

**FROM THE OFFICE OF WELD COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
KENNETH R. BUCK**



# Fraud Alert!

## TRAFFIC STOP TIPS: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU GET PULLED OVER

**The reports in the media are becoming more and more frequent:** Police investigate report of officer impersonation; Man poses as cop to steal from drivers; Possible police impersonator pulled woman over, asked for ID. Just this week a man in Loveland was accused of impersonating a police officer and “arresting” a female. It is unnerving enough to be pulled over by an actual police officer, but now we need to educate ourselves on how to identify an impersonator.



In this day and age, it is possible to buy anything over the internet. Many of the police impersonators we hear about in the news “appear” to have official lights in their car and some even “appear” to have an official badge. So how is the average citizen suppose to know who is a real officer and who is not? Here are a few tips you can follow to help ensure that you are not being contacted by phony law enforcement officer:

First, when you notice the lights of a law enforcement car behind you, acknowledge that you see the officer by slowing down, putting on your hazard lights or even waving. Then drive SLOWLY to a well-lit or well-populated area (such as a grocery store parking lot) especially at night. Pull over in a reasonable amount of time and if the officer asks why you didn’t immediately pull over, explain your concern. As long as you don’t appear to be eluding the officer (by not acknowledging the officer or by driving past well-lit, well-populated areas), the officer should be understanding of this. An imposter will probably not follow you into a well-lit or populated area.

Second, look for identification on the officer. Officers in marked cars (with the city or county name, logos, etc.) are in full uniform. Officers in unmarked cars (cars with no law enforcement indication other than internal red and blue lights) are often not in full uniform. These officers should, however, still have a name plate, a badge and often times a patch somewhere on their person.

Third, you can call 911 and ask the dispatcher if they show an officer out at a traffic stop at your location. If you have ever wondered why it takes an officer awhile to get out of his car after he pulls you over it is because that officer notifies dispatch of his location and your car description, including plate number, before exiting the vehicle.

Fourth, if you are still unsure if the person pulling you over is an actual officer you can politely express your concern and ask for a supervisor or marked unit to come to the scene. A good officer won’t mind.

*Thanks to Sgt. Joe Tymkovich with the Greeley Police Department for his help with this month’s fraud alert!*

**Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime. To contact the Weld County District Attorney’s Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.**