

Seattle Police Department

Directive

Effective Date: Immediately

Directive Number 22-006

Interim Policy

Traffic Stops

The Seattle Police Department is committed to the safety of community members in the City of Seattle. Officers with probable cause that a driver or rider is committing a criminal infraction or any other safety issue are expected to continue to use discretion within policy and training.

After extensive research and data collection by a cross section of members of our community, including members of the SPD, Seattle DOT, elected officials, the federal monitoring team, OPA, public and private lawyers, and others, there were recommended changes for how the SPD responds to non-criminal traffic violations. These violations do not apply to vessels or boat licenses.

The below listed violations, on their own, do not have a direct connection to the safety of other individuals on the roads, paths, or sidewalks. However, if there is another primary violation observed, the listed violations can still be enforced.

Effective immediately, officers will no longer treat the following portions of the below municipal codes as *primary violations*:

- Expired or missing vehicle registration (Title: License and plates required – SMC 11.22.070)
 - *A vehicle will not be stopped if it has no front license plate.*
 - *A primary stop can be conducted on a vehicle without a rear plate.*
- Issues with the display of registration plates (Title: Vehicle license plates displayed – SMC 11.22.080)

- *A vehicle will not be stopped for the following: no front plate, improper positioning of the front plate, license tabs obscured or not properly displayed, or failing to sign registration.*
- *The remaining elements of this municipal code can be used as primary violations.*
- Technical violations of SMC 11.84.140 (Title: Windshield obstruction)
 - *A vehicle will not be stopped for items hanging from the rear-view mirror or cracks in the windshield.*
 - *A primary stop and enforcement can be conducted on a vehicle with actual visual obstructions, such as snow, fog, non-transparent material, or shattered windshields.*

Any questions may be directed to the Policy Unit.
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