



POLICY & PROCEDURE

ELKHART LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **OTHER TRAFFIC RELATED DUTIES**

SCOPE: All Department Personnel
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedure Manual

REFERENCE: WI State Statutes: 346.215

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INDEX AS: Abandoned Vehicles
Assistance to Highway Users
Escort Services
Hazardous Highway Conditions
High Visibility Clothing
Traffic Direction and Control
Vehicle Unlocks

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Policy & Procedure is to ensure the safe and efficient movement of motor vehicles and pedestrians within the Village of Elkhart Lake. The Elkhart Lake Police Department will strive to reduce the incidence of traffic crashes and to provide for the orderly and safe flow of traffic.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. TRAFFIC DIRECTION
- II. SIGNALING CONTROL AIDS
- III. HIGH VISIBILITY CLOTHING
- IV. ESCORT SERVICES
- V. ASSISTANCE TO HIGHWAY USERS
- VI. ADVERSE HIGHWAY AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

VII. ABANDONED VEHICLES

I. TRAFFIC DIRECTION

A. Manual Traffic Direction

1. Manual traffic direction will be performed by officers when necessary to ensure the safe efficient movement of motor vehicles and pedestrians. Circumstances and situations will dictate whether officers should direct traffic or permit the traffic to flow without assistance.
2. Traffic flow problems may occur due to any of the following:
 - a) Traffic light malfunction or downed stop sign.
 - b) Special event creating heavy traffic flow.
 - c) Traffic crash, fire scene.
 - d) Temporary road hazard or obstruction.

B. Manual Traffic Direction Procedures

1. In the event traffic control is needed, an officer assigned should maintain a professional attitude and demeanor while conducting traffic control duties. Any other type of attitude or demeanor is likely to create more confusion than already exists for the pedestrians or vehicles being controlled.

The first step in the process is to select the proper location to establish operations. Several factors must be considered in selecting this location. They are:

- a) Design of the intersection,
 - b) Traffic patterns,
 - c) Lighting conditions, and
 - d) Degree of traffic control required.
2. The position of an officer should be selected with personal safety in mind. This position must be clearly visible to drivers and should not interfere with the flow of traffic. The point most commonly selected is the middle of the intersection. Intersection design may dictate that another spot be chosen. Some types of intersections requiring the location to be to one side or the other of center are:
 - a) A "T" type intersection,
 - b) A one way street, and/or,
 - c) Unusually narrow roadway

3. Manual traffic direction by an officer will be handled in a manner that will enable drivers and pedestrians to easily recognize and respond to standardized, clearly visible and easily understood audible signals (traffic whistle) and visual signals (hand signals) from an officer.
4. When directing traffic, an officer should stand with his/her face or back toward the stopped traffic and his/her side toward traffic being directed to proceed. There are six basic signals for manual traffic control. They are:
 - a) **To stop traffic:** An officer shall extend their arm(s) outward with palm(s) towards the vehicle(s) to be stopped, accompanied by one long blast on the traffic whistle
 - b) **To start traffic:** An officer shall use the hand nearest the stream of traffic being directed to go. Holding the arm horizontal at shoulder height point, with the index finger at the vehicle(s) being directed, accompanied by two short blasts of the traffic whistle. Bending the elbow, bring the hand back in an arc to the front of chin to direct traffic to pass in front of the person directing traffic. Using the same procedure, bring the hand back behind the ear to direct traffic to pass in back of the person directing traffic.
 - c) **To change direction:** Use the stop signal to stop each stream of moving traffic separately. Turn 90 degrees. Keep both hands in the stop signal position. Give the go signal to each stream of traffic separately.
 - d) **Right turns:** The officer shall gesture to the driver of a vehicle turning right, to perform the turn by pointing at the driver and extending their arm toward the direction in which the turn is to be made.
 - e) **Left turns:** Left turns may be made only when there is a gap in the traffic flow or all cross traffic has been stopped. With the arm extended horizontally the officer shall point at the driver and swing the arm straight to point to where the driver is to go.

