




WINCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATION ORDER

NOTE: This policy is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Number 2-15		Effective Date August 14, 2020	Review Date August 12, 2020	Reviewing Division Administration
Subject TRAFFIC CONTROL		<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Amends <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised		This policy shall apply to personnel assigned to the following divisions: <input type="checkbox"/> All Personnel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patrol Division <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration Division <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Investigation Division <input type="checkbox"/> ECC Personnel
References VLEPSC: OPR.05.01 - .02, OPR.07.11 CALEA				
 <hr/> Chief of Police or Designee		<hr/> March 23, 2023 Date		

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform procedures for the provision of traffic direction and control, traffic engineering, and additional traffic services.

II. POLICY

The Winchester Police Department performs traffic functions such as point traffic control, parking control, emergency assistance, and identifies and reports hazards, checks abandoned vehicles, recovers stolen vehicles, and provides traffic safety information and recommendations. The public relies on law enforcement for assistance and advice when faced with the many routine and emergency traffic situations which can and do develop in an urban society. Often there is no other private or public agency available to provide such services. Further, traffic control usually does not involve arrests or criminal investigations, yet it is a service necessary to the safe regulation of pedestrians and vehicles. A highly visible activity, traffic control must be performed consistently, responsibly, courteously, and professionally. The Department expects officers to be mindful of the expectations of the community and perform their duties accordingly.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Traffic Control Equipment

1. Except in an emergency, officers shall be in uniform when directing traffic. Off-duty and plain clothes personnel shall conspicuously display their badge when directing traffic.
2. Officers directing traffic shall wear a Department issued reflective vest at all times.
3. Officers shall use hand signals and when practical a whistle when directing traffic.
4. Officers shall use a flashlight when directing traffic during hours of darkness and any other circumstance of limited visibility.
5. Each patrol vehicle shall include flares as standard equipment. Officers shall use flares during hours of darkness, inclement weather, or at any other appropriate time. During hours of daylight, cones may be more visible than flares.
6. The City of Winchester Public Works Department and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) possess temporary barricades, cones, lighted and non-lighted signs, and truck mounted directional signs. The on-duty supervisor shall request the public works department or VDOT assistance if circumstances warrant.

B. Methods of Manual Direction of Traffic

1. To stop traffic by hand, the officer directing traffic shall stand with shoulders parallel to moving traffic and raise the arm(s) up forty-five (45) degrees above the shoulder, with hand(s) extended and palm(s) toward the moving traffic to be stopped.
2. To move traffic by hand, the officer directing traffic shall stand with shoulders parallel to the traffic to be moved, extend the right arm and hand full length at the height of the shoulders towards such traffic, fingers extended and joined, palm down, and bring the hand sharply in the direction the traffic is to move. Repeat the movement with the left arm and hand to start traffic from the opposite direction.
3. If the officer uses a whistle, the following commands shall be observed:
 - a. To stop traffic, sound one long blast;
 - b. To start traffic, sound two short blasts;
 - c. To stop traffic for an emergency, sound three or more short blasts. This signal orders traffic to clear the intersection and stop; and
 - d. Give several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.

4. Avoid using voice commands when directing traffic. Arm gestures and a whistle are usually sufficient. Oral orders are not easy to give or understand in traffic control situations and often lead to misinterpretations which can be dangerous. An order which is shouted can also antagonize the motorist.
5. Although a flashlight alone may be used to halt traffic, officers may use the safer and more effective cone attachment if available. To stop traffic with a flashlight, slowly swing the beam of the light across the path of 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 vehicle's headlight providing illumination.

C. Manual Operation of Traffic Control Devices

On occasion, circumstances may require the manual operation of traffic control signal lights, either to attempt to recycle a signal light or to place the signal lights on flash or blink. In these situations the officer shall contact the on-duty supervisor who will in turn contact the public works Department. The manual operation of traffic control signal lights may be requested under the following circumstances:

1. When traffic lights malfunction;
2. To facilitate movement at traffic crashes or other emergencies;
3. To provide a thoroughfare for a motorcade or funeral procession; and
4. To alleviate congestion resulting from the use of automatic controls, particularly during planned special events.

