



COTTAGE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

SUBJECT: **TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

NEW REVISED RESCINDS

APPROVED: *GM*
GEORGIA MILTENBERGER
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date 8/22/2018

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

- A. Any officer encountering a traffic problem, including those at accident scenes, shall take all reasonable actions to control the problem by requesting whatever assistance the officer deems necessary to restore the flow of traffic.
- B. If necessary, the officer will direct traffic and/or arrange for Public Works to deliver traffic cones, barricades, and/or portable signs.
- C. Situations in which officers are authorized to perform manual traffic direction include, but are not limited to:
 - Any Fire/Rescue operation
 - Any hazardous road condition
 - Any situation in which utilities are affected, i.e., downed power lines, light pole down, broken gas or water main, etc.
 - An accident scene
 - A disabled vehicle

- An arrest situation until the scene is stabilized

II. TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL PROCEDURES

- A. When directing traffic, officer will use standardized gestures and signals to have motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists stop, turn or proceed.
1. Before an officer begins to direct traffic, he/she should attempt to utilize the traffic signal pattern and direct traffic with the signal if one is present. If this cannot be done, place the traffic signal on flashing and immediately notify police communications.
 2. Officers are not authorized access to the inner light box, only the outer box.
 3. Officers directing traffic should position their police vehicle in such a manner that it is highly visible to roadway users yet does not impede or hinder the flow of traffic, unless the road is shut down.
 4. Officers will wear high-visibility AND reflective clothing at all times while they are in the roadway directing traffic and will:
 - Position them to be clearly seen
 - Stand facing stopped traffic
- B. To stop traffic, the officer should first extend his/her arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be stopped until that person is aware of the officer's gesture to stop.

The pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that the palm is facing the person to be stopped, and is held in this position until the person stops.

- C. To start traffic, the officer should stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extend his/her arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be started.

With the palm up, the pointing arm is swung from the elbow only, through a vertical semi-circle until the hand is adjacent to the chin.

- D. For motorists turning right or left, the officer should swing the extended arm in the direction of the motorist's intended turn. Officers should stop or hold on-coming traffic and then direct left-turning motorists to execute their turns.
- E. Every officer, while directing traffic, should use a whistle to get the attention of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, in the following manner:
 - 1. One long blast as a STOP signal.
 - 2. Two short blasts as a GO signal.
 - 3. Several short blasts if they do not respond to a given signal, or to warn of the approach of an emergency vehicle.
- F. Verbal commands are acceptable but seldom used because arm gestures are more easily understood, and voice commands are not easily heard over the sound of traffic.
- G. A flashlight equipped with a red plastic tip is recommended for use in low-light and/or adverse weather conditions. The flashlight should be used in conjunction with the arm gestures described above.
- H. Officers are discouraged from physically holding road flares to direct traffic, as their ashes and embers can be harmful to the officer, motorists, and property, etc. If practical, officers will use flashlights to direct traffic.

III. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

Temporary traffic control devices are available at Public Works, and consist of Stop signs, Detour, Road Closed, traffic cones, etc., to be used in emergencies.

- A. Before a temporary traffic control device is placed into service, any traffic signal present should be placed on flashing. All Prince George's County traffic signals are computerized and will not be operated manually by officers.
 - If the signal itself is causing the problem, police communications will be notified by the officer at the scene and a request made that the State Highway's Signal Shop requested to respond.
- B. If the officer determines that the flashing signal will adequately and safely control traffic, the temporary traffic devices should not be used if they will confuse motorists.

- C. During normal business hours, the officer should contact Public Works directly via the CCPD station clerk and specify exactly what is needed. After normal business hours, Public Works will be contacted directly by the officer, usually in an emergency type situation.
- D. Officers should make every effort to notify via police communications, either County Roads or the State Highway Administration to furnish temporary traffic control devices on street maintained by those respective agencies.
- E. When the temporary devices are no longer needed, the officer should remove them or have them removed and make arrangements to have them returned to Public Works or to the appropriate agency that provided them. If Public Works, County Road or State Roads will not be able to pick up the devices in a timely manner, the signs should be placed face-down to avoid confusing the motorists.

IV. TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL AT FIRE SCENES

- A. Officers will direct and control traffic at or around fire scenes and will coordinate their traffic direction and control efforts with the on-scene Fire/Rescue Incident Commander, i.e., establishing a perimeter, closing streets, designating alternate routes, detouring traffic, etc.
- B. Vehicles that interfere with Fire Department or rescue operations may be towed as necessary.

V. TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL DURING ADVERSE WEATHER AND ROAD CONDITIONS

- A. Whenever an officer discovers a hazardous situation that would affect street or highway users, the officer, using his/her best judgment, training, and discretion is authorized to close a road or portion thereof to traffic until the situation has subsided.
- B. When called upon to direct and control traffic during adverse weather and road conditions, officers will:
 - 1. Consider requesting barricades, temporary traffic control devices, etc., to slow traffic and/or establish a safe traffic pattern;
 - 2. Consider requesting a salt/sand truck or snow plow to respond or whatever else the officer deems necessary for the situation;

3. Not leave a hazardous situation they have discovered or responded to, unless the hazard has been alleviated or until relieved by a supervisor or OIC in the absence of a supervisor;
 - This is especially important in situations that include: a bridge that has been washed-out, high or standing water, power lines down creating a threat to public safety, and slippery road surfaces.
 4. Position the police vehicle, with emergency lights activated, in such a way that it does not impede traffic, but yet is clearly visible to motorists. Adverse weather and road conditions are usually accompanied by poor visibility so officers should position their vehicles to afford themselves maximum protection;
 5. The setting-up of road flares should be considered to warn motorists and to establish a temporary traffic pattern.
- C. When directing traffic around downed power lines, or a broken gas/water main, common sense should dictate the officer's actions which may include:
1. The notification of PEPCO, Washington Gas Light or the WSSC
 2. Fire Department
 3. Requesting additional assistance to detour traffic and control bystanders
 4. Consider all downed power lines as "live."

VI. CLOSING ROADS

- A. If a road will be closed down for any length of time, officers will notify police communications of the closure, an estimated length of time that the road will be closed, and what, if any, alternative routes are available.
- B. Officers will also request police communications to notify the news media, as appropriate, so that this information can be passed on to highway users via radio and television. Communications will also be advised when the road is re-opened.