



Fitchburg State University Police Department

**Subject: TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND
CONTROL**

Reference: MPAC: 61.3.2, 61.4.2
IACLEA: 10.3.1, 10.3.2, 10.3.6

Effective Date:

September 30, 2020

Review Date:

By Order of: Michael J Cloutier, Chief of Police

General Order

10.3

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this General Order is to provide basic guidelines for the safe, orderly, and manual direction of traffic on the campus of Fitchburg State University.

POLICY:

- A. The major objective of manual traffic direction and control is to maintain, or restore, the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. An officer may be responsible for some or all of the following activities: regulating traffic movements; controlling turning movements; coordinating vehicle movements with the flow of traffic from adjacent intersections; detouring traffic as necessary; controlling pedestrian movements; arranging for the removal of traffic obstructions; and rendering aid and assistance to motorists or pedestrians, or a combination thereof.
- B. It is the policy of the Fitchburg State University Police Department that all members shall employ uniform signals and gestures, to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians. When performing this function, all members shall wear the prescribed uniform, and the high visibility traffic vest or outer garment provided by the department.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Manual Traffic Direction and Control:
 - 1. When carrying out manual traffic direction and control, officers should ensure that their presence and purpose is highly visible to drivers and pedestrians alike, by:

10 - Traffic and Parking Services

- a. Taking a position where they can be seen, usually in the middle of the road or intersection.
- b. Standing straight, with weight distributed equally on both feet.
- c. Allowing hands and arms to hang easily at the sides, except when gesturing.
- d. Must wear a high visibility vest or jacket with a high visibility reflective liner whenever directing traffic in either the street or a parking lot.

IACLEA 10.3.1 b / MPAC 61.3.2 g

2. To Stop Traffic.

- a. To stop traffic, first extend the right arm (and fingers toward and look directly at) the person to be stopped, until that person is aware, or it can be reasonably assumed that s/he is aware, of the officer's gesture.
- b. Raise the pointing hand at the wrist so that its palm is toward the person to be stopped, and hold the palm in this position until the person is observed to stop. To stop traffic from both ways on a two-way street, repeat the procedure for traffic coming from the other direction, while continuing to maintain the raised arm and palm toward the traffic previously stopped.

3. To Start Traffic.

- a. First, stand with the officer's right shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started. Extend the right arm and fingers toward (and look directly at) the person to be started, until that person is aware, or it can be reasonably assumed that s/he is aware, of the officer's gesture.
- b. With the palm up, swing the pointing arm (from the elbow only) through a vertical semi-circle until the hand is adjacent to the chin. If necessary, repeat this gesture until the traffic begins to move. To start traffic from both directions on a two-way street, repeat the procedure for traffic coming from the other direction.

4. Right Turn Movement.

- a. To signal drivers approaching from the officer's right to make a right turn, first direct the extended right arm and index finger (and gaze) toward the driver, then swing the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the driver's intended turn.
- b. 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 officer may raise his or her extended left forearm to a vertical position from the elbow, while closing the fingers so that the remaining extended thumb points in the direction of the driver's intended turn.

IACLEA 10.3.1 a / MPAC 61.3.2 b

5. Left Turn Movement.

10 - Traffic and Parking Services

- a. Officers should never direct a driver to start a left turn while oncoming traffic is being allowed to proceed. The officer should either direct the opposing vehicles to start, or hold them and direct other drivers to turn left. To direct a driver to turn left, the officer's right side and arm face the oncoming traffic, and the left side and arm face the left-turning driver. After stopping oncoming traffic with the right arm and hand, the officer's right hand should remain in the "halt" position. Then direct the extended left arm and index finger (and the officer's gaze) toward the driver who wishes to make a left turn. When the left turning driver's attention is gained, the officer swings his or her left arm and index finger to point in the direction the driver intends to go.
- b. Street width permitting, to clear the lane occupied by a driver who intends to make a left turn but cannot because of oncoming traffic, the driver can be directed into the intersection and stopped adjacent to the officer's position until the left turn can be safely completed.
- c. The officer should direct the driver into the intersection by pointing at the driver with the officer's extended arm and index finger, which is then swung to point on the roadway at which the officer wants the driver to stop and wait for clearing traffic. The officer may also direct the driver to move by using one arm and hand gesture, while the other arm and hand point to the position on the roadway at which the driver is 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 make the turn during a natural break in the oncoming traffic.

6. Signaling Aids.

- a. An officer's voice is seldom used in directing traffic. Arm gestures, especially when supplemented with a traffic 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 dangerous misinterpretations. A shouted order can appear rude and antagonize the motorist. Occasionally, a driver or pedestrian will not understand an officer's directions. When this happens, the officer should move reasonably close to the person and politely and briefly explain the directions. No officer shall exhibit loss of temper by shouting, or otherwise indicate antagonism toward those who do not understand or who do not readily obey the officer's direction.
- b. Use of a flashlight with illuminated cone or baton.
 - i. To stop a driver with the baton, face the oncoming traffic, the officer holds the baton in his or her right hand, bends the right elbow, and holds the baton vertical, then swings the baton from left to right through an arc of approximately 45 degrees.
 - ii. The "GO" and "LEFT" turn direction are the same gestures as those previously described, except that the baton acts as an extension of the hand and index fingers. Signals and directions given with the aid of the baton should be exaggerated, and often need to be repeated because of poor visibility. The baton light should be turned off when it is not being actively utilized to give directions.

10 - Traffic and Parking Services

- c. A flashlight alone can also be used to halt traffic, but is less effective and safe than when used with a cone attachment. To stop traffic, the officer slowly swings 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, as the vehicle's headlights will provide illumination.

