

# Greer Police Department

## General Order 750.1 Traffic Ancillary Services

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. MOTORISTS ASSISTANCE
- II. HAZARDOUS ROADWAY CONDITIONS
- III. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
- IV. ABANDONED/JUNK VEHICLES
- V. TOW RECORDS
- VI. VEHICLE LOCKOUTS

By Order of: *Matt Hamby*  
Chief of Police

**May 9, 2023**

CALEA 61.4.1; 61.4.2; 61.4.3

**I. MOTORISTS ASSISTANCE**

- A. The Greer Police Department may often be called upon to provide general assistance to highway users. Assistance may be in the form of providing information or directions, aiding stranded motorists, obtaining mechanical or towing services, obtaining medical or fire suppression services, or other assistance as warranted.

Officers will provide assistance to motorists by either direct participation or by obtaining the necessary services.

B. Tow Service/Mechanical Assistance

1. Many occasions call for the immediate removal of a disabled vehicle from a traveled highway so further traffic problems and/or the possibility of a serious collision may be diminished. If the operator of the vehicle is present, the officer may elect to contact a towing service of the motorist's request, if the response time will be reasonable, or contact a wrecker from the tow rotation list.
2. Officers may, at their discretion, transport stranded motorists to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained; however, officers should be certain that assistance is available.
3. Officers' requests for tow trucks will be made to the Communications Section. Information regarding the towed vehicle will be provided to the dispatcher, who will enter available information into the department's tow log.

After receiving a response from the dispatcher, the officer will give the following information slowly and clearly so it can be recorded and checked for stolen:

- a. Vehicle license number, including year and state of issuance.
  - b. Whether the vehicle is being towed at the request of the owner or the officer.
4. It is the responsibility of the officer to complete a tow/inventory sheet when a tow is not at the owner's request. If practical, the operator of the vehicle will be advised of information regarding the vehicle release. The officer will not rely solely on the information supplied by the computer in the communications section, but should compare/confirm it with the vehicle itself.
  5. If the vehicle is to be processed for evidence, a Detective, or in the case of a traffic collision, a Traffic Officer, will make the determination if the vehicle should be towed for processing or if the vehicle can be processed at the scene. If it will be done on the scene, the owner will be notified to remove the vehicle from the scene after it is processed.
  6. All other vehicles towed by the Police Department will be taken to the lots of the tow companies called to the scene. This includes vehicles subject to seizure. Vehicles subject to seizure will have a hold placed on them by the officer requesting the tow. If it is determined that the vehicle will be seized, the vehicle will then be towed to the City Shop at the order of the officer in charge of seizures.

7. An officer will remain at the scene until the car has been hooked up by the tow truck. Only the vehicle keys will be turned over to the tow truck driver. If other keys accompany the vehicle keys, they will be returned to the owner. If this is not possible, they will be submitted to the property room.
8. The tow/inventory sheet should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than the end of the watch. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to check the accuracy and completeness of the tow sheet.
9. It is to be understood that the citizens requesting the service and/or the taxpayer are the ones who ultimately pay for these services, and poor quality service will not be tolerated. Officers should notify their supervisors indicating the name of any service agency that either renders poor service or is incapable of providing quality service because of inadequate equipment or personnel. This information will be forwarded to the Operational Support Lieutenant.
10. If a vehicle is safely out of traffic lanes, an officer may relay a message through the dispatcher requesting a mechanic or other assistance to respond for the motorist, or transport the motorist to a phone or police headquarters to call for assistance.

C. Stranded Motorists

1. Officers may, at their discretion, transport stranded motorists to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained; however, officers should be certain that assistance is available.  
  
