

Annapolis Police Department



GENERAL ORDER

Number: E.8

**Issue Date: February
2008**

TO: All Personnel

SUBJECT: Traffic Direction and Control

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures for traffic direction and control at planned as well as unanticipated incidents occurring within the City.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Annapolis Police Department to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

I. Traffic Direction and Control Responsibility

- A. Uniformed Police Officers have primary responsibility for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the City. These members shall be alert for problems which hinder the efficient flow of traffic and take appropriate action to eliminate problems when they are encountered.
- B. All members encountering traffic problems shall take all reasonable actions to control the problem to include:
 - 1. Notify the Communications Section of the location, nature and extent of the traffic problem.
 - 2. Request additional police personnel, if needed, to control the problem and restore the normal flow of traffic.
 - 3. Request other required services (Fire, Public Works, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, etc.) to respond and assist in correcting the problem.

4. Request specialized equipment needed to correct the problem.
- C. Personnel assigned to a traffic post shall remain at that post until relieved, until the problem is corrected or until released by a supervisor. This does not preclude officers from responding to emergency calls when necessary.

II. Traffic Direction Procedure

- A. Manual traffic direction should be conducted in a uniform fashion to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition and response. When directing traffic, it is necessary that the officer knows and utilizes standardized, appropriate gestures and audible signals to stop, start and turn traffic.
- B. To indicate that the officer is present for the purpose of directing traffic, they should:
 1. Turn the signal light (if possible) to blink or flashing;
 2. Position themselves so they can be seen clearly by all, usually in the center of the intersection or street;
 3. Stand straight with weight equally distributed on both feet;
 4. Allow hand and arms to hang easily at their sides, except when gesturing; and
 5. Stand facing or with their back to traffic which has been stopped and with their sides to traffic which has been directed to move.
- C. How to stop traffic:
 1. To stop traffic, the officer should first extend his or her arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be stopped until that person is aware, or it can be reasonably assumed that the driver is aware, of the officer's gesture.
 2. The pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that the palm is toward the person to be stopped, the palm is held in this position until the person is observed to stop. To stop traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction while continuing to maintain the raised arm and palm toward the traffic previously stopped.
- D. How to start traffic:
 1. The officer should first stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extend his or her arm and index finger forward and look directly at the person to be started until that person is aware, or it can reasonably assumed that the driver is aware, of the officer's gesture.

2. With the palm up, the pointing arm is swung from the elbow only, through a vertical semi-circle until the hand is adjacent to the chin. If necessary, this gesture is repeated until traffic begins to move. To start traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction.

E. Right turn movement. When directing a right turn becomes necessary, the officer should proceed as follows:

1. If the driver is approaching from the officer's right side his/her extended right arm and index finger and gaze are first directed toward the driver, followed by swinging the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the driver's intended turn.
2. If the driver is approaching from the officer's left side, either the same procedure may be followed utilizing the left arm extended or the extended left forearm may be raised to a vertical position from the elbow while closing the fingers so that the remaining extended thumb points in the direction of the driver's intended turn.

F. Left turn movements:

1. Left turning drivers should not be directed to effect their movement while the officer is also directing oncoming traffic to proceed. Therefore, the officer should either direct opposing vehicles to start while avoiding left turn gestures directed to a turning driver, which will lead them to complete their turn only when there is a gap in the oncoming traffic or to stop or hold the oncoming driver, after which the left turning driver can be directed into his/her turn. The officer's right side and arm should be toward the oncoming traffic, and left side and arm should be toward the left turning driver. After stopping oncoming traffic by using the right arm and hand, the right hand should remain in the halt position, then the extended left arm and index finger and officer's gaze is directed toward the driver who intends to effect a left turn. When the left turning driver's attention has been gained, the extended left arm and index finger are swung to point in the direction the driver intends to go.
2. In order to clear the lane occupied by a driver who intends to make a left turn, but cannot because of oncoming traffic, he/she can be directed into the intersection and stopped adjacent to the officer's position until the left turn can be safely completed. The driver should be directed into the intersection by pointing toward him/her with the extended arm and index finger which is then swung to point at the position at which the officer wishes the driver to stop and wait for clearing traffic. In the alternative, the driver may be directed to move with one arm and hand gesture while the other arm and hand are utilized to point to the position at which the driver is to stop. After the driver is positioned within the intersection, the officer may either halt oncoming traffic and direct the completion of the turn or permit the driver to effect the turn during a natural break in the oncoming traffic.

