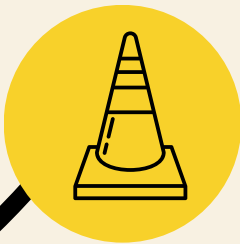




# Traffic Stops 101



## What are Non-Safety-Related Traffic Stops?

**Non-safety-related traffic stops are stops for minor traffic violations that do not actually make roads less safe.** These stops are usually for equipment violations, vehicle registration issues, or low-level traffic infractions (e.g., broken taillight, defective brake light, window tints, expired registration, driving in a bus-only lane, etc.).

## Why are Non-Safety-Related Traffic Stops Problematic?

Permitting officers to stop drivers for non-safety-related traffic offenses wastes police resources by diverting their attention away from dangerous driving. In addition, **these stops do not improve public safety, they expose police and drivers to violent encounters, and they produce racial disparities in traffic enforcement.** Studies show that Black drivers are stopped 20% more often than white drivers when these stops are allowed.

## What Happens When Non-Safety-Related Traffic Stops are Limited?

Data from other jurisdictions demonstrates that reducing non-safety-related traffic stops **improves traffic safety, strengthens public safety and community trust, spares drivers and officers the dangers of unnecessary traffic stops, and reduces racial disparities in traffic enforcement.**

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender is the largest criminal defense firm in the State of Maryland. Since 1972, we have been the state's foremost advocates for securing justice, protecting civil rights, and preserving liberty. Our work spans criminal, juvenile, parental defense, and involuntary commitment proceedings.

Scan for More Resources

