

# Bowie Police Department - General Orders



TITLE: TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL	NUMBER: 505
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/14/16	REVIEW DATE:
_ NEW   X AMENDS   _ RESCINDS	DATE: 2/23/12

AUTHORITY  <b>Chief John K. Nesky</b>	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS CALEA STANDARDS: 41.2.4, 61.3.1, 61.3.2, 61.3.4, 61.4.2	TOTAL PAGES  8
---	--	----------------------

## I. POLICY

The Department performs traffic direction and control functions, when necessary to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles. The public relies upon the police for assistance and advice when faced with many routine and emergency traffic situations. Therefore, this Department shall respond to such traffic-related incidents and perform such services diligently and responsibly.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Order is to establish uniform procedures for traffic direction and control and to establish guidelines for other related services.

## III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Point Traffic Control: The control of vehicular and pedestrian movement at a particular place on a roadway such as an intersection.
- B. Traffic Control Device: All signs, signals, markings and devices placed on, over or adjacent to a street or highway by authority of a public body or official having jurisdiction to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.
- C. Traffic Control Signal: Any device, whether manually, electrically or mechanically operated, by which traffic is alternately directed to stop and permitted to proceed.

## IV. TRAFFIC CONTROL FUNCTIONS

Police officers shall be assigned to carry out identified traffic direction and control functions only at those times and places where law enforcement authority and/or human intervention is required to ensure safety and efficiency, and until such time the as the problem is resolved or traffic control apparatus can be installed. Situations which may require traffic control by officers:

- A. Collisions, fires and other emergencies, special public attractions or activities such as parades, sporting events, funeral processions, etc.

- B. Major street excavation, particularly at intersections adjacent to the construction and during periods of peak traffic flow.
- C. Any condition which causes congestion of traffic in a particular location.
- D. Traffic signals that are temporarily out of service (i.e., when they are being worked on).

**V. POINT TRAFFIC CONTROL (CALEA 61.3.2.a)**

- A. Currently there is no requirement in the City for a permanently assigned, manually controlled, point traffic control. Frequently, however, during construction, at collision scenes, or at other points of traffic obstruction, at special events, or when existing signals are malfunctioning, it is necessary to establish temporary manual point traffic control, where a police officer manually controls traffic flow.
- B. Times and locations identified as requiring point traffic control will be analyzed to determine whether manual direction of traffic is necessary.
- C. Factors to be considered in this analysis will include, but are not limited to:  
(CALEA 61.3.2.d & .e)
  - 1. Traffic volume;
  - 2. Traffic speed;
  - 3. Number of pedestrians present;
  - 4. Duration of congestion periods;
  - 5. Presence and type(s) of traffic control devices;
  - 6. Special circumstances of the location;
  - 7. Weather; and,
  - 8. Officer safety.
- D. The decision to assign personnel to carry out traffic direction and control will be made only if the analysis indicates that unmanned signals/devices cannot adequately ensure the safe and efficient movement of traffic.

**VI. TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES**

Traffic signals have been strategically positioned throughout the City to aid in the uniform control and systematic movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In the case of a malfunctioning signal, the officer should notify Communications of the location of the light and the malfunction. Communications will contact the responsible agency and advise them of the problem.

- A. Temporary traffic control devices may be utilized during peak hours, if road hazards exist, if an accident occurs, or during parades and other special events.
- B. The following may be used as temporary traffic control devices:

1. Barricades;
  2. Detour signs and other descriptive signs as applicable;
  3. Traffic cones and flares;
  4. Police vehicles (in emergency situations);
  5. Arrow / Message boards; and,
  6. Police line tape.
- C. The on-duty Shift Supervisor shall be responsible to ensure the proper placement and removal of such temporary traffic control devices should they be used.
- D. When available, City of Bowie Public Works employees shall be contacted to install and remove barricades.

