

SafeStops is a one-page guide for law enforcement officers who may interact with autistic drivers during traffic stops. These steps are designed to help officers maintain calm, positive interactions and prevent escalation.

## **S** Stay Calm & Slow Things Down



Once a driver is identified as having autism, adjust your approach to slow down and stay calm. Speak slowly and clearly, and avoid sudden movements. Reduce sensory input if possible (sirens off, lights dimmed).

## **T** Take Time to Communicate



Give step-by-step directions: "First get your ID, then give it to me." Keep instructions literal and simple. Allow extra processing time before repeating or rephrasing. If safe, allow the individual to stay in their vehicle.

## **O** Observe & Respect Behavior



You may observe stimming (rocking, flapping), avoidance of eye contact, or repetitive movements. These are coping behaviors in autism, not defiance. Avoid interpreting delayed responses as non-compliance.

## **P** Patiently Wait



Avoid rushing the individual, and understand that delayed responses, or atypical emotional reactions are common. If escalation occurs, (crying, shouting), don't take it personally. Give the individual time and space to regulate.

## **S** Seek Support if Needed



Engage caregivers or support personnel if needed. Review available disclosure tools (e.g., Blue Envelope, QR code IDs) for ways to better support the individual.