



Traffic patrol techniques

This chapter contains these topics:

[Summary](#)

[Your power to stop vehicles](#)

[Risks associated with vehicle stops](#)

[Types of patrol](#)

[Plan and prepare for patrol](#)

[Before you stop a vehicle](#)

[Alert the driver and position your vehicle](#)

[Approaching a vehicle](#)

[Approaching the driver](#)

[Interviewing the driver](#)

[Dealing with armed vehicle occupants](#)



Summary

Introduction

Prevention First is the Police model within the New Zealand Policing Excellence Strategy focusing on preventing crime and crashes before they happen. Priorities of the strategy include reducing death and injury on our roads.

In line with this strategy, road policing patrols must focus on prevention of offences and unsafe behaviour. This includes:

- deterring and detecting offending through intelligence led targeting of specific risk locations, behaviours, people and organisations.
- general deterrence and positive enforcement of safe behaviours across the general public through high visibility in risk locations and at risk times, as informed by intelligence.

Purpose

This chapter applies to all constables and authorised officers, hereafter referred to as 'Police'. It gives detailed instructions on:

- [your powers to stop vehicles](#)
- [how to plan patrols](#)
- [carrying out vehicle stops](#)
- [interviewing drivers](#).



Your power to stop vehicles

Powers for stopping vehicles

Police in an approved Police uniform or wearing a distinctive cap, hat or helmet (with a badge of authority affixed to it) on the roadside, or in a vehicle displaying flashing lights or sounding a siren, have the power to stop the driver of a vehicle for the following purposes:

- traffic enforcement (section [114](#) of the Land Transport Act 1998 (LTA))
- to conduct a statutory search (section [314B](#) of the Crimes Act 1961), and
- to arrest a person in the vehicle, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that person is unlawfully at large or has committed an offence punishable by imprisonment (section [317A](#) of the Crimes Act 1961).

Note: If the driver of the vehicle stops, they are not obliged to remain stopped (section [114\(4\)](#) LTA) if the Police vehicle displaying flashing lights or siren does not stop itself in the vicinity.

Failing to stop

If a vehicle fails to stop, lights and sirens must be activated and the '[Fleeing driver policy](#)' complied with.

Note: Section [114\(6\)](#) LTA empowers Police to arrest without a warrant, if you suspect the driver has

- failed to comply with a signal, request or requirement to stop; or
- given false details.

Once the vehicle is stopped

The driver of every vehicle stopped must be breath tested, where practicable. Refer to [Alcohol and drug impaired driving](#) chapter for breath testing procedures.

Once the vehicle is stopped you can require certain details from the driver and/or passengers.

Requirement	What you can do
Require driver details (Section 114(3) LTA)	You can require the driver to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give their full name, address, date of birth, occupation and telephone number • state whether or not they are the vehicle's owner, or • if they are not the owner, give the owner's name and address or any information to help identify the owner.
Require driver to remain stopped (Section 114(2A) & (5) LTA)	You can require the driver to remain stopped for as long as reasonably necessary, so you can establish the driver's identity, or exercise any powers conferred by the LTA. Caution: You cannot stop them for longer than 15 minutes if getting this information is your only reason to keep them stopped. When conducting breath testing (LTA sections 68 or 69), then the person tested (the driver or person suspected of driving) must remain at the place where the person underwent the test until after the result of the test is ascertained.
Require passenger details (Sections 113(1) & (2)(a) LTA)	You can require a passenger to give their full name, address, date of birth, occupation, telephone number and any other identity particulars, when you stop a vehicle on a road. Note: You can require any person in a vehicle stopped under the provisions of section 317A of the Crimes Act

This is an uncontrolled document printed for reference only.

The controlled document can be found in the Police Instructions site which is accessible via the New Zealand Police Intranet.



Traffic patrol techniques, Continued...

