



## OPERATIONAL MANUAL

# OPS - 350 – TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL

Amends/Supersedes: OPS-350 (06/11/2021)

Date of Issue: 02/10/2025

### I. GENERAL

- A. Newport News Police Department personnel provide traffic direction and control under various circumstances to maintain roadway safety and facilitate investigative activities.
- B. For purposes of this policy, the term "officer" shall also apply in situations where a police aide is performing traffic-related duties as part of their job function.
- C. Police units will **not** be used to provide escorts for civilian vehicles in a medical emergency. The officer will summon an ambulance to transport the person with the medical emergency. [61.3.3]

### II. PROCEDURES

#### A. Manual Direction

- 1. Officers shall manually direct traffic at points and events requiring more than ordinary traffic control. Such points and events may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Crashes (see [OPS-330 Traffic Crash Investigation](#)); [61.3.2(a)]
  - b. Special events (e.g., parades, sporting events, etc.).
  - c. Adverse road and weather conditions, including but not limited to: [61.3.2(b)]
    - 1) Gas line/hazardous material leaks.
    - 2) Downed power lines.
    - 3) Fires.
    - 4) Flooding.
    - 5) Emergency weather conditions.
- 2. When manually directing traffic, officers shall:
  - a. Wear a department issued or authorized traffic vest/reflective gear. [61.3.2(e)]
  - b. Position themselves as conspicuously as possible.
  - c. Position their vehicles, with emergency lights activated, in a highly visible location.
  - d. Use clear, uniform, hand, or flashlight signals, supplemented with whistle blasts when necessary.
  - e. Use temporary traffic control devices at their disposal (i.e., flares, cones, barricades, etc.) to minimize danger to themselves and assist with traffic flow. Officers are responsible for removing these control devices after completing the manual control. [61.3.2(d)]
- 3. When directing traffic at fire scenes, officers shall: [61.3.2(b)]
  - a. Cooperate with fire officials in establishing and maintaining a perimeter around the fire.
  - b. Direct the traffic flow to prevent vehicles from driving over fire hoses.
  - c. Control parking and spectators to minimize their interference with the traffic flow and firefighting units.
- 4. Upon encountering a malfunctioning traffic light, officers shall:
  - a. Advise the Communications Division of the malfunction to be reported to the City's Traffic Engineering Department.



- b. Manually direct traffic until a representative from the City's Traffic Engineering Department arrives if the malfunctioning light presents a traffic hazard and if the representative can respond in a reasonable amount of time or use the traffic control box to change the malfunctioning light to flashing whenever it is safe and appropriate. [61.3.2(c)]

B. Escorts

[61.3.3]

1. Funerals

Assignment of motorcycles, police aide vehicles, or regular patrol units shall be made when the funeral home involved advises the Secondary Employment coordinator of the need for escort services. Funeral homes that do not provide the request at least 24 hours before the needed escort will be advised that the department may be unable to accommodate the request. The Secondary Employment coordinator shall assign the escort duty to at least two officers, unless additional officers are requested, based on the number of vehicles in the procession.

- a. Officers shall arrive at the point of origin no later than five minutes before the scheduled departure time. They will notify the Communications Division before starting the escort. The officers will notify the funeral director of the chosen route and the speed at which the procession will travel (speeds should be between 20 and 30 mph, depending on traffic and weather conditions).
- b. Emergency vehicles involved in the escort must use emergency lights and unit headlights. The siren shall be used only when clearing an intersection or to clear traffic throughout the escort.
- c. The lead unit shall leave a safe distance between itself and the lead car in the procession. When approaching an intersection with traffic control, the lead unit will move ahead into the intersection, stopping traffic in all directions. The unit will move ahead only when it is confident that traffic will remain stopped until the procession passes. Units shall continue this procedure until they reach their destination.
- d. As a courtesy to the deceased, the officers can stand outside their vehicle with a hand or hat over the badge. After the procession has passed, the officers shall notify the Communications Division of its completion and resume their assigned duties.

2. Oversized Load Escorts

- a. Whenever a vehicle that exceeds legal dimensions travels over Newport News City streets, the organization owning that vehicle must obtain an oversized hauling permit from the City's Engineering Department, even though they may have a permit issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia in their possession.
- b. The city permit requires the hauler to contact the designated Special Operations supervisor to schedule the load. The Special Operations supervisor or their designee will contact the secondary employment coordinator to hire the appropriate number of officers for the permit's specific load and route restrictions.
- c. This state permit is not valid within the corporate limits of the City of Newport News. However, the city will honor the state permit when the oversized haul is moving through the city on a "Primary Permit " and does not deviate from its route on a primary state highway.
- d. Before undertaking an oversized load escort, the lead officer or supervisor shall determine that a city permit has been issued and shall review all information on this and/or any accompanying state permit.
- e. The escort shall proceed **only** by the route indicated on the moving permit.



