

PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
  
 HEADQUARTERS  
 COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ  
 CHIEF OF POLICE

TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	350.03	6/24/2024	6/26/2024
SUBJECT TITLE		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Traffic Direction and Control		7/28/2022; 6/22/2018; 6/12/2015; 5/3/2012	
REFERENCE		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA 61.3.2; 61.3.3		6/22/2027	
SUBJECT AREA		DISTRIBUTION	
Law Enforcement Operations		All Personnel	

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for all personnel involved in traffic direction and control.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Providence Police Department to promote the safe and expeditious flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic through the implementation of effective and efficient traffic-related services.

**DISCUSSION**

Members of the Uniformed Division are frequently required to manually direct traffic. Proper execution of this responsibility will relieve congestion and reduce dangers to motorists and pedestrians. Members shall utilize the traffic direction skills learned through Department training to ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic.

**PROCEDURE**

**I. REFLECTIVE CLOTHING**

- A. All personnel directing or controlling traffic in the roadway will wear high visibility clothing, such as the Department-issued/approved reflective vests, reflective elements of the field jacket, or in the case of inclement weather, the department-issued/approved two-sided raincoat with the high-visibility surface displayed.

## **II. UNIFORM HAND SIGNALS**

- A. All personnel will use the hand signals described by Department training. These hand signals are taught in the Providence Police Department Training Academy.
  - 1. Training is also provided to school crossing guards by Traffic Bureau personnel upon the request of the Providence School Department.
    - a. As RI State law prohibits school crossing guards from performing traffic direction duties, training shall be specific to the proper method of stopping traffic for the sole purpose of facilitating the safe passage of school children crossing the roadway.

## **III. CRITICAL INCIDENT SCENES**

- A. Officers on the scene of any critical incident will assess the hazards present and take action to minimize further damage to property or life. These may include directing traffic or evacuating the immediate area.
- B. Officers will assist the Incident Command Staff in making sure the scene is clear for emergency vehicles to enter, but restrict entry of unauthorized vehicles or pedestrians.
- C. When the Providence Fire Department has equipment deployed, officers will restrict vehicle traffic from crossing fire hoses to reduce the opportunity for damage, which might affect the delivery of fire services.

## **IV. ACCIDENT SCENES**

- A. All personnel directing or controlling traffic in the roadway will wear Department-issued reflective clothing.
- B. The officer assigned to an accident scene investigation shall assess the impact to vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic that has occurred or will occur as a direct result of the accident and/or the requirements of the ensuing investigation, and shall request the assistance of additional manpower and/or other resources to deal with that impact as deemed necessary.
- C. Officers shall activate their vehicle's emergency lighting systems, and shall position their police vehicles in such a way that any approaching traffic is aware of the accident scene.
- D. If an officer determines that a roadway or a major portion of a highway needs to be closed, the officer may request the Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC) to advise Traffic Engineering and/or

RIDOT, as appropriate, to provide special safety devices such as barricades, arrow boards, etc. The Providence Fire Department and any other appropriate agencies shall also be advised of any road closing.

**V. ADVERSE ROAD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS**

- A. Adverse road conditions may result from many situations. These include accidental hazards such as downed power lines, debris, or natural causes such as fog, ice, snow, heavy rains, or flooding.
- B. Officers will monitor roadways and bridges and report all adverse conditions so emergency measures can be taken, if necessary.
- C. Officers will report observed conditions to the Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC).
- D. The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the Patrol Bureau shall assess all adverse situations and direct proper resources.

**VI. MANUAL OPERATION OF TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES**

- A. Officers will notify the PSCC to alert Traffic Engineering to the following traffic control device issues:
  - 1. When a malfunction of the traffic signal has created congestion at an intersection and the congestion can be reduced by manually altering the traffic control device.
  - 2. Upon notification of a special function such as a motorcade, major disaster, funeral procession, parade, or other event which might result in congestion or unsafe vehicle or pedestrian movement.
  - 3. A request for assistance during repair, replacement, or construction which creates congestion at an intersection and the congestion can be reduced by altering the traffic control device.

**VII. USE OF TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES**

- A. Temporary traffic control devices will be used in prescheduled events (parades, marches, concerts, etc.) or in emergency situations to include natural or manmade disasters and accidents.
- B. Officers may use cones, barricades, or other devices on the roadway to minimize hazards caused by vehicle or pedestrian accidents or dangerous road conditions.
- C. All non-emergency requests require the approval of the Traffic Engineer.
- D. Officers will ensure that the PSCC is informed of the

location and an estimated length of time such devices will be in use. If a street is closed or access limited, PSCC will notify the Fire Department.

## VIII. POLICE ESCORTS

### A. Routine Escorts.

1. All requests for routine escorts shall only be made through, and pre-approved by, the Office of the Chief of Police.
  - a. The Traffic Bureau Commanding Officer may be assigned to survey the route and traffic conditions for the time and date of the proposed escort in order to assess escort needs.
  - b. Police escorts shall be assigned to the appropriate Department entity (i.e. Traffic Bureau, Patrol Bureau, Detail Office, etc.) depending upon the nature of the escort, manpower needs, and asset availability.
2. Examples of routine escorts include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Funeral processions.
  - b. Visiting dignitary escorts.
  - c. Escorts for public officials.
  - d. Escorts for wide loads.
  - e. Escorts for over-sized vehicles.

### B. Emergency Medical Escorts/Transports.

1. Emergency medical escorts shall not be arranged so as to allow *in advance* any civilian vehicle to transport a victim suffering from a medical emergency.
2. Notwithstanding the above, an officer who encounters a victim in a civilian vehicle who needs immediate emergency medical treatment must determine the best course of action based upon the circumstances.
  - a. In most cases, a rescue vehicle should be summoned to provide proper emergency treatment and transportation.
  - b. In a life-threatening situation where the wait for a rescue vehicle could be detrimental, an officer may elect to transport the victim of a medical emergency to a medical facility in the

police vehicle, utilizing lights and sirens, without the necessity of first obtaining approval from a supervisor. Notifications to the PSCC must be made which include the nature, destination, and code level(s) of the response.

- c. However, if an officer observes that a victim requires uninterrupted, continued transport; or that a transfer of the victim into the police vehicle is otherwise ill-advised or not feasible; the officer shall escort the civilian vehicle at a reasonable and prudent rate of speed, utilizing lights and sirens, without the necessity of first obtaining approval from a supervisor. Notifications to the PSCC must be made which include the nature, destination, and code level(s) of the response.
  - i. Extreme caution shall be exercised in these circumstances. Officers need to remain cognizant of the fact that although they are operating an emergency vehicle as defined by state statute, the operator of the civilian vehicle is not.
  - ii. Officers shall not proceed through red lights/stop signs/restricting traffic control devices without first coming to a complete stop and ensuring that both the police vehicle and the vehicle being escorted can safely proceed.
  - iii. Code One responses are not allowed under these circumstances.
  - iv. Refer to Section (V)(E)(4) of General Order 330.01 *Vehicular Operations* for a list of factors to be considered when performing such escorts.

**APPROVED:**



COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ  
CHIEF OF POLICE