

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SOG #:	6.113	Effective Date:	2/6/2022
Title:	Incident Traffic Control	# of pages:	5
Category:	General Operations	Classification:	Red

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines to familiarize fire department personnel in proper operations while operating at incidents or training on roadways. This guideline is meant to set management expectations for conducting operations on roadways.

2. **POLICY:**

General: Whenever practical personnel shall position apparatus clear of roadways when operating at emergency incidents, training or routine operations. When this is not feasible, drivers shall position apparatus to obstruct traffic as minimally as possible while still protecting personnel operating in the roadway. Especially on a divided highway, every effort shall be made to continue at least one lane of traffic flowing. Safety of responders and the driving public shall be the primary concerns.

State Authority: Maine State law establishes authority for trained and authorized emergency personnel to function as a “Public Safety Traffic Flagger” (PSTF). SPFD personnel who have received appropriate Bureau of Labor standards training are authorized by the Chief of the Department to function as PSTF’s by this SOG. PSTF personnel wearing the appropriate clothing as defined later have the authority to direct vehicular traffic and drivers are required to obey their instructions.

Required PPE: All personnel functioning as PSTF’s are required to wear the following PPE; Class II Safety Vest with Helmet, Turnout Coat with Helmet or Spiewak coat w/ Helmet. Additionally, all personnel at the scene are required to wear a Class II Safety Vest, Turnout Coat or Spiewak coat.

Traffic Control Equipment: Each apparatus shall be equipped with a set of road cones. Engine 48, Ladder 45, and Engine 44 shall also be provided with a large folding “Emergency Scene Ahead” sign and a hand held STOP/SLOW traffic control sign.

General Safety Standards: In addition to proper PPE the following safety reminders and practices shall be followed;

- Maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of operating in or near moving traffic
- Exit and enter apparatus cabs as much as possible from the protected or shadow side of the vehicle
- When placing or retrieving traffic cones face and be alert to oncoming traffic
- Look in both directions before moving around traffic
- Stay in the protected or shadow area as much as possible and avoid the traffic side of apparatus

- Use special care when rounding the corners of apparatus to enter the unprotected side

3. PROCEDURES:

General Traffic Control Plan: In order to improve safety for responders and the driving public the following describes the general goals and components of a standard traffic control plan.

- Provide advance warning to approaching drivers by the use of signs, flaggers and cones in the “Advance Warning Zone”.
- Direct traffic as appropriate to shift lanes around the Activity area by the use of apparatus, cones and flaggers in the “Transition Zone” and “Buffer Zone”.
- Provide a safe “Work Zone” for responders by the use of cones and apparatus.
- Provide for the return to normal traffic flow after passing the work zone by the possible use of cones in the “Termination Zone”.
- Attempt to place as few personnel as possible in the hazard area by the use of vehicles, cones, signs, barricades and other inanimate objects.

The intent is to adequately inform and direct drivers to maintain safety for all.

Types of Traffic Incidents: Traffic incidents may be classified as one of three types depending on the duration of expected traffic disruption. Traffic control measures expected will increase with each level.

- **Minor Traffic Incidents:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow for under 30 minutes. Diversion of traffic to other lanes is not needed or only needed briefly
- **Intermediate Traffic Incidents:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow for between 30 minutes and 2 hours. More significant traffic diversion is expected and may include a brief Detour.
- **Major Traffic Incident:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow in excess of 2 hours. Major traffic diversion is expected and may involve a complete closing of the road with Detour.

Incident Specific Guidelines: The following are minimum traffic control efforts keyed to the above traffic incident types.

Minor Traffic Incidents: Apparatus shall be positioned to provide as little disruption to traffic flow as practical. An engine or ladder shall be positioned in the Buffer Zone to block oncoming traffic and create a safe Work Zone. This vehicle may be placed at an angle to help direct traffic flow. The engine or ladder operator shall place cones extending from the rear corner of the apparatus nearest the traffic toward oncoming traffic at an angle toward the curb to create a Transition Zone.

A **minimum of 5** cones placed at **15’ intervals** shall be used to create this Transition Zone. On **divided highways** this cone spacing should be increased to **no more than 55’**.