G. Signaling Aids

1. The whistle is used to get the attention of the drivers and pedestrians. It is used as follows:
 - a. One long blast for a STOP signal.
 - b. Two short blasts for the GO signal.
 - c. Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.
 - d. The whistle should be used judiciously. It should not be used to indicate frustration, and the volume should be just sufficient to be heard by those whose attention is required. Therefore, whistle blasts directed at pedestrians should be moderate in volume. The whistle should be used only to indicate stop, go, or to gain attention and when its purpose has been achieved, the officer should cease sounding the whistle. If the whistle is utilized continuously, it ceases to hold meaning for the drivers and pedestrians.
2. The voice is seldom used in directing traffic. Arm gestures and the whistle are usually sufficient. There are numerous reasons why verbal commands are not used. Verbal orders are not easy to give or understand and often lead to misinterpretations which are dangerous. An order which is shouted can antagonize the motorist. Occasionally a driver or pedestrian will not understand the officer's directions. When this happens the officer should move reasonably close to the person and politely and briefly explain his/her directions. No officer shall exhibit loss of temper by shouting or otherwise indicate antagonism toward those who do not understand or who do not wish to obey the officer's directions.
3. Use of the flashlight cone or baton.
 - a. To stop a driver with the baton, the officer should face the oncoming traffic, hold the baton in the right hand, bend the right elbow, hold the baton vertical then swing the baton from left to right through an arc of approximately 45 degrees.
 - b. The GO and LEFT TURN direction are the same gestures as those previously described except that the baton acts as an extension of the hand and index fingers. Signals and directions given with the aid of the baton should be exaggerated and often need to be repeated because of limited visibility. The baton light should be turned off when it is not being actively utilized to give directions.
4. A flashlight alone can also be used to halt traffic, but less effective and safe than with a cone attachment. To stop traffic slowly swing the beam of light across the path of the oncoming traffic. The beam from the flashlight strikes the pavement as an elongated spot of light. After the driver has stopped, arm signals may be given in the usual manner, the vehicles's headlights providing illumination.

- H. All members are issued a reflective safety vest which will be **worn at all times** during traffic direction. These vests will be carried while on duty.
- I. Members may manually operate traffic control devices, normally to either attempt to recycle a signal light or to place the signal light on flash or blink. Officers shall manually control traffic control devices only in the following situations:
 - a. When the traffic light malfunctions;
 - b. To facilitate movement at traffic collisions or other emergencies;
 - c. To provide a thoroughfare for a motorcade, funeral procession, etc., and
 - d. To alleviate congestion resulting from use of automatic controls particularly during planned special events.
- J. Members are prohibited from attempting repairs on traffic control devices. Members shall immediately notify the Communications Section of any signal malfunction, or signal placed on flash, and request that the appropriate state, county or city agency respond and repair the signal.

III. Temporary Traffic Control Devices

- A. Normally, temporary traffic control devices will only be used for special events or in the event a key signal light malfunctions.
- B. Use of temporary stops signs (requested through the Department of Public Works) will be limited to those key intersections at which the traffic signal has failed completely. If the traffic signal can be placed on four-way blink or flash, this is preferred over the use of a temporary stop sign.
- C. Flashlights with traffic wands should be used for traffic direction during periods of low light or unfavorable weather conditions. Road flares may also be used, however, their use should be limited and they will not be used during hazardous or explosive conditions. **FLARES WILL NOT BE USED IN A HAND HELD APPLICATION.** Members will ensure that their vehicle is stocked with flares.
- D. A supply of traffic cones and barricades is maintained at Police Headquarters and are available for use during traffic control assignments. Arrangements can be made for the delivery and pickup for these materials through a Patrol Supervisor.

IV. Special Events

- A. Special events can involve large amounts of vehicular/pedestrian traffic. These may include parades, rallies, sporting events, demonstrations or other large public gatherings. The Department will provide traffic direction at these activities to ensure proper flow of traffic through the area.
- B. Traffic control planning for special events will be conducted by the Special Events

Coordinator. Each proposed event will be reviewed to determine its impact on the following areas:

1. Designation of a single person or position as supervisor and coordinator for the coverage of a given event;
 2. Written estimate of traffic, crowd control, and crime problems expected for any given event;
 3. Contingency plan for traffic direction and control (Refer to Appendix A);
 4. Use of special operations personnel, if any;
 5. Logistical requirements;
 6. Coordination inside and outside the agency;
 7. Ingress and egress of vehicles and pedestrians;
 8. Parking space;
 9. Spectator control;
 10. Public transportation;
 11. Relief of officers assigned;
 12. Provisions for news media with Media Relations Officer
 13. Alternate routes for through traffic;
 14. Temporary traffic controls and parking prohibitions;
 15. Emergency vehicle access, and
 16. After-action report.
- C. For events requiring a Parade/Rally Permit, the Special Events Coordinator will submit a written report to the Commander of the Special Operations Section addressing the safety of the proposed event and its impact on the surrounding community. The report may also include recommendations which would improve these aspects of the event. For events requiring police services, the Special Events Section will prepare an Operations Plan detailing the assignments and personnel requirements.
- D. Staffing for special events will be coordinated through the Special Operations Section.