Version : 10.0

	1961 to also state their name, address and date of birth.
Require details of any person in a vehicle (Section 314C(2)(a) and (b) Crimes Act 1961)	You can require any person in a vehicle that has been stopped for the purpose of conducting a statutory search under section 314B of the Crimes Act 1961 to state their name, address and date of birth. This gives the power to stop a vehicle for a search under any other legislation where that other legislation does not give a power to stop vehicles.



Risks associated with vehicle stops

Vehicle stops are an unpredictable part of your job. In New Zealand, 14 percent of all assaults on Police stem from vehicle stops.

Vehicle stops are classified as:

- [known-risk vehicle stops](#), where Police have information about the vehicle and its occupants
- [unknown-risk vehicle stops](#), where Police have no information about the vehicle and its occupants.

Always consider the risks

You must always consider the risks before undertaking a vehicle stop. Apply common sense and sound tactics during the stop.

The risks may not become apparent until you approach the vehicle or interact with the driver. Safety precautions help protect you, your colleagues and the public.

Note: When stopping vehicles, be sure not to create a road hazard by disrupting traffic.

Known-risk vehicle stops

Known-risk vehicle stops occur when Police receive information suggesting there is a risk to Police safety. This information might come from:

- an unfavourable QVR response, such as:
 - danger flags
 - wanted reference
 - unlawfully taken
- the occupants are known to pose a risk to Police, or
- the vehicle is suspected to have been used to commit an offence.

If you are about to undertake a known-risk stop, you must adopt tactics to counter the risks. See the [contact and cover principle](#).

Unknown-risk vehicle stops

Unknown-risk vehicle stops occur when the Police do not have specific information to indicate a risk to employees. Most vehicle stops fall into this category and you must treat these stops with caution.

Contact and cover principle

The contact and cover principle involves **identifying** and **communicating** the roles of each officer in any interaction with a potential suspect.

Contact officer	Cover officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes the contact • checks the licence • conducts roadside interviews/searches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remains detached from the interaction • observes the scene for risk indications.

A second patrol can adopt the cover role for single crewed units or if the officers involved are inexperienced.

Note: If a single crewed unit attends to the driver without a cover officer or cover patrol car, regular contact with the Communications Centre (Comms centre) must be made. Refer to [Procedure before you stop a vehicle](#) section later in this chapter.



Types of patrol

Mobile patrol

The objectives of a mobile patrol are to:

- be seen, particularly in high risk locations at high risk times
- deter and detect crime and/or offenders
- improve driving standards by setting an example
- respond safely to incidents.

Stationary patrol

A stationary patrol reminds the public of the Police presence, encouraging safe driving and deterring crime and other offending.

It is used at maximum visibility locations in heavy traffic flow areas or known trouble spots, such as dangerous intersections and high crash areas.



Plan and prepare for patrol

Plan the patrol route

Police is committed to intelligence led policing. From a Road Policing perspective, this means deploying to meet risk.

Districts must focus on identifying specific road policing risks, especially those related to crash promoting behaviours, and the tactics that will be used to reduce them. These tactics are contained in Safer Journeys generally located in the District Tasking and Coordination Sharepoint application (login required) as:

- real time taskings
- monthly taskings, and
- tactical taskings

depending on how your District manages its road policing staff and addresses its road policing risks.

As part of your daily patrol planning you should familiarise yourself with key risks in your area, wherever they are located. You and your supervisor need to determine what patrol actions will have the greatest impact on crash reduction. Be mindful that other intelligence sources are available which may assist you. Use your local knowledge in conjunction with other information to determine where you will be the most effective.

Use information to predict where and when your presence is best used. Check:

- if there is a traffic black spot map, refer to it and ask colleagues about local trouble spots
- whether there are any potential major roadblocks, events at sports grounds or special functions scheduled that may cause traffic problems.

When your patrol is interrupted, for example to attend an incident, you should revert to your plan once the incident has been dealt with.

Pre-patrol vehicle checks

Pre-patrol vehicle checks should be conducted in conjunction with the [Professional Police Driver Programme Manual](#) (PPDP) requirements.

