



University of Pennsylvania Police Department 4040 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa 19104		 
Directive: 75	Subject: Traffic Direction, Control, And Ancillary Services	Effective Date: 02/14/2000
Order of: Gary Williams, Chief of Police		Amended Date: 08/01/2023

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for officers of the University of Pennsylvania Police Department (UPPD) relative to the control of traffic during incidents that may result in a potentially hazardous situation. Further, this directive will establish procedure for the ancillary services available to the patrol officer relative to the traffic safety function.

II. Policy

It shall be the policy of the UPPD to ensure the safety of motorists when faced with a potential hazard, while maintaining a minimal flow of traffic whenever possible. Officers of the UPPD will maintain a high level of visibility when directing and controlling traffic keeping the safety of the officer as a primary concern.

III. Scope

This directive shall affect all sworn police officers.

IV. Procedures

A. Traffic Direction and Control Procedures

1. Traffic Control

- a. At collision scenes, officers will use the patrol vehicle’s overhead lights, high visibility vests, traffic cones, flares, and other appropriate warning devices as necessary to protect the scene and alert approaching traffic. Officers need to be cognizant of the fact that flashing overhead lights, flares, etc. can create traffic problems and their unnecessary use should be avoided. Once the scene has been cleared of vehicle and debris, the officer will arrange for the prompt removal of flares and other warning devices that may have been used to protect the scene.

- b. If damage exists, which will require a prolonged closing of the roadway, the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) and PennDOT will be contacted to provide barricades, traffic devices, or other appropriate devices for traffic control.

2. Manual Traffic Direction Procedure

- a. Manual direction of traffic by an officer will be handled in a manner that would enable drivers and pedestrians to recognize and respond to verbal commands and gestured motions.
 - 1) To Stop Traffic: An officer extends his arm outward with the palm toward the car to be stopped. The officer may use verbal and/or whistle commands to enhance the physical gesture. If whistle commands are used, one steady blow will be used.
 - 2) To Start Traffic: Starting from the stop position, the arm will be moved at the elbow in a manner to indicate that the traffic may now proceed. This is done by swinging the arm upwards from the elbow down towards the direction in which traffic is to flow. Whistle commands will consist of two quick blows.
 - 3) Right Turns: The officer shall gesture to the driver of the vehicle turning right to perform the turn by extending the arm toward the direction in which the turn is to be made.
 - 4) Left Turns: Left turns are to be made only when there is a gap in traffic or oncoming traffic is completely stopped. The officer will point in the direction of the turn when such movement can be made safely.
- b. Officers may utilize marked patrol vehicles, flashlights, traffic cones, a traffic wand and/or road flares while manually directing traffic. These will be used in a manner to enhance the visibility of the officer. The use of traffic cones is highly recommended. Cones can be set in a manner to alert drivers of an approaching hazard to include officers directing traffic, traffic cones can also be used to create pinch points that will slow traffic enhancing the safety and effectiveness to officers manually directing traffic.
- c. Officers should remain calm and professional whenever directing traffic. There are times when drivers and pedestrians do not understand officers or may refuse to obey such directions. The officer will handle these instances with courtesy and professionalism within the guidelines of accepted procedures.

3. Fire Scenes

- a. Officers on the scene of fires will assess the hazards present and take action to minimize further damage to property or life. These may include directing traffic and/or evacuating the immediate area.

- b. The officer will assist the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) in making sure the scene is clear for emergency vehicles to enter but restrict entry to unauthorized vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- c. Officers will provide perimeter services to allow unrestricted access to the scene by fire and emergency vehicles/personnel.
- d. The UPPD will work with the PPD and the PFD to handle emergency scenes and to develop and implement plans and procedures for such scenes.

4. Adverse Weather and Road Conditions

- a. Adverse road conditions may arise out of many situations. These include potential collision hazards such as downed power lines and debris, or natural causes such as fog, ice, and/or snow.
- b. Officers will be cognizant of changing weather or roadway conditions so emergency measures can be taken if warranted. The appropriate highway department or service company will be notified by the PennComm Center immediately to correct the problem.
- c. The area of debris or an obstruction must be protected by officers and traffic control provided, detours established, or roads closed until the arrival of the service crew.
- d. If roads are impassable due to snow, floods, or other causes, officers should arrange a reconnaissance of the affected area to ensure no one is stranded in a vehicle. In long-lasting or very severe conditions, building checks may be needed.
- e. Officers encountering roadway and/or roadside hazards such as defects in the roadway, lack of or defects in highway safety features, visually obstructed traffic devices, or lack of or defective roadway lighting systems should contact the PennComm Center. The PennComm Center will then notify the proper authority with specific instructions in order to remedy the situation.

