

## TRAFFIC SAFETY

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**TRAFFIC SAFETY**

STOW POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. <b>5.01</b>  MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: <b>61.1.12; 61.3.2; 61.3.3; 61.4.1; 61.4.2; 61.4.4</b>	ISSUE DATE: _____
	EFFECTIVE DATE: _____
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**I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

Traffic safety is one of the most basic service functions of police departments. Police employees are called upon each day to assist with disabled vehicles, provide directions, and address unsafe driving behavior and roadways. This department is committed to promote the safe, efficient, and orderly movement of motor vehicles and people over the roads and highways in our community.

**II. POLICY**

It is the policy of this department to:

1. Reduce traffic collisions, fatalities, and injuries;
2. Facilitate the safe and expeditious movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;  
and
3. Aid motorists and pedestrians who are in need of assistance.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**B. RMV:** Registry of Motor Vehicles.

## IV. PROCEDURES

### ***B. Problem Drivers [61.1.12]***

#### 1. SUSPECTED DRIVER INCOMPETENCE

- a. Routine enforcement, accident reporting, and investigation activities may lead to the discovery of drivers who have displayed incompetence in driving a motor vehicle.
- b. The Registry of Motor Vehicles may suspend and revoke an operator's license for bad driving behavior that constitutes an immediate threat to the driving public.
- c. Operators may be subject to a hearing with the RMV to determine if their right to operate a motor vehicle should be suspended or revoked.
- d. Officers may report Medical conditions, incompetent or dangerous drivers to the Registry of Motor Vehicles using an RMV Immediate Threat of Suspension Form. The form must be approved by the Chief or **Shift Supervisor** prior to being faxed to the Registry.

#### 2. AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS: Operating a motor vehicle in an offensive manner, which is likely to endanger, threaten or otherwise intimidate other operators by engaging in any series of violations, is aggressive driving. These violations include:

- a. Chapter 85-2 State Department of Public Works Rules:
  - 1) Chapter 85-2 Weaving (from lane to lane)
  - 2) Chapter 85-2 Following Too Close (tailgating)
  - 3) Chapter 85-2 Failing to use caution in stopping turning, starting (e.g., cutting someone off)
  - 4) Chapter 85-2 Failing to obey traffic markings & signs (lane markings & regulatory signs)
  - 5) Chapter 85-2 Failure to yield at intersections
- b. Chapter 89 Rules of the Road:
  - 1) Chapter 89-2 Improper Passing (passing on right)
  - 2) Chapter 89-4A Lane violation (failing to be in marked lane)
  - 3) Chapter 89-4B Operating in breakdown lane
  - 4) Chapter 89-8 Right of Way at intersection and turns at red lights
  - 5) Chapter 89-9 Failure to stop and yield at intersection and designated

throughways

- c. Chapter 90 Motor Vehicle Laws:
  - 1) Chapter 90-14B Failure to give signal
  - 2) Chapter 90-16 Offensive or illegal operation (unnecessary use of a warning device, e.g.; horn)
  - 3) Chapter 90-18 Speed (above posted speed limits)
- 3. DOCUMENTING AGGRESSIVE DRIVING: Officers should note the violations and any other pertinent characteristics associated with aggressive driving behavior so as to more fully substantiate the charge.
- 4. REQUEST FOR REGISTRY ACTION: A copy of the officer's incident report and a "Request for Immediate Threat License Suspension Form" (Commonwealth of Massachusetts Form # 20385) will be filled out and submitted to the Chief or **shift supervisor** for review. The Chief or **shift supervisor** will determine if the incident constitutes an immediate threat, and submit the form to the RMV.

### ***C. Hazardous Roadway or Environmental Conditions [61.4.2]***

- 1. REPORTING HAZARDS: Upon discovery of a hazardous highway or environmental condition, the officer shall notify the station and request that the appropriate agency be contacted.
- 2. IMMEDIATE HAZARD
  - a. When a hazard is identified and, in the officer's opinion, such hazard requires immediate correction (such as a fallen tree or electrical wires across any part of the traveled portion of the highway, missing or damaged traffic control signs such as a stop sign, traffic signal or malfunctioning school zone light), officers shall inform dispatch of the situation.
  - b. The officer will identify the assistance or special equipment needed, if possible, and describe the situation to dispatch. The officer will protect bystanders, the scene, direct traffic, and/or take any action necessary to correct the situation.
- 3. POTENTIAL HAZARD
  - a. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential danger, but the threat is not immediate, the officer shall document the condition prior to the end of his/her shift with the dispatcher and documented in the daily log.
  - b. This report shall be e-mailed or otherwise made available to the proper agency believed responsible for correcting the condition with a request that the department be notified of the actual or intended correction of the hazard within ten (10) working days.