C. Manual Operation of Traffic Control Signals

1. Manual operation of traffic control signals may be initiated by officers under any of the following circumstances:
 - a) Special event causing excess traffic.
 - b) Traffic control signal malfunctions.
 - c) Traffic accident or other event affecting traffic movement.
2. Officers may put traffic control signals on all direction flash, if by doing so a traffic problem will be reduced.
3. When an officer places traffic control signals on flash in response to a malfunction with the signals, an incident report will be prepared and a copy sent to the department of public works outlining the circumstances of the failure.

D. Temporary Traffic Control Devices

1. Portable stop signs may be used as needed in the event of a signal malfunction or downed or missing stop sign.
2. In case of a major traffic disruption, portable stop signs, barricades etc. are available from the department of public works.

E. Special Events

1. Special events may necessitate involvement of the Department for traffic direction and control. The Department will provide necessary traffic direction and control in support of such pre-approved events.

F. Traffic Control at Fire Scenes

1. The primary duty of Department personnel engaged in traffic direction at a fire scene is to maintain access for fire fighting vehicles and equipment, as well as limiting public access to the area.
2. The first officer(s) at the scene of a fire, shall position their vehicle(s) as to limit access to the area and coordinate their traffic and crowd control efforts with the fire department on-scene commander.
3. If it appears the firefighting efforts will be prolonged, the department of public works should be notified to barricade the streets involved.

II. Signaling Control Aids

A. Use of signaling control aids may be necessary while conducting manual traffic control. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Traffic Whistle

- a) One long blast signals traffic to stop.
- b) Two short blasts signal traffic to proceed.
- c) Several short blasts should be used to gain attention.
- d) The whistle should be used as needed and **never** to indicate frustration or anger.

2. Voice

- a) Do not shout. Use a loud, professional tone.

3. Flashlight

- a) To stop traffic, swing the flashlight beam across the vehicle's path.
- b) Direct the beam at the pavement, being careful not to blind drivers.

- c) After a vehicle is stopped, use manual signals for further instructions.

III. HIGH VISIBILITY CLOTHING/SAFETY DEVICES

- A. Officers shall wear the Department issued reflective traffic safety vests when directing traffic, other than in the event of an immediate emergency. In the event of an immediate emergency, officers shall put on the reflective vest as soon as practical.
- B. Flashlights should be used with cone shaped traffic wand light diffusers.
- C. Flares may be positioned in the roadway or on the roadway edge in a manner that enhances conspicuity.
 1. Officers should remember to clear off debris left behind from flares.

IV. ESCORT SERVICES

- A. Generally, all routine requests for escorts will be reviewed by a supervisor. Notwithstanding the exceptions noted in paragraph C below, officers may initiate escorts without specific authorization depending on circumstances. The use of the patrol vehicle emergency equipment will be left to the discretion of the officer performing the escort functions; however all officers shall abide by the provisions of WI State Statute 346.215.
 1. Two (2) emergency vehicles shall be utilized for each escort; one at the front of the escort and one at the end of the escort. Emergency vehicles shall provide visual signals but are not required to provide audio signals unless needed.
 2. The operator of an emergency vehicle escorting a vehicle or procession of vehicles, and the operator of any vehicle being escorted, shall yield the right-of-way in accordance with WI State Statute 346.19 upon the approach of an authorized emergency vehicle giving an audible signal by siren.
- B. Examples of Approved Escorts
 1. Motorcades
 2. Public officials and dignitaries
 3. Oversized vehicles
 4. Vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo
 5. Convoys of vehicles
 6. Funerals
 7. Parades

8. Other traffic occurrences requiring an escort

C. Required Information before Providing Escort

1. Actual trip and route approvals and permits if needed.
2. Maximum and minimum speeds to be used.
3. Appropriate traffic direction points along the route.

D. The Department shall **not** provide escorts in the following circumstances:

1. Any person simply attempting to expedite their journey.
2. Other emergency vehicles.
3. Civilian vehicles transporting medical emergencies.
4. Civilian vehicles following emergency vehicles.

