



## **FMPD Traffic Enforcement - Myths and Facts**

Traffic enforcement is the most recognizable, universal police function. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are several myths and facts associated with traffic enforcement:

### **MYTH - All police officers enforce traffic laws.**

**FACT** - Because traffic enforcement is so visible, the public perceives that there are a large number of officers enforcing traffic laws. Some agencies have a few officers dedicated to traffic enforcement. In Flower Mound, the Police Department operates a fulltime Traffic Unit, six dedicated officers and a sergeant responsible for traffic enforcement and accident investigation.

### **MYTH - Traffic enforcement does not make a difference in road safety.**

**FACT** - Speeding, one of the most common and dangerous offenses committed by drivers, contributes to an estimated 21 percent of fatal car crashes. In 2008, 88 percent of all speeding-related fatalities occurred on local roads. Operating vehicle in erratic, reckless, careless, or negligent manner is attributed to an estimated 5 percent of all fatal car crashes.

### **MYTH - Traffic officers just write speeding tickets.**

**FACT** - Traffic officers perform a myriad of safety-related services, including removing impaired drivers from the road. National Alcohol-Related Fatal and Injury Crash statistics indicate that 41% of all fatal crashes and 9% of all injury crashes are alcohol related. In 2009, Flower Mound police officers made 216 DWI arrests and 40 DUI minor arrests. Traffic officers also enforce occupant protection laws, and an estimated 75 percent of all crash-related injuries and fatalities were due to a failure to wear, or improperly worn, safety belts.

### **MYTH - The FMPD excessively enforces speeding laws, and unfairly targets youth.**

**FACT** - The Flower Mound Police Department conducted 49,055 traffic stops between January 2009 and August 2010. Of those stops, only 37 percent resulted in citations being issued and approximately 3 percent resulted in citations issued to juveniles.

**FACT** - the Flower Mound Police Department issued approximately 26,000 traffic citations between January 2009 and August 2010. Of those citations issued, only 42 percent were for speeding.

**FACT** - The average speeding citation in Flower Mound was issued for 15 miles per hour above the speed limit.

**MYTH – Traffic problems are not that big of a deal.**

**FACT** - The average American is more likely to be involved in a traffic crash than be a victim of a crime. According to national statistics, there is one fatality crash every 12 minutes, one injury crash every 11 seconds, one reported crash every five seconds, and one property Damage crash every seven seconds. There were six Fatality crashes, 146 Injury crashes, and 746 reported crashes in Flower Mound in 2009.

**MYTH – If I am injured in a traffic crash, it affects only me.**

**FACT** – Everyone pays for traffic crashes and the economic costs are significantly more than crime. Crashes cost Americans \$164.2 billion annually, while violent crimes and property crimes cost Americans \$16.1 billion annually.

**MYTH – Police officers should be arresting criminals, not writing traffic tickets.**

**FACT** – Traffic enforcement regularly identifies criminals and results in their apprehension. Traffic stops in Flower Mound resulted in the apprehension of 617 criminals in 2009 and another 535 arrests between January and August 2010.

**FACT** – Drugs, weapons, contraband, fugitives, and criminals are frequently found in vehicles during “routine” traffic stops. A Flower Mound officer recently initiated a traffic stop due to observing an expired inspection sticker. The subject had in his vehicle several driver’s licenses, Social Security cards, books of checks, invoices, etc. which belonged to various individuals, and a laminator, printer, and computer. The individual had in his vehicle the means to steal more than 40 different identities and the ability to commit multiple identity theft crimes. The subject was arrested for fraudulent use of identifying information.

**FACT** – A Flower Mound officer recently stopped a vehicle in which the occupant had over six grams of heroin in his vehicle.

**FACT** – In June 2010, a vehicle stop resulted in the arrest of both occupants who possessed marijuana and a suitcase full of drug paraphernalia.

**FACT** – A recent routine traffic stop in Flower Mound resulted in a burglary arrest after the officers located stolen goods in the backseat of the vehicle.