When transporting stranded motorists of a sex opposite of that officer, officers should give the dispatcher their starting and ending mileage.
2. Stranded motorists should not be abandoned when exposed to a hazardous situation. Consideration should be given to traffic hazards, location, 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. Officers should periodically check to ensure the condition does not deteriorate.
3. Officers who assist stranded motorists should remain alert to the following possibilities:
  - a. The vehicle has not been authorized for use by the motorist.
  - b. The vehicle is in unsafe operating condition.
  - c. The motorist is not licensed to drive.
  - d. The motorist is incapable of safely operating the vehicle.
  - e. The vehicle's occupants have engaged in criminal conduct.

D. Emergency Assistance

Officers will render all practical assistance to users of the roadway who are involved in emergency situations.

1. Vehicle Fires- Officers will immediately advise the Communications Section upon discovery of a vehicle fire. The location, type of vehicle, location of fire, and cargo, if applicable, will be given to the Communications Section. The dispatcher will notify the Fire Department of these facts so an appropriate Fire Department response can be made.
2. Medical emergencies
  - a. Notification - Upon discovery of a medical emergency, the officers will request EMS. When requesting an ambulance, the type of emergency, location, condition of patient, and any other information available regarding the emergency will be given to the dispatcher.
  - b. Assistance- After notifying the Communication Section of the emergency, officers will render as much assistance as possible.

## II. HAZARDOUS ROADWAY CONDITIONS

- A. Hazardous highway and/or environmental conditions are defined as:
  1. Defects in the roadway itself (holes, ruts, or dangerous shoulders).
  2. Lack of, or defects in, highway safety features (center and roadway striping and reflectors) or improper, damaged, destroyed, or visually obstructed control and information signs.
  3. Lack of traffic control and information signs (curve and hill warnings, stop and yield signs, street and highway identification), or improper, damaged, destroyed, or visually obstructed control or information signs.
  4. Lack of mechanical traffic control devices or improperly located or malfunctioning traffic control devices.
  5. Lack of roadway lighting systems or deflective lighting systems.
  6. Natural or man-caused obstructions (fallen trees and rocks, litter, debris, parts of vehicles, broken water mains and electrical wires).
  7. Ice or heavy snow accumulations on roadway surfaces.
  8. Fire and its attendant smoke in areas adjacent to the highway.
  9. Vehicles parked or abandoned on or near the highway.
- B. The term "roadside hazard" will refer to all physical features of the roadside environment which are such that a vehicle leaving the road surface for any reason, even momentarily, can impact with them resulting in unnecessary injury to people or damaged property. Roadside hazards included in the definition are:
  1. Rigid, non-yielding supports for traffic control devices and lights, or the non-performance of safety installations; i.e. breakaway sign supports that fail to function properly.
  2. Improperly engineered guardrail.

3. Unshielded bridge railings that may not be able to retain an impacting vehicle and redirect it parallel to the roadway, thereby minimizing damage to the vehicle and danger to traffic below the bridge.
  4. Bridge abutments and other hazardous fixed objects off the roadway and into which the vehicle might crash with high injury probability.
  5. Utility poles, trees, ditches, inappropriately steep banks, culverts, rock formations, and other fixed objects and features of the roadside environment into which a vehicle might crash instead of being able to come to a stop in a clear distance.
- C. The following procedure will be followed in identifying, reporting and correcting hazardous roadway, roadside, or environmental conditions.
1. 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 or on any part of the traveled portion of this situation), they will immediately inform the Communication Section of this situation and identify the assistance or special equipment required. The officer will protect the scene and bystanders, direct traffic, or take any other action deemed necessary to correct the situation.
  2. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential collision situation but the threat of such is not imminent, as in the case of a discarded muffler, the officer will pass this information on to the Communications Section. The Communication Section will notify the street department or other proper authority to have the situation corrected. If the officer can correct the situation (such as the discarded muffler), they will take the appropriate action.

