

402.4 DOCUMENTATION OF VEHICLE TRAFFIC STOPS (INCLUDING BICYCLES)

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide a uniform approach for documenting all “vehicle traffic stops” as defined under this policy through issuing traffic citations, warnings, or street checks. (See also SOP 635 Traffic Stop Deployment Responsibility & Traffic Enforcement Guidelines and SOP 634 Traffic Citations).

- II. **DISCUSSION:** By documenting the reason for contact for all vehicle traffic stops through a citation, warning or street check, officers will ensure vehicle traffic stop data is captured. The electronic Florida Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC) via TraCS is the primary method for issuing citations and documenting warnings for vehicle traffic law violations for the Tampa Police Department. Paper UTC’s should only be used in the event the electronic method is not operational. When a vehicle traffic stop results in neither a UTC nor a warning, a Street Check will be written. Vehicle traffic stops for ordinance violations shall likewise be documented through the issuance of a citation, warning, or documenting through a Street Check.

- III. **POLICY:** All vehicle traffic stops shall be documented in some manner to ensure there is never a situation where a citizen is detained for a vehicle traffic stop that is not documented. Officers shall document the reason for contact by issuing a traffic citation or warning in all instances where a “vehicle traffic stop” was conducted for a violation of a traffic law or ordinance and determined to be a violation. Officers shall document a vehicle traffic stop through a Street Check when a vehicle traffic violation did not occur or when the reason for contact is not captured in a citation or warning. Vehicle traffic stops based on local ordinance violations shall also be documented in the same manner. Even if the vehicle traffic stop results in a report being written (i.e.: an arrest was made), a citation, warning or street check must document the reason for contact.

- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. **Reason For Contact:** The primary traffic law violation or reasonable suspicion for a vehicle traffic stop by an officer.

 - B. **“Vehicle Traffic Stop”:** Under this policy means **a stop of a vehicle on a public or private street, highway, roadway or right-of-way where the initial purpose of the stop is for a violation of traffic laws and ordinances.** This is not meant to cover pedestrian violations or vehicle stops involving suspected non-traffic criminal activity, such as stopping a stolen vehicle.

 - C. **Vehicle:** Shall mean the same as defined under section 316.003, F.S., to include every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except personal delivery devices, mobile carriers, and devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks. This includes bicycles, scooters, etc.

V. PROCEDURE:

A. DOCUMENTATION:

1. The following methods shall be used for documentation of vehicle traffic stops:

a. Citations: To be completed electronically utilizing TraCS and a copy provided to the violator, unless the officer does not have access to TraCS in which case a paper citation or a Street Check may be utilized to document the vehicle traffic stop.

b. Warnings: To be completed electronically utilizing TraCS and a verbal warning provided, unless the officer does not have access to TraCS in which case a verbal warning may be given and documented through a Street Check or through TraCS once it becomes available.

c. Street Check (SC): To be completed when an officer:

i. Determines the reason for the vehicle traffic is no longer valid (i.e.: running the wrong tag);

ii. Determines no violation of a traffic law or ordinance exists following an investigative vehicle traffic stop (i.e.: the driver is determined to not be the owner who has a suspended license or no valid license); or

iii. Determines the reason for contact for a vehicle traffic stop was not otherwise documented in a citation or warning.

iv. Is unable to access TraCS in order to document the citation or warning.

d. General Offense (GO) Report: All vehicle traffic stops shall still document the reason for contact in a citation, warning, or Street Check even when the traffic stop leads to a General Offense report documenting the event. A General Offense report shall also be completed for all vehicle traffic stops which result in **criminal** traffic offenses, criminal arrests, Notice to Appear, JAAP, ordinance notice to appear or arrests, or any criminal diversion. (See SOP 401.1).

2. The reason for contact must be documented. For example, an officer may stop a vehicle for running a stop sign and determine the driver does not have insurance. The officer would be required to issue a citation or warning in TraCS for the reason for contact, running a stop sign. An officer may not issue a citation or warning *only* for no insurance as that would not be the reason for contact. Every vehicle traffic stop

must result in at least one citation or warning in TraCS based on the reason for contact, or a Street Check stating the reason for contact.

3. TraCS provides a section for “Officer Notes” and a section for “Other violation comments”.
 - a. “Officer Notes” do not get transmitted to the Clerk and can only be viewed by the officer. It allows the officer to recall information that may be helpful when questioned about the stop. If a citation or warning has a related GO report, officers may notate “see related GO report” in the Officer Notes section.
 - b. “Other Violation Comments” will go to the Clerk and can be viewed by the Judge and violator.

