VEHICLE STOP TECHNIQUES

Instructor Guide
COURSE TITLE: Vehicle Stop Techniques

BLOCK: 5.2

DPS ACCREDITATION #: 

COURSE LEVEL: 100

INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL:

1. This course will enable the student to safely and tactically conduct an unknown risk and high-risk traffic stop.

2. This course will place emphasis on the right-side approach technique and demonstrate the tactical advantages that it has over a left-side approach.

3. This course will provide the student with the techniques and procedures that are necessary for conducting a felony stop.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify proper procedures to stop vehicles to investigate, cite, or arrest occupants.

2. Given a nighttime practical exercise involving stopping a vehicle for a traffic violation, demonstrate in a role play the following proper uses of the spotlight in a pullover and approach situation:
   a. Not blinding the driver of the other vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.
   b. Illuminating the interior of the other vehicle after it has stopped.
   c. Focusing on side mirrors and rearview mirrors in order to blind the occupant(s) to the officer’s approach.

3. Given a night time practical exercise involving stopping a vehicle for a traffic violation, demonstrate proper use of his/her flashlight to observe the vehicle occupants (s), get identification and issue a citation.

4. Given a practical exercise involving the stopping of a vehicle containing felony suspect, and as measured on an approved, pre-designed rating form, demonstrate safely stopping the vehicle, removing and placing the occupant (s) in a position of
disadvantage without the officer(s) being placed in a position that would be inherently dangerous.

5. Demonstrate conducting a safe and effective search of a vehicle
   As demonstrated on an approved, pre-designed ratings form.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: CLASSROOM LECTURE
                      DISCUSSION
                      PRACTICAL EXERCISES

HANDOUTS:

COURSE DURATION: 2 HOUR

CURRICULUM REFERENCES:

SAFETY CONSIDERATION: NONE

EQUIPMENT, PERSONNEL, AND SUPPLIES NEEDED:
                      COMPUTER, AUDIO AND VISUAL AIDS; WHITEBOARD

TARGET AUDIENCE: NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT CADETS AND RECRUITS

COURSE PREREQUISITES: NONE

INSTRUCTOR CERT.: 

INSTRUCTOR RATIO: 1 / 40

EVALUATION STRATEGY: NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION EXAM

AUTHOR & ORIGINATION DATE:

REVISION / REVIEW DATE(S): July 10, 2014

REVISED / REVIEWED BY: NMLEA STAFF
LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Course title: Vehicle Stop Techniques

Instructional Goals:

4. This course will enable the student to safely and tactically conduct an unknown risk and high-risk traffic stop.

5. This course will place emphasis on the right-side approach technique and demonstrate the tactical advantages that it has over a left-side approach.

6. This course will provide the student with the techniques and procedures that are necessary for conducting a felony stop.

Instructional Objectives:

6. Identify proper procedures to stop vehicles to investigate, cite, or arrest occupants.

7. Given a nighttime practical exercise involving stopping a vehicle for a traffic violation, demonstrate in a role play the following proper uses of the spotlight in a pullover and approach situation:
   a. Not blinding the driver of the other vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.
   b. Illuminating the interior of the other vehicle after it has stopped.
   c. Focusing on side mirrors and rearview mirrors in order to blind the occupant(s) to the officer’s approach.

8. Given a night time practical exercise involving stopping a vehicle for a traffic violation, demonstrate proper use of his/her flashlight to observe the vehicle occupants(s), get identification and issue a citation.

9. Given a practical exercise involving the stopping of a vehicle
Containing felony suspect, and as measured on an approved, pre-designed rating form, demonstrate safely stopping the vehicle, removing and placing the occupant(s) in a position of disadvantage without the officer(s) being placed in a position that would be inherently dangerous.

10. Demonstrate conducing a safe and effective search of a vehicle
As demonstrated on an approved, pre-designed ratings form.

