


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 6.04</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: <b>HIGH RISK TRAFFIC STOPS</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>		<p>Rescinds:</p>
<p>Index as:</p> <p>High Risk Traffic Stops Uniform Patrol Division</p>	<p>State Certification Standards:</p>		

Special Instructions:

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office regarding High Risk Traffic Stops.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office to conduct High Risk Traffic Stops in such a manner as to provide the maximum amount of safety to both deputies and the general public.

**DISCUSSION**

While every traffic stop that an officer makes can be construed to be dangerous and may in fact have an amount of hazard to the officer, a high-risk traffic stop has the most potential for an officer or a member of the general public to be injured. Therefore, it is very important for deputies to use extreme caution when conducting a high-risk traffic stop.

## DEFINITIONS

ROAD — The portion of a highway that includes both the roadway and the shoulder.

ROADWAY — The portion of a highway, improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the shoulder.

### I. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. Rabun County Central Communication Center will be immediately notified when an officer identifies a known or suspected violent felon or violent misdemeanor or otherwise has reasonable belief that the operator/passengers are armed and dangerous, and shall provide the following information:
  - 1. Exact location of the sighting;
  - 2. Detailed description of vehicle and occupant(s);
  - 3. License plate number stated twice; and
  - 4. Direction and speed of travel.
- B. Back up deputies shall be requested. Before a traffic stop is initiated, the officer shall:
  - 1. Follow and attempt to keep the suspect vehicle under observation;
  - 2. Continue to provide support units with up-dated information about the situation, the vehicles' location, and direction of travel; and
  - 3. **Do not attempt to stop the vehicle until back-up personnel can provide necessary assistance** or unless the urgency of the situation demands immediate action.
- C. The officer who makes the initial observation of the suspect(s) shall normally serve as the **primary officer** unless otherwise designated by the Patrol Supervisor. The duties of the primary officer are to:
  - 1. Select the site for the traffic stop;
  - 2. Signal the violator to stop when all support units are in proper position;
  - 3. Give verbal direction to the occupants of the suspect vehicle once the traffic stop has been effected;
  - 4. Take suspect(s) into custody for transport to Rabun County Jail, if appropriate; and
  - 5. Initiate vehicle impoundment proceedings.

### II. MAKING THE TRAFFIC STOP

- A. The following procedures will generally be used by the primary officer once back-up assistance has arrived on the scene:

1. Select a location that provides minimal danger to other citizens and permits the best possible deployment of other law enforcement personnel;
  2. Move into position behind the suspect vehicle and activate emergency warning devices to signal the violator to stop;
  3. Stop the violator on the right side of the roadway or in a suitable off- road location;
  4. Position the patrol unit approximately one to two vehicle lengths behind the suspect vehicle so that it provides maximum protection and cover;
  5. Position the back-up vehicle to the right rear of the initial patrol vehicle so that deputies have an unobstructed view of the passenger side of the suspect's vehicle;
  6. The deputies shall exit their vehicles quickly and assume a good cover position with weapons drawn or available;
  7. Issue instructions over the vehicle's public address system by notifying the occupants that they are considered armed and dangerous; and
  8. Advise the vehicle occupants that all instructions are to be followed without hesitation or any suspicious movements.
- B. With the appropriate back-up deputies present, order the operator of the suspect vehicle to lower the driver's side window, remove the ignition keys with his/her left hand, drop them on the ground, open the door from the outside, exit the vehicle, raise arms straight above the head, turn completely around (for a visual weapons inspection) and face toward the front of the violator's vehicle, walk backward until commanded to stop, and lie face down on the ground with hands stretched far to the sides.
- C. Direct all other occupants to exit the vehicle in a similar manner, one-at-a-time, until all individuals are out of the vehicle and in a prone position to be handcuffed and searched. Unless the exigencies of the situation require it, a lone officer should not order a driver or other occupants of a vehicle out of the vehicle without appropriate backup present.
- D. Once all of the occupants have exited the vehicle:
1. The primary officer shall continue to provide necessary cover over the occupant(s) and issue instructions as appropriate;
  2. Back-up deputies shall cautiously move forward to handcuff and search the occupants;
  3. Once all occupants are under control, one officer shall be designated to inspect the passenger compartment of the suspect's vehicle; and when necessary
  4. The vehicle may be impounded and towed.



By Order of the Sheriff: Chad K. Nichols  
Sheriff, Rabun County