




ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE MANUAL

Chapter: 5 <i>Procedures</i>	Revision Date: <i>May 15, 2025</i>	Initiation Date: <i>May 15, 2025</i>	By Authority of the Chief of Police  Chief Charles A. Penn
Accreditation Standard(s): 61.1.2, 61.1.4, 61.1.5, 61.1.7, 61.3.2, 61.4.1, 61.4.2 (CALEA)			

541.04 Transportation Safety

I. Overview

Transportation safety is a key initiative of the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) and involves the cooperation and coordination of officers and professional staff. The department's transportation safety programs are established to support the county's Vision Zero initiative and should promote the safe, efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This may be achieved through a combination of education, enforcement, and prevention.

II. Policy

All officers [and professional staff assigned to the Special Operations Section] should prioritize transportation safety in their day-to-day travels inside the county. This includes enforcing traffic laws when appropriate and, unless responding to a call of higher priority, identifying, and assisting with rectifying traffic-related problems. Traffic enforcement efforts or traffic engineering applications shall not be based upon revenue generation or the pursuit of artificial statistical goals and quotas.

III. Definitions

- A. Traffic Enforcement – Enforcement of traffic laws to reduce traffic collisions, and their resulting injuries, and to promote the safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, including:
 - 1. The operation of a vehicle while impaired or after driving privileges have been suspended/revoked [61.1.5, a, b]
 - 2. Moving violations [61.1.5, c]
 - 3. Non-moving violations [61.1.5, d]
 - 4. Public carrier / commercial motor vehicle violations [61.1.5, e]
 - 5. Multiple violations [61.1.5, f]
 - 6. Newly enacted laws and/or regulations [61.1.5, g]
 - 7. Violations resulting in traffic crashes [61.1.5, h]
 - 8. Pedestrian / bicycle violations [61.1.5, i]
- B. Traffic Emergency Plan #4 - Designates the names of streets within the County where parking is prohibited during adverse weather conditions. See Arlington County Code - Chapter 14.2, Article V, Traffic Emergency Plan
- C. Visible Stationary Traffic Observation – In areas where stationary observation is necessary to maximize the effectiveness of enforcement efforts, officers should park in a conspicuous location (e.g., on a side

street) and in such a manner that traffic flow is not impeded. Officers enforcing traffic laws on foot shall wear a high visibility traffic vest.

- D. **Concealed Stationary Traffic Observation** – Stationary observation in which the observer is not visible to persons, using ordinary power of observation, from the roadway being observed. Officers enforcing traffic laws on foot shall wear a high visibility traffic vest.

IV. **Traffic Enforcement** – Strategies and tactics for traffic enforcement should be consistent with the nature of the violation and its potential for interfering with the free and safe flow of traffic.

- A. **Traffic Enforcement Vehicle Equipment** – All department vehicles used in traffic enforcement shall be equipped with emergency lights and sirens.

1. **Traffic Stop Guidelines**

- a. Emergency lights shall be activated when attempting to stop a violator and remain activated throughout the stop. If the driver fails to stop with the emergency lights only, a brief sounding of the siren should put the violator on notice of the officer's intent to stop the violator. The spotlight may be used to gain the attention of a violator, or to illuminate the interior of the violator's vehicle. It should never be positioned in such a manner so as to shine into oncoming traffic.
- b. **Positioning the vehicle** - After a traffic violation has been identified, the officer will inform the dispatcher of the location of the stop and the vehicle/occupant information. The actual stop should be made in a location that will afford the officer and occupants the greatest safety available. If the violator has stopped in an unsafe position, the officer should use the public address system to notify the driver to move to a safer location. [61.1.7, a]
- c. **Approaching the violator's vehicle** - The officer should approach the violator's vehicle with caution, watching for suspicious or sudden movement.
 - (1) If the officer initiates a high-risk traffic stop, they will inform the dispatcher via radio of the location of the stop, vehicle/occupant information, and request additional back-up units. Officers shall then coordinate their efforts to remove the occupants from the vehicle safely. Once completed, they should approach the vehicle to ensure all occupants have been removed and any other threats have been rendered safe. [61.1.7, b]
- d. **Contact with Traffic Violators** – The officer should courteously greet the violator, identify himself/herself, explain the reason for the stop if reasonable and appropriate, and request the driver's license and vehicle registration. The officer shall then complete the appropriate paperwork. When the officer returns to the violator, the violation must be explained in detail, including the following:
 - (1) Court appearance requirements, including whether or not a court appearance is mandatory. [61.1.4, b]
 - (2) Court date [61.1.4, a]
 - (3) Pre-payment information (if it is a pre-payable offense) [61.1.4, c]
 - (4) Explain to the violator that signing the Virginia Uniform Summons (VUS) is not an admission of guilt but merely a promise to comply with the summons and either appear in court or prepay the summons [61.1.4, d]
- e. Traffic summons may be settled in court or by prepaying a predetermined fine in lieu of a court appearance. [61.1.2, b]
- f. Upon completion of the traffic stop, the officer should assist the violator in safely re-entering the flow of traffic.

