

FIVE RULES FOR MINIMIZING LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTACT

1. Don't draw attention to yourself.

No giant spoilers. In fact, no spoilers. Tints are fine, but **modest** tints only. A good rule of thumb: The more it appears you've got something to hide, the more interested Joe cop is in pulling you over to take a quick peek. So take it easy on the tints or else risk violating this #1 and most cardinal rule. Don't pump massive bass out of your custom subwoofers. **Do not hang ANYTHING from your rear view mirror. IN PARTICULAR – DO NOT HANG THOSE TREE-SHAPED AIR FRESHENERS.** Cops call them “felony forests” for a reason – you've been warned. And to be clear: No one is telling you that you *can't* have a car with all this shit on it. What I *am* telling you however is that you can save *that* car for all the trips you take where, for example, you're not possibly under the influence or rocking contraband on your god damned person. Get my drift? Take it easy on the driving as well. **Drive like your mother's riding shotgun.**

2. Keep your car up to regulation.

A good rule of thumb here would be: if law enforcement contact would be a problem for you (for example, it would make you late for an important appointment; wink) take 30 seconds prior to that trip and with a friend, kid or spouse, check that your brake lights (including the rear overhead brake light, which always seem to burn out faster than the other lights), headlights and blinkers AND rear license plate lights are all in working order.

3. Take steps to present yourself as a NON-threat.

When the red and blue lights go on behind you, begin looking to pull over immediately but with an eye towards stopping areas that will increase safety for both yourself and the cop. If you can identify a safer or more public stopping point within 100-200 yards of when you first see the cop's overhead lights, pull over to the side, use your blinker, make it clear to the cop you are submitting. Once stopped, put the car in park, turn it off, and **remove your keys from the ignition, placing them on the top of your dash where the cop can see them.** Once you do this, you'll have about 15-30 seconds to locate your registration and proof of insurance before the cop shows up to start looking through the car with you. **Keep your registration and insurance documents in the same place in a non-contraband containing compartment that is immediately within your reach.** Put these items in your lap with your driver's license. Roll down your window completely. Then, when you hear the cop approaching, rest your hands on the steering wheel where Jerry Law Enforcement can see 'em.

4. You have a lawyer, and s/he's advised you not to consent.

Learn this statement – heck, tattoo it on the back of your hand if you have to: **“Am I free to leave, officer?”** That is the golden phrase. As soon as you're getting questions or requests that make you uncomfortable, invoke the advice of your permanently retained and conveniently nameless attorney, and inform the cop that you wish not to participate in further questioning and that, based on this sage legal advice, you will not consent to any searches, tests, or roadsides (see (5), below), and then simply ask the officer if you are free to leave. At that point, he will need to articulate some specific reasonable suspicion he has of your alleged wrongdoing to legally detain you further. Even if he doesn't answer appropriately, you've at least teed up a better case for your defense attorney.

5. Never, ever, ever do roadsides.

Seriously. Roadsides are junk science invented by cops to make their jobs of criminalizing your otherwise completely unimpaired conduct easier. Roadsides should be likened to the “ring toss” carnival game. They appear so easy that it's tempting to believe you could pull together a Sportscenter top ten performance and “pass” them, whereupon you'll receive an apology and handshake from the cop now suddenly off your back. **But like with the ring toss - don't be a fucking idiot.** No one wins the ring toss; and no one passes roadsides; no one in the history of time has passed roadsides – and even if you think you've heard a story of your cousin's friend Leslie “passing” *their* roadsides and getting a cop off his or her back, you're a fucking fool if that leads you to believe you're going to be guy/girl #6 in the history of time to be stopped by one of those **fairy-tale** completely reasonable and objective cops. To be clear: the cop stopping *you* is no such cop, and you will not “pass” your roadsides because you are not *supposed* to pass the roadsides. When you do roadsides, you generate evidence with every step you take, and you can bet all of it will end up in the officer's report and be used against you in court whether it's TRUE or NOT. Bottom line: Unless you're ORDERED out of the car, you STAY IN THE CAR.

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