

# TRAFFIC TICKETS AND OTHER VIOLATIONS

Receiving a traffic citation can be stressful and intimidating. This section discusses some common concerns regarding traffic citations and other traffic violations.

## **IF YOU ARE STOPPED**

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) suggests that drivers turn on their right turn signals immediately after an officer alerts them to pull over. Officers will alert a driver to pull over by turning on flashing lights on their patrol car. The driver should pull over as far to the right as possible, and should proceed in a safe manner. It is important for the driver to stay calm.

The DMV recommends that when pulling over, drivers should discontinue cell phone use, turn off the radio, and place both hands on the steering wheel. Placing both hands on the steering wheel will allow the officer to see that the driver is not holding a weapon.

Drivers should have their driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance easily accessible to present to an officer during a traffic stop.

If the officer issues a citation, the driver does not admit guilt by signing the ticket. Instead, by signing the ticket, the driver promises to appear in court.

In many instances, citations can be handled by mail.

## **COURTESY NOTICES**

The Superior Court of California, County of San Diego – Traffic/Minor Offenses Division has jurisdiction over Vehicle Code infractions occurring in San Diego County. Most traffic citations are based on violations of the Vehicle Code.

The court will usually mail a courtesy notice to the driver about two weeks before the court appearance date indicated on the ticket. A driver must appear in court on or before the "promise to appear" date on the ticket even if he or she does not receive a courtesy notice in the mail, unless the driver is able to resolve the citation by mail.

A courtesy notice will often include options for paying the fine arising from a citation before the court appearance date. If the driver wishes to contest the ticket then he or she should go to court. Some drivers receive citations that cannot be taken care of by mail. Courtesy notices for these types of citations will state that the driver must appear in court.

## **TRAFFIC SCHOOL**

Some citations, though not all, can be handled by attending traffic school. A courtesy notice may indicate that the driver is eligible for traffic school. In some instances, even if the driver is not automatically eligible for traffic school, the judge may in his or her discretion permit the driver to attend traffic school. The driver must appear in court to make this request.

Drivers who are eligible for traffic school must attend an approved traffic school. A list of approved traffic schools can be found on the Superior Court of California website.

### **MAKING A COURT APPEARANCE**

Drivers can make a court appearance prior to the date on their ticket, although they should not attend court until at least three or four weeks after the ticket is issued. Citations generally indicate that a driver must appear on or before a certain date. If a driver wishes to attend court prior to the “promise to appear” date, he or she should notify the court beforehand.

Drivers should arrive at court before the hearing is scheduled in order to complete any security and check-in procedures. Court session schedules vary from location to location. Drivers should check the court’s website and call ahead to confirm the time of the hearing. It is highly recommended that drivers attending court maintain a professional appearance and be respectful of the court and its officers.

### **PARKING TICKETS**

Procedures for handling parking tickets vary depending upon the agency issuing the ticket. Drivers who receive a parking ticket should read the reverse side of the ticket for more information. Drivers should direct any additional questions about a citation to the issuing agency.

### **Getting Help**

#### ***General Legal***

Student Legal Services, 858.534.4374 or <http://sls.ucsd.edu>

#### ***Driver’s License Information, Registration Information, and California Driver’s Handbook***

California Department of Motor Vehicles

San Diego – Clairemont DMV Office

4375 Derrick Dr.

San Diego, CA 92117

800.777.0133

<http://www.dmv.ca.gov>

#### ***Court Information***

Superior Court of California, County of San Diego—Traffic/Minor Offenses Division,

[http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=55,1059604&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?_pageid=55,1059604&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

#### ***Driver Safety Information***

California Highway Patrol (CHP),

<http://www.chp.ca.gov>