5. Traffic Signal Boxes

- a. The PPD Traffic Unit shall be notified (at the discretion of the Shift Commander/Supervisor) to manually operate a traffic control box when one of the following circumstances occur:
 - 1) When circumstances such as a collision create an unusually heavy traffic flow through a particular area;
 - 2) Any other time a traffic control problem is identified and the manual operation of a traffic control signal would tend to alleviate the problem and allow the more efficient flow of traffic through an intersection; and

- 3) On special traffic control details approved by the Chief of Police or designee.
6. Temporary Traffic Control Devices
 - a. As a general policy, temporary traffic control devices will be used only in pre-scheduled special events, or when an existing device has failed or is under repair. In these situations, the Shift Commander/Supervisor will have the PennComm Center notify the appropriate agency to request that the temporary traffic control device be erected.
 7. Reflective Outerwear
 - a. All patrol vehicles will have a high visibility/reflective vest stored in the trunk. The high visibility vest or other provided reflective outerwear will be used in situations where an officer is needed to manually direct traffic or working along a roadway scene so they are more visible. An exception to this is in emergency situations where a vest may not be available, i.e. where an off-duty officer stops at a collision scene to assist with traffic direction.

B. Law Enforcement Escort Services

1. Emergency Escort Situations

- a. Officers will not initiate emergency escorts without first notifying the PennComm Center and receiving clearance by a supervisor.
- b. Emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, shall not be escorted by officers except under special circumstances. Two emergency vehicles traveling together more than doubles the hazard to traffic.
- c. Exceptions:
 - 1) Escorting an emergency vehicle to a hospital when the driver of the emergency vehicle is not familiar with the location of the hospital; or
 - 2) Emergency equipment on the vehicle requesting an escort is malfunctioning.
- d. No emergency escort shall be provided to a civilian vehicle unless the officer receiving the escort request has reasonable grounds to believe that a very real emergency exists.
 - 1) If such an emergency exists, the patient should be transferred to an ambulance, or, in the event that an ambulance is unavailable, to the patrol vehicle for the emergency run.
 - 2) The driver of the civilian vehicle should be directed to proceed to the emergency medical facility at normal speed in compliance with all traffic regulations.

- 3) If, in the opinion of the officer, delay or transfer of the patient would jeopardize the patient's life, the officer may escort the civilian vehicle to the nearest emergency medical facility.
 - a) During such escort, all emergency equipment shall be utilized and the officer will not proceed through traffic control devices without first stopping and ensuring that both vehicles can safely proceed.

2. Scheduled Events

- a. Legitimate requests for scheduled law enforcement escort services include, but are not limited to, those associated with funerals, motorcades, and other traffic of public officials and dignitaries, oversized vehicles, highway construction, and maintenance vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo.
- b. When the UPPD is presented with such a request, the trip route shall be established in advance, and coordinated through the Captain of Staff and Administrative Services. The Captain of Staff and Administrative Services shall also coordinate with other law enforcement agencies as needed for the event.
- c. Point traffic control shall be established, as appropriate, at locations along the scheduled route sufficient to ensure safe passage.
- d. Tactical control of the escort shall be assigned to a specific commander, supervisor, or officer in accordance with the complexity of the escort services being provided. The controlling commander/supervisor shall terminate the escort and resume normal vehicular operations when, in their opinion, conditions are such that continuation of the escort would constitute unacceptable risk to the public.
- e. The use of patrol vehicle emergency equipment during the escort shall be specified in advance by appropriate command or supervisory personnel.
 - 1) Request for non-emergency escort should be referred to patrol supervision. Escort requests for funerals, oversized loads/vehicles or hazardous materials should be referred to private agencies equipped for such details.
 - 2) Escorts for public officials or other special requests are to be approved by the Captain of Staff and Administrative Services in advance.

3. Special Events

- a. Special events are any activities that may involve large amounts of vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic. These may include parades, sporting events, concerts, and road maintenance. Officers will assist in control of movement in the area to ensure no unusual problems.

- b. The Captain of Staff and Administrative Services and/or the Captain of Patrol will assist in planning for any special event that would require officers to control traffic.
 - 1) He/she will assist the PPD in coordinating the traffic movement based on anticipated attendance, location, and time.
 - 2) The route will be carefully planned to allow for normal and emergency activities to continue with a minimal amount of disruption.
 - 3) Some streets will be used to their maximum potential by eliminating parking to assist in a smooth flow of traffic. Officers may be requested to post “No Parking” signage to assist in this effort.
 - 4) Emergency services (fire, police, EMS) will be provided unrestricted access from at least one direction.
- c. The UPPD will provide for crowd control by the use of foot beats, bicycles, and officers in patrol cars. Those officers may be at a stationary post or mobile.
- d. Information will be provided at the earliest possible time to the appropriate agencies addressing changes or alteration of the event, parking, etc.
- e. The UPPD will be provided a list of authorized personnel permitted to cross police lines. These include press, promoters, vendors, or VIP’s.
- f. Officers will be allotted adequate scheduled relief during the course of the event, whenever possible as determined by staffing requirements.
- g. When private security services are to be provided, the UPPD will review and determine the adequacy of these services to ensure that they meet acceptable standards.

