

## **22.00.170 MOTORIST ASSISTS (CALEA 61.4.1)**

Officers have the responsibility of assisting stranded motorists in obtaining needed road services and NORCOM to obtain the necessary services. Officers will stop and render aid to stranded motorists whenever possible. If an officer is unable to stop to assist a stranded motorist, the officer will notify NORCOM of the stranded motorist. NORCOM will send another car to check on the motorist.

If the motorist is outside the city limits, NORCOM will notify the agency having jurisdiction. Officers shall assist motorists by driving them to the nearest phone, or by having NORCOM notify the requested business or individual by phone. If they cannot find a ride, either a taxi will be called for them at their expense, or an officer can give them a ride as described below.

Should a motorist be stranded in a hazardous location, the officer will stay with the motorist until help has arrived. The officer, if possible, will assist the motorist in moving the stranded vehicle to a safe location off the roadway.

Should the officer have to leave the motorist after arranging for assistance, the officer will check back after a reasonable amount of time to be certain the requested assistance did arrive. Appropriate flares will be set out, if necessary.

Officers, prior to leaving the location of the stranded motorist, will see that the motorist and any passengers are in a place of safety and instruct parties to remain in the safe area until assistance arrives.

When stalled vehicles are creating a traffic hazard, the officer will stop and provide traffic control until the hazard is alleviated. Officers may assist motorists with minor repairs such as obtaining fuel, changing a tire, etc.

Officers shall refrain from providing jump-start service to motorists due to the amount of electronic equipment in patrol cars. If circumstances require that an officer assist with jump-starts, they should turn off their headlights, radios, emergency lights, and other electronic equipment to prevent damage from any power surges.

Transporting civilians should be limited to within the city limits. Permission to transport a civilian outside the city limits will be obtained from an on duty supervisor. Officers providing transportation will advise NORCOM of the starting point and destination, as well as starting/ending mileage if civilians of the opposite sex (from the officer) are transported.

Officers shall request a tow truck for stranded motorists upon request. Should the motorist have a preference of towing companies, the preferred company will be called. Should the motorist have no preference, the officer may request the next tow from the rotation list.

Stalled vehicles creating a hazard may be removed by an officer under authority of RCW 46.61.590.

Police vehicles equipped with push bars may be used to push, from the roadway, vehicles creating an immediate hazard. Vehicles should not be pushed further than required to alleviate the immediate hazard. The officer should have the driver sign a waiver of liability prior to pushing the vehicle. The push bar shall not be used for push starting stalled vehicles. Officers pushing vehicles should consider the type of vehicle, roadway grade, weight of the vehicle, roadway conditions, bumper match up, etc. They should advise the driver to place the vehicle in neutral with the brake off and the key on so as not to lock up the steering. Utilize a lower gear when pushing a vehicle. Do not try to maintain contact with the bumper while making a turn into a driveway, etc. Be sure to give clear instructions to the driver prior to a "push".

The first officer responding to a medical emergency scene shall notify NORCOM of needed aid or medic units and shall provide whatever first aid they are trained in until the aid or medic units have arrived.

### **Lockouts**

Officers will only be dispatched to requests for motorist assistance that involve lockouts when a small child or pet is locked inside the citizen's vehicle. A supervisor has the discretion to authorize lockout assistance on a case by case basis. In the event that lockout assistance is provided, the officer should determine if the person has a right to enter the vehicle, i.e., the registered owner. The officer will also advise the citizen that damage may occur to their vehicle and that the Department, and its agents, will not be liable for any such damage.