### **III. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

#### **A. Background**

1. A hazardous material is defined as any element, compound or combination thereof which is flammable, corrosive, explosive, toxic, radioactive, an oxidizer, or is highly reactive and which, because of handling, storing, processing, and packaging may have detrimental effects upon operating and emergency personnel, the public, equipment, and/or the environment.
2. Radioactive materials are in current use in hospitals, research laboratories, and numerous industrial and military applications and are transported throughout the state by truck, rail, air and waterborne transportation.
3. In addition, numerous hazardous materials are transported throughout the state every day. While many of these are in common use, accidents or spills present a serious threat to the health and safety of the general public, especially the officer who happens to be first on the scene
4. Many accidents and the other emergencies involve more than one agency and require a cooperative emergency response. It is of extreme importance for all officers to be aware of what action they should take during hazardous material emergencies.

#### **B. Procedure**

1. Radioactive material

- a. Complete information concerning the incident will be forwarded to headquarters by the quickest means available. This information will include:
  1. Basic description (explosion, fire, etc.).
  2. Exact location.
  3. If possible, all information contained on the interstate commerce commission (ICC) label or labels.
- b. Upon being notified of any incident, the Communications Section will notify the Greer Fire Department who will notify the appropriate state and/or federal agencies.

2. Atomic weapons

When it is believed that an accident or incident has occurred involving an atomic weapon (or weapon component) or radioactive material that can be identified with a military service, the Communications Section will, in addition to the notification specified in b. above, request assistance from the appropriate military headquarters.

3. Hazardous material

First, and most important, is the identification of shipments considered hazardous. This is usually accomplished directly or indirectly by descriptive data in shipping documents, on containers, package labels, and vehicle placards.

If this information is not readily obtainable due to an incapacitated driver, ~~destruction~~ of a bill of lading or other shipping papers, the Communications Section will immediately contact the Chemical Transportation Emergency Center (Chemtrec) 1-800-424-9300. Chemtrec provides technical expertise in handling hazardous material emergencies. They can also provide additional phone numbers for emergencies such as accidental poisoning. When in doubt, the Communications Section should immediately contact Chemtrec. Basic information needed:

- a. Name of caller and call-back number.
- b. Location of problem.
- c. Shipper or manufacturer.
- d. Container type.
- e. Rail car or truck number.
- f. Carrier name.
- g. Consignee.
- h. Local conditions.

4. In the case of hazardous materials incidents, officers will isolate the hazard area, evacuate nonessential personnel, and make a preliminary hazard identification (spill, leak, fire) using the Hazardous Materials Guidebook. The Greer Fire Department will be notified to aid in any such matter.

#### **IV. ABANDONED/JUNK VEHICLES**

- A. Officers have the authority and the responsibility to ensure an efficient flow of vehicular traffic on streets and highways. This sometimes requires that vehicles be removed/towed to a place of safety. If an officer finds that a vehicle is left unattended upon a street/highway in violation of any provisions regulating stopping, standing or parking and constitutes a definite hazard or obstruction to normal movement of traffic, he/she is authorized to tow the vehicle, if the owner cannot be located, or require the driver or other person in charge of the vehicle to move it to a position off the roadway immediately.
- B. An officer locating or receiving a complaint about an abandoned junk motor vehicle on a public street that does not constitute a hazard or obstruction to normal movement of traffic, will attempt to have the matter corrected before towing it. The officer will determine that there is no wanted or stolen status on the vehicle, identifying the owner if possible, and attempt to have it removed by the owner.
- C. If the investigating officer is unable to have the abandoned motor vehicle removed by the owner, the following steps will be taken:
  1. Determine if the vehicle qualifies as an "abandoned motor vehicle"
  2. An "abandoned motor vehicle" means any vehicle meeting the following requirements:
    - a. Left on a public roadway for more than 72 hours.
    - b. Extensively damaged.
    - c. Apparently inoperable.
  3. If the vehicle qualifies as an "abandoned motor vehicle," the officer will notify the Communications Section and request a tow truck. The next tow company on the rotation list will be called to remove the vehicle to their storage lot.
- D. If the vehicle is on private property and falls within the definition of an inoperable or unlicensed motor vehicle as defined in city ordinance 18.5-32, the officer will request Communications notify the Nuisance and Abatement Officer.

