



Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

Sheriff Carl Ritchie

13-07 TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL

- ☐ NEW
- ☐ REVISED
- ☒ REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference:
CALEA Standards Reference: 41.2.4, 61.3.1, 61.3.2, 61.3.3
NCCHC Standards Reference:
SCLEA Standards Reference:
SC Minimum Standards:

This policy dated 1/29/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.

I. Purpose:

To establish procedures for activities involving the movement and control of vehicles and pedestrians.

II. Policy:

The Sheriff's Office is committed to enhancing traffic safety in Charleston County by making necessary and timely referrals of complaints and suggestions concerning traffic engineering deficiencies. This agency will also provide traffic direction and vehicle escort services as necessary to assure safety of the motoring public.

III. Definitions:

A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, or Class III, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
2. civilian, non-sworn employee.

B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).

IV. Procedure:

A. Traffic Engineering:

While the Charleston County Sheriff's Office is not responsible for traffic engineering, close cooperation and coordination with city, county, and state traffic engineers is essential to the maintenance of a safe and efficient roadway system within the County of Charleston.

1. The Sheriff's Office will participate, whenever requested, in the management planning of County or regional transportation systems. The Sheriff's Office will assist in conducting traffic surveys on roadways within the County to assist planners in determining traffic volumes and speeds.

2. It is the duty and responsibility of all Charleston County Sheriff's Office personnel to bring any traffic engineering related problems identified (e.g., traffic signals not functioning, street signs down, street design problems, etc.) to the agency's attention so that these deficiencies can be reported to the appropriate traffic engineering authorities. Traffic engineering problems noted will be promptly reported, via Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (911 Center), telephonically, or written correspondence, to the proper state agency or local public works department.

(Ref: CALEA 61.3.1 item a)

3. Traffic collision and enforcement data captured via the South Carolina Collision and Traffic Ticketing System, on State electronic collision and citation forms, will be forwarded to the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for their analysis and engineering recommendations.

(Ref: CALEA 61.3.1 item b)

B. Traffic Direction and Control Procedures:

1. Traffic Control at Collision Scenes:

- a. At the discretion of the responding deputy sheriff, the deputy sheriff may position the patrol vehicle in the affected lane(s) of traffic, with blue lights activated, to warn approaching traffic.
- b. Responding deputy sheriffs should clear the roadway as quickly as practical; towing services should be notified as soon as possible if vehicles involved in a collision are inoperable.
- c. Deputy sheriffs on-the-scene may perform manual traffic control when it is determined it can be accomplished safely.

(Ref: CALEA 61.3.2 item a)

- d. Deputy sheriffs directing traffic, or in the roadway controlling traffic, will wear their reflective vests.

(Ref: CALEA 61.3.2 item e)

2. Uniform Hand Signals and Gestures for Manual Traffic Direction and Control:

- a. **To Stop Traffic:** The deputy sheriff extends their arm outward with the palm facing the vehicle to be stopped. The deputy sheriff may use verbal and/or whistle commands to enhance

the physical gesture.

- b. To Start Traffic: The deputy sheriff moves their arm at the elbow in an upward, sweeping motion, with the palm of the hand facing in the direction that traffic is to proceed.
- c. Left and Right Turns: The deputy sheriff shall gesture to the driver by extending the arm toward the direction in which the turn is to be made.
- d. Deputy sheriffs will use flashlights with the traffic wand, highway flares, or flash wands while manually directing traffic during the hours of darkness or under conditions of limited visibility due to weather conditions.

3. Procedures Applicable at Critical Incidents:

- a. Deputy sheriffs at the scene of critical incidents will assess the hazards present and take action to minimize damage to life or property. This may include traffic direction and/or evacuation of the immediate area.
- b. Deputy sheriffs will assure the scene is clear for emergency vehicles to enter but restricted to any unauthorized vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- c. Sheriff's Office personnel will work in cooperation with all other emergency services personnel.

4. Procedures Applicable During Periods of Adverse Road and Weather Conditions:

Adverse road conditions may arise out of many situations. These include accidental hazards such as downed utility lines and debris on the roadway or natural causes such as fog, ice, and snow. Appropriate personnel may be notified for the purpose of correcting the condition. Deputy sheriffs will be cognizant of changing weather conditions so emergency measures can be taken if warranted.

(Ref: CALEA 41.2.4 and 61.3.2 item b)

5. Malfunctions of Traffic Control Devices:

Charleston County Sheriff's Office personnel, with the exception of the Traffic Services Unit, do not have access to traffic signal control

boxes for the purposes of manually operating such traffic control devices. Any malfunctions or engineering concerns regarding traffic control devices will be promptly reported to the appropriate state agency or local public works department. (Ref: CALEA 61.3.2 item c)

6. Use of Temporary Traffic Control Devices:

Generally, temporary traffic control devices will be used only in pre-scheduled special events or road construction projects. These devices, which include traffic cones, barricades, portable stop signs, and other devices, will normally be placed and removed by SCDOT or local public works departments. Deputy sheriffs may request these devices for use at accident scenes, natural disasters, unanticipated road hazards, etc. (Ref: CALEA 61.3.2 item d)

C. Vehicle Escort Services:

1. Vehicle escort services provided by the Charleston County Sheriff's Office may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. funeral motorcades;
 - b. traffic assistance to public officials;
 - c. dignitaries;
 - d. oversized vehicles and/or loads;
 - e. roadway construction;
 - f. maintenance vehicles; and
 - g. vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo.
2. Vehicle escorts that involve other agencies will be coordinated as far in advance as feasible.
3. Vehicle escort requests are normally processed through the 911 Center and relayed to the duty supervisor. When large or lengthy escort requests are received by this agency, the Traffic Services Unit (hereafter Traffic Services) may be notified to assist.
4. Vehicle escorts for public officials, dignitaries or executive protection assignments will normally be handled by the Traffic Services Unit, due

to the length of time required for such assignments.

5. Control of vehicle escorts will be assigned to a supervisor or deputy sheriff in accordance with the complexity of the escort requirements. The deputy sheriff in charge of the vehicle escort will set the pace for the escort in accordance with prevailing conditions. Under no circumstances will the escort exceed the predetermined maximum speed for any segment of the route. The deputy sheriff in charge of the escort will terminate the escort and resume normal vehicle operation when, in the deputy sheriff's opinion, conditions are such that continuation of the escort will constitute unacceptable risks to the motoring public. (Ref: CALEA 61.3.3)
6. Vehicle escort services of civilian vehicles in medical emergencies is not an accepted practice of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. If immediate medical service is required, EMS should be summoned to the scene. (Ref: CALEA 61.3.3)

D. Special Events:

Special events, such as parades, movie filming, road construction, bridge closures and other such events which allow for prior planning will be assigned to a Traffic Services supervisor, who will develop an operations plan for the event. The operations plan will include, but not be limited to:

1. use of additional personnel, if any;
2. designation of a single person or position as supervisor and coordinator;
3. written estimate of traffic, crowd-control, and crime problems expected;
4. logistics requirements;
5. coordination both internal (PIO) and external to the Sheriff's Office; and
6. coordination with the 911 Center