



St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office



Traffic Enforcement

Why do we enforce traffic laws?

Annually, traffic accidents cost St. Joseph County residents twice as much as criminal incidents. In an effort to reduce the number of deaths and the cost to the community, the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office places a high emphasis on traffic enforcement. Traffic enforcement is used to change driver behavior and reduce the number of traffic accidents in the community. Deputy's are encouraged to "look beyond the ticket" and realize their efforts will result in a safer community due to more public awareness.

Why am I being stopped?

Vehicles are most commonly stopped for the following reasons:

- Moving violations
- Non-moving violations
- Equipment violations
- Criminal investigations
- Safety or courtesy concerns

How will I know if I need to stop?

The deputy will signal you to stop by:

- Emergency lights and/or siren
- Voice and/or hand signal

What should I do if I'm stopped?

Please adhere to the following guidelines when you stop to ensure safety for both yourself and the deputy:

- Slow down and stop your vehicle as far right off the road as possible
- Keep your seatbelt fastened
- Stay in your vehicle unless instructed otherwise
- Turn interior lights on in the vehicle after dark
- Keep your hands in view, preferably on the steering wheel
- Inform the deputy of all intended movements

What types of required paperwork should I have?

The driver (not necessarily the registered owner) of any vehicle should have the following information:

- A valid driver's license
- Vehicle registration
- Proof of insurance

What if I don't feel safe stopping?

In most cases, you will be stopped by a uniformed deputy in a marked police vehicle. If you don't feel safe you should:

- Slowly drive to the nearest well-lit public place or local Police Department
- Make the deputy aware that you are not trying to flee the situation

Why do officers sit in their car so long during the traffic stop?

The officer must perform the following steps:

- The deputy will contact dispatch with the location and vehicle registration.
- Vehicle and driver information is requested through dispatch or the police vehicle laptop
- The deputy logs the race and gender of driver
- The deputy may write a citation if a citation is warranted

I don't agree with the reason I was given a citation; what should I do?

In the event that you do not agree with the reason you were given a citation:

- Note the officer's name, location, and time of the traffic stop
- If your complaint is about the deputy: Contact the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office and request to speak to a supervisor
- If your complaint is about the citation: Contact the 3B District Court to have your complaint heard by a magistrate or judge.

What can I do about a traffic concern that I have?

Call St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office general business number at 269-467-9045 ext 233. Explain your concern to the call taker. Include the location, and days and times of the week the problem is occurring. The information will be forwarded to the Uniformed Services Division.

For Emergencies Dial 911