#### **V. TOW RECORDS**

- A. Authorization to Tow
  1. The purpose of this section is to establish guidelines regarding removal/towing of vehicles from public streets and highways for various legitimate governmental purposes, such as vehicles in violation of provisions regulating stopping, standing, or parking, stolen vehicles, and vehicles of arrested persons. The towing procedure outlined in section I.B. of this order is to be followed when a tow is authorized.
  2. Officers are authorized to remove a vehicle found upon a street/highway under the following circumstances:

- a. When any vehicle is left unattended upon any street, bridge, or causeway and is so illegally parked so as to constitute a hazard or obstruction to the normal movement of traffic, or as to unreasonably interfere with street cleaning or snow removal procedures.
  - b. When any vehicle has been stolen or operated without the consent of the owner.
  - c. When any vehicle displays illegal license plates or fails to display the current, lawfully required license plates.
  - d. When any vehicle has been used in or connected with the commission of a crime.
  - e. When any vehicle has been damaged or wrecked so as to be inoperable or isolates equipment provisions of this traffic code whereby its continued operation would constitute a condition hazardous to life, limb, or property.
  - f. When any vehicle is left unattended due to the removal of an ill, injured or arrested operator.
  - g. When any vehicle has been operated by any person who has failed to stop in case of accident or collision.
  - h. When any vehicle has been operated by any person who is driving without a lawful license or while his or her license has been suspended or revoked.
  - i. When any vehicle is left unattended within any fire lane, identified as such, whether on private or public property.
3. Any vehicle removed under authority of Section V.B. above shall be ordered into storage. Any other vehicle removed under authority of this section shall be ordered into storage and the Police Department shall forthwith attempt to notify the registered owner of the fact that such removal and impounding.
  4. Any person desiring to redeem an impounded vehicle shall appear at the Police Department to furnish satisfactory evidence to identify and ownership or right of possession. Prior to issuance of a release form, the claimant, owner or operator shall either pay the amount due for any fines for violations on account of which such vehicle was impounded or as the court may require, post a bond in an amount set by the court, to appear to answer such violations. The tow company shall release such vehicle upon receipt of the release form and payment of all towage and storage charges.

**B. Special Considerations**

1. If the driver or owner of the vehicle is arrested, the officer will have the vehicle towed. The officer has the discretion to release the vehicle to a responsible, licensed person of the owner's choice once ownership has been verified, as long as the vehicle is not needed for evidence or subject to seizure.
2. If the vehicle is reported stolen, officers will determine who the reporting agency is and whether the vehicle should be held for evidentiary purposes. If another agency is the reporting agency, such agency will be contacted.

- a. If the stolen vehicle is not to be held for evidentiary purposes or other reasons, the owner will be contacted and instructed to come to the scene and claim the car.
  - b. If the owner of the vehicle is unable to respond immediately, the car will be towed.
  - c. If the vehicle can be processed for evidence at the scene, then it should be processed there and the owner notified to claim the vehicle.
3. Vehicles parked unlawfully on the streets will be handled in the following manner.
- a. If the vehicle is parked in such a manner that there is no immediate traffic hazard, the officer should attempt to locate the operator and have the situation corrected. If unable, the officer will take regular parking enforcement action. Although parked in violation, the vehicle will not be towed or impounded if it is not an immediate hazard.
  - b. Whenever an officer finds a "vehicle unattended upon any highway, where such vehicle constitutes an obstruction to traffic," the officer may provide for the removal of such vehicle.
4. When an officer encounters a vehicle with expired license plates the following will apply:
- a. If a vehicle is being driven on the street with expired license plates, a regular traffic citation or written warning will be issued and the driver will be instructed to remove the vehicle from the street until current registration is obtained. This vehicle may be impounded under City Ordinance.
  - b. If the vehicle is parked on the street or right-of-way, the officer should issue a citation or written warning to the registered owner and attempt to contact the owner to have the vehicle moved.
  - c. If the vehicle appears to be abandoned, the officer shall issue a citation and then follow the guidelines in unit IV of this order.
5. When a vehicle is involved in a traffic collision, the officer will contact the Communications Section and have the appropriate tow company respond to the scene. If there is an owner's request for a tow company, every effort should be made to contact that tow company.

