

WOONSOCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT

THOMAS F. OATES, III
CHIEF OF POLICE



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	330.07	1/6/2021	1/10/2021
SUBJECT		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Ancillary Traffic Services		6/1/2015	
ACCREDITATION		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA Standards: 61.4.1, 61.4.2, 61.4.3, 61.4.4 RIPAC Standards: 11.8, 11.9, 11.10		12/22/2020, 1/9/2023	
INDEX		DISTRIBUTION	
Traffic		All Personnel	

ANCILLARY TRAFFIC SERVICES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide all personnel with information and direction regarding the department's role in assisting the public as it relates to traffic services.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Woonsocket Police Department to provide traffic-related assistance to the public as outlined below. All officers of the department will be constantly alert for motorists who appear to need assistance, directions, or information.

III. PROCEDURE

A. General Assistance:

1. Officers shall provide general assistance, such as information and directions, upon request. Officers shall be aware of major points of interest, within a reasonable travel distance, to enable them to provide information on routes of travel to motorists.
2. Officers shall be constantly alert for motoring citizens who appear to need assistance. Whenever possible, consistent with the prevailing necessity to affect apprehensions of actual or suspected violators and to answer previous calls for

service or fulfill assignments, officers shall stop and offer assistance to motorists who appear to be in distress.

B. Disabled Vehicles

1. Officers will use discretion in determining whether to physically push a disabled vehicle from the roadway.
 - a. Factors to be considered:
 - 1) Officer safety;
 - 2) Size and weight of the vehicle
 - 3) Number of officers/persons available to assist; and
 - 4) Need to expedite the removal of the vehicle.
 - b. Officers will ensure that adequate safety measures are taken whenever they do decide to push a vehicle, such as adequate lighting and a physical barrier to protect officers from oncoming traffic.
 - c. Officers will not physically push disabled vehicles on an interstate highway or any location, which would jeopardize officer safety.
2. Police vehicles will not be used to push other vehicles, except in emergencies to protect the public or motorist(s).
3. The officer will remain on the scene, when possible, handling traffic and occupant safety until the roadway is clear.
4. If it is deemed necessary that a tow truck is required, the officer will request dispatch personnel to summon for the next tow service on the department's towing rotation list. When response time is acceptable, the citizen's choice may be called.
5. Officers will not jump-start another vehicle or transport gasoline per [31-23-49](#) of Rhode Island General Laws.

C. Mechanical Assistance and Towing Services. [RI 11.8\(a\)](#)

1. Patrol officers shall assist motorists in need of mechanical repair or fuel by either contacting a local service garage from the department's approved rotating list or a specific party or business, at the request of the motorist.
2. Officers may require the vehicle to be removed without delay, due to a traffic hazard, and direct the nearest approved garage to handle the request.
3. A police officer may, at their discretion, assist any disabled motorist with any minor mechanical problems (i.e., change a tire, transport to a garage, etc.), but shall be cognizant that their primary duties are to warn motorists of potential hazards or oncoming traffic.

4. Officers should ensure that motorists are transported to the nearest facility for shelter or safety purposes while a vehicle is being repaired.
5. Under no circumstances shall a motorist be left alone in life-threatening weather, such as a severe cold or snowy conditions.
6. The Traffic Officer-in-Charge (OIC) shall review the tow log at regular intervals to ensure the proper rotation of towing agencies on the department's approved tow list.

D. Disabled Vehicle Parking

1. Any time an officer permits the owner of disabled vehicles to remain in an otherwise illegal parking place, the officer will inform the Communications Center of the location and vehicle description, as well as a time when the vehicle will be removed.
2. Before an officer causes an unattended vehicle to be towed, the officer is to check with the Communications Center to see if permission to park has been given.

E. Abandoned Autos

1. The term abandoned motor vehicles have a special meaning under the law. Under Rhode Island General Law [31-42-1](#). An abandoned motor vehicle is defined as one that is inoperable, over eight (8) years old and left unattended on public property for more than forty-eight (48) hours; or a motor vehicle that has remained illegally on public property for more than three (3) days.
2. Forty-eight (48) hours before towing, officers shall post or attach to the vehicle written notification indicating the vehicle will be towed. After waiting forty-eight (48) hours, officers must obtain approval from their supervisor before towing an abandoned vehicle. [RI 11.10\(a\)](#)
3. Officers will complete an incident report including the following information:
 - a. Last registered owner and address of the vehicle;
 - b. Type of vehicle, year, make, model, VIN, registration plate;
 - c. Location and condition of vehicle glass, tires, bumpers, lights, interior, radio, engine parts;
 - d. Body collision and damage;
 - e. State inspection sticker;
 - f. Officer name, badge, date, time, tow operator. [RI 11.10\(b\)](#)
4. Officers shall make every effort to contact the registered owner of any abandoned vehicle left on the roadway before towing the vehicle.
5. Officers shall notify the Communication Center of the impending tow.
6. Communications Center personnel shall note in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) log that the vehicle was towed, the name of the tow service being used, and whether the vehicle needs to be held for investigation before release. [RI 11.10\(c\)](#)

7. All towed, abandoned vehicles are subject to inventory as specified in [General Order 330.06 Motor Vehicle Inventory](#). [RI 11.10\(d\)](#)

F. Lockouts

1. Officers will not provide lockout assistance except in emergencies where human or animal life is endangered.
2. If the locked vehicle is a road hazard or if the caller expresses concern for their safety, an officer will be dispatched to assist the caller as they would for a disabled motorist.

G. Roadway Hazards

1. As roadway and roadside hazards can be contributing circumstances in vehicle crashes, they must be repaired as soon as possible. All officers should be alert to and will report:
 - a. Traffic light malfunctions such as burned-out bulbs, downed or hanging traffic lights, cycle malfunctions (stuck lights), or any other problem with traffic lights;
 - b. Missing, damaged, or obscured traffic control devices;
 - c. Roadway hazards such as potholes;
 - d. Missing, broken, or improper street markings;
 - e. Downed utility lines; and
 - f. Debris in the roadway. [RI 11.9\(b\)](#)
2. When an officer discovers roadway or roadside hazards, the officer will direct or reroute traffic to prevent any further jeopardy to motorists. The officer will have the Communications Center notify the appropriate department of the problem and request they respond and make repairs. [RI 11.9\(a\)](#)

H. Emergency Assistance [RI 11.8\(c\)](#)

1. Officers should always be prepared to assist motorists with:
 - a. Providing first aid when qualified to do so or summoning Emergency Medical Services (EMS);
 - b. Obtaining medical assistance;
 - c. Obtaining fire service assistance; and
 - d. Transporting civilians to the nearest phone or shelter.
2. In fire and medical emergencies, officers will make it a priority in notifying the Communications Center.

I. Protection to Stranded Motorists [RI 11.8\(b\)](#)

Officers have a responsibility for the safety of stranded motorists. Officers should standby with disabled motorists and provide lighting until the vehicle can be removed or transport the occupants to a safe location where he/she can wait until help arrives.

J. Traffic Safety Education

The Woonsocket Police Department will, whenever possible, respond to any requests to conduct classes, discussions, children's shows (bicycle safety, etc.), and the like by the general public. It is the Traffic Division's responsibility to schedule and appear at such requests. It will also be the responsibility of all officers to keep informed and answer any questions asked of them while performing their daily duties.

Per order,

Thomas F. Dates, III

Chief of Police

Written directives published within PowerDMS are in full force and effect on the referenced dates and have been approved by the Chief of Police