

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL

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I. Purpose

To establish the procedure for directing pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

II. Objectives

The major objectives of the officer directing traffic are to minimize traffic congestion problems and maintain the safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Specifically, the officer is responsible for the following:

- A. Regulating the flow of traffic
- B. Control of turning movements.
- C. Coordinating vehicle movements with the flow at adjacent intersections.
- D. Detouring traffic as necessary.
- E. Controlling pedestrian movements
- F. Arranging for the removal of obstructions to traffic flow.
- G. Providing for emergency vehicle movements.
- H. Rendering aid and assistance to motorists and pedestrian

Traffic direction will be performed at any accident or fire scene where it is necessary to route traffic in another direction. Traffic direction will be performed during adverse weather conditions where such conditions have caused downed trees, power lines or in areas where there are existing road hazards.

III. Manual Direction of Traffic

- A. Visibility - Officers shall wear their reflective jackets or reflective vests when directing traffic unless it is an emergency situation where time does not permit the putting on of the jacket/vest. During adverse weather conditions, officers shall wear reflective or high visibility raincoat when directing traffic. To indicate that the officer is present for the purpose of directing traffic he should: Position

himself so that he can be seen clearly by all, usually in the center of the intersection or street; stand straight with weight equally distributed on both feet; allow hands and arms to hang easily at his or her sides except when gesturing; stand facing or with his or her back to traffic which they have stopped and with their side toward traffic they have directed to move.

- B. Stopping Traffic: To stop traffic the officer should first extend his 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 he is aware of the officer's gesture. Second, the pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that its palm is toward the person to be stopped, and 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.
- C. Starting Traffic: To start traffic the officer should first stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extend his arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be started and until that person is aware or it can be reasonably assumed that he is aware of the officer's gesture. Second, with 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 is necessary this gesture be 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.
- D. Right Turns: Drivers intending to turn right can usually make their turns without the necessity of being directed by the officer. When directing a right turn becomes necessary, the officer should proceed as follows. If the driver is approaching from the officer's right side his 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. 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 extending thumb points in the direction of the driver's intended turn.
- E. Left Turn: Drivers intending to turn left should not be directed to turn 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 at turning drivers, which we lead them to complete their turn only when there is a gap in the oncoming traffic, or to stop or hold oncoming drivers, after which the left turning driver can be directed into his turn. The officer's right side and arm should be toward the oncoming traffic, and the 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 gesture, 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 intended to go.

In order to clear the lane occupied by a driver who intends to make a left turn, but cannot because of oncoming traffic, he 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 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. 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.

IV. Signal Aids

- A. The whistle is used to get the attention of drivers and pedestrians. It is used as following:
 - 1. One long blast with a signal to stop.
 - 2. Two short blasts with a signal to go.
 - 3. Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.
- B. The whistle should be used judiciously. It should not be used to indicate frustration, but the volume should be just that 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 drivers and pedestrians.
- C. 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 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 direction.

- D. The flashlight can be used to halt traffic. To stop traffic slowly swing the beam of the light across the path of incoming traffic. The beam from the flashlight strikes the pavement the pavement as an elongated spot of light. After the driver has stopped, arm signal may be given in the usual manner, the vehicle's headlights providing illumination.

This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant existing departmental policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

V. Traffic Direction at Accident Scenes

- A. Minor traffic accidents requiring an accident report do not present a major problem relative to traffic direction. In these cases, the officer should note the position of each vehicle and other relevant physical evidence, have vehicles moved to a safe location, restoring traffic flow, and then complete the report.
- B. In serious accidents requiring a thorough investigation, the scene may need protection for an extended period. In these cases, investigating officer shall follow these procedures:

1. Summon sufficient manpower to handle traffic direction responsibilities.
2. Utilize sufficient equipment to protect the scene (barricades, traffic cones, etc.).
3. Detour traffic as necessary.
4. Give priority attention to collecting the information necessary at the scene to facilitate restoring normal flow of traffic.
5. Restore the scene to a safe condition (replace sign, etc.).
6. Continuing traffic direction duties until traffic flow is normal.
7. Notify GADOT if a state route is to be closed for more than 15 minutes.

VI. Traffic Direction and Control at Fire Scenes

- A. Officers directing traffic at fire and emergency scenes will ensure that all private vehicles, including volunteer fireman's vehicles, are well clear of the emergency or other traffic.
- B. Officers shall follow these procedures when directing traffic at a fire scene:
 1. Summon sufficient manpower to handle traffic direction and pedestrian control responsibilities.
 2. Utilize sufficient equipment to protect the scene (barricades, cones, etc.).
 3. Detour traffic as necessary.
 4. Restore traffic flow.
 5. Continue traffic direction duties until fire scene is cleared.

VII. Traffic Directions at Special Events

Upon learning of a special event, the watch commander or other patrol supervisor shall plan the event. The following procedures will be utilized.

- A. The time, location and anticipated attendance shall be determined.
- B. The perimeter streets of the special events shall be used to maximum advantage by eliminating or increasing parking space, making temporary one-way streets, and assigning officers to key intersection for control.
- C. Provide for adequate emergency service access to the scene of the event, including fire and ambulance services.
- D. Providing for adequate crowd control. If the event is a parade, ropes may be used along the parade route with officers stationed at intervals as needed.
- E. Ensure adequate publicity for any changes or alternations in street utilization, parking availability, public transportation services, and the location of the event or parade route.

- F. Provisions should be made for identifying those persons working directly with the event to assist them in crossing police lines. This includes promoters of the event, vendors and press personnel.

VIII. Temporary Traffic Control Devices

Temporary traffic control devices such as cones, barricades, etc., may be obtained from the City Utility Plant. These devices shall be utilized when necessary at a special event or an emergency scene. The Watch Commander or Patrol Supervisor on duty shall have the authority to request these devices and determine the location for using them. Police personnel will remove temporary devices when the event or emergency situation is over and returned to City Utility Plant.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton

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Chief of Police