C. Tow Records

1. Whenever a vehicle is removed or towed at the direction of the officer, a tow and inventory sheet along with an incident report will be completed. The tow sheet and report will show the time, date, requesting officer, reason for the removal or tow, towing service, vehicle information, and location of the vehicle.
2. The Communications Section will be advised of all tows so proper entry of available information can be immediately entered into the tow log.
3. The tow report will be forwarded to the Records Section for retention.

4. The officer involved in the towing of a vehicle should attempt to contact the owner/operator of the vehicle if not available to notify him the vehicle is being towed. This attempt(s) will be recorded in the report.

D. Inventory of Towed Vehicles

1. The officer who requests the tow truck will be responsible for conducting an inventory. An inventory will be conducted on all vehicles towed by this Department.
2. The officer will attempt to inventory the vehicle before leaving the scene. If this is not practical, then an inventory will be conducted as soon as possible. The date and time of the inventory will be noted on the tow report. Any vehicle towed as an owner's request may not be subjected to an inventory.
3. The inventory will be as thorough as possible and will include all areas of the vehicle and all containers in the vehicle, both unlocked, and when keys are available locked in order to:
  - a. Protect the owner's property in the vehicle.
  - b. Protect the officers from dangerous objects
  - c. Protect the officers from false allegations of theft
4. All items unattached in the vehicle with an estimated value of more than \$10 will be listed on the inventory sheet, which will be part of or attached to the tow report. Any item of substantial value will be removed from the vehicle and submitted to the property room. A property tag will be completed. A list of items as well as the property tag number will be included on the inventory.

E. Release of Towed Vehicles

1. If a tow sheet has the "hold" box marked, the reason for the hold will be indicated on the tow report, and the vehicle will not be released without approval from the officer who authorized the tow.
2. If a vehicle is to be reclaimed at the City Shop, the owner will be instructed to report to the involved towing agency to pay all charges. The vehicle will then be released upon the owner presenting the title, registration, and paid receipt.
2. If the vehicle is at the tow company lot, the owner of the tow company must receive approval from the officer who put a hold on the vehicle to release it. The owner of the vehicle is responsible for payment of all charges to the tow company.

**VI. VEHICLE LOCKOUTS**

Citizens who are locked out of their vehicles will generally be advised to contact a tow or locksmith service to assist them unless there are circumstances that raise a safety concern for the citizen or person locked in the vehicle.

Communications will dispatch a patrol unit to a citizen locked out of a vehicle when:

1. The vehicle is located in an area that poses a safety risk.

2. The lockout occurs at such a late hour that it poses a safety risk.
3. A young child, incapacitated person, or animal is locked in the vehicle.
4. Any other circumstance exists which poses a safety risk or hazardous situation.

Due to the potential for injury and damages, officers will not attempt to unlock any door with a side impact airbag or that has electric locks. The owner or operator will be advised to contact a locksmith for entry assistance. Communicators will not recommend a locksmith.

If circumstances exist where it is critical that entry be made as soon as possible, such as a child or animal in the vehicle at risk of injury or illness, the officer will contact the Shift Supervisor who may provide authorization to break a window. An Incident Report outlining the circumstances surrounding the decision to use force to enter the vehicle will be completed by the end of the shift.

If circumstances exist where the citizen would be at risk due to location or other hazardous situation, the officer will stand by until the arrival of assistance, or will consider the driver a stranded motorist and assist accordingly.