

**Topic: Laws, Rules & Regulations**

**Let's get started...**

Before you begin discussing today's topic, take a minute to think about your impressions of law enforcement in the U.S. and in your country.

- How do you feel about law enforcement officers? Why?

**New words and Idioms:**

Break the law, by the book, busted, law-abiding, fender bender, to get caught, speed trap, DUI (driving under the influence), MIP (minor in possession), jay walking, minors, cop, K-9 unit, to be pulled over, speed limit, speeding, to get in trouble, breathalyzer, litter, seatbelt, safety seat, restrained, booster seat, etc.

**Background:**

Living in a new place can be very stressful if you are unfamiliar with the basic laws, rules, and regulations. In the past, many people have gotten into trouble or gotten hurt because they didn't know what to do in some situations. Today, we'll talk about some basic laws, rules, and regulations that you need to know when living in Washington State.



**In pairs for 5 minutes, read and discuss the following traffic stop tips:**

There are several reasons why you might be pulled over by a police officer: you have expired tabs, a headlight or taillight is out, you are caught speeding, you aren't wearing a seatbelt, or you are doing something illegal (changing lanes without signaling, turning left at a red light, etc.).

**What should you do if you are pulled over by a police officer in the U.S.?**

- Find a safe, well-lit place to pull over and turn off your car.
- Roll down your window and keep your hands on the steering wheel.
- Say, "Hello Officer, can you tell me why I am being pulled over?" *Always be polite!*
- If the officer asks, give him/her your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance. Wait patiently while the officer looks at them.
- Never argue or joke with, or try to bribe a police officer if the officer gives you a ticket.
- Listen carefully to the officer's directions for how to pay the fine. It is okay to say, "Please speak slowly, I only speak a little English."
- When the officer tells you that you can leave, drive away slowly and carefully.

How are these tips similar to or different from what you would do in your country?

Have you or someone you know ever been pulled over? If so, what happened?

**Share your partner's answers and opinions with the group.**

**Discussion Questions:**

Have you ever called 911? What happened?

Should you call 911 for the following reasons? Explain why or why not.

- You see someone breaking into a home or car?
- There is a life threatening emergency (heart attack, kidnapping, fire, etc.)?
- Your neighbor isn't answering his/her door?
- Your neighbor is having a loud party late at night?
- Someone is looking in your window?

What are some other reasons that you should call 911?

Have you heard of the "Click it or Ticket" law? What is it? Do you have a similar law in your country?

Do you know what the legal ages are for buying alcohol and buying cigarettes in the U.S.? In your country?

What happens if you give alcohol or cigarettes to someone under the legal age in the U.S.? In your country?

What have you heard about the new smoking laws? Do you agree or disagree with them? Why?

Do you know about Washington State's Child Restraint or *Booster Seat Law*? Please tell your group what you know.

**Details:** The child restraint laws have been updated recently. If you break the law – the police could give you a \$101 ticket.

Children under the age of 16 years must be restrained in a vehicle according to the following steps:

- 1 year of age or under or weighing less than 20 pounds:  
*a rear facing infant seat*
- Between 1 - 4 years old or 20 - 40 pounds:  
*a forward facing child safety seat*
- Between 4 - 6 years old or 40 - 60 pounds:  
*a booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt*
- 6 years old or 60 pounds and greater:  
*a seatbelt or a booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt*
- Children less than eight years old must be restrained in child restraint systems, unless the child is four feet nine inches or taller.
- Children under thirteen years old must be transported in rear seats if possible.

What do you think of this law? Is it similar to or different from laws in your country? What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of this law?

What are some other laws that you know? Do you agree or disagree with them?

What is the process for making/changing a law in your country? In the U.S.?