- g. **Physical Arrest** – An arrest may occur when a routine traffic stop either becomes criminal in nature (i.e., DUI or DUID), the Code of Virginia requires the arrest, or a discretionary arrest is warranted based on the actions or behavior of the driver and/or passenger(s). [61.1.2, a]
- h. **Refusal to Sign VUS** – For minor traffic offenses, if any person refuses to give a written promise to appear, the arresting officer shall give such person notice of the time and place of the hearing, note such person's refusal to give their written promise to appear on the summons, and forthwith release him from custody. In other cases (e.g., jailable offenses, violator likely to disregard the summons, etc.), the officer shall promptly take the violator before a magistrate.
- i. **Officer Discretion** - The exercise of discretion should be based upon the seriousness of the violation and the action that is most likely to encourage future compliance with the law. When a traffic violation is observed, it is the officer's decision whether to issue a traffic summons, a written warning, or a verbal warning. If multiple violations have been observed, the officer may elect to utilize any, or a combination, of the above actions. [61.1.2, c]
 - (1) No officer shall stop a motor vehicle due to an expired registration and/or vehicle inspection sticker prior to the first day of the fourth month after the original expiration date. (VA Code § 46.2-646. Expiration/renewal of registration and § 46.2-1157. Inspection of motor vehicles required).
- B. **Speed Enforcement** – Officers should prioritize speed enforcement efforts in areas where high crash rates are identified, school zones, and areas identified by citizens and county personnel as containing a high quantity of violations. All citizen requests for speed enforcement shall be forwarded to the Special Operations Section (SOS) for processing and dissemination based on their assessment of the problem.
- C. **Speed Enforcement Considerations** – While on foot officers are permitted to use Visible Stationary Traffic Observation and Concealed Stationary Traffic Observation on roadways that have a speed limit of 35 mph or lower. While on foot officers are not permitted to utilize Visible Stationary Traffic Observation or Concealed Stationary Traffic Observation on highways with a speed limit greater than 35 mph. Additionally, they are prohibited from stepping out in traffic to stop a violator in a speed zone that is higher than 35 mph. Officers enforcing traffic laws on foot shall wear a high visibility traffic vest.
- D. Officers are permitted to use Radar/Lidar on highways with a speed limit greater than 35mph if they utilize a police vehicle to stop the violator. Once a violator passes by an officer using Radar/Lidar the officer will use their discretion to determine if it is safe to pull on to the highway to conduct a traffic stop
 - 1. **Speed Measuring Devices** - When conducting speed enforcement utilizing RADAR or LIDAR equipment, officers shall take all reasonable steps to protect the equipment, including protection from inclement weather.
 - a. Unless assigned to an officer, all speed-measuring equipment is for daily use only.
 - b. Officers must return the equipment to its assigned locker and return the key at the end of their tour of duty.
 - c. All RADAR/LIDAR units shall be tested for accuracy prior to, and at the completion, of the officer's tour of duty.
 - d. **Repairs and Calibration** - The Special Operations Section is responsible for coordinating all repairs to the RADAR/LIDAR equipment. Under no circumstances shall any employee attempt to make any mechanical adjustment to the equipment. Any malfunction or damage noticed by the officer shall be immediately reported to their supervisor and to the SOS master police officer (MPO). The damaged unit shall be delivered to the SOS MPO, along with the corresponding key. Tuning forks and LIDAR units shall be calibrated every six months. At the appropriate time, the SOS MPO shall ensure that all RADAR/ LIDAR units are collected for calibration. The

Special Operations Section will be responsible for ensuring proper calibration of all speed detection devices per 46.2-882. Following calibration, the resulting documentation shall be stored in the SOS office. Original calibration certificates are stored in the Operations Roll Call Room and in General District Court, in courtroom 3C.

