



stopped by police while driving ? know your rights and obligations !



Without traffic laws and rules there would be chaos on our roads. Read and learn the rules in the new Highway Code - if everyone follows them we will all get to our destinations more easily and safely.

The Police have the difficult but very necessary task of enforcing the laws. You must cooperate with them, unless they are acting outside the law.

This notice is a brief guide to what a police officer in uniform can legally do and ask for when he stops you in your vehicle. You may wish to cut this notice out and keep it in your vehicle - *but remember that it is only a guide.*

Power to stop your vehicle: a police officer has the right to stop your vehicle - if they signal you to stop, slow down safely and pull off the road - he or she can also ask your name and address and that of the owner of the vehicle (Road Traffic Act (RTA), s.78).

Driving licence: a police officer can ask to see your driving licence - he/she can refuse to accept a photocopy - however, you can opt to produce your driving licence within three days at a police station nominated by the officer. To avoid problems, always carry your driving licence with you in the vehicle (RTA, s.77).

Registration document: a police officer has the right to check the registration details as shown on the registration sticker - the vehicle must

conform to the description on the sticker, but minor things such as faded or flaking paint do not matter (RTA s.13).

Road licence, and motor vehicle insurance: a police officer has the right to check that you are displaying a valid road licence and insurance sticker on the windscreen of your vehicle.

Confiscation: a police officer does NOT have the right to remove and keep stickers and licences.

Seatbelts: you and your front-seat passenger must securely fasten your seatbelts when driving - you are committing an offence if you drive while your front-seat passenger is not wearing the seatbelt (RTA s.39.11). Passengers in the rear seats should also wear their seat belts.

Driving after drinking alcohol: if a police officer suspects you have been drinking and are incapable of controlling the vehicle properly he can require you to take a test (a breath test or blood test) to see if the amount of alcohol in your blood is over the prescribed limit. If you refuse you will be guilty of an offence (RTA, s.44,s.45,s.46).

Using a mobile phone when driving: although the law does not specifically prohibit this, a police officer may consider that you are committing the

offence of "driving carelessly" (RTA, s.42,s.50).

Speeding: you must observe all speed limits, (including the 50km/h limit in built-up areas, which may not be signed) - a police officer may measure your speed in various ways, and is not required to show you proof of your speed - however, you may challenge his evidence in court (RTA, s.51, s.73(2)).

Roadworthiness: a police officer has the right to check whether your vehicle is in a safe mechanical condition. Tyres, brakes, lights, indicators and steering must be in good working condition - you may be required to take the vehicle where it can be thoroughly inspected by a Police vehicle examiner (RTA, s.39.1, s.81). You are advised to have your vehicle inspected by the Police every year. Get a road safety sticker, certificate of fitness, or letter from the Police as evidence that your vehicle has been inspected.

IF A POLICE OFFICER ALLEGES THAT YOU HAVE COMMITTED AN OFFENCE: in most cases you will be offered a choice of admitting the offence and paying a fine of Tshs 20,000 to the police officer, or appearing in a local court to answer the charge. The officer will record the details on Police Form PF101, and both of you will sign it - *never pay the fine without getting a signed copy of the Form.* You may have to go with the

officer to a police station to do the paperwork. If you admit the offence, but are unable to pay the fine, the police officer will tell you how to send payment to his local commander (RTA s.95).

IF YOU THINK A POLICE OFFICER HAS ACTED ILLEGALLY OR HAS MISBEHAVED IN ANY WAY YOU SHOULD MAKE A COMPLAINT: ask the officer for his name, rank, and number, and the address of the police station where he is based (you have a right to ask this). Then send a written complaint to the officer in charge - who will investigate and reply to you.

Help keep our police officers honest - don't pay bribes

Said A. Mwema
Inspector General of Police
21/8/09

Tanzania Police Force and Ministry of
Infrastructure Development - *working
together for safer roads*

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