

YORK-POQUOSON SHERIFF'S OFFICE	GENERAL ORDERS
SUBJECT: Traffic Control	NUMBER: GO 2-21
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Index Words

- Accidents
- Disabled Motorists
- Escorts, emergency medical
- Escorts, Funeral
- Escorts, oversize/overweight
- Escorts, other
- Hand Signals
- Manual traffic control
- Reflective traffic vest
- Whistle signals

POLICY

During a disruption of its normal flow, deputies shall maintain and facilitate the orderly movement of traffic. Deputy Sheriff's shall direct traffic in the safest, most effective means possible. A highly visible activity, traffic control, must be performed consistently, responsibly, courteously, and professionally. The Sheriff expects all deputies to be mindful of the expectations of the community and perform accordingly when providing traffic control and other ancillary duties.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish uniform procedures for the direction and control of traffic and other ancillary traffic functions.

PROCEDURES

- Manual Direction and Control
 - Deputy Sheriffs shall manually direct traffic at locations and events determined to require other than ordinary traffic control. Such locations and events may include, but are not limited to:
 - At scenes of traffic accidents;
 - Parades;
 - Hazardous material incidents;
 - Fires;
 - Large crowd and sporting events;
 - Emergency weather conditions;

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- Malfunctioning automatic traffic control devices.
 - When manually directing traffic, or in the roadway controlling traffic, deputies shall:
 - Position themselves as conspicuously as possible;
 - Position their vehicle, with emergency lights activated, in as highly a visible location as possible;
 - Use clear, uniform, hand or flashlight signals and gestures, supplemented with whistle blasts when necessary;
 - Use traffic control devices at their disposal such as:
 - ❖ Flares;
 - ❖ Strobe lights;
 - ❖ Traffic cones;
 - ❖ Barricades;
 - ❖ Etc.
 - Deputies shall be responsible for the removal of these traffic control devices upon completion of the manual traffic control activity.
 - Deputies shall have equipment immediately available for directing traffic, to include the following:
 - Uniform
 - ❖ Except in an emergency, deputies shall be in uniform when directing traffic.
 - ❖ Off-duty or investigative personnel shall conspicuously display their badge when directing traffic.
 - Reflective traffic vest
 - ❖ Deputies shall wear a reflective traffic vest at all times when directing traffic.
 - Whistle
 - ❖ Deputies shall use a whistle when directing traffic, unless circumstances preclude its effective use.
 - Flashlight and illumination cone
 - ❖ When directing traffic during hours of darkness, an illumination cone shall be attached to the flashlight.
 - Flares
 - ❖ If available, each patrol vehicle shall contain an ample amount of road flares.
 - ❖ Deputies shall use road flares during hours of darkness or inclement weather and may use them at other appropriate times during hours of daylight.
 - The Virginia Department of Transportation has the following equipment available:
 - Temporary barricades;
 - Traffic cones;
 - Lighted and non-lighted signs;
 - Truck mounted directional signs;

- 86 ▪ Variable messaging signs.
- 87
- 88 ○ The on duty supervisor may request VDOT assistance if circumstances warrant.
- 89
- 90 ● Methods of Manual Direction of Traffic
- 91 ○ Avoid using the voice when directing traffic.
- 92 ○ Arm gestures and whistle blasts are usually sufficient.
- 93 ○ Oral orders are not easy to give or understand and often lead to misinterpretations,
- 94 which can be dangerous.
- 95 ○ An order shouted can antagonize a motorist.
- 96 ○ Section [46.2-1309](#), Code of Virginia, outlines uniform hand and whistle signals as
- 97 follows:
- 98 ▪ To stop traffic by hand
- 99  ❖ Raise the arm up 45 degrees above the shoulder with the palm of the hand
- 100     extended toward the moving traffic to be stopped.
- 101
- 102 ▪ To move traffic by hand
- 103  ❖ The deputy shall stand with shoulders parallel to the traffic to be moved.
- 104  ❖ Extend the right arm and hand full length at the height of the shoulders, towards
- 105     such traffic, fingers extended and joined palm down.
- 106  ❖ Bring the hand sharply in the direction the traffic is to move.
- 107  ❖ Repeat the movement with the left arm and hand to start traffic from the opposite
- 108     direction.
- 109
- 110 ○ If the deputy uses the whistle, the following commands shall be used:
- 111 ▪ To stop traffic
- 112  ❖ Sound one long blast.
- 113
- 114 ▪ To start traffic
- 115  ❖ Sound two short blasts.
- 116
- 117 ▪ To stop traffic for an emergency
- 118  ❖ Sound three or more short blasts.
- 119  ❖ This signal orders traffic to clear the intersection and stop.
- 120
- 121 ▪ To get a motorists or pedestrians attention who does not respond to a given signal
- 122  ❖ Sound several short blasts.
- 123
- 124 ○ During hours of darkness, use of a flashlight with a illumination cone:
- 125 ▪ Although a flashlight alone may be used to halt traffic, deputies shall use the safer
- 126     and more effective illumination cone attachment.
- 127 ▪ To stop traffic
- 128  ❖ Hold the flashlight, with cone attached, parallel to the ground at shoulder height,
- 129     in front of the body, pointing either to the left or right.
- 130
- 131 ▪ To slow traffic

