



PATROL			513.03	
		<b>TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL</b>		
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## CONTENTS

This procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| I. AUTHORITY AND DUTIES                 | IV. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES |
| II. MANUAL CONTROL OF TRAFFIC           | V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES              |
| III. TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL MALFUNCTION | VI. ESCORTS                           |

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish guidelines for directing the movement of vehicles and pedestrian traffic in a safe and efficient manner.

## SCOPE

This procedure shall apply to all certified Punta Gorda Police Department law enforcement officers and VIP's.

## DEFINITIONS

- Adverse Road and Weather Conditions:** For example, debris in the roadway, downed power lines, fog, ice, flooding, exposed guard rails, pot holes, etc.
- Roadblock:** A barricade, either fixed or moving, which is intended to preclude through-passage. This definition does not include the actions of an officer who is manually directing traffic to stop where no physical barrier or traffic control signal exist.
- Traffic Control:** The physical presence of a law enforcement officer or VIP controlling vehicles and pedestrians.
- Traffic Control Device:** Signs, signals, markings, and devices placed or erected for the purpose of regulating, warning or guiding traffic.

5. **Traffic Control Signal:** Any device, whether manually, electrically or mechanically operated, by which traffic is alternately directed to stop and permitted to proceed.

## PROCEDURE

### I. AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

- A. Florida Law requires obedience to police and fire department officials; it is a misdemeanor of the second degree for any person to willfully fail or refuse to comply with any lawful order or directions of any police officer, or member of any fire department at the scene of a fire, who is vested by law or ordinance with authority to direct, control, or regulate traffic.
- B. Traffic Control and Direction Duties
  1. It shall be the duty of certified law enforcement officers and VIP's to facilitate the safe flow of vehicles and pedestrians by utilization of manual traffic direction techniques.
  2. Officers and VIP's involved in traffic direction and control shall be responsible for providing information and answering citizen inquiries in a manner consistent with effective duty performance.

### II. MANUAL CONTROL OF TRAFFIC

- A. **Criteria:** Officers/VIPs shall exercise judgement in carefully weighing the necessity of effecting manual control of traffic. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, existing roadway congestion, adverse conditions, emergency situations, traffic volume, traffic speed, number of pedestrians, estimated duration of the congested period, and manpower availability and safety. Manual control of traffic should not be performed by an officer/VIP when an existing traffic control device will eliminate the traffic problem. If manual control of traffic is performed, the county may be contacted to turn automated signals to flash to prevent driver/pedestrian confusion.
- B. **Equipment:** When engaged in manual traffic direction and control, each officer/VIP shall have access to a whistle, a flashlight, flashlight cone, portable or mobile radio, a raincoat, hat, cones, and reflective clothing consisting of a vest as issued. The whistle is to be kept upon the person of the officer when performing manual direction of traffic. Officers/VIPs shall wear issued reflective vest when engaged in the manual direction of traffic. An exception would be during those brief periods of time when initially effecting manual traffic direction on an emergency basis.

### C. Procedure

1. Position: Officers/VIPs should select a control position to direct traffic which provides a full view of an intersection or incident scene to include all approaches. This will make the officer/VIP readily visible to drivers and pedestrians affording maximum safety.
2. Stance: Officers/VIPs shall assume a posture at the control position which reflects confidence, command and courtesy.
3. Command Responsibility: When more than one officer is involved in manual direction or control of traffic within the same area, the first officer on the scene shall assume the responsibility of coordinating traffic control.
4. Signals
  - a. Whistle Signals - Whistle signals shall be coordinated with hand signals and of sufficient volume as to be audible with respect to surrounding conditions. Use one long whistle blast to command "Stop", two short whistle blasts to command "Proceed or Go", and a series of short whistle blasts to command "Attention".
  - b. Hand Signals
    - 1) Stop Signal: Arm extended, hand up and palm outward pointed at approaching traffic;
    - 2) Proceed Signal: Point at the driver or pedestrian you want to move and establish eye contact. Bend arm at elbow indicating "Proceed" in the direction intended.
    - 3) Left Turn: Ensure conflicting traffic is stopped. Point at the driver you want to move and establish eye contact. Indicate the turn by exhibiting a "Proceed" signal and pointing to the left turn direction.
    - 4) Right Turn: Ensure that the turn can be made safely. Point at the driver you wish to move and establish eye contact. Exhibit "Proceed" signal and point to the right turn direction.

**III. TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL MALFUNCTION:** If a traffic control signal malfunctions, Punta Gorda Police personnel shall contact the Communications Section and advise the location and scope of the control signal malfunction. Communications will in turn, contact the appropriate repair agency which will then respond to correct the traffic signal malfunction.

#### IV. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

A. Temporary Devices: Temporary devices such as portable signs, barricades, flashing lights, and cones may be used to expedite the flow of traffic and promote safety. The use of these devices must be approved by the appropriate Watch Commander.