Instructional Method: Classroom Lecture and Discussion, Practical exercises

Estimated Time: 2 hours

Bibliography: NM DPS Block Lesson Plan, 1999
University of New Mexico, Criminal Justice Program, Patrol Operations

Unknown risk vehicle stops

A. Conducting the stop

LO 1

Determine reason for stop

a. Traffic violation, suspicious person(s)/vehicle, Vehicle equipment malfunction

Why would an officer not make a traffic stop.

a. Numerous subjects in the car
b. No back up available
c. Severity of the infraction not sufficient
d. Inclement weather
e. Heavy traffic
f. No safe location

Advise Dispatch (Prior to initiating stop)

a. Current Location/Anticipated Stop Location
b. Vehicle Description
c. License Plate Information
d. Request Registration & Warrants Check. Wait for return before initiating stop

e. Number of Occupants

Officer chooses location of stop: The officer will attempt to travel to a suitable location before engaging lights and siren thus minimizing the chance that the violator stops in an unsafe area.

a. Minimize exposure to traffic hazards

1. Curves
2. Hills
3. Heavy traffic
4. High crime area
5. Lighting
6. Available cover
7. Ability to back out of area

LO 2

4. Select Location of the stop:
   a. Free of traffic hazards
   b. Well lit area at night
   c. Cover available
   d. Ability to back out of area (if needed)

Initiate the stop

11. Activate emergency equipment. The spotlight should not be used to blind the driver when their vehicle is in motion. The spotlight can be used to illuminate the vehicle’s interior once it has stopped. It can also be turned on the vehicle’s mirrors to mask the officer’s approach on foot.

   a. Over head, dashboard or bumper mounted lights
   b. Headlights
   c. Rear warning lights
   d. Headlights or wig-wag lights
   e. Siren if necessary

   (DO NOT PULL ALONG SIDE AND MOTION DRIVER TO PULL OVER)

12. Be prepared for sudden stops

   Maintain safe distance (Space Cushion)
Do not drive alongside or in front of suspect vehicle. Watch out for motorcycles pulling onto shoulder and losing control. Park at least 21 feet behind suspect vehicle
(\textbf{DISTANCE IS YOUR FRIEND})

i. This places the officer at the minimum safe distance to defend against an edged weapon attack.

ii. This distance creates a buffer area in the case that the police vehicle is struck from the rear; the chance that the violator vehicle will also be struck is minimized.

iii. Without obstructing traffic, offset patrol vehicle 1 to 2 feet left of center of the suspect vehicle. This allows a small buffer area that minimizes the driver from stepping directly into traffic should they choose to exit their vehicle.

Turn Wheels of patrol car to the left
Use headlights even during daylight

8. Notify dispatch
   a. Location
      1. Location and as much vehicle information as possible should be called in while still in motion to minimize time spent behind the wheel of the patrol vehicle
   b. License information
   c. State, Letters and numbers
   d. Vehicle description
   e. Number of occupants

9. Exiting the vehicle
   a. Minimize time in patrol vehicle
1. Due to the inability to quickly move and inability to quickly access weapons the officer is extremely vulnerable while sitting in a parked vehicle.

b. Exit vehicle, quietly shut door (do not give the driver any unnecessary clues to your movement)

c. Keep eyes on suspect vehicle

d. Be aware of passing traffic

e. Step around rear of patrol vehicle

   This places the patrol vehicle between the officer and the suspect providing distance, cover and concealment.

f. Pause and look from rear of patrol vehicle. Assess the situation, determine if backup is needed and prepare to approach.

10. Vehicle Approaches

   A. Approach on right/passenger side of vehicle
   B. The officer should not carry anything in his or her weapon hand. No unnecessary equipment should be carried on approach.
   C. When using a flashlight, the officer must use light discipline;
   D. Taking care to not illuminate himself and only turning on the light when absolutely necessary.
   E. This keeps the driver out of passing traffic and allows attention to be paid to the driver
   F. A passenger side approach allows the officer to approach where the driver is least expecting him
   G. On nighttime stops, the officer is not silhouetted in the spotlight and is able to move in the shadows.
   H. From the passenger side, the officer is able to see both of the driver’s hands.
   I. Pause at rear of suspect vehicle and assess situation
a.) At any time during the stop, the officer should not walk between the vehicles. The driver may intentionally or unintentionally reverse the vehicle and crush the officer.

b.) Look through rear window to observe occupants
c.) For dark tinted windows, the officer should order the driver to roll the window down. Sometimes placing a flashlight directly against the window will illuminate the interior enough to see through the tint however this pin points the officer's location.

d.) If rear seat is occupied, attempt to contact driver without passing in front of rear passengers
e.) If rear seat is empty, stand at passenger side and contact driver.

