



## Traffic Direction

### .01 Policy

It is the policy of the Bladensburg Police Department for all police officers to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians where conditions or emergency situations require traffic direction or control.

### .02 Terms

Special Events: An event at which a large volume of vehicular or pedestrian traffic is anticipated, but hostile crowds are not anticipated. Special events may include parades, sporting events, highway construction and/or maintenance activities, picketing, etc.

### .03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation: N/A

Forms: N/A

Reference:

General Order 323, Traffic Enforcement.

General Order 325, Accident Investigation.

### .04 Procedure

Police officers responsible for performing traffic direction duties will be trained in the basic skills and knowledge required for those functions.

#### A. Manual Traffic Direction at Traffic Crash Scenes

Manual traffic direction at traffic crash scenes is intended to secure the scene for personnel rendering aid to victims and the subsequent investigation, prevent further crashes by oncoming traffic, facilitate traffic flow around the crash scene, and restore normal traffic flow as soon as possible.

The use of standardized hand gestures and signals are to be used to direct traffic at traffic crash scene.

Appropriate traffic control devices, such as traffic cones, warning signs, or flares are to be used to designate the crash scene and let other drivers know how traffic is to be routed around the scene.

- Road flares used at a crash scene will be placed at the side of the road on the leading

approach end of the crash at intervals of approximately 25 feet;

- Prior to lighting a flare inspect the area for flammable liquids. Should flammable liquids be found, flares will not be placed closer than 1,500 feet from the area; and,
- When materials having low flash points, such as liquefied gas are involved in a spill, flares will not be used.

Civilian members may be assigned to carry out traffic control functions to ensure safety and efficiency, but where a need for enforcement authority is not anticipated.

Care is to be taken to establish traffic direction to keep pedestrian and vehicular traffic away from debris that denotes the points of collision, tire prints, skid-marks, runoff from radiators, blood stains, and broken accessories.

#### B. Uniform Hand Signals or Gestures for Manual Traffic Direction

Members engaged in manual traffic direction will use uniform procedures (signals, gestures, etc.) to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition and response to their direction.

- **Stop:** To stop traffic the member should first extend his or her arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be stopped until that person is aware or it can be reasonably assumed that the driver is aware of the member's gestures. Second, the pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that its palm is toward the person to be stopped, and the palm is held in this position until the person observed is stopped.

To stop traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction while continuing to maintain the raised arm and palm toward the traffic previously stopped.

- **Start:** To start traffic the member should first stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extend his arm and index finger toward and look directly at the

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person to be started until it can be reasonably assumed that the driver is aware of the member's gesture. Second, with palm up, the pointing arm is swung from the elbow, only through a vertical semicircle until the hands adjacent to the chin. If necessary, this gesture is repeated until traffic begins to move.

To start traffic from both directions on a two way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction.

- **Right turns:** Right turning drivers usually effect their turns without the necessity of being directed by the member. When directing a right turn becomes necessary, the member should proceed as follows:
  - If the driver is approaching from the member's right side his or her extended right arm, index finger and gaze are first directed toward the driver, followed by swinging the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the driver's intended turn.
  - If the driver is approaching from member's left side, either the same procedure may be followed utilizing the left arm extended or the extended left forearm may be raised to a vertical position from the elbow while closing the fingers so that the remaining extended thumb points in the direction of the driver's intended turn.
- **Left turns:** Left turning drivers should not be directed to effect their movement while the member is also directing oncoming traffic to proceed. Therefore, the member should either direct opposing turning drivers, which will lead them to complete their turn only when there is a gap in the oncoming traffic or to stop or hold oncoming drivers, after which the left turning driver can be directed into his turn. The member's right side and arm should be toward the oncoming traffic, and the left side and arm should be toward the left turning driver. After stopping oncoming traffic by using the right arm and hand, the right hand should remain in the halt gesture, then the extended left arm, index finger, and member's gaze is directed toward the driver who intends to effect a left turn. When the left turning driver's attention has been gained, the extended left arm and index finger are swung to point in the direction the

driver intends to go.

- **Intersections:** Traffic should be directed into an intersection by distinctly pointing to the spot where the member desires the driver to go.

### Signaling Aids

**Whistle:** The whistle is used to get the attention of drivers and pedestrians. It is used as follows:

- One long blast with a stop signal;
- Two short blasts with the go signal;
- Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal; and,
- The whistle should be used judiciously with sufficient volume to be heard by those whose attention is required. The whistle should be used only to indicate stop, go, or to gain attention and when its purpose has been achieved the member should cease sounding the whistle. Use of the whistle is strongly encouraged.