#### B. Roadblocks

1. Authorization - The use of a roadblock/checkpoint must be approved by a Watch Commander. A Watch Commander or a designee will be present, in charge at a scene, and have the authority to cancel the roadblock/checkpoint at any time.
2. Criteria: A Watch Commander must review the following factors when considering the use of a roadblock:
  - a. Risks to the public safety vs. the need for a roadblock;
  - b. Officer safety;
  - c. Time of day;
  - d. Volume of vehicle and pedestrian traffic;
  - e. Road and weather conditions; and
  - f. Officer and Watch Commander familiarity with the area.
3. Types of Roadblocks - Roadblocks may be moving, fixed, or checkpoints.
  - a. Moving roadblocks are addressed in [SOP 1105.01 - Vehicle Operations](#).
  - b. Fixed Roadblocks: A fixed roadblock requires the blocking of a road at a certain or fixed point. A fixed roadblock will not be used to stop a fleeing vehicle or as part of any pursuit. Fixed roadblocks may be used for:
    - 1) Search and apprehension of a fleeing felon (as a method of search and not pursuit);
    - 2) Containment or isolation of crime scenes, riots, civil disorders, or other restricted zones;
    - 3) Limiting or stopping traffic flow during emergencies or adverse conditions; or
    - 4) Other circumstances approved by Watch Commander.
  - c. Checkpoints: Checkpoint operations may be used in conjunction with DUI, vehicle defects, and/or driver's license enforcement. They will be conducted in strict conformance to federal and state guidelines. The following general procedures apply:
    - 1) A detailed operations plan must be submitted to the Operations Commander for approval. The plan must include mission objectives,

staff assignments, specific verbiage for officers to use, provisions for public notification, equipment needs, and procedures for operational contingencies;

- 2) One person will be in command of the operation;
  - 3) Members will be briefed on the purpose of the operation, limitations imposed, and their individual responsibilities;
  - 4) All members will be in uniform, and marked patrol vehicles will be clearly visible;
  - 5) The checkpoint must be in an area with sufficient lighting and space for traffic safety. An "off street" parking area must be available for follow-up investigation. If the location is on private property, permission will be obtained from the property owner/agent in advance;
  - 6) Sufficient traffic control devices and signs will be used to indicate a controlled entry into a checkpoint with an escape route provided for officers and the public;
  - 7) The inconvenience/intrusion to motorists will be minimal; and
  - 8) Once the checkpoint is started, all vehicles should be required to stop, unless traffic volume necessitates stopping vehicles at a predetermined sequential pattern, or when the operation is suspended or terminated. The Watch Commander will make these determinations.
4. Procedure: When implementing a fixed roadblock, the following apply:
- a. Personnel and equipment will be assembled;
  - b. The members will be briefed on the purpose of the roadblock, limitations imposed, and their individual responsibilities;
  - c. The Watch Commander will notify the Operations Commander and Communications Section of the location, time initiated, and the members involved;
  - d. The Operations Commander will monitor the roadblock to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose, meets criteria, and is not presenting unnecessary risk;
  - e. Any law enforcement officer can discontinue a roadblock if its use is a threat to the public safety; and
  - f. The Watch Commander will notify the Operations Commander and Communications Section of the time the roadblock is discontinued.

## V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### A. Adverse Road and Weather Conditions

1. When the normal control of traffic is impaired during adverse road or weather conditions (i.e., sink holes, fog, rain, smog, blowing sand, downed power line, spillages), greater consideration shall be given to officer safety due to reduced visibility and other operational problems.
  2. The same procedures for traffic direction and control shall apply as specified in this procedure.
  3. Additional officers or equipment should be used, as necessary, to adequately perform the traffic control function in a safe and efficient manner.
- B. Fire Scenes
1. At the scene of a fire, Punta Gorda Police Department personnel and fire department personnel share overlapping responsibilities.
  2. While Florida law grants firefighters the authority to direct traffic at the scene of a fire, officers should consider that a firefighter's primary duty is to control or extinguish the fire. When possible, officers should assume the responsibility for traffic control at fire scenes.
- C. Absence From Post
1. Officers shall not leave their traffic post unattended to enforce minor violations or otherwise vacate the post unless properly relieved.
  2. Only in extreme circumstances shall officers vacate a post prior to the specified end of assignment time, cancellation of the assignment or relief by another officer. In the event that an officer must vacate their post, the supervisor shall be notified of the circumstances.
- D. Emergency Vehicles: When emergency vehicles approach in emergency status, the traffic control officer shall stop all traffic and allow the emergency vehicle to proceed.
- E. Special Events
1. When a request for traffic control and direction during a special event has been received and approved by competent authority of the Punta Gorda Police Department, that request shall be forwarded to the Operations Commander.
  2. It shall be the responsibility of the Operations Commander to evaluate the request and determine the resources needed to accomplish the assignment.

## VI. ESCORTS

- A. Emergency Escort of Emergency Vehicles: Emergency escort of emergency vehicles is prohibited.
- B. Emergency Medical Transportation
1. Officers shall not escort civilian vehicles in emergency response mode.

2. Officers contacting a vehicle containing sick or injured persons shall request the response of Emergency Medical Services for transport to the appropriate medical facility and shall render first aid until the arrival of the Emergency Medical Services unit. In an extreme medical emergency, it may become necessary for an officer to transport the injured or ill person to a treatment facility in a police vehicle. Such transports shall be made only upon approval of Watch Commander.
- C. Dignitaries and Public Officials: Escorts will be provided for dignitaries and public officials when requested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service, or when directed by the appropriate agency authority. All requests will be referred to the Operations Commander.
- D. Funerals
1. At the request of licensed funeral directors or another agency, the department may provide escorts for funeral processions. The escort or procession shall be approved by the Operations Commander and may be assigned as an extra-duty detail.
  2. Escorts shall travel at or below the posted speed.
  3. Once the escort officer has insured that travel through a controlled intersection is safe, the procession may proceed against the red light or stop sign. The escort officer shall remain in control of the controlled intersection until all vehicles have safely passed.
  4. The safety of the members of the procession and the public is paramount. When traffic conditions are such that continuing through a controlled intersection is inappropriate, the escort officer will direct the vehicles in the procession to stop, and wait for the traffic signal to cycle.
- E. Other Escorts: Requests for oversized vehicles, hazardous, or unusual cargo escorts will be referred to the Operations Commander. The Punta Gorda Fire Department will be notified if the cargo is a hazardous material.

**APPROVED**



**PAMELA R. SMITH, CHIEF OF POLICE**

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