- 132 ❖ Hold the flashlight at shoulder height parallel to the ground pointing either to left
133 or right.
134 ❖ Move the flashlight in an up and down motion in front of the body.
135
- 136 ■ To move traffic
 - 137 ❖ Hold the flashlight in front of the body pointing upward at shoulder height.
 - 138 ❖ Move the flashlight toward and away from the body to move traffic forward.
 - 139 ❖ Point the flashlight at the motorist and move the flashlight, swinging the arm
140 either to left or right in the direction you desire traffic to go.
 - 141
 - 142 ■ In the event a flashlight illumination cone is unavailable, a flashlight alone may be
143 used to halt traffic.
 - 144 ■ To stop traffic
 - 145 ❖ Slowly swing the beam of the flashlight across the path of oncoming traffic.
 - 146 ❖ The beam from the flashlight strikes the pavement as an elongated spot of light.
 - 147 ❖ After the driver has stopped, normal arm signals may be given with the vehicle's
148 headlights providing illumination.
 - 149
 - 150 ● Manual Operation of Traffic Control Devices
 - 151 ○ On occasion, deputies may need to manually operate traffic control signal lights, either
152 to attempt to recycle a signal light or place the light in a flash/blink mode.
 - 153 ○ Deputies shall manually control traffic control devices only under the following
154 circumstances:
 - 155 ■ When traffic lights malfunction;
 - 156 ■ To facilitate the movement of traffic at accident scenes or other emergencies.
 - 157 ■ To provide thoroughfare of a motorcade or funeral procession.
 - 158 ■ To alleviate congestion resulting from the use of automatic controls unable to
159 adequately regulate traffic flow following planned special events.
 - 160
 - 161 ● Malfunctioning traffic lights
 - 162 ○ Deputies shall notify The Virginia Department of Transportation through the 911
163 Emergency Communications Center of inoperable or malfunctioning traffic control
164 lights.
 - 165 ○ If the malfunctioning light presents a traffic hazard the deputy shall:
 - 166 ■ Manually direct the traffic;
 - 167 ■ Request the 911 Emergency Communications Center notify the Virginia State Police
168 to relieve the deputy from traffic duty.
 - 169 ■ The deputy shall stand by until a representative of VDOT or the Virginia State
170 Police arrives.
 - 171
 - 172 ● Special event Traffic Control
 - 173 ○ The Sheriff or his designee, shall ensure the preparation and implementation of a special
174 traffic plan that addresses:
 - 175 ■ Ingress and egress of vehicles and pedestrians;
 - 176 ■ Provisions for parking;
 - 177 ■ Spectator/pedestrian control;