**Voice:** The voice is seldom used in directing traffic. Arm gestures and the whistle are usually sufficient. Verbal orders are not easy to give or understand and often lead to misinterpretations which are dangerous. An order which is shouted can antagonize the motorist.

**Flashlight:** A flashlight can be used to halt traffic. To stop traffic, slowly swing the beam of the light across the path of the oncoming traffic. After the driver has been stopped, arm signals may be given in the usual manner, the vehicle's headlights providing illumination.

Temporary traffic control devices include movable barriers, portable signs, and other apparatus intended for temporary deployment to assist the safe and efficient movement and control of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

### C. Special Events

This department will provide that degree of traffic direction and control in support of special events as is absolutely necessary.

The primary task of members of the department conducting traffic direction and control in support of a special event is to assist motorists or pedestrians in the vicinity of the event.

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### Procedure

- The Operations Commander will be assigned to participate in planning for the event;
- The time, location, and anticipated attendance is to be determined;
- If the event is a parade, the route will be determined and coordinated with other public service and transportation agencies, including mail, bus, and public works, to provide an opportunity in adjusting the normal schedules for their services;
- The perimeter streets of the special event are to be used to maximum advantage by eliminating or increasing parking space, making temporary one-way streets, and assigning members to key intersections for control;
- Adequate emergency service access will be provided to the scene of the event, including fire and ambulance services;
- The department will provide for adequate crowd control. If the event is a parade, ropes or other appropriate barriers may be used along the route with members stationed at intervals as needed;
- The department will insure adequate publicity for any changes or alterations in street utilization, parking availability, public transportation services, and the location of the event or parade route; and
- Provisions will be made for identifying those persons working directly with the event to assist them in crossing law enforcement lines. This includes promoters of the event, vendors, and media personnel;
- Consistent with the scheduled or anticipated duration of the need for traffic direction and control, provision will be made for adequate breaks for the department members providing those services; and,
- traffic direction and control services are to be provided in support of the event by private sources, the department will review those services and their duty assignment prior to the event to insure their adequacy.

### D. Special Scenes and Critical Incidents

The department will maintain a close working relationship with the fire and emergency service organizations serving the community

and will work with them in developing and implementing plans and procedures for providing traffic direction and control support to fire ground operations.

The fundamental task of members of this department engaged in traffic direction and control services at fire scenes will be to maintain access to and egress from the scene by fire and other emergency vehicles and to direct traffic to prevent vehicles from driving over fire hoses.

Similar traffic direction procedures are used at other critical incidents, such as disasters or crime scenes, as at fire scenes.

### E. Adverse Road and Weather Conditions

Adverse road and weather conditions may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Accidental hazards, such as debris that has fallen onto the roadway, downed power lines, etc.; or,
- Acts of nature, such as fog, water on the road, etc.

The department will closely work with those other agencies that share responsibility for coping with adverse road and weather conditions affecting traffic safety, and will assist in developing and carrying out mutual assistance policies, procedures, and programs to serve the public as effectively as possible.

Upon discovering adverse road conditions, department members will notify Communications as to the nature and scope of the adverse condition. Communications will notify the appropriate agencies and persons responsible for correcting the condition.

Department members will provide traffic direction and control and scene protection services in the vicinity of adverse road conditions and weather conditions, as appropriate.

1. When the normal control of traffic is impaired during adverse road or weather conditions, (i.e.; sink holes, fog, rain, smog, downed power lines, spillage) officer safety is paramount.
2. The same procedures for traffic direction and control apply as specified in this directive.
3. Additional equipment and officers may be required to adequately perform traffic control in a safe and efficient manner.

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- a. Officers requiring additional equipment or personnel will make such requests through their supervisor.
- b. Officers will insure that the situation has been adequately stabilized before securing their post. This does not preclude the placement of barricades, cones or signs to route traffic around or away from the hazard.

### F. Manual Operation of Traffic Control Devices

Due to intricate requirements associated with the automated traffic control devices, sworn members will not manually operate traffic control devices. A supervisor may request assistance from the State Highway Administration for special events, vehicle crashes, or during construction or repair.

### G. High Visibility (Reflective) Clothing

Members will wear such high visibility outerwear, in addition to the full prescribed uniform, whenever conducting traffic direction and control, investigating crashes when vehicles will be in the roadway for any period of time longer than to get them out of the road, or when performing other duties in roadways and right-of-ways, except when conducting a traffic stop. Reflective vests shall meet current ANSI Class 2 requirements under ANSI 107/207 standards.

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HISTORY: Adopted May 1, 2014

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:



Charles L. Owens  
Chief of Police