

Understand that each situation is unique and the officer must alter his or her response to fit the circumstance. Generally, however, an officer:

- ✚ Will provide his/her name upon request.
- ✚ Will inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- ✚ Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in his/her presence, or when the officer has probable cause to believe the person has already committed the crime.

### ***Questions/Compliments/Complaints:***

If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the Police Department and ask to speak with a supervisor. You may also send a letter of compliment if you feel the officer was particularly helpful in your situation. Compliments or complaints about the Police Department's personnel's conduct can be made by utilizing the information provided within this brochure and/or located on the departmental website at [www.cocoapolice.com](http://www.cocoapolice.com)

### **Summary of Complaint Procedures**

Telephone the Internal Affairs Section Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (321) 637-6310.

Nights, weekends, and holidays call (321) 639-7620 to contact the Shift Supervisor who will see that the matter is properly addressed.

Depending upon the circumstances, the incident will either be handled by a supervisor, informally by an Internal Affairs Investigator, or formally by Internal Affairs. If your case is assigned to the officer's supervisor for investigation, the supervisor will contact you to try to resolve the situation.

If the case is to be handled formally, an Internal Affairs Investigator will complete a thorough report regarding the complaint.

All formal investigative reports are reviewed by the Chief's Staff for approval and recommendations.

Formal Investigation Disposition: You will be notified of the final disposition by mail.

## **Mission Statement**

*“The Cocoa Police Department will respond to community needs through a combined strategy of preventative, proactive and reactive policing programs. Utilizing the concept of a total and integrated team commitment by all employees, the whole of which will be supported by a progressive, participatory management environment. Providing the highest level of police service possible, with compassion and professionalism.”*



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# ***Biased-Based Profiling***



**COCOA POLICE  
DEPARTMENT  
1226 West King Street  
Cocoa, Florida 32922  
(321) 639-7620**

## **Bias-Based Profiling**

The purpose of this brochure is to clearly state that racial and ethnic profiling within the Cocoa Police Department is an unacceptable practice. A fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States to all who live in this nation is to the equal protection under the law. Along with this right to equal protection is the fundamental right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by government agents. Citizens are free to walk and drive our streets, highways, and other public places without police interference so long as they obey the law. They also are entitled to be free from crime, and from the depredations of criminals, and to drive and walk our public ways safe from the actions of reckless and careless drivers.

The City of Cocoa Police Department is charged with protecting these rights, for all, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, physical handicap, religion or other belief system.

Because of the nature of their business, law enforcement officers are required to be observant, to identify unusual occurrences and law violations, and to act upon them. It is this pro-active enforcement that keeps our citizens free from crime, our streets and highways safe to drive upon, and that detects and apprehends criminals.

It is the policy of the Cocoa Police Department to patrol in a pro-active manner, to aggressively investigate suspicious persons and circumstances, and to actively enforce the motor vehicle laws, while insisting that citizens will only be stopped or detained when there exists reasonable suspicion to believe they have committed, are committing, or are about to commit, a violation of the law.

Should you encounter a situation where you believe you were stopped by an officer based on your race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, physical handicap, religion or other belief system, you are encouraged to contact the on-duty shift supervisor as soon as possible at (321) 639-7620.

## **WHY DO OFFICERS STOP PEOPLE?**

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by the Police Department. Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation:

- The officer may want to warn you about a potentially dangerous situation.
- You may have committed a traffic violation.
- Your vehicle may match the description of one used in criminal act.
- The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.
- You may have witnessed a crime.

If you are stopped by an officer while driving, you may feel confused, anxious or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the officer as well. Many law enforcement officers are killed each year and thousands more are injured in traffic-related incidents. For example, each year approximately half of all line-of-duty officer deaths were related to traffic incidents. In addition, when the use of weapons at the traffic stop is added, the percentage of traffic-related deaths is over 55 percent. Every stop for a traffic violation has the potential for danger. Help lessen the uneasiness experiencing a traffic stop.

***Remember: Be courteous and cooperative in any stop by the police.***

*Florida Statute 316.126 requires that all drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. Drivers are to immediately pull over parallel to the nearest edge, stop and remain in a stopped position until the emergency vehicle has passed.*

- ➔ *Drivers shall vacate the lane closest to a roadside emergency vehicle and shall also slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit; or travel at 5 miles per hour when the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less, when driving on a two-lane road, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.*

## **What to do when an officer stops you:**

- ✓ When you see the emergency lights and/or hear the siren, remain calm, slow down and pull over in a safe location off the roadway.
- ✓ Do not exit your vehicle unless asked to do so. This is for safety reasons.
- ✓ Keep your hands on the steering wheel so the officer can see them.
- ✓ Inform the officer of any weapons in your vehicle and their location. Do not reach or point to the location.
- ✓ Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle.
- ✓ Comply with the officers' request to see your driver's license, proof of insurance and vehicle registration. Florida law requires you to carry these with you.
- ✓ If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
- ✓ If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions. You, as the operator, are solely responsible for your vehicle and its occupants.
- ✓ Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer's mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
- ✓ Answer all questions truthfully.
- ✓ If the officer issues you a ticket and you feel the reason is vague or unclear, politely ask him/her for details.
- ✓ If asked to sign a citation, do so. It is not an admission of guilt. Refusal could result in an arrest.
- ✓ You have the right to politely deny a request by a law enforcement officer to search your car; however, if probable cause is present, the officer has the right to search your vehicle without your consent.