Uniform requirements for traffic patrol

All employees undertaking traffic stops at night must wear the high visibility long-sleeved safety jacket or the high visibility long-sleeved raincoat, as part of their uniform in compliance with the Police Manual chapter '[Uniform, dress standards and appearance](#)'. See 'Requirements when wearing uniform'.

The high visibility sleeveless safety jacket may only be worn during daylight hours, as it does not comply with the night time high visibility standard of the Australia and New Zealand Standard [AS/NZS 4602:1999](#).

Uniformed employees must wear uniform headgear for all work outside vehicles or buildings.



Before you stop a vehicle

Principles

Conduct each vehicle stop **safely, effectively, lawfully** and **professionally**.

Remember to:

- use the [contact and cover principle](#)
- constantly be aware of road safety.

Stop a vehicle

There are four procedures to follow:

- [Before you stop a vehicle](#)
- [Alert the driver and position your vehicle](#)
- [Approach the vehicle](#)
- [Interview the driver](#).

Procedure before you stop a vehicle

Follow these steps before you stop a vehicle.

Step	Action
1	Observe activity in the vehicle such as occupants preparing firearms, hiding evidence or acting suspiciously. Caution: If you suspect the occupants have firearms, you must follow the firearms vehicle checker procedure. See Dealing with armed vehicle occupants .
2	Know why, and plan how, you are going to stop the vehicle.
3	Advise the Communications Centre (Comms) of your location and intention to stop the vehicle. This can be done verbally over the radio or by using a SMART device. Using the radio gives other patrols awareness of your location if you require assistance. Note: When notifying Comms of a 3T, provide them with your knowledge or suspicions on any concerns that may impact on your safety, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person(s) who would commonly use the vehicle being stopped • an occupant of the vehicle
4	Make a risk assessment. Consider the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • known history of the owner and occupants • proximity of the nearest back-up patrol.
5	If there are suspicious circumstances, advise Comms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the vehicle's direction of travel • a description of the occupants • how you plan to stop the vehicle • your back up requirements.
6	Request back-up early if needed. Follow the vehicle until back-up is confirmed.
7	Decide where you will stop the vehicle. Above all, the place should be safe and well lit in a built-up area that has plenty of room to move. For public safety, there should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no obstructions • no risk of crash • room for the occupants to get out safely. Note: Avoid stopping on corners or outside licensed premises.



Alert the driver and position your vehicle

To alert the driver

Once you have selected a suitable location to stop the vehicle, alert the driver by following these steps.

Step	Action
1	Activate your vehicle's blue and red lights and use the siren to indicate your intention to the target driver. Note: While it may at times not appear to be necessary or desirable to activate your siren, it is recommended that you do. It will assist you in supporting a case of failing to stop or failing to remain stopped. In such cases you must comply with all the requirements of section 114(2) LTA to satisfy the court that the driver had clearly heard and seen the patrol vehicle.
2	Where possible, while following the driver keep to the right so they have a clear view of you in their interior and exterior mirrors.
3	Use your indicators to signal your intention to pull over to the left. Then use a hand signal or the PA system to direct the driver to stop in a safe location.
4	Check the traffic behind you.
5	Once you have attracted the driver's attention, and it is obvious the driver is pulling over, immediately cover the brake and be ready to brake in a controlled manner.
6	Allow a safety margin in case the driver panics and brakes abruptly.
7	If you are in an unmarked car, allow a greater safety margin than usual because of a possible delay in the driver's response.
8	Keep a watch on activities inside the car at all times.

To position your vehicle

Once have you alerted the driver, position your vehicle by following these steps.