IACLEA 10.3.1a

B. Traffic Direction and Control at Fire Scenes:

The department works closely with the Fitchburg Fire Department and other emergency services organizations, in order to maintain access and egress at fire scenes by emergency vehicles. Officers responding to fire scenes shall adhere to the following procedures:

1. Do not park cruisers in a manner that may hamper Fire Department operations.
2. Allow no vehicles, including those of volunteer firefighters, to drive into the area where fire apparatus are parked and operating.
3. Allow no vehicle to cross fire hoses without the approval of the Fire Department's officer in charge.
4. Parked vehicles that interfere with fire operations may be towed as needed.
5. Applicable laws and ordinances include, but are not limited to:
 - a. **MGL c. 89, s. 7A, 7 B**
 - i. 7A: Restrictions on use of ways upon approach of emergency vehicles
 - ii. 7B: Operation of emergency vehicles
 - b. **MGL c. 268, s. 32, 32 A**
 - i. 32: Interference or tampering with police or fire signal systems, or motorist highway emergency aid call boxes; false alarms or calls
 - ii. 32A: Interference with fire fighting operations

C. Temporary Traffic Control Devices:

1. Temporary traffic control devices include movable barriers, portable signs, and other apparatus intended for temporary use to assist in the safe and efficient movement of traffic.
2. During special events, or in times of emergency, the department, at the direction of the Chief or designee, may authorize the use of temporary traffic control devices, and coordinate their placement and removal with the Capital Planning and Maintenance or the City's Public Works Department.

IACLEA 10.3.1 e / MPAC 613.2 f

D. Adverse Weather and Road Conditions:

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

10 - Traffic and Parking Services

- a. Accidental hazards, such as fallen debris from vehicles.
 - b. Downed power lines or trees.
 - c. Road construction.
 - d. Acts of nature, e.g. fog, ice, snow, etc.
 - e. Engineering hazards, such as exposed guardrail ends, missing manhole covers, etc.
2. Any officer who discovers adverse road or weather conditions shall report these to Communication Center and request the appropriate assistance. The Dispatcher shall notify the appropriate agency(s) and record the notification in the dispatch log.
 3. Officers shall provide traffic direction and control and scene protection in the vicinity of the adverse weather or road condition, as needed.
 4. The OIC or Patrol Supervisor may contact the appropriate construction company or vendor, if involved, and/or detail additional officers as needed for traffic direction and control.
 - a. In the case of downed power lines, officers must not approach or touch these lines. They shall call in the pole number to the Dispatcher and ask that the power company be sent to turn off the current to the wire.
 - b. Officers must not approach, nor allow others to approach, downed wires and should assume that all downed wires are live until proven otherwise. Officers shall keep people at least 150 feet away, and at greater distances if the road is wet, as electricity can conduct for a considerable distance along the ground. When keeping pedestrians away, officers must use caution to be sure that persons do not lean against or touch metal guardrail posts in the vicinity of a downed wire.
 - c. If the wire is down across a vehicle and there are people in the vehicle, officers shall instruct them to stay where they are until the power has been shut off. If the vehicle catches fire and it is necessary for persons to leave the vehicle, officers shall instruct them to open the door and leap out without touching the ground and any part of the vehicle such as the door handle at the same time, as this would complete a circuit and could result in electrocution.
 - d. Officers should not attempt to remove a downed wire from a vehicle by using something such as a tree limb, as the limb will contain sap, which will conduct electricity from the wire to the rescuer. The only safe thing to use would be a completely dry stick. A downed wire that is writhing on the ground is particularly dangerous. If it absolutely must be stabilized and it is impossible to await the arrival of the power company, the only relatively safe way to do so is to roll a spare tire to a point near the wire, then lift the tire and drop it onto the wire. This should be only as a last resort, as normally one should not approach a downed

10 - Traffic and Parking Services

wire close enough to do this. It is best to conduct traffic direction and control from such a distance as to allow for the maximum safety of all concerned.

- e. Dispatch should be called and asked to inform the Patrol Supervisor or OIC of any other road hazards officers encounter or that are reported to them during the relief. The department's policy is to notify the proper authorities to attend to road hazards, dead animals in the road, etc.
5. Officers should report any hazards or defects in the road, parking lots, or sidewalks to dispatch who will make contact with Capital Planning and Maintenance as well as enter a call for service.
- a. If officers can safely remove the hazard they should do so, if the hazard or defect cannot be moved, a traffic cone or caution tape should be placed or in some severe cases a cruiser should be posted until hazard or defect is corrected.

IACLEA 10.3.1 c 10.3.2 a & b / MPAC 61.3.2 d, 61.4.2

E. Manual Operation of Traffic Control Devices:

1. On occasion, officers may manually operate traffic control signal lights to direct traffic flow, attempt to recycle a signal light, or to place the signal lights on flash or blink. Some intersections in the City have manual control devices located in the service box, and if an officer can gain entrance, s/he shall manually control traffic signaling devices in the following situations:
 - a. When the traffic light malfunctions.
 - b. To facilitate the movement at traffic crashes or other emergencies.
 - c. To provide a thoroughfare for a motorcade, funeral procession, etc.
 - d. To alleviate congestion resulting from use of automatic controls, particularly during planned special events.
2. An officer should be familiar with the device before using manual traffic controls.

IACLEA 10.3.1 d / MPAC 61.3.2 e

F. Traffic Safety Education

1. The Fitchburg State University Police Department has safety educational material available in their lobby provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the American Automobile Association (AAA).

IACLEA 10.3.6

Approval:


Chief of Police

09/30/2020
Date