

TRAFFIC ASSISTANCE

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to provide police assistance for routine and emergency situations including, but not limited to, temporary traffic hazards, stranded motorists, and other traffic situations.

PROCEDURE:

I. Manual Traffic Direction

- A. Manual traffic direction may be necessary in the following instances:
 - 1. The scene of traffic crashes.
 - 2. During periods of adverse road and weather conditions.
 - 3. Sporting and special events.
 - 4. Signal malfunctions.
 - 5. Fire or medical emergencies.
 - 6. Disabled vehicles or other roadway hazards.

II. Traffic Direction Guidelines

- A. Employees will utilize uniform hand gestures and signals consistent with OPD training.
- B. High visibility, OPD issued, reflective outerwear shall be worn whenever manual traffic direction is required, especially during nighttime hours and adverse weather conditions.

EXCEPTION: Exigent circumstances may cause a reflective vest or high-visibility clothing to become a hindrance to law enforcement functions. OPD supervisors may grant exceptions for special situations, such as traffic control at an Emergency Response Unit (ERU) call-out, sniper attacks, emergency calls for service, etc.

- C. Temporary traffic control devices, such as traffic cones, flares, and barricades, may be used to supplement manual traffic direction if the safety of employees and motorists is not compromised.
 - 1. Temporary traffic control devices used to redirect traffic flow for more than one hour on the Interstate system shall be compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
 - 2. The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has an emergency barricade truck and trained employees, available 24/7, who may assist with the placement of compliant traffic control devices. Dynamic Message Boards will also be utilized to warn approaching traffic of slowdowns/hazards ahead.
 - a. Officers who perform long-term Interstate traffic control may utilize both of these services by making a request via the Nebraska State Patrol (See [Appendix A](#) for phone number).

- D. Officers assigned to the Traffic Unit may modify the pattern of an automatic signal by placing it on the flash mode. Automatic signals may also be manually operated to enhance traffic flow during special events.
- E. Officers assigned to direct traffic will not leave their assignment until the traffic flow has returned to normal, or when directed to by a supervisor.

III. Stranded Motorists

- A. Officers will use 10-7 when they assist stranded motorists.
- B. When feasible, officers who encounter stranded motorists will stop and offer assistance as follows:
 - 1. Protect the disabled vehicle and motorists by using emergency lights to warn oncoming motorists.
 - 2. Direct traffic to relieve congestion.
 - 3. Obtain emergency services, if needed.
 - 4. Contact towing services.
 - a. The motorist will be advised that they will be responsible for the tow charges.
 - 5. Assist the motorist in arranging for transportation.
 - a. Officers will ask motorists if they need a ride to the nearest telephone, service station, or other public place from where assistance can be arranged.
 - b. Officers transporting stalled or stranded motorists shall advise Radio Dispatch of beginning mileage and upon arrival at the destination, shall give the ending mileage.
 - 6. Summon emergency services when necessary.
 - a. Officers who are enroute to an emergency call and are unable to stop, will immediately notify 911 Dispatch to send another unit to the motorist's location.
 - b. Officers who are enroute to a non-emergency call will stop and, if the vehicle does not pose a hazard and no medical emergency exists, notify 911 Dispatch and continue to the dispatched call for service.
- C. Motorist Assist Program
 - 1. The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) operate the Motorist Assist Program in the Omaha metro area.
 - a. Motorist Assist trucks patrol the freeway and interstate systems and assist stranded motorists by changing tires, inflating tires, providing up to two (2) gallons of gas, and jumping vehicle batteries.
 - b. Motorist Assist trucks do not push/pull/tow vehicles, give rides to vehicle occupants, or request tows.

- c. In general, the program runs Monday through Friday from 0600 to 1900 hours, except on holidays. The program may not always be available and may run different hours for special events.
2. Officers may request the help of Motorist Assist trucks via 911 Dispatch when they come across a motorist that has a flat tire or has run out of gas. Dispatch will notify the NDOT State Operations Center of the request.
3. If officers are dispatched to a 911 call to assist a motorist, they shall NOT request a Motorist Assist truck in lieu of responding to the call.
 - a. After officers arrive on scene and determine the best course of action, they may request a Motorist Assist truck.
4. Motorist Assist trucks are equipped with arrow boards that can be used on the scene of motor vehicle crashes.
 - a. Officer may request a Motorist Assist truck if they are on scene of a crash in which the truck is needed.
5. See Training Bulletin #[58-23](#) for more information.

IV. Rolling Roadblocks

- A. Rolling roadblocks are a traffic control procedure used to safely slow or divert traffic flow on a highway or interstate.
 1. Rolling roadblocks are most often used in response to a traffic hazard such as a crash, or a planned incident such as a dignitary motorcade or transient construction activity.
- B. Rolling roadblocks will be established upon reasonable request from an agency or authority that determines the need for mobile traffic assistance, requiring decelerating control, but not total immobilization, of moving traffic.
 1. Any formal request for a rolling roadblock will be immediately referred to the Traffic Unit.
 2. Informal requests will be approved by a command officer prior to deployment, whenever possible.
 3. Road conditions, time of day, lighting conditions, and weather will be considered when making the decision to deploy a rolling roadblock.
- C. When feasible, a rolling roadblock will be supervised by a Traffic Unit supervisor. The Traffic Unit supervisor will be responsible for the employee requirements, including the required assistance of other law enforcement employees (i.e., Nebraska State Patrol, Douglas County Sheriff's Department, etc.).
- D. All involved police vehicles will utilize emergency lighting at all times during the rolling roadblock.

V. Notification Procedures – Road Closures and Other Road Hazards

- A. Road Closures.
 1. Responding officers shall notify 911 Dispatch when a road is completely closed or blocked-off due to a vehicle crash or other road hazard that makes vehicle travel unsafe,

or when a road is closed or blocked-off to preserve evidence from a serious injury crash (Code 3 or above) or fatality crash.

- a. If the closed road is a State Interstate or Highway, 911 Dispatch will contact the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) Traffic Management Center (See for [Appendix A](#) phone number).
- b. If the closed road is maintained by the City of Omaha, 911 Dispatch will contact City of Omaha Traffic Engineering and Maintenance at 402-444-5160. The 911 Dispatcher may require additional information from the officer in this situation.

B. Damaged Traffic Control and Traffic Safety Devices.

1. Responding officers shall notify 911 Dispatch when any traffic control device (sign, traffic light, etc.) is damaged or disabled, or when any traffic safety device (guard rails, impact attenuators, jersey barriers, etc.) is significantly damaged.
 - a. If the affected device is on a State Interstate or Highway, 911 Dispatch will contact the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) Traffic Management Center (See [Appendix A](#) for phone number).
 - b. If the affected device is on a City-maintained road, 911 Dispatch will contact City of Omaha Traffic Engineering and Maintenance at 402-444-5160. The 911 Dispatcher may require additional information from the officer in this situation.

REFERENCES:

I. Previous OPD Orders

- A. Previous General Orders: #66-00, 9-07, 43-15, 118-16, 5-21, and 91-23.

II. Accreditation Standards

- A. Relevant CALEA Accreditation standards: 61.3.2, 61.4.1, and 61.4.2.

III. Other

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #04-2021.
- B. Training Bulletins: #[58-23](#).