- e. Training - Prior to operating any RADAR/LIDAR equipment, employees must successfully complete the department's mandated course on the use of RADAR/LIDAR. Additionally, officers shall complete recertification every three years. All RADAR/LIDAR equipment shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's operation manual and training provided by the department.

E. Special Enforcement Considerations

1. Juveniles - Juvenile traffic offenders are prosecuted in Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court which should be indicated on the summons. Officers issuing a traffic summons to a juvenile offender should advise them of their options regarding prepayment or court appearance and that the juvenile must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in court.
2. Congressional Immunity - Members of Congress may not be detained for the issuance of a summons while they are in transit to, or from, the Congress of the United States. If a member of Congress is stopped for a traffic infraction, they should be identified and immediately released. The officer may then obtain a summons for the member of Congress covering the observed violation and make arrangements to serve the summons at a time when the member of Congress is not in transit to, or from Congress, or on official business.
3. Diplomatic Immunity - See Manual Directive 536.10 Diplomatic and Consular Immunity.
4. Military Personnel - Military personnel assigned to local military installations should be treated as residents. Military personnel not assigned to local installations should be treated as nonresidents in accordance with the provisions of this directive. Officers are reminded that the home state operator's license of military personnel does not expire until 90 days after separation from active duty.
5. Cognitive Health Driver Referral for Reexamination - Officers who encounter drivers suspected of incompetency, mental or physical disability, disease, or other conditions that would prevent that person from exercising reasonable care over a motor vehicle, may utilize the Driver Deficiency Report form issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, to request reexamination of that driver.
6. DUI Enforcement - Enforcement will be conducted in accordance with Manual Directive - 541.05 DUI Arrests.

- V. **Parking Enforcement** - Although the Public Service Aides (PSA) and Transportation Safety Specialists (TSS) have primary responsibility for parking enforcement, patrol officers shall also enforce parking regulations as a routine part of their daily activities. Special attention should be paid to parking violations that impede the flow of traffic, especially during rush hour, or create a hazardous situation. Enforcement action should be taken, including towing, if necessary, to correct these problems.

1. *Clerical Errors* – The Special Operations Section (SOS) Commander or designee is authorized to abrogate parking citations for good caused based on clerical errors. Clerical errors are defined as errors made by police employees during the issuing of a citation and those errors entered by citizens using the ParkMobile pay system. The decision of the SOS Commander or designee as to the disposition of the citation is the final internal review by the department.
2. *Voided Citations* - When a PSA/TSS becomes aware that a parking ticket is printed with errors and needs to be VOIDED, they should forward it to an SOS supervisor so that the record can be

updated in the Parking Ticket System. The hard copy of the ticket should be presented to the supervisor before the end of the employee's tour of duty.

VI. Traffic Direction and Control

- A. **Traffic Conditions Requiring Immediate Attention** - All sworn personnel shall be constantly alert for problems which are a hindrance to the smooth, safe, and orderly flow of motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic in Arlington County and shall take appropriate action to eliminate such problems when they are identified.
- B. **Traffic Concerns Not Requiring Immediate Attention** – Traffic concerns and problems with street signs, traffic signals, or street maintenance issues that are not police matters or do not require immediate attention should be reported via the County's online service request tool. Additionally, citizens with complaints or suggestions concerning traffic engineering deficiencies can use the app to contact the Traffic Engineering Division to provide specific details and receive updates on their particular service request.
- C. **Manual Direction of Traffic** – Employees directing traffic shall wear a high visibility traffic vest. Additionally, they shall direct traffic in the following manner: [61.3.2, e]
 - 1. To stop traffic by hand - Stand with shoulders parallel to moving traffic. Raise arms forty-five degrees above shoulder with hand extended, palm towards moving traffic to be stopped.
 - 2. To move traffic by hand - Stand with shoulders parallel to traffic to be moved. Extend right arm and hand full length at height of shoulders towards such traffic, fingers extended and joined, palm down. Bring hand sharply in direction traffic is to move. Repeat movement with left arm and hand to start traffic from opposite direction.
 - 3. To stop and start traffic by whistle - One blast, moving traffic to stop; two blasts, traffic in opposite direction to move.
 - 4. Emergency stop of traffic by whistle - Three or more short blasts, all traffic shall immediately clear the intersection and stop.