11. Contacting the driver

a. Contact through passenger window or door

1. The officer stands behind the doorframe to maximize cover and prevent being struck with an opening door.

b. Do not reach into vehicle

c. If there are multiple occupants, determine whether or not to have driver exit the vehicle.

d. If the officer chooses to have the driver exit the vehicle, maintain a safe distance and have the person stand behind their vehicle on the shoulder.

e. The officer should avoid standing between the driver and the suspect vehicle.

f. The officer should keep all activity in front of him

12. Call-out the offenders (Tactics)
a. Calling the driver and/or passenger(s) out of the suspect vehicle to the curb area utilizing verbal commands/directions.
b. Calling the offender out to the curb for problem vehicles or when there is an increased danger/risk of being involved in a use-of-force situation such as a gunfight.
c. When a unsafe location or a safe approach is also a concern, call-out tactics can be utilized

   a. Loss of containment of the subject(s) in the vehicle
   b. The possible loss of “Plain View” evidence.

14. Utilize the P/A to Communicate
   a. Verbally direct driver/occupant to turn-off the vehicle (not including tractor trailer rigs or other large diesel vehicles)
   b. Request only the driver retrieve the paperwork from the vehicle
   c. Have the driver exit the vehicle and meet you at the curb away from the traffic flow
   d. Visually inspect the driver as he/she walks approaches you for any possible weapons
   e. Insure the subjects hands/palms are visible
   f. Maintain your position of cover and concealment at your unit until the subject is at the curb
   g. Avoid tunnel vision on the driver or any other object

15. Contact the driver at the curb
   a. Maintain a minimum two arms distance
   b. Have the driver set the information or paperwork on the trunk and step away
   c. You then can pick-up the information and step away
   d. Maintain a 360 degree security by being aware of your surrounding area

16. Issue the citation
   a. Advise the driver of your intentions and/or decision(s) on the course of action
   b. Offer the Penalty Assessment if applicable
   c. Request the driver and passengers to remain inside the vehicle until you return
   d. On a call-out, have the driver remain at the curb
   e. Walk back to the patrol car - gain distance
   f. Request a driver registration and wants/warrant check
g. Position yourself on the passenger side of the patrol car
h. Right front fender of patrol car
i. Write the citation
j. Approach the subject car again
k. Look for a change attitude/behavior of the driver - physical, verbal, & non-verbal cues
l. Visually search the subject again and again
m. Second approach is the most dangerous - use good tactics
n. Do not reach into the subjects car
o. Make the driver extend to your position
p. On a Call-out, set the paperwork on the trunk and step away
q. Advise the driver that you will assist in getting them back into traffic
r. Avoid telling the driver to “Have a good day.” Advise them to drive safely

17. Terminate the stop

a. Return to your patrol car
b. Maintain visibility with both the passing traffic and the subject car
c. Pull into traffic lane while simultaneously observing the traffic flow
d. When safe, pull into traffic and allow subject car to leave
e. Turn-off emergency equipment on the patrol unit
f. Make a turn away from subject(s) vehicle - head in a different direction
g. Advise dispatch that you are back in-service
I. KNOWN HIGH RISK STOPS

LO 4

Make a plan before initiating the stop
A. Communicate with all other officers involved in the stop prior to initiating the stop
B. Move methodically
C. Slow things down
D. Do not move fast due to excitement

18. Principles of known risk stops

a. Do not commit yourself without adequate manpower
b. Utilize marked vehicles to make the stop
c. Don't try to be a "hero"
d. Wait for backup
e. Make the suspects come to you
f. Give suspect vehicle description
   1. make, model
   2. approximate year, color
   3. license number and state
   4. number of occupants and descriptions
   5. dents, primer, stickers etc.

19. Making the Known Risk Stop

a. Select a location with:
   1. cover available
   2. good lighting
   3. no traffic hazard
   4. no innocent bystanders
   5. free of suspect escape routes
b. Unit windows down and doors unlocked
c. Activate emergency equipment
d. Lights
e. Sirens should be turned off as soon as possible to lower attention of bystanders and make communication easier

20. Positioning Patrol Cars

a. Maintain a distance of 15 yards or a minimum of 30 feet
b. Contact unit off-set to the left  
c. Cover unit left of contact vehicle  
d. Leave enough room to open drivers door on contact unit and passenger door on cover unit  
e. All lights concentrated on suspect vehicle  
f. Contact vehicle turns tires to left  
g. Cover vehicle turns tires to the right  
h. Watch for movement inside the vehicle  