D. Special Event Traffic Control

For any other special event, the Chief of Police or his/her designee shall ensure the preparation and implementation of a special traffic plan which addresses ingress and egress of vehicles and pedestrians, provisions for parking, spectator control, public transportation, assignment of point traffic control duties and relief, alternate traffic routing, temporary traffic controls and parking prohibitions, emergency vehicle access, and appropriate media coverage.

E. Traffic Control at Traffic Crash Scenes

Officers shall employ techniques of traffic control at traffic crash scenes with the following objectives in mind:

1. Protect lives and property;
2. Prevent additional traffic crashes;
3. Protect evidence;
4. Keep avenues of ingress and egress open for emergency vehicles; and

5. Restore the safe flow of traffic as soon as practicable.

F. Traffic Control at Fire Scenes

1. Upon arrival at a fire scene, officers shall contact the fire officials in command of the scene to determine if any special traffic control procedures must be observed.
2. The objective of traffic control at fire scenes is to allow fire and rescue equipment to be deployed without hindrance and to keep pedestrian and vehicular traffic away from the scene.
3. Officers responding to a fire scene shall observe the following rules, mindful that the fire officials in command have authority over the fire scene. The exception to these rules shall be emergency vehicles on actual calls for service:
 - a. No vehicles, including those of volunteer firefighters shall be allowed to drive into the block where fire apparatus are parked and operating, unless requested to do so by the fire officials in command;
 - b. No vehicles shall be allowed to cross fire hoses without the approval of the fire officials in command; and
 - c. Parked vehicles that interfere with fire operations may be towed as needed.
4. Officers shall restore the safe flow of traffic as soon as practicable.

G. Traffic Control During Adverse Road and Weather Conditions

1. The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall notify the local media, public works Department, and the fire department of adverse road conditions that affect the motoring public.
2. The Chief of Police or his/her designee may close a street if, in his or her opinion, the surface conditions and terrain are unusually hazardous. The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall request the public works Department's assistance in alleviating the problem and request media public service announcements to be made concerning the closure.
3. The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall request the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to notify the proper utility company and may assign officers to direct traffic and safeguard movement at the scene of all downed power lines, broken gas or water mains, or at construction sites, when the situation endangers the safe movement of traffic.
4. Adverse road conditions may require several officers and the use of flares, traffic cones, or temporary barriers to reroute traffic. The on-duty supervisor

shall contact the public works Department and/or VDOT for assistance, signs, and barricade equipment, if needed.

5. Adverse weather conditions may require the assistance of other law enforcement agencies. If additional personnel are needed, the on-duty supervisor shall ask the ECC to request assistance from available law enforcement agencies.

H. Additional Traffic Services

1. Officers shall provide reasonable assistance to motorists. Help may include requesting the ECC to call towing services or other services as needed. Time and duty permitting, officers may assist stranded and disabled motorists to acquire fuel and repairs, but officers shall not perform repairs personally.
2. Police vehicles shall not be used to jump start or push vehicles.
3. Officers shall be aware of possible dangers to motorists who are stranded in isolated and hazardous locations on the highway, and shall take steps to reduce these threats by transporting motorists to safer locations or setting out flares to warn other motorists.
4. If an officer must leave the scene before the arrival of requested assistance, they shall request that another officer check the area and provide assistance or protection.
5. Officers shall be able to provide directions to various locations within the City of Winchester and surrounding area.
6. Officers arriving at the scene of any highway emergency shall request the ECC to notify necessary emergency services. Officers shall then provide emergency first aid, fire suppression, and obtain additional assistance as the situation requires, pending arrival of appropriate emergency services.
7. Officers shall not escort other emergency vehicles. However, officers may direct traffic at intersections to expedite the movement of other emergency vehicles. Officers shall not provide emergency escorts for private vehicles. If a medical emergency exists, then rescue units shall be summoned. See GO 2-2, Patrol and GO 2-13, Traffic Enforcement for other vehicle escort procedures.
8. An officer locating hazardous debris in the roadway shall remove the debris or request the ECC to notify the public works Department to have the debris removed.
9. Officers shall report all highway defects to the ECC and the ECC shall contact the public works Department as soon as the situation dictates.
10. For vehicle roadblock situations, refer to GO 2-4, Use of Force, GO 2-12, Vehicle Operations, and GO 2-13, Traffic Enforcement.