Employees may also use supplemental traffic direction devices, including but not limited to hand-held stop or go signs, traffic cones, barricades and directional arrows. All traffic direction equipment is maintained by the Special Operations Section and will be available to other sections upon request. Personnel assigned to a traffic direction post shall remain at that post until relieved or until such time as the problem is corrected or ordered removed by a police supervisor. [61.3.2, d]

Employees may place traffic signals on flash to reduce or eliminate a traffic problem. When an employee places a traffic signal on flash, ECC shall be advised and ECC will then notify the proper authorities. Employees are prohibited from making traffic signal repairs or to adjust the timing cycles. [61.3.2, c]

D. Crash Scenes [61.3.2, a]

- 1. Employees should set up perimeter traffic control points to:
 - a. Allow for the ingress-egress of police, fire, and rescue equipment.
 - b. Halt, or divert approaching traffic away from or around the crash scene
 - c. Provide for a system of alternate routes to move traffic around the crash.

- d. Notify ECC of the action being taken so that they may in turn notify other jurisdictions that may be affected.
 - e. Notify the department's public information officer to share information via social media.
 - 2. The following methods of control may be used when it becomes necessary to close or restrict the flow of traffic: [61.3.2, d]
 - a. Flares may be used except where hazardous materials are involved.
 - b. Barricades are appropriate when an entire roadway or intersection must be closed.
 - c. Traffic cones are excellent for diverting traffic from one lane to the next and are often more appropriate than flares.
 - d. Directional arrows can be used to alter the direction of approaching traffic and are best utilized some distance from the scene of the crash.
- E. **Fire Scenes** - At the scene of a fire, the police shall assist and support the fire-rescue operations. This responsibility shall include:
 - 1. Consulting with the ranking fire official in charge of the scene to determine their needs.
 - 2. Providing protection for the fire scene and for fire and rescue equipment.
 - 3. Setting up perimeter traffic control points to allow for the ingress and egress of fire and rescue equipment and personnel authorized to be at the scene.
 - 4. Controlling key intersections utilized as an ambulance route to hospitals.
 - 5. Controlling any traffic problems that occur at hospitals where the injured are taken.
 - 6. Keeping ECC informed as to the location of control points and the alternate routes that traffic will be utilizing.

"Personnel authorized to be at the scene" shall include all persons who can be identified as firefighters, either regular or volunteer, by badge, or possession of regularly used fire equipment such as a helmet and coat. It shall be the responsibility of supervisory officers of the fire department to correct any problems resulting from these persons blocking fire lanes or impeding the efficiency of persons at the scene.
- F. **Natural or Man-Made Disasters** – The Arlington County Emergency Operations Plan requires the police department fulfill the following traffic direction and control responsibilities:
 - 1. Maintain close contact with ECC to ensure that traffic control points and alternative routes of traffic are identified.
 - 2. Establish an on-scene command post if no fire is involved and no rescue operations are to be conducted. If fire is involved, or rescue operations are to be conducted, the ranking police official consults with the on-scene fire command post for liaison and coordination.
 - 3. Establish one or more control points on the perimeter of the disaster scene.
 - 4. Regulate traffic at the disaster scene to allow free ingress and egress to emergency vehicles.
 - 5. Restrict access to the disaster scene to authorized personnel.

6. Control traffic at key intersections on ambulance routes to hospitals where the injured are being transported and control traffic at hospitals receiving the injured.
 7. Ensure the security of the disaster scene and preserve law and order.
- G. **Special Events and Parades** - It shall be the policy of the police department to provide traffic direction and control services at special events and parades.
1. Appropriate pre-planning sessions will take place with event officials and other affected county or state agencies in order to identify the following:
 - a. The route of travel for the proposed event.
 - b. The number of personnel needed to handle the traffic control points and security of the event.
 - c. The special equipment that will be needed to support and control the motor vehicles and pedestrians affected by the event.
 - d. The identification and discussion of alternate or back-up plans for the event.
 - e. Relevant legal issues involved.
 2. The police department may request the services of the following for such special events:
 - a. Personnel of the Arlington County Sheriff's Office.
 - b. Officers of the Police Auxiliary Unit.
 - c. Selected civilian event marshals.
 - d. State and federal police agency personnel.
 - e. Special equipment from the county and state highway departments.
 - f. Other non-sworn personnel from the police department.
- H. **School Crossings** - The crossing of school children is primarily the responsibility of the school crossing guards within the Special Operations Section. However, officers and PSA/TSS personnel may be called upon to assist at such school crossings.

