

8.09
CRAIG POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of Chief of Police
General Order

Date Issued: May 15, 1997
Subject: High Risk Traffic Stops
To: All Officers

Revision Date: April 1, 2009
Reference:

I. POLICY

Officers of the department occasionally make high-risk traffic stops. Due to the inherent dangers associated with that type of activity the department provides a procedure to ensure the safety of officers and civilians.

II. PROCEDURE

General Guidelines for making high-risk traffic stops: Due to the inherent unpredictable circumstances in making high risk traffic stops, officers may have to modify or improvise the following guidelines to fit the specific incident.

A. Vehicle Stops

1. Always wait for backup.
2. Time is always to your advantage, use it. After the initial stop, wait until other units in the area can block off traffic--if possible.
3. Choose your location to make the stop; preferably in an area with little vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Hills and curves in the roadway should be avoided. The traffic stop should be initiated where good lighting is available.
4. At night, use high beams, takedowns and spotlights, when available.
5. The primary officer (patrol vehicle #1) positions the patrol vehicle 40 to 50 feet from the suspect vehicle with the wheels offset to the left to utilize full cover capacity of the engine block. The primary officer will control the incident.
6. The backup officer (patrol vehicle #2) positions the patrol vehicle to the right of the initial contact car. The backup car should be positioned so that the driver can see the passenger side of the suspect vehicle.
7. If a second backup officer (patrol vehicle #3) is available, he should position his vehicle behind the first two patrol vehicles. Note: If it is dark he should only use his parking lights so as not to silhouette the officers in front of him. The third officer should position himself at the passenger side door of patrol vehicle #1. The second backup officer is usually the handcuffing officer and is responsible for covering the stopped vehicle and handcuffing.

B. Advise the occupants in the vehicle over the P.A. System:

1. That you are police officers
2. That they are being detained for (whatever the stop is for, i.e. a warrant, stolen vehicle, etc.)
3. That they must follow commands and do only as commanded.
 - a. All occupants put hands on back of their heads, interlacing their fingers.
 - b. Driver roll down the windows. Driver turn off car.
 - c. Driver drop keys out the window.
 - d. Driver open door from outside with left hand.
 - e. Driver step out.
 - f. Driver put hands high in the air and bend forward. Turn around and bend backwards (check waistband) If a weapon is seen by the officers, tell the suspect you see the weapon and not to touch it.
 - g. Driver walk backwards towards my vehicle with your fingers interlaced behind your head (or above his head)
 - h. Driver stop (just in front of the patrol cars) The primary officer may transfer commands to the handcuffing officer. The primary officer then covers the stopped vehicle while the handcuffing officer finishes the arrest commands.
 - i. Driver take three side steps to your right. Driver should be positioned between the two patrol vehicles at approximately the bumper or just behind. Note: If it is dark, your patrol headlights will provide some concealment.
 - j. Driver get on your knees
 - k. Driver cross your legs

C. Making the Arrest

1. The handcuffing officer cuffs the suspect, does a cursory search for any weapons, moves the suspect behind the patrol car, frisks the suspect more thoroughly and conducts a brief interview to find out how many occupants, weapons, animals, children etc. are in the vehicle. He then secures the suspect in a patrol car. The handcuffing officer will quickly brief the primary officer of the results of the interview.

2. All other occupants are treated as the driver; following the same procedures as above. Occupants on the passenger side of the vehicle may be removed from the passenger side of the vehicle.
3. After all suspects have been taken out of the vehicle, challenge the vehicle several times for any other occupant to show themselves.
4. Clear the suspect vehicle. To avoid crossfire, the primary officer and another officer should approach the vehicle from the rear.
5. No more than five or six officers at contact point. Other officers will assist with traffic control or second line containment.
6. If you are on a routine traffic stop that turns into a high risk stop, instruct your backup car to assume a high risk stop position. Then you can carefully move your vehicle back to that position.
7. When you are advised by another law enforcement agency that they will be making a high risk traffic stop, our only function will be to serve as backup and assist where directed by the other agency. However, do not take command of the situation, unless specifically requested to do so. This is the responsibility of the agency making the initial contact.
8. If there are only two officers available at the contact point, you will need to modify the procedure. A suggested method may be to bring each suspect out of the vehicle and to prone them out in front of the patrol vehicles. Once everyone is out of the car, an officer can cuff each suspect while the primary officer covers him.

Approved By:



Walter K. Vanatta
Chief of Police