



## Traffic Safety Bulletin

We Serve and Protect

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# COURTESY IS CONTAGIOUS

How many times have you heard this phrase? Courtesy is in fact contagious. As police Officers and representatives of the City of Chicago, each of us plays a major role in shaping a favorable image of the Department. Police officers performing their daily tasks can convey a positive or negative impression when dealing with the public.

Police courtesy consists of a quiet, unassuming behavior based on a sincere consideration for the feelings of others. The demeanor and appearance we exhibit will cause citizens to have confidence in us. Courtesy is also expressed in the use of temperate language. A clean well pressed uniform coupled with exemplary behavior will indicate to all concerned that we are diligent and capable of doing our jobs.

### POLICE OFFICER-TRAFFIC VIOLATOR RELATIONSHIP

Courtesy must be displayed in all forms of police functions. The most common type of contact comes in the form of the traffic stop. Almost every traffic stop has possibilities for producing frustration which can lead to aggression. What you do and say during this contact will have an important bearing on how much frustration is created. How you deal with the driver as an individual person will generally control the reaction you get.

The following suggestions are offered to improve officer-violator relationships.

1. **GET YOUR EMOTIONS UNDER CONTROL.** Your attitude and first few comments will set the stage for the entire interview.
2. **LET THE VIOLATOR TALK.** It may take considerable effort to listen, however, allowing the violator to talk will help put him in a frame of mind to listen to you.
3. **DO NOT ARGUE WITH, BERATE OR THREATEN THE VIOLATOR.** Such actions tend to increase the violators emotional tension, at which point they are unable to accept rational ideas or explanations.
4. **BE COURTEOUS AND BUSINESSLIKE.** Your tone of voice, demeanor and facial expressions are important in showing real courtesy.
5. **REQUEST COMPLIANCE.** When directing the violator, make requests politely. Ordering the violator to do things will do little toward developing an atmosphere of mutual respect.
6. **AVOID TELLING THE VIOLATOR WHAT NOT TO DO.** Phrase your requests and instructions in a positive way. Explain the reasoning of your instructions.
7. **AVOID ASKING QUESTIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ANSWERED INTELLIGENTLY AND THOSE THAT ARE IRRITATING TO THE VIOLATOR.** Questions such as "What's your hurry?" or "How did you get your driver's license?" will cause a violator to defend his actions and make it difficult for you to point out errors and proper techniques.