VII. Traffic-Related Services [61.4.1]

- A. **Mechanical Assistance** – Employees shall, unless engaged in a priority assignment, render assistance to the motoring public experiencing a mechanical failure or other emergency situation.
1. **Traffic Warning Devices** – When assisting a disabled vehicle that is in the roadway or on the shoulder of the road, employees shall utilize traffic warning devices to protect the vehicle until it is removed. Such devices may include police vehicle emergency lights, flares, cones, or sign boards.
 - a. Employees shall ensure that suitable safety measures are in place prior to leaving the scene.
 2. **Tow Requests** – If a vehicle is disabled, employees should assist the motorist in requesting a tow company of his/her choice to tow it or, if necessary, make a notification to the ACPD contracting towing service via ECC at the motorist's request.
- B. **Stranded Persons** – Police officers should be prepared to assist stranded motorist in a variety of ways, including:

1. Serving as a communications link between the motorist and mechanical services facility;
 2. Transporting motorists to a safe location to await the arrival of assistance. Officers should not abandon a stranded motorist, and, when considering whether to offer transport, take into consideration traffic hazards, location, time of day, weather conditions, and priority calls for service. [61.4.1]
- C. **Vehicle Fires** – Upon the discovery of a vehicle fire, employees shall immediately notify ECC with the location, entrapment (if applicable), type of vehicle, and potential hazardous cargo. Once the fire department has arrived, officers should assist with traffic assistance until relinquished of duty or the incident has concluded.
- D. **Vehicle Lockouts** – In most circumstances, community members requesting assistance from department employees with gaining access to a locked vehicle should be referred to a commercial business for that service. Officers may assist a citizen with gaining entry into a vehicle under the following circumstances:
- a. A medical emergency
 - b. A child locked inside
 - c. An animal locked inside
 - d. An exigent circumstance (as determined by an officer on-scene)
 - e. When authorized by a supervisor
- E. **Adverse Road and Weather Conditions** [61.3.2, b] - Police officers should make every effort to ensure the safety of all public roadways. If an officer is unable to correct a hazard or potentially hazardous roadway condition (i.e. debris in the road, stranded motor vehicle) by himself/herself, then he or she will request that ECC notify the appropriate agency.
- a. If a roadway is maintained by Arlington County and it is obstructed by debris, presents major defects (e.g., major potholes), or lacks or has defective safety features (e.g., reflectors), employees should notify ECC and request notification to the proper county agency. [61.4.2]
 - b. If a roadway is maintained by the State of Virginia and contains any of the above-mentioned defects or hazards, the Virginia Department of Transportation shall be contacted to remedy the problem. [61.4.2]
 - c. Obstructing traffic - Vehicles abandoned or not equipped with snow tires or chains on designated Snow Emergency Routes, where signage is posted, are subject to the issuance of a traffic summons and towed under Arlington County Code §14.2-85. Tires marked M+S (or M/S, M&S, MS) indicate an all-season tire that has been approved for use in mud and snow.
2. Patrol assignments - The Operations Division Watch Commander will coordinate patrol assignments to allow for the maximum utilization of all personnel. If the situation requires additional staffing, the Operations Division Watch Commander will be responsible for contacts to activate off duty officers.
 3. Essential Personnel – Inclement weather will occasionally require that County Services be curtailed. However, public safety agencies must continue to function. In accordance with County Administrative Regulation: Severe Weather/Emergency Closings, all essential personnel must report to work. Sworn officers and Emergency Communication Technicians (ECTs) who are scheduled or directed to work by their supervisor are considered essential personnel. Division and section commanders may specify additional individuals or positions as essential to meet their

respective needs. Employees whose positions are designated as essential and who are unable to reach their assigned work location must notify their supervisor. In such instances, the employee will be charged with an appropriate type of leave.

4. Crash investigation - At the discretion of the Operations Division Watch Commander, standard procedures related to traffic crash investigation may be suspended and crashes may be cleared by distributing Driver Exchange Forms to all parties involved in a crash. Unless an injury or death has occurred, no crash report will be required, regardless of the amount of damage to the vehicles involved.
5. Traffic congestion - Officers should notify their immediate supervisor if traffic becomes congested in any particular area so that appropriate action may be taken to attempt to alleviate the situation.