**VII. PROCEDURES FOR MANUAL TRAFFIC DIRECTION (CALEA 61.3.2.b)**

- A. Position in Roadway: The position selected to direct traffic must be suited to the particular intersection and traffic pattern. It must command a full view of the intersection and the approaches; the officers must be visible to the motorists as well as to the pedestrians. Usually, officers assigned to traffic control will select a position in the center of the intersection or at one of the corners.
1. Center of the intersection position:
    - a. Gives greatest visibility;
    - b. Is the most hazardous;
    - c. Is usually selected when the signals are not working or the flow of traffic is slow; and,
    - d. Should be avoided if it places the officer in the flow of traffic or leaves little clearance between the vehicles.
  2. The corner position:
    - a. Should be used where there is heavy pedestrian crossing or where the flow of traffic can be regulated by an officer standing a few feet off the curb line.
    - b. Affords the officer greater personal safety and better pedestrian control.
- B. Signals and Gestures for Directing Traffic:
1. Posture communicates the fact that the officer is in command of the situation. The officer must assume a military bearing, with weight evenly distributed on both feet. When not engaged in signaling motorists, the officer must stand at case facing traffic and with hands at the side. When directing traffic, the shoulders must be in line with the flow of traffic and officer's attention must be directed to the vehicular movements.

2. Prompt compliance to hand signals is dependent upon the officer's ability to use uniform, clearly defined, and understandable gestures. Intersection control does not call for complicated choreography or wild arm movements. Improper hand signals, causes confusion, hesitation and lead to violations. Unusual movements undermine the purpose of traffic control and direction. The following will describe the standardized signals and gestures used in directing traffic.
- a. The first general rule of traffic control is for the officer to stand with the sides of the body parallel with the traffic being allowed to move. The officer's face and back will then be toward the stopped traffic.
  - b. To stop traffic, two motions are used. First point with the arm and finger straight at the driver who is to stop. Watch the driver and hold this point until the driver sees the signal, or at least has had plenty of time to do so. Then raise the pointing hand (not the entire arm) so that the palm is toward the driver. Hold this position until the driver stops. Stop traffic from both directions to give traffic on the cross street a chance to move. Stop the traffic coming from one side first, then that from the other. After traffic has been halted with one hand, hold that hand to the stop position and turn to the other side and repeat the process. Do not lower either arm until cars coming from both directions have stopped.
  - c. To start traffic, be positioned so that the side is toward the traffic to be started. Point with the arm until the driver's attention is attained. Then, with the palm up, swing the hand up and over the chin. Bend the arm only at the elbow. If the driver does not move, make the signal a second time. After traffic has been started from one side, drop the arm and start traffic from the other side in the same way. Use the signals to give the "go ahead" to slow and timid drivers.
  - d. Right Turn: Signals for a right turn usually are not required at an intersection. When it is necessary, the arm to be signaled with will be determined by the car's direction. If the car approaches from the right, point toward the driver with the right arm. Give the driver time to see the gesture and then swing the arm and finger to point in the direction the driver is to go. Keep pointing in that direction until the driver begins the turn.
  - e. Left Turn: In helping a driver make a left turn, the vehicle may need first to be stopped. If the turning vehicle is approaching from the officer's left, the stop signal to opposing traffic should be given with the right arm and such stopped vehicles should be kept out of the path through which the turning vehicle will travel. When safe to do so, the turning gesture should be given with the left arm. Clearly indicate to the driver turning left to pass in front or inside of the officer and not to turn out and around.
  - f. If the car approaches from the right, turn around and face toward the direction the car making the turn is to go. Halt the traffic with the right arm and give the turning gesture with the left as described above.
  - g. If opposing traffic from both directions is to make left turns, indicate so by swinging the other arm in the direction of the turn. However, such turns are dangerous and must be watched carefully by the officer to see that no conflict arises from the straight through traffic or pedestrians.

