



## Keep the Peace When Interacting with Police:

- Be a Good Citizen
- Follow the Law
- Prepare Before Driving
- Be Smart if Stopped
- Show Respect
- Know Your Rights



Races for Peace

PO Box 12364  
Silver Spring, MD 20908  
[www.racesforpeace.org](http://www.racesforpeace.org)

## Keep the Peace

A Citizen's Guide to  
Interacting with the Police

*Choose Peace*

[www.Races for Peace.org](http://www.Races for Peace.org)

Tel: 202-845-1430

## How Can You Stay Safe?

Citizens and the Police share a common interest of wanting to be safe in their communities. This guide provides important information you can use to help build trust if you interact with a police officer. Following these steps may help keep you both safe.

The information presented here is not a substitute for legal advice. If you feel your rights have been violated, consult your local civil rights organization and/or an attorney.

### STEP 1: BE A GOOD CITIZEN

As a citizen who cares about your community, it is your responsibility to avoid engaging in criminal activity. The most important way you can protect yourself is to follow the laws.

1. **Check Your Car** - Ensure all brake lights and mirrors are in working condition.
2. **Keep Up With Your I.D.** - Be sure your license and registration are not expired.
3. **Follow the Law** - Behave in a legal manner at all times whether in public, in private, or on the road.
4. **Leave Weapons Behind** - Do not transport ANY weapons unless absolutely necessary and be sure you have an appropriate license to carry weapons if you must.
5. **Avoid Illegal Cargo** - Do not transport any illegal substances or contraband on your person or in any vehicle.

### STEP 2: PREPARE BEFORE DRIVING

Police officers will want to identify you and know the registration status of any vehicle you are driving. You can help yourself by planning ahead in case you are stopped by the police while driving.

As soon as you get in a vehicle:

1. **Buckle Up** – Ensure your seatbelt is secure.
2. **I.D. Out in the Open** – Place your license and registration near you in a location that is clearly visible when viewed through the front side windows.

### STEP 3: BE SMART IF STOPPED

These steps will help both you and a police officer feel safer during traffic stops:

1. **Stay Calm, Cool, Collected** – Turn off vehicle and radio, do not assume the worst.
2. **Allow Communication** – Open the front windows enough so you and the police officer can clearly hear each other.
3. **Always Show Hands** – Keep your hands on top of the steering wheel in plain sight.
4. **Ask Before You Reach** - Tell the police where your I.D. and registration are located. If you feel comfortable, ask if you are safe to reach for them. It is okay to state you are NOT comfortable enough to reach for your I.D.
5. **Show Respect, Know Your Rights** – Comply with all police demands. Never resist even if you feel your rights are being violated. You can exercise your rights by clearly stating if you choose to remain silent or if you do not consent to having you or your vehicle searched. However, some states allow searches anyway. Ask the police if you are free to go and calmly leave if you are not under arrest.

#### Buckle Up



#### I.D. Out in the Open



#### Stay Calm, Cool, Collected and Allow Communication



#### Always Show Hands and Ask Before You Reach for I.D.



#### Show Respect, Know Your Rights

