

Traffic Direction and Control

Index Code: 1907

Effective Date: 11/01/02 (Revised 01/01/10)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to provide deputies with guidelines for manually directing and controlling pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff that a uniformed deputy will manually direct traffic when necessary to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles.

III. Manual Traffic Direction Procedures

A. General Procedures

Deputies must constantly keep in mind their own safety and the safety of others when manually directing traffic. All personnel directing traffic will use uniform signals and gestures to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition of, and response to, directions. The voice commands, signaling aids, hand motions, and gestures displayed should be performed in a polite but firm manner to elicit a reasonable and immediate response from drivers and pedestrians.

B. Stopping Traffic

When stopping traffic the deputy should first extend his or her arm and index finger toward, and look directly at, the driver to be stopped until that person is aware, or it can be reasonably assumed that the person is aware of the deputy's gesture. Second, the pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that the palm is toward the person to be stopped. The palm is then held in this position until the vehicle has stopped. 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. The same procedure applies to stopping vehicles from intersecting roadways.

C. Starting Traffic

When starting traffic the deputy should first stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extending arm and index finger toward, while looking directly at the first driver, until that driver is aware of the deputy's gesture.

Second, with the palm toward the deputy, the pointing arm is swung from the elbow 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. The same procedure applies to starting vehicles from intersecting roadways.

D. Turns

When directing traffic to turn in a specific direction, the utmost caution must be used to ensure driver compliance. The deputy's extended arm, index finger, and gaze should first be directed toward the driver to gain their attention, followed by swinging the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the turn.

E. Whistles

A whistle may be used in conjunction with arm and hand signals to gain the attention of drivers and pedestrians in the following manner:

1. One long blast coupled with the appropriate hand signal for STOP.
2. Two short blasts coupled with the appropriate hand signal for GO.
3. Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.

F. Driver Confusion

When a driver or pedestrian misunderstands or misinterprets a deputy's directions, the deputy will move reasonably close to the person and politely but briefly explain the directions without compromising safety. The deputy will then allow the driver to proceed according to directions when it is safe to do so. This procedure is not intended to abridge a deputy's enforcement responsibilities. In the event of a deliberate and flagrant failure to heed a deputy's directions, the deputy should invoke the necessary enforcement action.

G. Flashlights

Flashlights must be used during hours of darkness or diminished illumination, and will only be used to stop traffic. To stop traffic swing a beam of light across the path of the oncoming vehicle, avoiding the driver's eyes. Once the vehicle has stopped, the flashlight will be turned off and the deputy will proceed to direct traffic in the manner set forth above.

H. Flares/Traffic Cones

Flares may be utilized to direct traffic by the deputy on scene. Flares must be supervised by the deputy and the deputy must be sure the flares do not present a fire hazard. If the deputy feels that traffic cones are needed to direct traffic they will contact a supervisor and request assistance from the State Highway Administration or Department of Public Works.

I. Traffic Flow

Unless circumstances prevent it, a deputy will allow traffic from one direction to flow for at least sixty seconds before stopping the flow and starting traffic from another direction. However, deputies will disregard the sixty-second time allotment when gaps or lulls in traffic appear.

J. Positioning

Prior to engaging in manual traffic direction control, the deputy must:

1. Select a position in the roadway that maximizes visibility;
2. Select a position that maximizes personal safety; and
3. Be alert and flexible at all times.

K. Reflective Vest

All personnel directing traffic, or in the roadway, will wear the agency issued reflective vest at all times unless exigent circumstances exist.

IV. Closure of State Roads

The State Highway Administration has developed a comprehensive program for rerouting traffic in the event of State road closures, or significant traffic disruptions on State roads. The system is known as C.H.A.R.T. (Chesapeake Highway Advisory Routing Traffic). When notified, C.H.A.R.T. will assist in traffic redirection.

In any incident where a State road is closed or experiences a significant disruption of traffic, on-scene personnel will inform the Department of

Emergency Services of the incident, who in turn will notify the State Highway Administration. It is important to provide D.E.S. with as much information as possible concerning the incident, and the expected length of time the road will be affected.

V. Fire Scenes

A. The Fire Department is in command of all fire scenes. Sheriff's Office personnel are responsible for assisting and facilitating the operations of the Fire Department. Responsibilities of the Sheriff's Office include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring that no one hinders or obstructs Fire Department apparatus or personnel;
2. Excluding unauthorized persons and vehicles from the fire scene;
3. Ensuring control and free maneuverability of fire apparatus.

B. Deputies responding to a fire scene will not congregate directly at the scene of the fire. The deputy in charge will establish traffic control points at a safe distance from the fire.

C. In discharging duties at a fire scene, it is important that the rights and privileges of citizens, businesses, pedestrians, and vehicular traffic not be interfered with or obstructed any longer than public safety requires.

VI. Critical Incidents

During critical incidents where traffic direction is needed deputies will contact the Incident Commander, or Shift Supervisor if there is not a designated Incident Commander, to see where traffic direction is needed. Traffic direction during critical incidents will be conducted as described above.

VII. Adverse Conditions

Deputies learning of, or observing, a hazardous condition on a roadway, or severe weather affecting traffic flow which requires immediate attention or repair, will notify the Department of Emergency Services (DES). The deputy will inform the dispatcher of the situation and identify the assistance or special equipment required. The deputy will protect the scene and bystanders, and direct traffic or take any other action deemed necessary. DES will notify the

appropriate agency to make the emergency repair or restore essential services.

VIII. Special Events

The Commander of the Support Services Division, or his designee, is responsible for the coordination of traffic control associated with special events, such as fairs, funerals, parades, picketing, and sporting events. Contingency plans for such events will include provisions for ingress and egress of vehicles and pedestrians, parking, spectator control, public transportation, news media, alternate routes for through traffic, placement of temporary traffic controls, emergency vehicle access, relief of deputies assigned control duties, and any other contingency that may arise out of the event. Temporary traffic control devices, such as movable barriers and signs, may be obtained from the Department of Public Works and the State Highway Administration.

VIII. Manual Operation of Traffic Signals

A. Deputies may manually operate a traffic signal when the signal is malfunctioning, or when manual operation would facilitate the flow of traffic. The signal should be placed on manual only for the duration of the event.

B. If the signal is malfunctioning, the deputy will notify the appropriate agency via the Department of Emergency Services.

C. Familiarization training on the use of manual controls must be obtained prior to utilizing manual control operations. Familiarization training and traffic signal control box keys can be obtained through the Department of Public Works or the State Highway Administration. Deputies who have not received familiarization training will not manually operate traffic signals.

IX. CALEA References: 61.3.2b, 61.3.2c, 61.3.2d, 61.3.2e, 61.3.2f & 61.3.2g.

X. Proponent Unit: Field Operations Division

XI. Cancellation: This directive cancels Index Code 1907 dated 11/01/02.


Sheriff R. Gery Hofmann III