- f. The escort shall proceed with the appropriate police vehicles in the assigned positions designated by the Special Operations supervisor who approved and scheduled the move. Larger, more complicated moves may require an Operations Plan and a formal briefing prior to the escort at the discretion of the Special Operations supervisor. Escorts will utilize appropriate safety equipment, including traffic vests, lighted wands or flashlights, vehicle emergency lights and sirens when appropriate.
- g. The escort shall move at a speed that the officers and the driver of the load determine to be safe, considering the nature of the load, permit restrictions, traffic, and weather conditions.
- h. Officers will utilize the appropriate Special Operations radio channel for whichever precinct the move originates in (Specops). A 10-3 should be called on the channel for the duration of the escort to allow the escorting officers to communicate safely and efficiently. Communications should be advised of the escort and the 10-3. For complicated moves with an Operations Plan, a copy of the plan should be sent to dispatch for awareness purposes.

### 3. Hazardous Materials Escorts

The department provides escorts for hazardous materials after being notified by the Fire Marshal's Office of the need for such an escort. Any organization contacting the department for this type of escort shall be advised to contact the City Fire Marshal first. Upon request of the Fire Marshal, the department will follow the following procedures in a hazardous materials escort:

- a. The shift supervisor notified shall assign officers to the escort duty and advise them of the date, time, destination of the escort, and nature of the materials being carried, along with any emergency information needed in the event of a possible accident.
- b. The watch supervisor shall coordinate with the Fire Marshal the presence of the Fire Department's HAZMAT team during the escort. Escort officers shall ascertain the presence of the HAZMAT team before beginning the escort.
- c. One marked police unit equipped with emergency lights and a siren shall serve as a lead unit, and a second similarly equipped unit shall serve as a follow-up unit. The officers and the escort shall coordinate the distance between the police units and the escorted material and the rate of travel before departure.
- d. In the event of an accident, the escort officers shall assist the HAZMAT team in controlling traffic and in evacuation procedures if the HAZMAT team deems them necessary.
- e. Upon completion of the escort, the officers shall notify the Communications Division and resume their normally assigned duties.

### 4. Parades

Units assisting with the movements of a parade involving either mobile units or marching units must:

- a. Utilize the vehicle's emergency equipment, when appropriate.
- b. Have a marked police unit lead the parade to ensure the safety of the community along the parade route and the participating parade units.
- c. Utilize the police unit's emergency equipment when the officer feels it is necessary for safety reasons.
- d. Maintain a slow, steady pace, keeping the parade units moving. This pace shall be coordinated with parade sponsors or marshals before the start of the parade.
- e. Provide motorcycle units that continuously move along the parade route to maintain a safety zone between parade units and the observers.
- f. Have a marked police unit or police aide serve as a follow-up vehicle behind the last parade unit. This police unit shall keep all other units informed about the parade's progress.



g. Restore the normal flow of traffic upon completion of the parade.

5. Political Dignitaries or Organizations

All political escort requests involving United States government officials, foreign dignitaries, or elected state or city officials will be assigned to the Special Operations Division commander or designee under the direction of the assistant chief of Patrol Operations. The assistant chief of Patrol Operation determines if the escort requested is related to the dignitary's official duties as an elected official, a political organization or a candidate running for office and coordinate the escort activities between the agencies involved.

a. Escorts (Dignitaries Performing Official Duties)

- 1) The precinct commander or designee will determine traffic points that need to be covered, and the number of personnel needed.
- 2) The route chosen should be designed to be the most suitable, causing as few problems as possible with the normal traffic
- 3) flow.
- 4) At least one marked police unit or two motorcycles, along with a follow-up vehicle, will lead the motorcade.
- 5) Depending on the nature of the escort, the Precinct Commander and other agencies involved will decide whether emergency equipment is used.
- 6) After the escort, all assigned personnel will remain on assignment until relieved by the precinct commander or their designee.

b. Escorts (Political Organizations or Candidates Running for Office)

- 1) A minimum of two marked police units will be used, one to lead and the other as a follow-up vehicle.
- 2) The precinct commander or designee will be responsible for acquiring on-duty officers for the assignment and the assignment of vehicles.
- 3) After the escort, assigned officers will return the units to their precinct.

  
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**Steven R. Drew**  
**Chief of Police**