- 178 ▪ Public transportation;
- 179 ▪ Assignment of traffic control point duties;
- 180 ▪ Alternate traffic routing;
- 181 ▪ Temporary traffic controls;
- 182 ▪ Parking prohibitions;
- 183 ▪ Emergency vehicle access;
- 184 ▪ Appropriate media notification of traffic routes and closures.
- 185
- 186 • Traffic Control at Accident Scenes
- 187 ○ Deputies shall employ techniques of traffic control at accident scenes with the following
- 188 objectives in mind:
- 189 ▪ Protection of lives and property;
- 190 ▪ Prevention of additional accidents;
- 191 ▪ Protection of evidence;
- 192 ▪ Keeping avenues of ingress and egress open for emergency vehicles;
- 193 ▪ Restoration of the safe flow of traffic as soon as possible.
- 194
- 195 • Traffic Control at Fire Scenes
- 196 ○ The objective of traffic control at fire scenes is to allow fire and rescue equipment to be
- 197 deployed without hindrance and to keep pedestrian and vehicular traffic away from the
- 198 scene.
- 199 ○ Restore the safe flow of traffic as soon as practicable.
- 200 ○ Deputy Sheriffs responding to fire scenes shall consider the following:
- 201 ▪ No vehicles, including those of volunteer firefighters, shall be allowed to drive into
- 202 the block where the fire apparatus is parked and operating.
- 203 ▪ No vehicles shall be allowed to cross fire hoses without approval of the fire scene
- 204 incident commander.
- 205 ▪ In cases of fires at a hospital or prison, no non-emergency vehicles, including those
- 206 of volunteer firefighters, shall be allowed on the grounds unless requested by the
- 207 incident commander.
- 208
- 209 ○ When directing traffic at fire scenes, deputies shall:
- 210 ▪ Direct and control the flow of traffic to include:
- 211 ❖ Pedestrian/Spectator traffic;
- 212 ❖ Prevent interference with fire operations;
- 213 ❖ Prevent vehicles from driving over fire hoses;
- 214 ❖ Parked vehicles that interfere with fire and rescue operations may be towed as
- 215 needed.
- 216
- 217 • Traffic Control During Adverse Road and Weather Conditions
- 218 ○ The Sheriff or his designee shall notify the 911 Emergency Communications Center,
- 219 county government, and local media outlets of adverse road conditions that affect the
- 220 motoring public.
- 221 ○ The Sheriff or his designee may close a street if in his opinion the surface conditions and
- 222 terrain are unusually hazardous.

- 223 ○ The Sheriff or his designee may request Virginia Department of Transportation
224 assistance in alleviating the problem and if possible, request public service media
225 announcements be made concerning the closure.
- 226 ○ The Sheriff or his designee shall request dispatchers to notify proper utility companies
227 and assign deputies to direct traffic and safeguard movement at the scene of:
- 228 ▪ Downed power lines;
229 ▪ Water main breaks;
230 ▪ Gas main breaks;
231 ▪ Downed trees blocking the roadway;
232 ▪ Other locations, when conditions endanger the safe movement of traffic.
- 233
- 234 ○ Adverse road conditions may require the assistance of other law enforcement agencies.
235 ○ During periods of adverse road and or weather conditions, deputies must be cognizant of
236 additional hazards as well as those listed above.
- 237 ○ Deputies must be proactive in making decisions during these conditions that will
238 maximize their safety during traffic direction control activities.
- 239 ○ The on duty supervisor shall request additional assistance as needed through the 911
240 Emergency Communications Center.
- 241
- 242 • Roadblocks
- 243 ○ See [GO 2-6, Use of Force](#);
- 244 ○ [GO 2-9, Vehicle Operations](#), and
- 245 ○ [GO 2-19, Traffic Enforcement](#).
- 246

247 **Ancillary Traffic Services**

248

- 249 • Stranded or Disabled Motorists
- 250 ○ Deputies shall provide reasonable general assistance to motorists that may include:
- 251 ▪ Requesting the 911 Emergency Communications Center to call wreckers;
252 ▪ Obtain other services such as mechanical or locksmith services.
- 253
- 254 ○ Deputies may request assistance for motorists, but shall not perform repairs personally
255 except for assisting with tire changes.
- 256 ○ Unless extenuating circumstances exist, Sheriff's Office vehicles shall not be used for:
- 257 ▪ Jump starting non-government owned vehicles;
258 ▪ Pushing non-government owned vehicles.
- 259
- 260 ○ Deputies shall be aware of possible dangers to motorists who are stranded in isolated or
261 hazardous locations on the highway.
- 262 ○ Steps shall be taken to reduce these dangers by:
- 263 ▪ Transporting the motorist to a safer location;
264 ▪ Setting out flares to warn other motorists;
265 ▪ Standing by with emergency lights activated until assistance arrives, when call
266 volume permits.
- 267