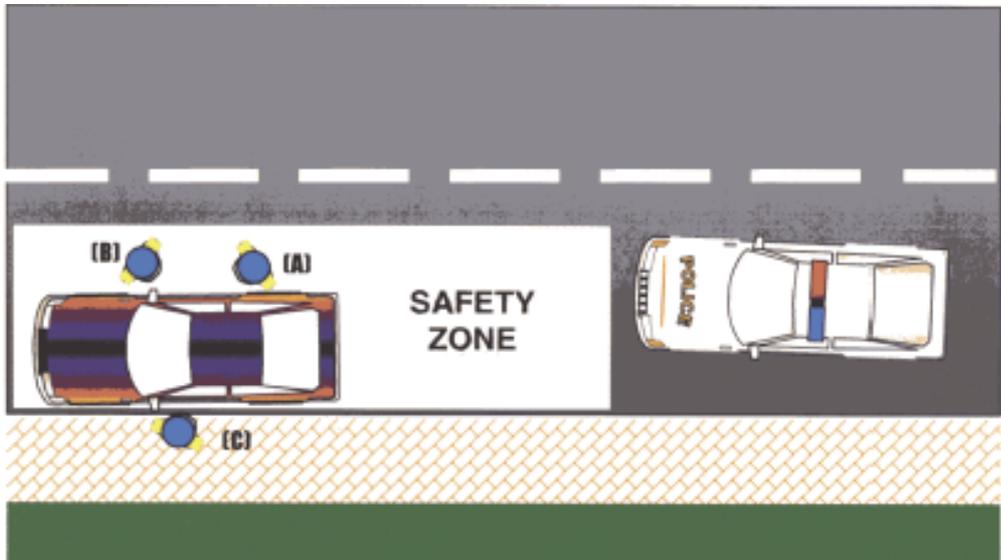
Step	Action
1	Once the driver understands your intention, allow them to stop safely.
2	Slow down carefully and position your vehicle approximately a car length behind the other vehicle and 1 metre to the right of their vehicle.
3	Position your vehicle to create a safety zone in which to walk towards the other vehicle.



Approaching a vehicle

Vehicle approach procedure

Follow these steps when initially approaching a vehicle.

Step	Action
1	Log the vehicle turnover (3T) with Comms, giving the location and registration of the vehicle stopped. A SMART device may be used to do this. Request a QVR or QP when required.
2	Make a risk assessment before you get out of your vehicle. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your reason for the stop • the number or type of occupants • location • surrounding traffic • back-up availability.
3	At night, use your forward facing 'take down' lights only briefly to scan the inside of the suspect vehicle. Caution: Do not leave the 'take down' lights switched on, as they reduce the contact officer's vision of the suspect vehicle.
4	Decide whether it is appropriate to turn your flashing blue and red lights down to the secondary setting; and check that the auxiliary switch is on (where fitted) before taking the keys out of the patrol vehicle ignition.
5	Use the contact and cover principle to approach the suspect vehicle. Discuss these roles with your partner, so each knows what the other is doing.
6	In single crew situations, always remove the patrol vehicle's ignition keys before leaving the vehicle.
7	Use the safety zone created by the patrol vehicle's position to protect you from passing traffic.
8	<p>If you are the contact officer, it is usual to approach the driver's side of the vehicle scanning for hazards as you approach. Follow these steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pause at position "A" (see diagram below) long enough to make contact with the driver and assess any danger • move past and stand at position "B" for any interview and interaction with the driver. Note: this position allows you to keep both the driver and approaching traffic in view • stand in position "C" in instances of heavy traffic flow. It may be safer to approach the vehicle from the passenger side. 

This is an uncontrolled document printed for reference only.

The controlled document can be found in the Police Instructions site which is accessible via the New Zealand Police Intranet.



Traffic patrol techniques, Continued...

Version : 10.0

9	Pause to reassess the risks.
10	Scan the condition of the suspect vehicle. In particular, take note of the boot lock, contents of rear seats and the demeanour of the occupants.



Approaching the driver

Driver approach procedure

Follow these steps when approaching the driver.

Step	Action
1	Where there is risk of drive-off, instruct the driver to turn off their ignition.
2	<p>If a driver refuses your request to remain in the car, invite the driver to the side of the road near the rear of the car (see picture below). From this position, the cover officer can observe the interview and you can withdraw to the Police vehicle if necessary.</p> 
3	Never stand or conduct an interview in the area between the two cars. If your patrol vehicle is struck from behind, it may be shunted forward and into the suspect vehicle.
4	<p>If the driver gets out of the vehicle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ask them to return and stay seated in the vehicle, and• if this request fails, follow step 2 above.



