



Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



16.230 – Issuing Tickets and Traffic Warnings

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This policy applies when sworn employees address traffic or non-traffic infractions and/or criminal traffic offenses.

16.230-POL-1 Definitions

Criminal Citation: used to enforce criminal traffic offenses as defined in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Title 11; Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 46 traffic crimes; and SMC Title 16 Harbor Codes.

- Allows sworn employees to release a violator pending filing of criminal charges
- Issued if the offense occurs in the sworn employee's presence or if the sworn employee has probable cause to believe that the violator committed a crime listed as an exception under [RCW 10.31.100](#).

Notice of Infraction (NOI): used to enforce non-criminal offenses designated as civil infractions. These include, but are not limited to, traffic and non-traffic violations as defined in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) and the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

- Issued if the offense occurs in the sworn employee's presence or issued as an exception under [SMC 11.31.020](#) or [RCW 46.63.030](#)

Parking Infraction: used to enforce SMC parking violations.

- Only issued if the offense occurs in the sworn employee's presence

Traffic Warning (electronic): documentation of a warning given for traffic infractions. Traffic warnings are entered into Mark43.

- Not used when an infraction must be written (e.g., traffic collision)
- Not used for Terry stops on a vehicle
- Not used for traffic stops conducted by a sworn employee working off-duty for a non-SPD employer

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16.230-POL-2 Discretion and Documentation

1. Sworn Employees May Use Discretion When Issuing Tickets

The department appropriately warns, cites, or arrests, traffic violators to gain compliance with traffic laws and to develop driver awareness of the causes of traffic accidents.

Rather than ignore a minor violation, sworn employees may stop the vehicle and call the violation to the driver's attention. Sworn employees have discretion to issue a traffic warning to urge caution and alertness in the operation of the vehicle.

2. Sworn Employees Will Identify Themselves During all Detentions

Notification will occur as early in the contact as is safe to do so, pursuant to requirements in manual section [6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, and Detentions](#).

3. Sworn Employees May Detain a Violating Driver for a Reasonable Period of Time

Sworn employees may use a mobile identification device as appropriate and in accordance with manual section [15.360 – Use of Mobile Fingerprint Identification Devices](#). If the sworn employee cannot determine the violator's identity at the scene, they may take the violator to the SPD Identification Unit.

Exception: Juveniles will only be fingerprinted for gross misdemeanor and felony offenses (see manual section [6.290 – Juvenile Investigations and Arrests](#) or manual section [7.100 – Fingerprint Evidence](#)).

(See 16.230-PRO-1 Utilizing the SPD Identification Unit)

4. Sworn Employees Will Document All Traffic Stops

Sworn employees will document all traffic stops by using:

- An NOI for civil infractions,
- A Criminal Citation for criminal traffic offenses, or
- A Traffic Warning and giving the driver a business card with the sworn employee's name, serial number, and event number (see 16.230-TSK-7 Issuing a Traffic Warning)

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5. Sworn Employees Will Complete All Fields on the Front and Back of the Court Copy of the Ticket

Sworn employees will write "not applicable" or draw a line through any field that they are otherwise unable to complete.

For all types of traffic stop documentation, before selecting "unknown" as an option for a form field, sworn employees will make a reasonable effort to gather the necessary information.

Sworn employees will write "unknown" in the address field when they are unable to determine a current address for the violator.

If the violator does not have a valid driver's license, including only possessing an identification card, sworn employees will write "none" in the operator's license number field.

If necessary, sworn employees will use the perceived race, perceived ethnicity, perceived age, and perceived gender of the subject to complete the form.

6. An Event Number is Required for All Traffic Warnings and on Tickets in Certain Circumstances

All Traffic Warnings must have an event number to be entered into Mark43.

Criminal Citations and/or NOIs must have an event number when completed or issued in association with:

- A report, Collision Report, or Vehicle Report
- A criminal or traffic misdemeanor case
- Evidence submittal

7. SECTOR-Trained Sworn Employees Issue E-Tickets for Infractions, As Appropriate

Sworn employees will not use SECTOR to issue or refer Criminal Citations.

When issuing an e-ticket for speeding, sworn employees must write the following information in the "Officer's Notes" section:

- The defendant's speed
- The posted speed

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- How the speed was determined (SMD, Pace, or Aircraft)
- Distance
- [SMC 11.52.040](#)

(See manual section [15.380 – SECTOR](#))

If a violator is booked into jail during an investigation related to the ticket, sworn employees must still complete paper tickets and utilize the delayed issuance procedure below.

(See 16.230-TSK-2 Issuing completed E-Tickets (SECTOR))

(See 16.230-TSK-4 Delayed Issuance of Tickets)

8. Sworn Employees Complete and Submit Tickets and Traffic Warnings by the End of Their Shift

9. Sergeants Approve Paper Criminal Citations and Notice of Infractions

Sergeants will verify that all information from the stop is documented on the court copy of the ticket, including but not limited to:

- All fields on the front of the ticket are completed.
- A narrative, including whether in-car video exists for the stop.

