

Vehicle Check Points

Reasons for check points

- Movement Control / Access
- Revenue, job creation
- Intelligence gathering, recruiting & meeting
- Information control
- Intimidation, Turf wars, Pimping

In advance

- Timings / routes
- Paperwork in order
- Get your story straight
- Language & Cultural, Gender Issues known
- What are the going rates (mates rates & foreigner rates)
- What footage / information is required
- No personal information
- Intelligence on conditions ahead, roads, going, VCP etc.
- Money divided, Passport (Photocopy) available
- Emergency RV system known & understood by all, Actions on planned
- Radio OFF – Need to be able to hear what is being said, going on around you
- Access to what is needed

Approach

- Day or Night routine. head lights dimmed
- Speed, control drivers, seatbelts
- Hands visible by all.
- No Sudden movements.
- Documentation up-to-date.
- Follow orders explicitly.
- Think about equipment storage

- Cameras, Sat-phones & hidden items

Conversations & attitudes

- Answer the questions ONLY – Direct & to the point (DO NOT Elaborate).
- Body language sorted.
- Eye contact respectful, use of sun glasses reduced
- Attitude, Respectful but not subservient.
- Moderate voice. Follow any leads
- Your belief is they are there to protect you.
- “Is it safe to travel after we leave here”.

Bribes

- DO NOT Treat bribes as robbery, it may be a way of life.
- Never offer a bribe openly
- Deal with the person in-charge
- Not necessarily money, other forms of ‘sweetener’ (Newspaper, latest boy/girl magazine, cigarettes, water etc.).
- Does the bribe equal the amount the actual rate should be?
- How is it achieved (Asked for never given. extra page in passport, ‘that’s a large SUV’ – more road damage)
- Alternative currency (Example: This equals x thousands in RAND)
- DO NOT pay bribes? (Company Policy) “I’m in the country doing a story for the Government on corruption in local areas”.
- Receipts?
- Be polite and calm.

- Call office in all scenarios?
- Phrases.
 - “How can I speed up the process”?
 - “Is there a small fine I can pay”?

View from the checkpoint

- Static as in Border, Mobile in helicopter or vehicle – may meet again.
- Security forces, police, rebel, child soldier. Professional or not.
- Security State dictates overall security of check-point.
- Overall security – numbers seen, hidden & sateliting for protection.
- Guards – Mental state. Bored, anxious, playing with weapon safety catch, drunk etc.
- Guards – Training & ability.
- Climatic conditions at checkpoint.
- Assumptions – may be linguists, intelligence operators acting as soldiers.