Interviewing the driver

Identify yourself

If the vehicle has been stopped because you believe an offence, other than a driving offence, has been committed, the contact officer must:

- if not in uniform, identify themselves by name
- produce evidence to show they are a Police employee
- provide the name and section of the Act (section [314B](#) of the Crimes Act 1961) if a search is going to be conducted.

See '[Search](#)' for further details.

Adopt this interview behaviour

Interviewing members of the public who have broken a traffic law may differ markedly from interviewing suspected criminals.

Remember: The first 60 seconds are the most important, as this is considered the critical period in the officer/driver roadside interaction.

The incident or occurrence from the driver's perspective may be considered 'negative' from the point the vehicle is stopped until they are spoken to by the contact officer. The contact officer sets the scene for the interaction in the first 60 seconds.

When interviewing

Don't . . .	Do . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologise for the stop • show any outward signs of annoyance, anger or irritation • react to any smart, patronising or irritating remarks from the driver or occupants • be drawn into an argument. Keep conversation to a minimum • cause a driver to lose face, especially in front of their family or friends • threaten the driver • delay the driver unnecessarily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be courteous, confident and positive without being confrontational • keep your approach neutral and fair • be alert for danger and constantly monitor the vehicle occupants' actions, as well as passing traffic and pedestrians • always 'keep your cool'.

Why this approach is successful

This approach is successful because:

- it has been proven to reduce potential for conflict in traffic enforcement and helps maintain public co-operation
- when used consistently, the public knows what to expect. This reduces uncertainty and the potential for conflict
- it is sure and reliable and improves officers' confidence and professionalism
- it aligns with the principles of [Service First](#).

How to interview

Follow these steps when interviewing people stopped in their vehicles.

Step	Action
1	Greet the driver by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saying "Good morning, sir/madam/driver" (for example) until you find out their name. • Consider introducing yourself by name and station.



Traffic patrol techniques, Continued...

Version : 10.0

2	Explain firmly yet politely the reason for the stop. For example, "I have stopped you because I checked your speed at 70 km/h in a 50 km/h area." Note: Do not ask the driver if they know why the car has been stopped. This invites a denial and subsequent confrontation.
3	Ask for an explanation for the driver's actions and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• listen attentively without interrupting or commenting.• note the explanation in your notebook to use as evidence later if necessary.
4	Ask for their driver licence to verify the driver's identity. Check the contents of the licence including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the picture is an accurate likeness• it is not expired• the driver has the appropriate class of licence to drive that vehicle• any restrictions on the rear of the licence are complied with. Keep the licence temporarily if you intend writing out an infringement offence or traffic offence notice. Ask for the driver's particulars (section 114(3)(b) LTA): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• full name• full address• date of birth• occupation• telephone number. After this, you may address the driver by name.
5	Conduct a passive breath test on the driver. If appropriate, continue breath/drug test procedures in accordance with the Alcohol and drug impaired driving chapter.
6	Establish whether the driver is the owner of the vehicle. If not, get the owner's details (section 114(3)(b) LTA).
7	Inspect the vehicle for defects. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check that the front registration plate number matches the rear.• Check and note the Evidence of Vehicle Inspection (WOF or COF label) and licence label expiry dates, and that all relevant details match.• Be alert for evidence of other offending, including criminal or drug related matters.
8	If appropriate or necessary, return to the patrol vehicle to confirm the information and details given by a QVR, QP or QDL.
9	Discretion - a certain level of discretion is permitted when considering what is the most appropriate action. See the ' Speed enforcement ' and ' Traffic compliance scheme ' Police Manual chapters for further information.
10	If an offence notice is required, tell the driver you are going to issue one. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fully complete the notice.• Explain the details of the notice to the driver.• Hand back the driver licence with the notice.
11	Leave your patrol car's warning devices on until the stopped vehicle has safely re-entered the traffic flow and you have moved off, or out of the safety zone position to the side of the road.