C. Assistance to Motorists

1. General Assistance to Motorists

- a. Because of the overall danger to the stranded motorist, and also to the motorist on the roadway potentially affected by the stranded motorist, the UPPD shall offer reasonable assistance at all times to the motorist who appears to be in need of aid. This shall apply at all hours of the day, but particularly during the nighttime hours when the hazards are higher.
- b. Officers should be constantly alert for roadway users who appear to need assistance. Officers should freely provide information and directions upon request. In an effort to better serve the University community, officers should not only become familiar with the streets and services within the UPPD’s primary jurisdiction, but also the various services and facilities available outside of the jurisdiction.

- c. The UPPD will offer reasonable assistance at all times to a motorist who is in need of aid (if personnel are available). Officers should check all abandoned vehicles within the area for occupants. Aid may be rendered by police officers for minor repairs, tire changes, etc. If nothing else, the officer's marked police car should be positioned behind the disabled vehicle with flashers on to protect the occupants and to warn oncoming traffic.
- d. Motorists may be transported for fuel or to a location of their choice within the UPPD's primary jurisdiction, with permission from the Shift Commander/supervisor. A telephone call may be made from the PennComm Center to summon assistance on behalf of the motorist.
- e. If a motorist is transported to a location, it should be determined from him/her when the vehicle will be removed. If the vehicle is a hazard, the officer must inform the driver that the vehicle will have to be removed within a reasonable time. When possible, the vehicle should be pushed off the highway as far as possible before transporting the motorist. The officer may make arrangements for towing service on behalf of the motorist.
- f. Officers encountering vehicle lockouts, or vehicles requesting a jump-start, will contact the PennComm Center to have an Allied/SpectaGuard mobile officer respond accordingly. This service is provided as a courtesy to civilian passenger cars ONLY. Hours of service are 7:00am – 3:00am Monday through Friday, and 7:00pm – 3:00am Saturday and Sunday.
- g. Stranded motorists should not be abandoned when exposed to a hazardous situation. Consideration should be given to traffic hazards, locations, time of day, weather conditions and priority calls for service. This does not preclude placing devices to warn oncoming traffic and clearing the scene if conditions are such that this can be done safely.
- h. Officers who assist stranded motorists should remain alert to the following possibilities:
 - 1) The vehicle in the possession of the motorist has not been authorized for their use;
 - 2) The vehicle is in unsafe operating condition;
 - 3) The motorist is not licensed to drive;
 - 4) The motorist is incapable of safely operating the vehicle; and
 - 5) The vehicle's occupants have engaged in criminal activity.

2. Emergency Assistance to Motorists

- a. Officers who encounter motorists requiring emergency assistance (i.e. medical emergency, vehicle fire, etc) shall immediately notify the PennComm Center to request appropriate assistance from the Philadelphia Fire Department or Fire Rescue. Officers will provide first responder aid as warranted. In the event of a vehicle fire, responding officers should ensure that a safe perimeter is established and traffic is diverted around the vehicle fire.

3. Towing Procedures

- a. The UPPD shall call any towing service that the motorist requests, with the following exceptions:
 - 1) Towing company requested is not available;
 - 2) Requested company's response time is longer than reasonable;
 - 3) Officer directed tow; or
 - 4) Any other reasonable condition that the on-scene officer might have.
- b. Requests for a tow truck shall be made through the PennComm Center. Information regarding the towed vehicle shall be provided to the dispatcher and marked on the UPPD Incident Report (UPPD-10).
- c. After receiving a response from the dispatcher, the officer shall provide the following information so that the vehicle may be checked for wanted/stolen status:
 - 1) Vehicle license number, including year and state of issuance,
 - 2) The on-scene officer shall verify all information gained from the PennComm Center on the registration of the towed/involved vehicles and compare that with on-scene documentation to verify ownership of the vehicle and to ensure that the vehicle is not stolen.
- d. The removal of abandoned vehicles from the UPPD's primary jurisdiction shall be the responsibility of the PPD. Officers encountering abandoned vehicles shall notify the PennComm Center, who will contact the PPD 18th District Tow officer by phone, providing him/her with the location and make and model of the vehicle.
- e. Officers encountering illegally parked vehicles on University property shall issue the appropriate Parking Violation, and notify the PennComm Center to request the University's contracted towing company respond to remove the vehicle. When feasible, officers should remain with the vehicle to be towed until the arrival of the towing company.

- 1) During normal operating hours, UPPD officers will as a courtesy, escort the owner/operator of a towed vehicle to the location of the contracted towing company. Officers performing this service will inform the owner/operator of the necessary fees required to retrieve their vehicle. Officers will remain at the site of the contracted towing company until the owner/operator has retrieved their vehicle.

D. Compliance

Violations of this directive, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action.

E. Officers Assigned to Other Agencies

Officers of this department assigned to or assisting other law enforcement agencies will be guided by this directive.

F. Application

This directive constitutes departmental policy, and is not intended to enlarge the employer's or employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims insofar as the employer's or employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of policy will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.