

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. When a car is stopped, it appears the officer is “sneaking up” on the driver. At night the officers shine their flashlights into the car. Why is that?**

A. Officers are trained to minimize their exposure to traffic and potential danger from within the vehicle. At night, the bright lights illuminate the interior of the vehicle which is a safety consideration for the officer.

**Q. If I’ve only been stopped for a traffic violation, why do other police officers show up?**

A. It is not uncommon for officers who are in close proximity to stop and provide assistance, even if they are not requested. It is possible the initial or secondary patrol vehicle may be a field-training unit, which consists of two officers.

**Q. Why does the officer sit in the car for so long? What are they doing?**

A. Technology now allows an officer to verify your driving status and check your vehicle registration directly from the patrol car. This information is accessed via computer and dependent upon its reliability. Unanticipated delays may occasionally occur. While it may seem as if the officer has kept you waiting a long time, in reality, it is normally a short period of time.

**Q. I would like to speak with someone regarding the officer’s actions. What should I do?**

A. Your comments are very important to us. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this brochure or your experience with the Fitchburg Police Department, please call Police Chief Thomas Blatter at 608-270-4300.

CITY OF FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

## What Should I Do If I Am Stopped By The Police?



Fitchburg Police Department  
5520 Lacy Road  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
Phone: 608-270-4300  
[www.fitchburgwi.gov/police](http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/police)



A GUIDE FOR  
OUR COMMUNITY



A City of Fitchburg Police officer has just stopped you. We realize this experience is a significant emotional event in your life. We can assure you the officer will complete all necessary business and release you as soon as possible.

As members of the Fitchburg Police Department, we have developed this guide to help you understand why you may be stopped by an officer, and how you can expect to be treated. It is important for you to understand what you can expect when an officer stops you.

If you would like to speak with someone regarding your experience with the Fitchburg Police Department, please call us at 608-270-4300.

The following are some suggestions on to how act and help the officer complete their duties.

### **What should I do if I am stopped in my car?**

If you are driving a motor vehicle, and an officer signals you to stop, you must pull over safely to the right side of the roadway. This is the law. Stay in your car. If it is dark, turn on the

interior light. Do not leave your car unless directed to do so by the officer. Relax, do not make any sudden movements or reach for items inside the vehicle. An officer could misconstrue your actions as a potential threat to their safety.

Keep your hands on the steering wheel. Wait for the officer to approach your vehicle. Generally, the officer will greet you and introduce themselves as a City of Fitchburg police officer. Next, the officer will explain why you were stopped. The officer will ask if you have any reason explaining the violation for which you were stopped. The officer will ask you for your driver's license and proof of insurance. If you do not have your license with you, verbal identification will be requested. Please provide the officer with the requested information.

Moving traffic violations are the most common reason for stopping a vehicle. However, you may have been stopped for a registration or equipment violation. A criminal investigation may be another reason for being stopped. As an example, your vehicle may match the description of a vehicle that was involved in a crime.

At some point during the stop, the officer may ask you and any passengers to step from the car for a variety of reasons. Please follow the instructions the officer gives you.

Our actions during a traffic stop are guided by the fact many police officers are assaulted and killed each year during traffic stops. Our goal is to protect you, the motorist, and to ensure our own safety. We feel it is important for you to know all Fitchburg Police Department vehicles are equipped with video and audio recording equipment.

### **If you are issued a citation:**

Do not argue at the scene. You have the right to contest a citation before a judge at a later time. This does not require the services of an attorney. Please refer to the bottom of the citation for further instructions or contact the Fitchburg Municipal Clerk of Courts at 608-270-4224 during weekday business hours.

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Dedicated to Excellence”**