16.230-POL-3 Separation of Tickets and Ticket Issuance Delay

1. Sworn Employees Cite Different Types of Violations on Separate Tickets

When issuing tickets for different types of violations, sworn employees will use separate tickets.

- Parking infractions cannot be on the same ticket with traffic or non-traffic infractions.

2. Sworn Employees Will Not Serve Completed Tickets to Violators Booked into Jail

(See 16.230-TSK-3 Completing Tickets for Violators Booked into Jail)

3. Sworn Employees May Delay the Issuance of Tickets in Certain Circumstances

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The delayed issuance of a ticket occurs when:

- A Criminal Citation is referred to the Law Department for review,
- An NOI is sent to the court for mailing to the violator, or
- A sworn employee completes a citation, and a driver removes the vehicle from the location before the sworn employee can place the citation on the windshield.

(See 16.230-TSK-4 Delayed Issuance of Tickets)

4. Sworn Employees Submit Tickets to the Evidence Unit That Are Evidence in a Crime

(See 16.230-TSK-5 Submitting Tickets to the Evidence Unit)

16.230-POL-4 Other Types of Notices for Violations

1. Sworn Employees May Issue Notices of Infraction (NOIs) to Juveniles Aged 16 and 17

Sworn employees must include parental information and disposition of the juvenile in the court copy narrative.

Sworn employees will write a report to request criminal charges on a juvenile and/or to have a juvenile under the age of 16 charged with an infraction.

(See also manual sections [6.150 – Advising Persons of Right to Counsel and Miranda](#), [6.290 – Juvenile Investigations and Arrests](#), and [SMC 3.28.147](#)).

2. Sworn Employees Cite [SMC 11.44.020](#) “Rights and Duties of Rider” When Issuing Traffic Violations to Bicyclists

(See 16.230-TSK-6 Issuing Tickets to Bicyclists)

3. Sworn Employees Place Completed Parking Infractions on the Offending Vehicle

Sworn employees will write a narrative with the element(s) of the offense on the court’s copy. A diagram is optional.

Sworn employees must complete a Washington State Tow/Impound Record if the vehicle will be impounded.

(See manual section [6.120 – Impounding Vehicles](#))

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16.230-PRO-1 Utilizing the SPD Identification Unit to Identify a Traffic Violator

Any print request outside of business hours (M-F 0730-1530 hrs.) is no longer handled by the Identification (ID) Unit. Sworn Employees should radio for a Mobile ID to respond to their location (see manual section [15.360 – Use of Mobile Fingerprint Identification Devices \(Mobile IDs\)](#)).

Sworn Employee

1. **Contacts** their sergeant to request the violator be fingerprinted.

Sergeant

2. **Confirms** the request meets the authority to detain and identify a person as outlined in [SMC 11.59.090](#), [SMC 12A.02.140](#), and/or [RCW 7.80.060](#).
3. **Authorizes** the sworn employee to transport the violator to the Identification Unit, if during business hours.

Sworn Employee(s)

4. **Contacts** the ID Unit at [\(206\) 684-5510](#) prior to transport.
5. (Two (2) sworn employees) **Transports** the violator to 5th Floor HQ or to the Identification Unit.
6. **Stands by** with the violator while they are being fingerprinted.
7. **Provides** the Identification Technician with the event number.
8. **Takes** appropriate enforcement action once the violator is identified.
9. **Completes** a report documenting the fingerprint procedure and the result (see manual section [6.010 - Arrests](#)).

16.230-TSK-1 Issuing Completed Paper Tickets

When a sworn employee elects to issue a paper ticket to an adult or eligible juvenile (see 16.230-POL-2(4)), the **sworn employee**:

1. **Completes** the ticket(s).
 - **Corrects** any error(s) made on the ticket by crossing it out and initialing it.

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2. **Marks** the "Served on Violator" box.
3. **Enters** the date issued.
 - **Marks** the "Mandatory Court Appearance" box for criminal citations but does not enter an appearance date unless the offense is for misdemeanor DUI, in which case refer to manual section [15.280 – DUI Investigations](#).
4. **Serves** the violator with the "Defendant Copy" of the ticket.
5. **Includes** on the first line of the ticket's narrative if the stop or contact was recorded by the in-car or body-worn video system.
6. **Writes** the element(s) of the offense(s) in the ticket's narrative.
7. **Enters** the "Related #" on each companion ticket, if applicable.
8. **Enters** the report number on each ticket, if applicable.
9. **Retains** the ticket's Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) copy.
10. **Paper clips** all related tickets and reports together, if applicable.
11. **Submits** all tickets to a sergeant for review.

