

pulled over. You will probably be asked to show:

- Your driver's license.
- The registration to the vehicle.
- Proof that the vehicle is insured.

You must comply with these requests. The best thing to do in this situation is:

- To pull over
- **STAY COOL AND CALM AND REMAIN IN YOUR CAR, UNLESS TOLD TO DO OTHERWISE BY THE POLICE OFFICER(S).**
- If you are stopped at night, turn on your dome light and show the officer that there is nothing wrong or any reason to fear for his or her safety.
- It is best not to make any sudden movement or do anything that would give the officer a reason to search further.

Having your light on and keeping your hands on the steering wheel will usually put the officer's mind at ease. Remember the officer cannot read your mind, and does not know if you are a law-abiding citizen or a criminal. For safety reasons, the officer must assume the worst case scenario at first. Only when you are asked for your ID, should you go

about getting it.

At this point, you may start to explain or question what you were doing that caused you to get stopped, but that is as far as you should take it. There is a chance that the officer will write you a ticket or warning notice for a traffic violation. When the officer asks you to sign the ticket or warning notice, it is **NOT AN ADMISSION OF GUILT**; you are simply acknowledging that you received it. If you refuse to sign, the officer will still issue the ticket but will mark it "refused." The officer may legally start to check your car for equipment code violations under the Vehicle Code. Be careful about how you protest. This is not the place to argue your case. If you feel that you are getting a ticket for something you **DIDN'T DO** or for something that is **NOT FAIR**, you should take your protest to court and explain your case to the Judge. Just because the officer gives you a ticket, **DOES NOT** automatically mean that you are guilty, or will be found guilty, or that you will have to pay a fine.

**REMEMBER, IN AMERICA, YOU ARE INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO GO TO COURT AND TO HAVE THE JUDGE HEAR YOUR EXPLANATION, AND IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH THE JUDGE'S DECISION, YOU CAN APPEAL.**



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2. If you have a license to carry a firearm and have a firearm in the vehicle or concealed on (or around) you, you must produce the license at the request of the law enforcement officer. If you are carrying a firearm pursuant to a legal exception, e.g., as a constable, you must produce evidence of the exception at the request of the officer.



**WHAT TO DO** WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE

## REMEMBER...

1. If the police have stopped you, they **THINK** they have a reason to do so.
2. It is best to be cool and calm and identify yourself.
3. If an unmarked car signals you to pull over at night and you are not sure the person is a police officer, put your 4-way flashers and dome light on and **SLOWLY** drive to the nearest well lit public area. Unmarked police cars used for traffic stops are equipped with **RED & BLUE** lights.
4. **DON'T THREATEN OR TOUCH THE OFFICERS.** Keep your hands and your feet to yourself. Doing otherwise will probably get you arrested. **DON'T MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE THAN IT ALREADY IS.**
5. **UNDER PENNSYLVANIA LAW, YOU MAY NOT USE FORCE TO RESIST A LEGAL OR ILLEGAL ARREST.** Remember you have the right to contest the validity of your arrest later in court.

6. If you are given a ticket, you have a right to a hearing in front of the Magisterial District Judge (MDJ). If you do not agree with the MDJ's decision you have a right to appeal.
7. If you are arrested you have the right to a preliminary hearing, in which the police must show why you were arrested.
8. If you feel you were treated unfairly by a **MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICER(S)** you have the right to file a complaint with the chief of police or superintendent of police. If you are dissatisfied with the chief's or Superintendent's response, you can file a complaint with the elected officials who oversee the police department such as the mayor, police commissioner or township manager. If you are dissatisfied with that response, you have the right to file a complaint with the county district attorney's office and if you choose, you can pursue a civil action.
9. If you feel you were treated unfairly by a PA State Police Trooper, complaint procedures are available at [www.psp.pa.gov/contact](http://www.psp.pa.gov/contact).