21. Maintaining a position of cover  

a. Stay partially inside the patrol car  
b. Unit doors offer limited cover  
c. Point weapons at your target  
d. Maintain weapons safety  
e. Trigger finger stays off the trigger unless the decision is made to fire  
f. Identify yourself as a police officer  
g. Advise the suspects they are under arrest  
h. Confirm the suspects can hear you  
i. GIVE INSTRUCTIONS OVER P.A.  
j. Cover officer obtains another pair of handcuffs if he/she does not have them on their person  
k. The cover officer instructs the contact officer to bring out the next person  
l. Repeat the procedure for all visible suspects  
m. When no other suspects are visible the contact officer challenges the vehicle  
n. Use the P.A. to tell others to sit up  
o. Say the other suspects told you they were there  
p. Utilize or threaten to utilize a K-9  

22. When you are satisfied no others are inside the vehicle.  

a. Contact officer continues to challenge the vehicle while the cover officer searches  
b. Cover officer goes around the rear of the patrol car and approaches the suspect vehicle from the 2 1/2 position  
c. Maintain weapon discipline  
d. Stop at the rear of the vehicle and feel for movement
e. Have flashlight at the ready for night stops
f. Do a quick peek for suspects on the seats and floorboards of the vehicle
g. If movement or suspects are detected retreat to cover and have the contact officer challenge the vehicle again
h. If no movement or suspects are detected:
   i. Move around the front of the vehicle and pick up the keys
   j. Cover officer then positions himself in order to coordinate the clearing of the trunk this is done from the 2 1/2 in order to avoid a crossfire

23. Advantages

   a. May result in apprehension of suspects
   b. Assist in solving a crime by identifying suspects and recovering evidence
   c. Confine suspects to a geographic area

24. Disadvantages

   a. Inconvenience to officers
   b. Expensive in terms of manpower and equipment
   c. Hazardous to officers and citizens
COURSE LEVEL DEFINITIONS

100 LEVEL: BASIC LEVEL - FOUNDATIONAL BLOCK OF INSTRUCTION. PRE-REQUISITE TO ALL HIGHER LEVEL COURSES.

200 LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY LEVEL. REQUIRES COMPLETION OF PRE-REQUISITE COURSE(S). [ONE OR MORE 100 LEVEL COURSE(S)]

300 LEVEL: INCUMBENT LEVEL. REQUIRES COMPLETION OF PRE-REQUISITE COURSE(S). [ONE OR MORE 200 LEVEL COURSE(S)]

400 LEVEL: ADVANCED LEVEL. REQUIRES COMPLETION OF BASIC ACADEMY AND POSSIBLY PRE-REQUISITE COURSE(S)

CLASSIFICATION OF LEARNING OBJECTIVE

(C): COGNITIVE BASED LEARNING OBJECTIVE
(P): PSYCHOMOTOR BASED LEARNING OBJECTIVE
(C/P): BOTH COGNITIVE AND PSYCHOMOTOR BASED LEARNING OBJECTIVE
(V): VALUE BASED LEARNING OBJECTIVE
(Emphasizing Sacred Trust the community has placed in the hands of the law enforcement officer, addresses related professional conduct and respect for rights of citizens. All lesson plans must contain at least one value based learning objective.)
COURSE AUDIT

PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR:

SECONDARY INSTRUCTOR:

SUPPORT STAFF (i.e.: Scenario Managers, Role Players, etc):

DATE(S)/ TIME(S) OF INSTRUCTION:

LOCATION OF INSTRUCTION:

RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM CHANGES: Identify inaccurate information, outdated information, new information to be added to update material, etc. (Use additional pages if necessary)
COURSE AUDIT (Continued)

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS: (If any portion of the course content was not presented, indicate the specific content here)

If course content other than the NMDPS TRD approved Basic or PST academy curriculum is taught, the alternative curriculum must be submitted to the Law Enforcement Academy Deputy Director's office and approved prior to delivery of the alternative instructional materials.

Alternative curriculum was taught.

Accreditation number of alternative curriculum:

SIGNATURE                                      DATE

Primary Instructor

Reviewed by Program Coordinator

Reviewed by Bureau Chief

Reviewed by LEA Director or Designee