### C. Signaling Aids:

1. Voice: Is seldom used in directing traffic. Arm gestures are usually sufficient. There are numerous reasons why oral commands are not used. Oral orders are not easy to give or understand, and often lead to misinterpretations which are dangerous. An order which is shouted can antagonize a motorist.
2. Flashlight with or with out orange wand covers: Can be used to halt traffic in an emergency. To stop traffic, slowly swing the flashlight at arm's length across the path of the approaching car. The beam from the flashlight strikes the pavement as an elongated spot of moving light which is seen by the motorist. Do not stand directly in front of the approaching car. After the motorist has stopped, give signals in the usual manner with the flashlight.
3. Whistle: Can be an effective tool if used properly. A blast from the whistle should catch motorist attention before issuing an arm motion.

D. Use of Highway Flares: (CALEA 61.3.2.f)

1. Improper use of highway flares at a disaster scene has caused vehicles to become involved in accidents. By giving approaching traffic ample warning and allowing sufficient distance in which to start taking defensive measures, hazards can be reduced at an accident scene.
2. Caution must be used with flares at an accident scene due to the possibility of flammable or combustible materials being present.
3. The following table is the minimum distance away from the disaster scene at which a line of flares should be started. Note that the distance at which oncoming traffic receives its first warning is dependent upon the speed limit on the roadway being traveled.
  - 55 MPH-375 feet warning-then every 40 feet to the scene.
  - 45MPH-300 feet warnings-then every 40 feet to the scene
  - 35MPH-200 feet warnings-then every 30 feet on the scene.
4. In any speed zone where flares are used to channel traffic from one lane to another, place them 20 feet apart. This eliminates any doubt in the mind of the motorist as to what is expected, and it will lessen the possibility of any motorist driving between flares into the wrong traffic lanes.
5. The primary objective is to ensure that oncoming traffic has ample warning of danger ahead so that defensive tactics may be employed to negotiate the scene safely.
6. Handle flares carefully. The flare burns at 1500 degrees Fahrenheit and can damage uniforms and burn flesh severely. Also, plastic lane dividers will melt if a flare is placed on or near them.

- E. Two Officers Signaling: Sometimes there is a need for more than one officer at a busy intersection. One of the officers must originate all signals and gestures. One officer is the lead and makes all the decisions while the other officer assists by coordinating with and extending signals.

**VIII. HIGH VISIBILITY CLOTHING (CALEA 61.3.2.g)**

- A. The Department provides personnel with a highly reflective vest to be kept in the assigned vehicle.
- B. Personnel will wear a reflective vest in addition to the full prescribed uniform whenever performing traffic direction in the following instances:
  - 1. Weather conditions are such that without the use of high visibility clothing the person(s) performing traffic direction will endanger their own safety unnecessarily.
  - 2. Traffic direction control is prearranged and will be performed for an extended period of time.
  - 3. A supervisor deems it necessary.

**IX. SPECIAL EVENT TRAFFIC DIRECTION (CALEA 61.3.2.e)**

- A. The Department will provide only that degree of traffic direction and control service in support of special events as is absolutely necessary. The primary task of Department personnel Conducting traffic direction and control in support of a special event is to assist motorists and/or pedestrians in the vicinity of the event. The special event supervisor will be the coordinator of all special events traffic direction and control.

Exception: Events Such as the City's Independence Day Celebration where a Division Commander is the Officer In Charge, but the Traffic Officer is in charge of event traffic.

- B. The special event supervisor will decide what personnel are needed to effectively and efficiently oversee the event. The special event supervisor will meet with any outside committee and other City Departments to coordinate plans and exchange information. At this time, a written estimate of traffic and crowd size and any crime problems should be obtained. Logistical requirements should also be addressed. These would include:
  - 1. Fixed post assignments;
  - 2. Relief of officers assigned to fixed post;
  - 3. Emergency vehicle access;
  - 4. Ingress and egress of pedestrians;
  - 5. Parking;
  - 6. Crowd control;
  - 7. Alternative routes for through traffic;
  - 8. Temporary traffic controls such as barricades, parking restrictions etc.; and,
  - 9. Any other relevant considerations that will help in a smooth and effective operation.
- C. If traffic direction and control are to be provided in support of an event by private sources, the special events supervisor will review those services and the duty assignments prior to the event, to ensure their adequacy.