B. ELECTRONIC CITATION ISSUANCE (TraCS):

1. Officers completing electronic citations through TraCS shall follow these procedures for issuance of **UTC’s**:
 - a. Ensure all the necessary information fields are completed on the electronic citation, including the event or report number in the space provided. Officers will ensure that the violator’s address and contact information are current. If the violator is a juvenile, the parents’ or legal guardians’ name and address may be entered in the “other violation comments” section.
 - b. Verify that the violator's driver’s license and vehicle registration information are accurate and complete.
 - c. Enter the correct location where the violation was committed.
 - d. In the violation Information section enter and verify the correct traffic state statute is being used. Any information entered in the “Other Violation Comments” field electronically transmits to the Clerk of Court.
 - e. Enter the device (i.e.: radar/laser), make, model, and serial number of the device used in the “Speed Measurement Device” field.
 - f. Ensure any vehicle defect information is entered on the citation if it applies to the violation for which the citation was issued.
 - g. Ensure appropriate officer information is complete and accurate. An officer’s electronic signature is required on the State of Florida Uniform Traffic Citation.

- h. If the witness section is to be utilized, officers will ensure that the information is accurate and complete. Witnesses related to a crash report or other traffic related violation must be entered in the witness section to include full name, address, and phone number.
 - i. Before issuing the citation, officers will ensure the appropriate court payment schedule has been selected "within thirty (30) days" for civil infractions, "within ten (10) days" for criminal violations and mandatory court appearances, and "within thirty (30) days" for equipment violations under F.S. §316.2935 and §316.610, County Violations Bureau, 419 E Pierce Street, Tampa, FL 33602.
 - j. Officers will then validate the electronic citation in the TraCS system where it will be issued a State of Florida citation number.
 - k. Officers will print the “driver’s” copy of the TraCS citation and provide it to the violator.
 - l. The “court” copy will be printed for criminal citations and mandatory court appearances.
 - m. Violators will sign and be fingerprinted in the designated area on the “court” copy for all criminal and mandatory court appearances and routed to their division CSO via normal routing procedures.
 - n. Officers placing a violator into custody will electronically attach the electronic “court” copy as an attachment in the eCRA and validate UTC in TraCS.
 - o. Officers will validate all issued citations by the end of shift. Copies of electronic citations only need to be turned in for processing when a criminal violation or violation requiring a mandatory court appearance is involved. All other electronic citations will be processed within the TraCS system.
 - p. Officers issuing more than one citation to a violator must click on the “Replicate Current Form” button located under the home tab to automatically prefill the violator information.
 - q. Officers issuing a UTC and a Warning must click on the “Copy Info To Another Form” button located under the home tab.
2. For the issuance of **local ordinance (municipal) violations** in TraCS, officers will do the following:

- a. Use pick list to select the municipal ordinance violation, you cannot manually type in a violation not listed. (Note that if the ordinance is not listed then it has not been approved for civil citation use and you will need to request Legal to review adding the ordinance to TraCS for future use).
- b. Complete all required information.
- c. Officers should type in the facts supporting reasonable cause for the violation in the box titled “Other Violation Comments”.
- d. Do not use the “Officer Notes” section on the TraCS form to type in your reasonable suspicion or cause as that information does not get transmitted to the Clerk but is only viewed by officers.
- e. Officers must print a copy of the citation and deliver it to the offender. TraCS will route the citation to the Clerk and into Versadex.
- f. Officers can take and upload pictures to the citation (optional).
- g. Always pick “civil citation” for payment information.
- h. Payment will be paid through the Clerk of the Court beginning on the next day.
- i. Make sure you click “**validate**” to finalize the citation.
- j. If a UTC is opened and generated in error, please contact the TraCS liaison via e-mail to have the UTC removed from the system

C. PAPER CITATION ISSUANCES:

1. Below are the instructions for completing the paper Florida Uniform Traffic Citation:
 - a. Enter and check proper heading information. Enter event number or report number in upper righthand corner.
 - b. Enter the correct time of the violation.
 - c. Enter and check correct violator information. If juvenile, enter parent's name and address in left-hand margin.
 - d. Enter license information.