V. Unusual Occurrences

A. Traffic Collision Scenes

1. Officers have primary responsibility for the direction and control of traffic at collision scenes.
2. Officers shall set up perimeter traffic control points to:
 - a. Allow for the ingress and egress of police and other emergency equipment.
 - b. Halt, or divert approaching traffic away from or around the accident scene.
 - c. Provide for a system of alternate routes to move traffic around the accident site.

B. Fire Scenes

1. Traffic direction and control at the scene of a fire or rescue incident is the responsibility of the Police Department. Members will ensure that responding emergency equipment and personnel have access to the affected area.
2. Members should coordinate the appropriate access and detour routes with the ranking Fire Department official at the scene. The route should be communicated to incoming vehicles.
3. Members will prohibit access to unauthorized vehicles and persons attempting to enter the fire scene.
4. All volunteer fire fighters arriving at the scene in privately owned vehicles will be directed to park at the edge of the established perimeter. Problems in this area should be addressed through the Fire Department on scene commander.

C. Natural and Man-made Disaster

1. The Police Department is responsible for traffic direction and control in the event of a disaster. Members will ensure that responding emergency equipment and personnel have direct access to the area. The ingress and egress for emergency vehicles will be maintained throughout the duration of the incident.
2. Members should coordinate with the ranking Fire Department official at the scene when determining the most appropriate access and detour routes. These routes should be communicated to incoming emergency vehicles through the Communication Section. If detours will be in effect for extended periods the Media Relations Officer will notify local media.
3. Members will prohibit access to unauthorized vehicles and persons attempting

to enter the disaster site. Members will also maintain security of the disaster site and preserve law and order.

- 4. If the incident involves numerous injuries, traffic control should be implemented at key intersections along the evacuation route to allow for rapid evacuation of the injured.

D. Adverse Road and Weather Conditions

- 1. Members will be alert to adverse road or weather conditions which might create traffic congestion or a hazard to motorists. These conditions shall be reported immediately to the Communications Section. Members will direct traffic as necessary to clear up the congestion or to assist motorists in avoiding the hazard.
- 2. Hazardous roadway conditions resulting from roadway damage or damage to traffic controls shall be reported immediately to the appropriate City, State or County agency. The member shall request the Communications Section to make the necessary notifications. Members will direct traffic as necessary to assist motorists in avoiding the hazard.
- 3. Hazardous conditions resulting from natural occurrences such as snow, icing, or flooding shall be reported immediately to the Communications Section. Members will provide the location and nature of the hazard and any additional information which might assist allied agencies in determining the appropriate response. Members will direct traffic as necessary to assist motorists in avoiding the hazard.
- 4. The officer shall request the Communications Section to notify the proper utility company and direct movement to direct traffic and safeguard movement at the scene of all downed power lines, broken gas or water mains, or construction sites, when the situation endangers the safe movement of traffic through the area.
- 5. The Watch Commander, Platoon Supervisor/Unit supervisor may close a street if in his/her opinion, the surface conditions and terrain creates an unusually hazardous condition. The supervisor should request public works' assistance in alleviating the problem.

Joseph S. Johnson
Chief of Police

References
1. Accreditation Standards 46.2.7, 61.3.2, 61.4.2

Revision: This General Order replaces General Order E.8 Traffic Direction and Control dated April 2001

General Order E.8 Appendix A: Traffic Direction and Control, September 2004

Contingency Plan for Traffic Direction and Control:

Personnel assigned to traffic direction and control for special events will facilitate the smooth movement of traffic as outlined in any deployment plans as developed by the Special Events Coordinator. In the event of a motor vehicle (collision that disrupts traffic flow), the assigned personnel will, contact Communications to advise them of the collision and evaluate the need for medical care and provide basic life support; if there are injuries have Communications contact the Annapolis Fire Department; contact the Special Events Coordinator or supervisor in charge of the traffic detail; at the discretion of the Special Events Coordinator or supervisor in charge of the traffic detail request a post/traffic safety unit officer to respond to the scene (for both personal injury and property damage collisions); attempt to redirect/re-route traffic in order to clear any congestion caused by the collision.

The Special Events Coordinator or supervisor in charge of the traffic detail will coordinate all of the other affected traffic control points to assist in the redirecting/re-routing of the affected traffic. At the discretion of the Special Events Coordinator or the supervisor in charge of the traffic detail, officers detailed to crowd control/security posts may be reassigned to a traffic control post to assist with the redirecting/re-routing of traffic. The Special Events Coordinator or supervisor in charge of the traffic detail may also notify any other assisting agency to aide in re-routing of traffic or let the agency know of the situation i.e., Secret Service security detail, Maryland State Police security detail.