Ambulance apparatus shall be placed downstream of the engine or ladder in the protected Work Zone. If the ambulance arrives prior to an engine or ladder it shall be placed initially as

a block to create a Work Zone. Later arriving apparatus shall be placed upstream to extend the Work Zone and provide a block.

Cones from the ambulance should be used to help mark the parallel dividing line between the Work Zone and the traffic flow to reduce the possibility of traffic entering that area before reaching the Termination Zone.

Command may wish to place a PSTF at the furthest cone, at the start of the Transition Area, to provide advance warning and direction to approaching traffic. The PSTF shall use a hand held STOP/SLOW warning sign. They shall use Traffic 1 as a radio designation and remain on the same frequency as Command. This will allow rapid reporting to Command of traffic safety issues as well as allow Command to quickly halt or adjust traffic.

The size and location of these assignments should be adjusted to meet the specific traffic flow issues and physical road conditions.

Intermediate Traffic Incidents: All guidelines and features of the Minor Traffic Incident shall be placed initially.

Due to the expected longer duration of this type of incident an additional company should be special called specifically to provide traffic control. This company shall be positioned upstream of the initial companies to extend the Advance Warning Area and Transition Area.

This company on approach shall deploy the “Emergency Scene Ahead” sign at least **100 feet prior** to the last cone in the Transition Area. For an incident on a **divided highway** this sign should at least **1000 feet** before the last cone. When practical an **additional sign** shall be placed approximately **1500 feet** upstream from the first sign.

Command shall place a PSTF at the furthest cone, at the start of the Transition Area, to provide advance warning and direction to approaching traffic. The PSTF shall use a hand held STOP/SLOW warning sign. They shall use Traffic 1 as a radio designation and remain on the same frequency as Command. This will allow rapid reporting to Command of traffic safety issues as well as allow Command to quickly halt or adjust traffic.

Command should coordinate with law enforcement to develop a traffic control plan. This plan may include placing a law enforcement vehicle in the area of the PSTF to provide additional slowing effect due to the blue lights. Consideration should also be made as to reducing the amount of traffic diversion as the incident progresses and normally shrinks.

Consideration of additional non-emergency resources for traffic control such as Public Works barricades, MDOT warning signs and trucks should be examined.

Major Traffic Incidents: All guidelines and features of the Minor and Intermediate Traffic Incidents shall be placed. With these incidents an additional company shall be called if not already done to deal specifically with traffic control.

Additional road cones and PSTF's should be utilized as needed to improve traffic direction and flow.

Extra effort to liaison with law enforcement and discuss possible modifications to the traffic control plan should be undertaken. Given the extended nature of the operation a more in depth risk assessment should be discussed and modifications implemented.

Strong consideration of additional non-emergency resources for traffic control such as Public Works barricades, MDOT warning signs and trucks should be examined. If adequate resources can be obtained, Command may elect to return some emergency units to service and leave the area. This benefits the public as well as reducing the number of personnel exposed to the traffic hazards.

Two-way single lane traffic: Occasionally it may be necessary to reduce the roadway to a single lane which must be shared alternately with traffic in two directions. In this case an additional company shall be special called to set up an additional Advance Warning Zone in the opposite direction.

One PSTF shall be stationed at each end of the incident to control the traffic using hand held STOP/SLOW signs. They shall be designated Traffic 1 and Traffic 2 and coordinate via radio to allow traffic movement. They shall remain on the same frequency as Command to allow rapid reporting to Command of traffic safety issue as well as allow Command to quickly halt or adjust traffic.

Incident Specific Safety reminders:

- During night time incidents, vehicle headlights may need to be turned off to improve visibility of oncoming vehicles.
- During night time incidents, consideration should be made of supplemental lighting directed to illuminate the PSTF, information signs and the like. The PSTF shall have a flashlight with them at all times.
- Due to the higher speeds on the divided highway, safety distances need to be increased significantly.
- During slippery road conditions, safety distances need to be increased significantly.
- During reduced visibility situations

4. REFERENCES:

- None

By Order Of:



James P. Wilson
Fire Chief