16.230-TSK-2 Issuing Completed E-Tickets (SECTOR)

When a sworn employee elects to issue an E-Ticket (through SECTOR) to an adult or eligible juvenile (see 16.230-POL-1-(3)), the **sworn employee**:

1. **Completes** the ticket(s).
 - **Corrects** any error(s) made on the ticket by editing the ticket in the SECTOR interface.
2. **Enters** the date issued.
3. **Serves** the violator with the printed SECTOR copy of the ticket.
4. **Includes** on the first line of the ticket's narrative if the stop or contact was recorded by the in-car or body-worn video system.
5. **Writes** the element(s) of the offense(s) in the ticket's narrative.
6. **Enters** the "Related #" on each companion ticket narrative, if applicable.
7. **Enters** the report number on each ticket narrative, if applicable.

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8. **Submits** all tickets through SECTOR.

16.230-TSK-3 Completing Tickets for Violators Booked into Jail

When completing ticket(s) for violators who are booked into jail, the **sworn employee**:

1. For Criminal Citations:

Writes "Book Direct" in the blank box next to the completed Criminal Citation's bar code if the violator is booked into jail.

Exception: If the violator is booked for felony DUI or a potential felony traffic investigation, then the sworn employee does not complete any tickets.

Marks the "Referred to Prosecutor" box.

Leaves the "Appearance Date" box blank.

2. For NOIs:

Marks the "Referred to Prosecutor Infraction Companion to Crime" box.

Exception: If the violator is booked for felony DUI or a potential felony traffic investigation, then the sworn employee does not complete any tickets.

3. **Does not issue** the violator their copy of the ticket(s).

4. **Leaves** the "Date Issued" box on the tickets blank.

5. **Writes** the report number on each ticket.

6. **Writes** the "Related #" on each ticket, if applicable.

7. **Completes** the ticket's narrative.

Includes on the first line of the narrative if the stop or contact was recorded by the in-car or body-worn video system.

8. **Retains** the LEA copy of the completed ticket(s).

9. **Paper clips** all related ticket(s) and reports together.

10. **Forwards** the ticket(s) and related reports to their sergeant for review.

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11. **Routes** the ticket(s) and related reports to the Data Center in an Alert Email.

16.230-TSK-4 Delayed Issuance of Tickets

When there is a delayed issuance of a ticket, the **sworn employee**:

1. For drivers of vehicles who drive away prior to being issued parking ticket(s):

Returns paper violator's copy of SECTOR ticket (if applicable) to office/precinct for destruction.

Submits ticket or **uploads** digital copy of ticket as usual for processing.

2. For NOIs:

Marks the "Sent to Court for Mailing" box.

Enters the date when referred to the court for mailing in the "Date Issued" box.

3. For Criminal Citations:

Marks the "Referred to Prosecutor" box.

Does not enter the date when referred to the Prosecutor.

4. **Enters** related ticket numbers and the report number on each ticket, if applicable.

5. **Completes** the ticket's narrative including the elements of the offense(s).

Includes on the first line of the ticket's narrative if the stop or contact was recorded by the in-car or body-worn video system.

6. **Retains** the LEA copy of the completed tickets.

7. **Paper clips** all related tickets and related reports together, if applicable.

8. **Submits** the tickets and related reports to their sergeant for review if there is a Criminal Citation or NOI with a report number.

9. **Forwards** all tickets and any related reports together to the Data Center.

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16.230-TSK-5 Submitting Tickets to the Evidence Unit

When an issued ticket becomes evidence in a crime, the **sworn employee**:

1. **Photocopies** the ticket.
2. **Completes** an SPD Voided Ticket Report.
 - Marks** the "Other" box in justification field.
 - Lists** in the "Explanation" section that the ticket was placed into evidence.
3. **Retains** the LEA copy of the ticket.
4. **Packages** and submits to the Evidence Unit the original ticket.
5. **Includes** the ticket's number in the report narrative.
6. **Forwards** the SPD Voided Ticket Report, photocopy of the ticket, and related reports to their sergeant for review prior to submittal to Data.
7. **Submits** all paperwork to Data.

16.230-TSK-6 Issuing Tickets to Bicyclists

When completing a NOI to a bicyclist for a traffic violation, the **sworn employee**:

1. **Writes** "bicycle" in the "Vehicle/Motor Vehicle" field.
2. **Cites** "[SMC 11.44.020 Rights and Duties of Rider](#)" in the "Violation/Statute" field.
3. **Writes** the underlying traffic violation on the front of the NOI below the cited violation listed in #2.
4. **Enters** the current penalty amount.
 - This penalty amount also applies if the bicyclist is determined to be at fault in a collision.
5. **Issues** the NOI to the bicyclist.

16.230-TSK-7 Issuing a Traffic Warning

When issuing a Traffic Warning, the **sworn employee**:

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1. **Gives** the driver a business card with the sworn employee's name, serial number, and event number.
2. **Releases** the driver.
3. **Begins** a new report in Mark 43.
4. **Enters** the event number for the stop.
5. **Selects** "Citation" as the type of report.
6. **Completes** the report fields, selecting "Traffic Warning" under the Citation Type field.
7. **Submits** report by end of shift.