## ***D. Traffic Control***

1. PURPOSE: The department shall perform traffic direction and control functions to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

### **2. VISIBILITY [61.3.2(G)]**

- a. Officers assigned to be in the roadway directing or controlling traffic are to have high-visibility outerwear, traffic vests or belts in accordance with department uniform standards. (See department policy on ***Uniforms and Equipment.***) All officers shall wear such high-visibility outerwear, in addition to the full prescribed uniform, whenever conducting manual traffic direction and control, either at a private outside detail or while on duty.
- b. Personnel conducting unscheduled manual traffic direction and control in response to unforeseen contingencies will wear high-visibility outerwear, provided that conditions make it practical, before initiating manual traffic direction and control.

### **3. MANUAL DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC**

- a. Officer Safety
  - 1) While carrying out manual traffic direction and control, officers shall at all times give due consideration to their own safety and the safety of the public.
  - 2) Officers must remain aware of all moving traffic, including vehicles behind them.
- b. Uniform Hand Signals [61.3.2(b)]
  - 1) Personnel shall employ uniform procedures (signals, gestures, etc.) to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition and response to their direction.
    - a) Stop: One or both arms pointed toward the target to be stopped, palm of hand visible.
    - b) Go: Hand pointed toward the target, sweeping in the intended direction of traffic.
    - c) During hours of darkness, hand and arm signals may be augmented by the use of a flashlight, flashlight with visibility cone, or flare (use flare with caution).
- c. To indicate that the officer is present for the purpose of directing traffic, [s]he should:
  - 1) Turn the signal light (if practical) to blinking or flashing, or work in sync with the traffic lights.

- 2) Position him/herself so that [s]he can be seen clearly by all, usually in the center of the intersection or street.
- 3) Be mindful that his/her hands not gesture a movement command, except to intentionally signal a traffic movement.
- 4) Stand facing in such a manner as to observe moving traffic, being mindful of stopped traffic which may unexpectedly begin moving.

#### 4. IDENTIFYING TRAFFIC CONTROL POINTS

- a. Times and locations identified as requiring a traffic control point will be reviewed by **each officer** to determine whether manual direction of traffic is necessary.

NOTE: A traffic control point is the control of vehicular and pedestrian movement in a particular place on a roadway, such as an intersection.

- b. Factors to be considered in the analysis will include, but may not necessarily be limited to:
  - 1) Traffic volume and speed;
  - 2) Number of pedestrians present;
  - 3) Duration of congestion period;
  - 4) Presence and types of traffic control devices; and
  - 5) Special circumstances of the location (e.g., handicapped pedestrians) and other pertinent factors.
- c. The decision to assign personnel to carry out traffic direction and control will be made only if the analysis indicates that unmanned signals/devices cannot adequately ensure the safe and efficient movement of traffic.

#### 5. MANUAL OPERATION OF TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES [61.3.2(E)]

- a. Officers may manually operate traffic control signals to direct traffic flow, recycle a signal light, or place the signal lights on flash or blink. Some intersections have manual control devices located in the service boxes which an officer can use to manually control the traffic control device. This may be useful in the following situations:
  - 1) When a traffic light malfunctions;
  - 2) To facilitate movement at the scene of a traffic accident or other emergency;
  - 3) To provide a thoroughfare for a motorcade, funeral procession, etc.; and
  - 4) To alleviate congestion resulting from use of automatic controls, particularly

during planned special events.

- b. Any officer who is not familiar with the manual operation of traffic controls shall be trained by a responsible officer regarding their use before using manual traffic controls. It shall be a part of the Field Training Process.

6. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES [61.3.2(F)]

- a. The department will have use of temporary traffic control devices, including movable barriers, traffic cones, portable signs, and other apparatus intended for temporary deployment, to assist the safe and efficient movement and control of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- b. As soon as practical following termination of the need for the temporary traffic control device, the supervisor authorizing deployment of the device will see to its removal. The department shall not use portable or part-time stop signs as temporary traffic control devices except in an emergency.

7. TRAFFIC CONTROL AT COLLISION SCENES [61.3.2(A)]

- a. Officers shall conduct traffic control at the scenes of accident, in this priority:
  - 1) Protect public safety personnel, victims and others at the scene.
  - 2) Protect collision scene evidence.
  - 3) Assist the safe and orderly flow of traffic.
- b. For further information, see the department policy on ***Traffic Collisions***.

8. TRAFFIC CONTROL AT CRITICAL INCIDENT SCENES [61.3.2(C)]

a. CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- 1) Department employee may be required to conduct traffic control at the scenes of critical incidents such as:
  - a) Gas utility leaks;
  - b) Public transportation accidents;
  - c) Hostage or active shooter; and
  - d) Bombing or bomb threat.
- 2) Officers shall conduct traffic control at the scenes of critical incidents in this priority:
  - a) Protect public safety personnel, victims and others at the scene.
  - b) Protect collision scene evidence.
  - c) Assist the safe and orderly flow of traffic.