## **X. TRAFFIC CONTROL AT CRITICAL INCIDENTS (CALEA 61.3.2.c & .e)**

- A. When directing traffic at a critical incident scene, be concerned with keeping traffic from entering the area as well as assisting trapped vehicles in exiting the area, when appropriate. Once traffic has been cleared from the critical incident area, permit no vehicles other than emergency vehicles and public utility repair trucks to enter.
- B. Critical incidents attract large numbers of spectators; plan where this traffic is to be detoured. For those spectators who arrive on foot, keep them beyond the established safe zone so that emergency responders will have room to work.
- C. Emergency responders will be busy at the scene. It is up to the law enforcement officers to protect fire engines, ambulances and other responder vehicles from traffic and spectators. Pay particular attention to the fire hoses or wires laid in the street; allow no traffic to cross over them.
- D. Coordinate enforcement and traffic direction activities with the fire department, command post or other officials in charge.

## **XI. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ROAD HAZARDS OR POTENTIAL HAZARDS (CALEA 41.2.4 & 61.4.2)**

- A. Hazardous highway and/or environmental conditions are defined as, but not limited to:
  - 1. Defects in the roadway itself (holes, rust, or dangerous shoulders).
  - 2. Lack of, or defects in, highway safety features (e.g., center and roadside striping and reflectors) or improper, damaged, destroyed, or visually obstructed traffic control and information signs.
  - 3. Lack of traffic control and information signs (curve and hill warnings, stop and yield signs, speed limit signs, street and highway identification), or improper, damaged, destroyed or visually obstructed traffic control or information signs.
  - 4. Lack of mechanical traffic control devices or improperly located or malfunctioning traffic control devices.
  - 5. Natural or man-caused obstructions (fallen trees and rocks, litter, debris, parts of vehicles, broken water mains and electrical wires).
  - 6. Ice or snow accumulations on roadway surfaces.
  - 7. Fire and its attendant smoke in areas adjacent to the highway.
  - 8. Vehicles parked or abandoned on or near the roadway.
- B. The following procedures will be followed in identifying reporting, and correcting hazardous roadway, roadside, or environmental conditions:
  - 1. When a hazard is identified and in the officer's opinion such hazard requires immediate correction (such as a fallen tree or electrical wires across or on any part of the traveled portion of the roadway), the officer will inform Communications of the situation immediately and identify the assistance or special equipment required.

The officer will protect the scene and bystanders, and direct traffic or take any other action deemed necessary to correct the situation.

2. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential accident situation but the threat of such is not imminent, as in the case of a fallen tree limb, the officer will pass this information on to Communications. Communications will notify the appropriate department to have this situation corrected. If the officer can correct the situation (such as the removing of fallen tree limb), the officer will take appropriate action.

## **XII. TRAFFIC ENGINEERING**

The handling and referral of complaints and suggestions concerning traffic engineering problems or deficiencies will be handled through the Traffic Officer. The transmission of accident and enforcement data to local or regional traffic engineering authorities is to be handled by the Traffic Officer.

## **XIII. TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT ROADBLOCKS**

Roadblocks may be used for the following situations:

- A. During natural disasters, cruisers may be used temporarily for roadblocks, using all emergency lights on the vehicle, until more permanent warning devices and barricades are put in place.
- B. Cruisers may be used as roadblocks at accidents, using all emergency lights on the vehicle, and placed in such a manner as to be noticed by other traffic.
- C. If the roadway is going to be closed for an extended period of time, other barricades should be used.
- D. The uses of stationary, moving, circle system and/or roadway barrier roadblocks to end a vehicular pursuit are prohibited.