




# City of Manassas Police Department General Duty Manual



Effective Date: 09-05-2005	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b>	Number: 08-10
Subject: Road Hazards and Motorist Assistance		
<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Amends <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescinds <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewed: 02-18-2015 General Order # 8-10 Dated: 6-20-2000		Reevaluation: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 18 months <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Accreditation Standards: 41.2.4/ 46.3.2/ 61.3.1/ 61.4.1/ 61.4.2/	By Authority Of:  Douglas W. Keen, Chief of Police	Total Pages: 3

## PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for identifying, reporting and correcting hazardous highway and roadside conditions and for providing assistance to motorists.

## POLICY:

Officers should be observant for hazards and potential hazards to the motoring public. Hazardous conditions observed or reported by citizens should be identified as soon as possible, reported and corrected. Officers should be observant for motorists who appear to be in need of assistance. When called to respond to a request for motorist assistance, the officer will make every effort to obtain or render assistance, if practical.

## DISCUSSION:

N/A

## PROCEDURE:

### I. Hazardous Highway / Environmental Conditions

- A. Hazardous highway and / or environmental conditions include the following:
1. Defects in the roadway itself (i.e., holes, ruts or dangerous shoulders) or lack of, or defects in, highway safety features e.g., center and side of the road striping and reflectors, impact attenuation devices).
  2. Lack of, improper, damaged, destroyed or visually obstructed traffic control and information signs (curve and hill warnings, stop and yield signs, speed limit signs, street and highway identification).
  3. Lack of, improperly located or malfunctioning mechanical traffic control devices.
  4. Lack of, or defective, roadway lighting systems.
  5. Natural or man made obstructions (debris in the roadway, fallen trees and rocks. Litter, parts of vehicles, broken water mains and electrical wires).
  6. Ice or heavy snow accumulations on roadway surfaces.
  7. Fire and resulting smoke in areas adjacent to the highway.
  8. Vehicles illegally parked or abandoned on or near the roadway.
  9. Obstructed vision at intersections.
- B. When a hazard is identified, and in the officer's opinion, requires immediate correction (such as a fallen tree or electrical wire across or on any part of the traveled portion of the highway), the officer should :
1. Immediately inform the PSCC of the situation, identifying assistance or specific equipment required. PSCC notifies the appropriate utility or City Department.
  2. Notify the Duty Supervisor.
  3. Protect the scene and bystanders, direct traffic, set up flare patterns, or take any actions deemed necessary to correct or protect the situation.

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- C. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential accident situation, but the threat of such is not imminent, the officer should:
  1. Notify PSCC immediately, and identify specific actions to correct the situation. PSCC notifies the appropriate utility or City Department.
  2. Notify the Duty Supervisor.
  3. In certain instances, such as ongoing or repeat problems, documentation of the situation in memorandum form and directed to the Duty Supervisor may be appropriate.

**II. Hazardous Roadside Conditions**

- A. Hazardous roadside conditions refers to all physical features of the roadside environment that are such that a vehicle leaving the road surface for any reasons, even momentarily can impact with them resulting in unnecessary damage or injury. Roadside hazards may include, but are not limited to:
  1. Broken guard rails or other hazardous fixed objects built off the roadway and into which a vehicle might crash with high injury probability.
  2. Utility poles in need of repair, trees blocking vision, ditches or shoulders in need of repair, inappropriately steep banks, culverts, rock formations, areas prone to flooding due to improper drainage construction, and other fixed objects and features of the roadside environment that may be unsafe to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- B. Hazardous roadside conditions are reported and corrected as specified in Section I of this General Order.

**III. Hazardous Materials Control / Removal**

- A. Hazardous materials control and removal is a function of specially trained members of the Fire and Rescue Departments, and certain City contractors and outside governmental agencies.
- B. Extreme caution is required in the approach to a potential hazardous materials incident.
- C. Further procedural guidelines are found in General Order 8-8, and in the Department contingency plans.

**IV. Providing Assistance to Motorists**

- A. General Assistance - The department recognizes the responsibility for the safety of the public while using the roads and highways within its jurisdiction. Unforeseen and emergency incidents will occur involving the motorists operating in the City. When an officer observes or responds to a motorist in need of assistance, they will make every effort to render or obtain assistance as practical.
  1. The following areas are included within the scope of assistance that can be rendered.
    - a. Providing directions
    - b. Non-emergency vehicle lockout – In non-emergency situations, officers are restricted from using a Slim Jim or other similar tool to assist a motorist in gaining access to the vehicle due to the risk of damage to the vehicle. They may, however, assist the motorist in locating a locksmith to open the vehicle. Officers will ascertain the person making the request has the right to enter the vehicle.
    - c. If a vehicle is in the roadway and poses a hazard, the officer will use appropriate traffic control devices to warn other motorists of the vehicle stopped in the roadway.
    - d. Obtaining Gasoline – The officer may transport the motorist to the nearest service station to obtain gasoline. Only gasoline in an approved safety container may be transported in a department vehicle. Gasoline will not be transported in the passenger compartment of the police vehicle.
- B. Mechanical Assistance – Department personnel will not attempt to make mechanical repairs to vehicles.
- C. Disabled Vehicles and Towing Services
  1. Disabled vehicles that are not in violation of law and not posing a traffic hazard, and which are not likely to create a traffic hazard or impede traffic in the near future (pending darkness, etc.) are to be considered abandoned vehicles, and handled according to the procedures described in General Order 8-11, Towing Vehicles.

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2. Officers in order to relieve an immediate traffic hazard posed by an attended disabled vehicle may push the vehicle manually, if possible. Officers do not use Department vehicles to push disabled vehicles. Otherwise, initiating officers contact the PSCC and request the “next available” towing company.
3. Attended disabled vehicles are allowed the owner / operator’s choice of towing company, only if a timely removal can be completed by the company of their choice, and the initiating officer does not remain tied up on the scene unnecessarily. Otherwise, the initiating officer should contact the PSCC and request the “next available” towing company.
4. Officers should lay out a flare pattern, give safety instructions to the owner / operator, or otherwise render the scene safe and return to service at their discretion.

D. Emergency Assistance

1. When a stranded or disabled motorist requires assistance of an emergency nature, the officer will render or request the assistance needed. (fire, rescue, mechanical, tow, taxi or lockout). If a citizen’s safety is in question if left unattended by the officer, the officer can transport the citizen to a suitable location to await or obtain help.
2. Emergency lockouts consist of the following:
  - a. A small child or infant is locked in the vehicle.
  - b. An animal is locked in the vehicle and the outside temperature is such that the animal is in danger.
3. If an officer is enroute to or on a call, and observes a disabled or stranded motorist, he will notify the PSCC of the motorist’s location and vehicle description to ensure that assistance is dispatched.

Attachments: N/A

Index as: Road Hazards  
Hazardous Conditions  
Highway Safety  
Emergency Assistance  
Stranded Persons  
Disabled Vehicles

References: N/A