Note: These steps relate to exercising your powers as conferred by section [114](#) LTA, which gives Police the authority to stop and speak with a driver for traffic related offending. You need to be familiar with those powers.



Dealing with armed vehicle occupants

Checking vehicles whose occupants may be armed is one of the most dangerous duties you can face. You must carry out the following procedures whenever you have any suspicion at all that the occupants may be armed.

Do not approach the vehicle – whether you are armed or not, and whether you are in a two-person patrol or not.	Instead: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• follow at a safe distance and observe• provide continuous situation reports (sit-reps) to Comms, providing vehicle and occupant descriptions, registration number and any other relevant information• request QVRs and QPs• wait for back up.
---	--

Also read this section in conjunction with the Police Integrated Tactical Training [Vehicle Checker Manual](#).

Avoid stopping the vehicle

Do not stop the vehicle before back up arrives, except in extreme circumstances. For example, if the driver:

- has become agitated and is heading into a populated area, or
- is known to be on their way to a place where they intend to commit a serious offence and is about to reach that destination.

If circumstances dictate that you have to stop a vehicle with armed occupants

Provide continuous sit-reps to Comms and your back up, including your location and safe arrival directions.

Select a stopping site

Think ahead when selecting a stopping place. It must:

- have no or little vehicle or pedestrian traffic
- be as safe as possible for you and all other vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- provide cover, if possible
- be well lit in low light conditions
- be on a straight stretch of road so that approaching vehicles and pedestrians have plenty of warning.

Position your vehicle

Your vehicle's position relative to the suspect's is a trade-off between the safety of distance, and the need to exercise control over it which is achieved by being closer to it.

It is important that you:

- are within the effective range of your weapons
- can see the suspect's hands
- can react to an attempted ram (recommended distance is two to three car lengths, or 12 to 15m)
- position your vehicle to maximise the cover it provides
- are close enough to convey orders clearly to the suspect
- leave your vehicle's engine running and the warning lights on.

Maintain observation

Do not approach the vehicle – once again, observe only. Provide continuous sit-reps to Comms and those coming to assist you, including your location and safe arrival directions. [Wait for back-up](#).

This is an uncontrolled document printed for reference only.

The controlled document can be found in the Police Instructions site which is accessible via the New Zealand Police Intranet.



Traffic patrol techniques, Continued...

Version : 10.0

If you are the **driver**, you are the controlling officer.

Step	Action
1	Get out of the driver's door and crouch in the 'V' made by the open door.
2	Put the radio handset and PA microphone on the driver's seat, within easy reach.
3	Use the PA to control the suspect(s). Give clear and concise instructions. Tell them: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• this is the police and you are armed• they must follow your instructions• all occupants must put their hands on their heads• the driver is to use their right hand only to remove the keys from the ignition;• to open the driver's window and throw out the car keys. <p>Comply with all the other vehicle clearance procedures specified in the Police Integrated Tactical Training Vehicle Checker Manual.</p> <p>Note: Give the instructions slowly and clearly. Do not position yourself forward of the PA speaker or you will cause feed-back.</p>

If you are the **observer**

Step	Action
1	Get out of the passenger's door and take cover in the 'V' made by the open door.
2	Once control has been established, you can take cover in an observation point off to the side – but only if cover is available.

Wait for back up to arrive. This will also give time for the suspect to calm down.

When back up arrives

Step	Action
1	Do not allow the suspect to get out before you are ready – a cordon must be in place and an arrest team ready.
2	If circumstances mean you must take some action before back up arrives, take the suspect to the stage of lying on the ground but take no further action.
3	Do not approach the suspect until back up is in position.
4	When back up has arrived and been deployed, you can begin removing the suspect from the vehicle.
5	Detain or arrest the suspect, depending on the circumstances.