- e. Enter vehicle information.
 - f. Enter location, city, and county.
 - g. Enter and check violation information. Enter violation details on comment line.
 - h. Enter the make, model, and serial number of the radar/laser device used in the “Speed Measurement Device” field.
 - i. Complete booking section if physical arrest is made.
 - j. Enter appropriate officer information.
 - k. Enter and check appropriate court information.
 - l. Provide violator the yellow copy of the paper Florida Uniform Traffic Citation.
 - m. Remove and retain the “officer’s” copy for future reference or court use.
 - n. The driver’s copy is for paying fines, setting court dates and serves as the affidavit of compliance upon the issuance of a traffic citation for violations of F.S. §316.2935 and §316.610 (equipment violations).
 - o. Information on the copy for civil infractions will reflect the amount of the fines payable at: Violations Bureau, 800 E. Twiggs St Room 101, Tampa, FL 33602.
 - p. Supervisors will review all paper traffic citations issued by officers under their command and ensure the citations are legible, complete, and accurate. Paper citations will be turned in to the officer’s division CSO by the end of shift for processing.
2. Local ordinance violations not able to be completed through TraCS may be done through a paper citation. (See Legal Bulletin # 2020-17).
- a. Officers will use paper citations dated on or after 08/20, TPD Form 427. Citation books should be located at the districts. Officers may also find a copy of TPD Form 427 in Power DMS.
 - b. Officers will complete all required information.
 - c. The original citation will be turned into the district CSO for

processing.

- d. District CSO's will scan the original into Versadex, enter the handwritten data into TraCS, and send the original citation along with the completed transmittal form to the Clerk of Court.
- e. Copy of the paper citation will be delivered to the violator.
- f. Payments for local ordinance (municipal) citations are made to the Clerk of the Court as directed on the citation.

D. ISSUANCE OF TRAFFIC WARNINGS:

1. Electronic: Traffic warnings will be documented in the TraCS software application by officers who have been trained and are permitted to use the TraCS application.
 - a. Officers will complete all necessary information fields on the electronic TraCS warning similar to a regular citation to include the reasonable suspicion or cause.
 - b. A copy of the warning **will not** be printed and provided to the violator. The violator will be verbally advised that they have been warned of the violation and the warning will be entered into the TraCS application for law enforcement purposes only.
 - c. After ensuring the warning form is complete and accurate, officers will validate the TraCS warning into the electronic citation system by the end of their shift.
 - d. Traffic warnings will not be issued state citation numbers or reported to the State of Florida.
2. Electronic: Local ordinance warnings will also be documented in TraCS following the same procedures above except that officers will complete the information after selecting the civil ordinance selection. (See Legal Bulletin # 2020-17).
 - a. Use pick list to select the municipal ordinance violation, you cannot manually type in a violation not listed - if it not listed contact Legal or the TraCS liaison to get it added.
 - b. Complete all required information.
 - c. Officers must type in the facts supporting reasonable suspicion or cause for the violation in the box titled "Other violation comments"

until the next version of TraCS allows for a box specifically for facts constituting reasonable suspicion or cause.

- d. Officers can take and upload pictures to the citation (optional).
- e. Paper copy of the warning will not be issued but the data and reason for the contact will be captured.
- f. Make sure you click “**validate**” to finalize the citation.

- 3. Paper: There are no paper warnings and officers will have to give a verbal warning and document the warning in a Street Check when TraCS is not available.

E. COMPLETING STREET CHECKS (See SOP 401.8):

- 1. On a Street Check cover page under Type chose “Traffic Stop”. Under Reason chose “Traffic Stop” or “Bicycle Stop”.
- 2. In Entities when identification has not been made, choose “Unidentified Person” and populate applicable fields.
- 3. In Entities complete the vehicle section.
- 4. Complete the narrative to include the reason for contact (i.e.: ran wrong tag number. Tag came back expired and did not notice until I approached the vehicle).

F. REPORTING:

- 1. The Professional Standards Bureau shall ensure all data on vehicle traffic stops, including bicycle stops, is made publicly available and updated on a regular basis to include the following information about the vehicle traffic stop:
 - a. Race of the person stopped;
 - b. Sex of the person stopped; and
 - c. Location of the stop.
- 2. Officers should not create or issue any criminal traffic citations related in any way to cases that are direct filed. (See Legal Bulletin # 2022-02).

Supersedes SOP 402.4, dated 2/19.