

Your rights when pulled over by the police



WHEN CAN THE POLICE STOP MY CAR OR VAN?

If a police officer asks you to stop driving your car or van on the road, you must do so. The police officer does not need to have a reason to stop you.

WHEN CAN THE POLICE SEARCH MY CAR OR VAN?

A police officer can stop you while driving without a reason, but they **must** have a reason to **search** you and your vehicle.

If they want to search you or your car, the officer must have reasonable grounds to suspect you of having certain items on you or in your car, such as:

- Stolen property
- Controlled drugs
- Offensive weapons
- Firearms
- Items for use in a theft/burglary.

The fact that someone is a Gypsy, Roma or a Traveller is not a 'reasonable ground' for suspicion, nor is the fact that they may have previous convictions.

If a violent incident has happened or is anticipated nearby, an order may be issued by the police which gives them the power to stop and search anyone in the area for weapons. They do not need reasonable grounds to suspect that a person might have a weapon on them.

If the police officer is not wearing uniform they must show you their identity card.

Before they search the car or van, the police officer must tell you that you are being stopped for a search and give you the following information:

Why you are being searched	What they are looking for
Their name	The police station they are from
What legal power of search they are using	Your right to have a record of the search

You have the right to this information. If they don't give it you, ask for it.

Record of the search

If no arrest is made, the police officer must make a record of a search, either immediately or as soon as possible afterwards. The officer may give you a copy of the record. If they don't, ask for one.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY VEHICLE IS STOPPED AND/OR SEARCHED?

Stay calm and be polite. Don't let anger or fear get the better of you. Keep good eye contact and be aware of your body language.

Provided you don't obstruct the search, you have the right to respectfully make a video of the search. If you have a camera phone, politely tell the police officer that you are going to get it out and film the stop and search. **IMPORTANT** – do not reach into your pocket without warning them first.

If you are unhappy about the way the police officer treated you, contact Traveller Movement which can assist you to make a complaint and support you. See the contact details below.



The information in this information guide refers to the law in England & Wales. It summarises the main points and is intended for guidance only. While every effort is made to ensure it is correct at time of publication it should not be used as a substitute for legal advice or for individual advice about your case. If you have any specific questions about any legal matter you should consult a solicitor.

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