- 268 ○ In the event the deputy must leave the scene before arrival of the requested assistance,
269 he or she shall request that another deputy periodically check the area and provide
270 assistance or protection.
271
- 272 ● Highway Emergencies
 - 273 ○ Deputies arriving at the scene of a highway emergency shall:
 - 274 ▪ Request the 911 Emergency Communications dispatcher to respond any necessary
275 emergency equipment;
 - 276 ▪ Provide emergency medical care or fire suppression within the scope of their
277 training and equipment available.
 - 278
 - 279 ● Emergency Escorts
 - 280 ○ Deputies shall not escort other emergency vehicles, unless approved by the on duty
281 supervisor.
 - 282 ○ Deputies may direct traffic at intersections to expedite the movement of other
283 emergency vehicles.
 - 284 ○ Deputies shall not provide emergency or non-emergency medical escorts for private
285 vehicles. If a medical emergency exists, an ambulance should be requested.
286
 - 287 ● Funeral Escorts
 - 288 ○ Funeral procession escorts shall be provided as manpower permits.
 - 289 ○ All funeral procession escorts shall be made within a reasonable time prior to the escort.
 - 290 ○ Funeral homes are responsible for coordinating with other agencies if the escort passes
291 into another jurisdiction.
 - 292 ○ Funeral homes must inform all procession participants of any requirements and provide
293 any necessary equipment.
 - 294 ○ The funeral home requesting the escort shall provide to the 911 Emergency
295 Communications Center the following information:
 - 296 ▪ Time the escort is to begin;
 - 297 ▪ Location where escort is beginning from;
 - 298 ▪ Location where escort is ending (Final destination);
 - 299 ▪ Number of vehicles involved in the procession.
 - 300
 - 301 ○ Deputies Responsibilities
 - 302 ▪ Deputies shall have the authority to refuse to start any escort which presents a hazard
303 to the safety of either:
 - 304 ❖ The deputy(s) involved;
 - 305 ❖ The general public, or
 - 306 ❖ For an emergency or other pressing enforcement necessity.
 - 307
 - 308 ▪ If a deputy refuses to start a funeral escort for any reason, he or she shall contact the
309 on duty supervisor and provide the reason for the refusal.
 - 310 ▪ If a funeral escort is refused, the on duty supervisor shall contact a representative of
311 the funeral home and explain the reason for the refusal.
 - 312 ▪ Deputies shall coordinate the route to be taken bases on:
 - 313 ❖ Available resources;

- 314 ❖ Weather;
315 ❖ Time of day;
316 ❖ Traffic along the route;
317 ❖ Potential road hazards.
318
- 319 ■ The procession shall not:
320 ❖ Exceed the posted speed limit;
321 ❖ Enter an intersection on a red light unless the intersection is being manually
322 controlled by a law enforcement officer.
323 ➤ One the procession has entered an intersection on a green light, it may
324 continue although the light turns red, but only at the direction of a deputy or
325 other law enforcement officer controlling the intersection.
326
- 327 ■ In the event the procession is larger than anticipated, the deputy in charge of the
328 procession shall consider the following options:
329 ❖ Complete the escort as requested;
330 ❖ Wait until additional assistance arrives;
331 ❖ Escort a manageable number of vehicles to include family vehicle and funeral
332 coach.
333 ❖ The requesting party may choose to proceed without the benefit of an escort.
334
- 335 ■ Deputies shall not continue funeral processions into other jurisdictions outside of
336 York County unless:
337 ❖ Prior supervisor approval has been obtained, or
338 ❖ The procession originates in York County and must pass through an adjoining
339 jurisdiction to arrive at the final destination also in York County, or
340 ❖ Through an approved mutual aid request from the jurisdiction(s) the funeral
341 procession is passing through.
342
- 343 ■ Deputies shall inform the funeral director when they cannot wait beyond a
344 reasonable time for the escort to begin.
345 ❖ If deputies must abandon the escort because of an unforeseen delay, they must
346 notify the on duty supervisor before leaving.
347
- 348 ■ The funeral director shall be advised that all processions which proceed on an
349 interstate highway that interstate traffic will not normally be stopped for the
350 procession.
351
- 352 ○ Vehicle Requirements
353 ■ Sheriff's Office vehicles escorting funeral processions shall:
354 ❖ Have emergency lights in operation at all times;
355 ❖ Only marked, or un-marked Sheriff's Office vehicles equipped with emergency
356 lights and siren may be used.
357 ❖ The siren may be used as appropriate to warn other drivers that the procession is
358 proceeding through the area.
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- Funeral home and individual private vehicles
 - All vehicles participating the funeral procession shall:
 - ❖ Have headlights illuminated.
 - Oversize and Overweight Vehicles
 - Deputies may provide escort of oversized or overweight vehicles provided:
 - The transporter has obtained a permit from the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner in accordance with Section [46.2-1139](#), Code of Virginia.
 - Deputies shall display emergency lights and or sirens only as required to facilitate the escort.
 - Deputies may use emergency equipment to stop traffic during bridge crossings or other times the escorted vehicle's movement is restricted.
 - Other escorts
 - The Sheriff, Chief Deputy or the Patrol Division Commander may authorize Sheriff's Office escorts for the following:
 - Community events;
 - Charity events;
 - VIP escorts;
 - Any event or function where by providing an escort will provide for the safe or restoration of the normal flow of traffic through or within the county.