
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 112.043
TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 4, 2009
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: October 20, 2025

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for officer use in assisting in, and providing for a safe and efficient traffic flow, and to ensure the safety of the public.

II. POLICY

At times it will be necessary for an officer to manually regulate the flow of traffic around crash scenes, fire scenes, and other hazards on or near the roadway or during special events. Ensuring orderly flow of traffic, prevention of congestion, and to ensure the safety of officers, motorists, and pedestrians is very important.

Manual traffic direction will be performed in emergency situations, at special events on a temporary basis, and when roadway volume and congestion have overwhelmed existing fixed traffic control devices (due to inoperative devices or due to unusual traffic volume caused by a temporary event). Only sworn officers may perform traffic direction duties.

It is the philosophy of the department to provide assistance to all highway users within the city, which includes assisting motorists with stranded or disabled vehicles, providing information and direction, and taking appropriate action in the event of a highway hazard. Officers are authorized to remove vehicles in accordance with the provisions of Transportation Code Section 683 Abandoned Motor Vehicles and Section 684 Removal of Unauthorized Vehicles from Public Roadways.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Traffic Direction

1. All personnel directing traffic should use uniform and easily understood hand signals. If a whistle is used, personnel should:
 - a. Use a long whistle blow when stopping traffic.
 - b. Use a shorter whistle blow when starting traffic.
2. When directing traffic, personnel should be as visible as possible. They may make use of the following items:
 - a. Flares
 - b. Marked police units
 - c. Emergency lights
 - d. Flashlights
 - e. Whistles
 - f. To increase visibility, ANSI Level 2 reflective coats or vests are required at any traffic direction assignment or if vehicles will be flagged over for traffic enforcement purposes.
3. Temporary traffic control devices such as barricades or traffic cones may be used at sporting events, parades, or large gatherings where traffic control is required.
4. In the event the special events sergeant becomes aware of a special event such as a parade, sporting event, highway construction, etc., they will prepare a contingency plan for traffic direction. The plan will consider such factors as:
 - a. News media access
 - b. Parking area availability
 - c. Spectator control

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- d. Public transportation
 - e. Ingress and egress of vehicle and pedestrian traffic
 - f. Emergency vehicle access
 - g. Alternate routes for through traffic
 - h. Use and availability of temporary controls
5. At fire scenes, police personnel will direct traffic as conditions require, to expedite traffic or to safeguard pedestrians. Personnel from the Fire Department may direct or assist the police in traffic direction at the scene or in the immediate vicinity, in the absence of adequate personnel on a temporary basis.
 6. During periods of adverse weather and road conditions, police personnel will provide traffic direction or assistance on an emergency basis. In the event assistance is needed from other city departments such as Traffic Engineering or the Public Works, on call personnel from these departments will be notified as quickly as possible.
- B. Stranded Motorists**

Note: This section applies to both officers and PSOs.

1. Personnel will stop to aid stranded motorists along the roadway. If unable to do so they will advise dispatch of the situation along with a request for someone to be notified of the motorist's location. Personnel shall make a request for a wrecker of the stranded party's preference if practicable. If a wrecker is needed, and the stranded party has no preference, or it is anticipated that their preferred wrecker will take longer than 30 minutes to render assistance, the contracted wrecker service for the city shall be requested to remove the vehicle. A disabled vehicle should never be left unattended in the traveled portion of the roadway, unless it is safely situation, so as not to create a hazardous condition for other motorists.
2. If the stranded vehicle is in a hazardous location employees will, remove it or cause it to be removed from the traveled portion of the roadway in the most expeditious manner possible. The employee will implement advance warning to motorists approaching the hazard by setting out temporary traffic control or warning devices far enough downstream so that the hazard can be avoided until it is removed.
3. Police vehicles will not be used for towing or jump-starting other vehicles.
4. Only vehicles with approved push bumpers may be used to push any other vehicle from the roadway.
5. If the person needs emergency medical or fire assistance, the employee will contact dispatch who will in turn notify the Fire Department. The employee will provide practical assistance until the proper service arrives.
6. During adverse weather conditions, employees shall make an effort to transport or arrange for transportation of those persons who are stranded, to a place of safety.
7. In the event the person needs mechanical assistance, the employee may advise dispatch to call a mechanic if one is requested by the person. The employee may not recommend any particular mechanic but may identify sources of reference.
8. Police employees will not unlock a vehicle unless someone is believed to be trapped inside, or other exigent circumstances are found to exist. Upon receiving such a request, employees should instead offer to help the citizen contact a locksmith of their choosing.