- d) Temporarily close roads if necessary to protect evidence.
  - e) Secure the evidence scene with yellow crime scene tape
  - b. FIRE SCENES: The department shall work closely with the fire department and other emergency services organizations in order to maintain access to and egress from fire scenes for emergency vehicles. Officers responding to fire scenes shall follow the department policy on **Structure Fires**.
9. ADVERSE ROAD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS [61.3.2(D)]
- a. Adverse weather or road conditions include, but are not limited to:
    - 1) Accidental hazards, such as debris that has fallen onto the roadway -- examples include debris from another motor vehicle, power lines, and trees;
    - 2) Acts of nature, such as fog, ice, snow, etc.; and
    - 3) Engineering hazards, such as exposed guardrail end, potholes, missing drain covers, or other objects.
  - b. A supervisor shall determine whether notifying the local newspapers, radio stations, public works, and fire department of the adverse road condition(s) will have a desired effect.
  - c. A supervisor may notify the Chief of Police and advise him/her of the circumstance which may close a street, if, in his/her opinion, the surface conditions and terrain creates an unusually hazardous condition. [S]he shall also request assistance from the Department of Public Works.
  - d. A supervisor shall ensure that the proper utility or construction company is also notified as appropriate, and assign officers as needed to direct traffic and safeguard the public.

### **E. Vehicle Escorts [61.3.3(a)]**

#### **1. REQUESTS FOR ESCORTS**

- a. The department recognizes that there are legitimate and reasonable requests for police escort services to ensure safe, orderly, and efficient movement of special traffic or to expedite delivery of special items.
- b. The department shall make every reasonable effort to honor such requests to the extent practical and consistent with the need to ensure that the act of escorting or emergency relay itself does not create unnecessary risk to the public.
- c. The shift supervisor shall review and approve all requests for escorts or relay.

#### **2. AUTHORIZATION: Officers shall not initiate escorts without first obtaining**

permission from the officer-in-charge.

3. TYPES OF ESCORTS: Requests for escorts that may be obliged may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Funerals;
  - b. Motorcades;
  - c. Public officials and dignitaries;
  - d. Oversized vehicles;
  - e. Highway construction and maintenance vehicles; and
  - f. Hazardous or unusual cargo.
4. PUBLIC SAFETY VEHICLES: Officers may assist emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, through traffic and intersections when requested and authorized by a supervisor.
5. CIVILIAN VEHICLE EMERGENCY ESCORTS: Officers shall not escort civilian vehicles except in unusual medical emergencies. [61.3.3(b)]
6. Officers shall first render medical assistance and summon an ambulance to their location prior to engaging in a civilian escort.
  - a. The driver of a civilian vehicle requesting an escort should be directed to proceed to the emergency medical facility at normal speed in compliance with all traffic regulations.
  - b. If, in the officer's opinion, delay or transfer would jeopardize a person's life, the officer may, with the approval of the shift supervisor, escort the vehicle to the nearest medical facility or rendezvous with a waiting ambulance. During this escort, all emergency equipment (lights and siren) shall be utilized and motor vehicle laws outlined in M.G.L. c. 89, §§§7, 7A, and 7B, shall be observed.

## ***F. Motorist Assistance***

1. OBTAINING ASSISTANCE [61.4.1(A);(B);(D)]
  - a. The public, when utilizing public highways, may encounter mechanical or other difficulties requiring assistance from the police. When outside assistance is needed, the officer shall notify the dispatcher of the following factors:
    - 1) Type of Service Needed:
      - a) Tow trucks (type of car, problem, or if a flatbed is needed);
      - b) Ambulance;
      - c) Vehicle repair/service; and



- d) Lockout assistance
  - i. Officer will respond and evaluate the request. No action will be taken for vehicles with side impact airbags.
  - ii. The officer shall identify the requestor by a drivers license and registration to identify the owner of the vehicle.
  - iii. The requestor shall be advised that the officer's effort may result in damage and that the department will not pay for such damage. The procedure is at the requestor's risk.
- 2) Specific location to which the service is to be dispatched; and
- 3) Reason for request (e.g., medical problem, flat tire, out of gas).
- b. It is the policy of the department not to recommend a particular service. When asked, officers should advise a citizen of several businesses in the area, and let the citizen decide.
- 2. STRANDED MOTORISTS [61.4.1(C)]
  - a. The overall danger to the stranded motorist can also be a potentially dangerous condition.
  - b. The department shall offer reasonable assistance to stranded motorists at all time.
  - c. If the officer believes it is necessary to transport a stranded person in his/her police vehicle, [s]he shall first obtain permission from the officer in charge. Prior to such transport, the officer shall advise dispatch of his/her location, destination, mileage and reason for the transport.
- 3. DIRECTIONS/INFORMATION: [61.4.1(a)]: At the request of a citizen, officers shall provide information and direction consistent with other duties and responsibilities.

### ***G. Educational Material***

- 1. The department may periodically prepare or secure from third parties and disseminate traffic safety education materials to the public. Such materials support enforcement efforts and enhance public understanding of traffic safety programs.
- 2. Copies shall be available in the Police Department lobby. [61.4.4]