V. ASSISTANCE TO HIGHWAY USERS

A. General Assistance

1. Officers should provide reasonable assistance to motorists in need of information or directions.
2. Officers should assist, or arrange help for motorists in need of fuel and/or transportation.

B. Vehicle Lock Out Services

1. Officers shall respond to vehicle lock out calls for service and attempt to unlock the vehicle if requested to do so. The individual requesting the service must first complete and sign the standard Elkhart Lake Police Department "Vehicle Lockout Form", as provided by the responding officer before any attempt is made to open the vehicle.
2. Officers should conduct a registration check and/or other measures to ensure the person is entitled access to the vehicle.
3. Officers may assist in contacting a party with a duplicate key or provide information regarding the availability of a locksmith or towing service for unlocking the vehicle if the individual does not wish for the officer to attempt entry and/or in the event the officer is unsuccessful in gaining entry to the vehicle once the Vehicle Lockout Form has been completed.
4. If the situation necessitates it, the officer should standby for the arrival of the locksmith or towing service. Once the locksmith or towing service has arrived and it is determined that the officer's services are no longer needed, the officer may clear from the scene.

5. If the incident becomes an emergency and immediate action is required, the officer shall affect entry to the vehicle in the safest and most expeditious manner possible.

C. Mechanical or Towing Services to Motorists

1. If a towing service is needed or requested, an officer shall ask the operator for a towing service preference. If there is no preference, 24/7 Towing shall be contacted via the Communications Center.
2. Officers should not attempt to provide repairs, change tires, jump batteries etc.
3. Police vehicles should not be used for pushing, towing or jump starting disabled vehicles.

D. Medical and Fire Assistance to Motorists

1. Officers who encounter motorists in need of emergency medical services or assistance shall, to the extent possible, render first aid, or take such other action as is based on the officer's training. Officers shall summon EMS personnel when needed.
2. Officers who encounter motorists in need of fire protection services shall ensure that persons are removed from immediate danger and summon fire and EMS personnel as needed.

VI. ADVERSE HIGHWAY AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

A. Adverse road and weather conditions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Accidental hazards, such as debris that has fallen on the roadway from another vehicle.
2. Downed power lines.
3. Fallen trees.
4. Acts of nature such as fog, flooding, ice or snow on roadway etc.

B. Upon discovering or being sent to an adverse road or weather condition affecting safe roadway travel, officers are expected to request the help needed to remedy the hazard. For example, calling the needed support people from the department of public works, etc.

C. Department personnel shall provide traffic direction and control services in the vicinity of adverse road conditions, if appropriate, and shall do so with great caution, as snow, ice, flooding and fog can all make traffic direction more dangerous.

VII. ABANDONED VEHICLES

A. When an officer receives a report of an abandoned vehicle the officer should determine if the matter is a law enforcement issue or a building inspection issue.

- 1) If an officer finds the abandoned vehicle is a building inspection issue he/she should forward the information to the building inspector for follow up.

Example: Vehicle is parked in a person's back yard or in a garage out of view of the public and appears to be abandoned.

- 2) If an officer finds the abandoned vehicle is an ordinance violation enforced by the Department and under normal circumstances, i.e. parked legally on the roadway, in a parking lot, or on private property, an officer will do an Abandoned Vehicle Report.

This report will be forwarded to the officer assigned to abandoned vehicles.

- a) The officer assigned to abandoned vehicles will follow up and take appropriate action, i.e. notification to owner, citations, and/or removal of the vehicle.
3. If an officer finds the vehicle abandoned in an unsafe circumstance, i.e. in the roadway, leaking fluids, etc., the officer may tow the vehicle. A citation should be issued for the appropriate offense.
4. The officer shall make reasonable efforts to notify the registered owner of the vehicle as to which tow company has the vehicle and the vehicle's current location.

The owner shall also be notified of the date, time, and location the vehicle was towed from, as well as the reason for the vehicle's removal and any possible charges.

5. An incident report shall be completed when a vehicle is towed. Photographs and an inventory of the vehicle may be taken.
 - a) Depending on circumstances present, additional resources may be required, i.e. Fire Department, D.N.R. etc.

Michael Meeusen
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all previous written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

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