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C. Police Escorts

1. Employees will not use a police vehicle to escort civilian vehicles to medical or other facilities by use of emergency equipment. If a medical emergency exists, the employee will request for an ambulance to be sent to the location.
2. The department will provide escort for hazardous materials transport and when requested for emergency vehicles from other agencies as part of mutual aid. Routine escort requests for funerals, dignitaries, parades, oversized vehicles, hazardous or unusual cargo, emergency vehicles, and other special events shall be directed to the special events sergeant for planning and coordination. Emergency escort requests may also be authorized by the on-duty watch commander for public officials, dignitaries, oversize vehicles or unusual cargo on a case-by-case basis. The Fire Department will be contacted in the event a request for escort of hazardous materials is made.

D. Hazards on the Highway

1. Officers will try to verify any roadway condition that may be reported as a highway hazard, evaluate the need for action, and notify the appropriate authority. Hazards such as downed stop signs, missing or inoperative traffic control devices, or a defective roadway will be reported immediately. Conditions of a non-emergency nature may be noted and referred at a later time.
2. Verified road hazards should be corrected as soon as possible. Serious conditions will not be left unattended without proper warning devices in place.

E. Hazardous Materials

1. If an officer receives information regarding hazardous materials, they shall make every attempt to verify the situation, notify a supervisor, make note of the circumstances surrounding the incident, and notify the Fire Department.
2. In the event the complaint or incident involves a chemical spill, the officer will secure the scene and assist the Fire Department to the extent necessary. Officers should refrain from using flares around any type of spill if the type of spillage is not known, or if it is known to be flammable.

F. Junked and Abandoned Vehicles

1. The Texas Transportation Code Section 683 Abandoned Motor Vehicles and Chapter 12, Article VIII. of the City of Plano Code of Ordinances authorizes the police department to take into custody any abandoned motor vehicle found on public or private property.
2. The Texas Transportation Code and Chapter 12, Article VIII. of the City of Plano Code of Ordinances allows authorized persons to enter upon private property for the examination of vehicles or parts thereof and to cause their removal. In such connection, the department may employ its own personnel, equipment and facilities for the purpose of removing, storing, and preserving such vehicle. The Municipal Court will issue orders necessary to enforce those procedures which apply to junked vehicles.
3. The following procedures will apply to the removal of abandoned vehicles from public property:
 - a. The officer will first determine the vehicle is in fact abandoned. This may be accomplished by checking registration and attempting to contact the owner. Contact with local residents may also prove helpful.

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- b. If the vehicle is determined to be abandoned, the initiating officer should fill out the impound ticket with all available information including the condition of the vehicle, notify the wrecker on call and advise dispatch of the appropriate information for the removal. The hard copy of the impound ticket will be forwarded to the Records Division where it will be filed. This copy will provide a written record of the time, date, location, requesting officer, reason for removal or tow, towing service, location of the vehicle, and general condition of the vehicle at the time of impound.
 - c. If the vehicle is not claimed, the department will prepare all necessary paperwork for the vehicle to be sold at public auction. Thirty days notice of the time and place of the sale of the vehicle shall be posted at the Municipal Center, and a copy thereof sent by certified mail to the last known address of the registered owner.
- G. The department will not attempt to remove junked vehicles on private property. Complaints should be forwarded to the Property Standards Department for the city.

H. Traffic Signal Preemption System

The department will utilize the traffic signal preemption system for special operations. Select Emergency Services Unit (ESU) vehicles, equipped with a permanently mounted traffic signal preemption system, are authorized to utilize the equipment when responding to ESU call outs. Portable traffic signal preemption equipment may be deployed for special events or operations when authorized by the chief or designee.

1. Use of Equipment

- a. Care shall be exercised not to overdrive the system at a speed above the legal speed limit. To overdrive a system means reaching an intersection before the equipment has cycled the traffic signal to a green light.
- b. Drivers of a vehicle equipped with the traffic signal preemption system shall slow down or come to a complete stop (if unable to account for all lanes of traffic) at all intersections where a red traffic light or stop sign is encountered. Emergency vehicles may proceed through an intersection with a red light with emergency vehicle lights and siren activated, and when determined safe to do so.
- c. The emitter is to be turned on only while the vehicle is in motion and emergency lights are activated. Upon arrival at the scene or destination, the emitter shall be turned off. Failure to turn it off when close to an intersection may cause a traffic signal lockup.
- d. The preemption system is designed to expedite obtaining a green light but does not guarantee the right of way to the police vehicle. It should not be assumed every intersection is equipped with traffic signal preemption equipment.
- e. Installed traffic signal preemption equipment is only encoded for intersections operated by the City of Plano.

2. Testing Equipment

Traffic signal preemptive equipment shall be tested prior to use for special events or operations. Portable units shall be tested in the specific vehicle and configuration for which it will be used. The following testing procedures shall be used:

- a. Position the emergency vehicle approximately 1,000 feet from the signalized intersection.
- b. Wait for test direction to turn to yellow.

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- c. Turn on override emitter and time how long it takes to return to a green indication for the test direction.
- d. Record whether the intersection returned to green and how many seconds it took.

Note: The customary time for an intersection override device to operate and provide a green light is approximately 5 to 10 seconds.