

# La Plata Police Department – General Order

	Title: <b>Traffic Management and Control</b>	Order #: <b>712</b>	
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Approved by: <b>Chief Carl Schinner</b>		CALEA 5 <sup>th</sup> Edition	
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1. **Policy:** This policy governs the department's traffic direction and control functions, to include special events, escorts, and emergency closures of State roads. Traffic direction and control functions are performed, when necessary, to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians on our roadways. Whenever possible, nonsworn personnel will perform traffic/pedestrian direction and parking control duties, thus permitting sworn personnel to perform duties requiring law enforcement authority.

**2. AUTHORITY:**

- a. Maryland Transportation Article (T.A.) grants this agency the authority to regulate traffic upon, and when needed, shut down State and/or County roads. T.A. §25–102. states “(a) The provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law do not prevent a local authority, in the reasonable exercise of its police power, from exercising the following powers as to highways under its jurisdiction... (2) Regulating traffic by means of police officers or traffic control devices; (3) Regulating or prohibiting processions or assemblies on highways.”
- b. The following personnel are authorized to provide manual traffic direction and control when necessary:
  - i. Uniformed officers and non-uniformed who are properly attired and wearing a traffic vest (i.e., signal malfunction, crash, animal carcass, debris, and emergency situations).
  - ii. Uniformed school crossing guards, under the supervision of, and at locations approved by the School Safety Section.
  - iii. Uniformed reserve officers, upon request of a supervisory officer, and only in the event that they have received appropriate training (i.e., signal malfunction, crash, debris, and emergency situations).
- c. Personnel performing manual traffic control will do so until they are properly relieved, the hazard is mitigated or supervisory personnel have been notified.

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- d. All personnel having responsibility for traffic direction and control will receive appropriate training.

## 3. MANUAL OPERATION OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS:

- a. Manual operation of intersections controlled by a traffic-controlled device and the closing of an uncontrolled ramp are not considered road closures.
- b. Officers may manually operate a traffic signal when the signal is malfunctioning, or when manual operation would facilitate the flow of traffic. The signal should be placed on manual only for the duration of the event. Familiarization training on the use of manual controls will be given periodically by the Traffic Safety Section. Officers who have not received such training will not manually operate traffic signals.
- c. If a signal is malfunctioning the officer will notify the appropriate road-serving agency (SHA, County Roads, etc.) via the Communications Section.

## 4. MANUAL TRAFFIC DIRECTION PROCEDURES:

- a. In General Personnel will keep in mind their own safety when manually directing traffic. All personnel assigned or authorized to direct traffic will use uniform signals and gestures to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition of, and response to, directions. The voice commands, signaling aids, hand motions or gestures displayed by personnel should elicit a reasonable and immediate response from drivers and pedestrians.
- b. To Stop Traffic: The officer/crossing guard should first extend his/her arm and index finger toward, and look directly at, the person to be stopped until that person is aware, or it can be reasonably assumed that the person is aware, of the officer's gesture. Second, the pointing hand is raised at the wrist so that the palm is toward the person to be stopped. The palm is then held in this position until the vehicle has stopped. To stop traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction while continuing to maintain the raised arm and palm toward the traffic previously stopped. The same procedure applies to stopping vehicles from intersecting roadways.
- c. To Start Traffic: The officer/crossing guard should first stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extending the arm and index finger toward, while looking directly at the driver until that driver is aware of the officer's gesture. Second, with palm toward the officer, the pointing arm is swung from

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the elbow through a vertical semi-circle until the hand is adjacent to the chin. If necessary this gesture is repeated until traffic begins to move. To start traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction. The same procedure applies to starting vehicles from intersecting roadways.

- d. Right Turns: If the driver is approaching from the officer's right side, the extended right arm, index finger, and gaze are first directed toward the driver, followed by swinging the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the driver's intended turn. If the driver is approaching from the officer's left side, either the same procedure may be followed or the extended left forearm may be raised 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.
- e. Left Turns: To start left turning drivers, the officer's left side and arm should be toward the left turning driver. The officer should then extend the left arm and index finger and then gaze toward a left turning driver. When the left turning driver's attention has been gained, the extended left arm and index finger are swung to point in the direction the driver intends to go. The officer should not direct his/her gaze, nor turn his/her body toward a left turning driver unless he/she is prepared for the driver to complete the left turn.
- f. Whistles: A whistle may be used in conjunction with arm and hand signals to gain the attention of drivers and pedestrians in the following manner:
  - i. One long blast coupled with the hand signal for STOP.
  - ii. Two short blasts coupled with the hand signal for GO.
  - iii. Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.
- g. Driver Confusion: When a driver or pedestrian misunderstands or misinterprets an officer's directions, the officer will move reasonably close to the person and politely and briefly explain the officer's directions. The officer will allow the driver to proceed when it is safe to do so. This procedure is not intended to abridge an officer's enforcement responsibilities. In the event of a deliberate and flagrant failure to heed an officer's directions, the officer should consider the necessary enforcement action.
- h. Flashlights: Flashlights with the issued "orange wand" will be used during the hours of darkness or diminished illumination.

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- i. Traffic Flow: Unless circumstances prohibit, an officer will allow traffic from one direction to flow for at least 60 seconds. However, officers will disregard the 60-second time allotment when gaps or lulls in traffic appear.
  - j. Positioning:
    - i. Select a position that maximizes personal safety.
    - ii. Select a position in the roadway that maximizes visibility. Center position is usually best.
    - iii. Be alert.
5. **REFLECTIVE OUTERWEAR:** Any personnel directing traffic, or in the roadway controlling traffic, will wear their issued reflective vests/clothing at all times.
6. **EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF STATE ROADS:** The State Highway Administration has developed a comprehensive program for rerouting traffic in the event of State road/highway closures or significant traffic disruptions on State roads/highways. The system is known as C.H.A.R.T. (Chesapeake Highway Advisory Routing Traffic). When notified, C.H.A.R.T. will assist in traffic redirection.
- a. Management of Traffic Incidents:
    - i. Crashes or Emergency Incidents: Police Department personnel have the right, and responsibility; to close or redirect traffic on State owned roads or highways in the event of a crash or an emergency situation. In any incident where a State road or highway is closed or experiences a significant disruption of traffic (SHA Guidelines: 30 minutes or more), on-scene personnel will inform Communications of the known details, and Communications will notify C.H.A.R.T. authorities. It is especially important to inform Communications of the nature of the situation, and the expected length of time the road/highway will be disrupted.
    - ii. Road Hazards: Road Hazards (disabled vehicles, debris, sink holes, etc.) that interrupt or impeded the normal flow of traffic on roadways may be mitigated by officers utilizing temporary traffic control until the hazard is removed. If the officer is unable to mitigate the hazard they shall notify communication to have the appropriate agency (SHA or County Roads) respond to take corrective action. Officers shall attempt to safeguard motorists from the hazard until it is resolved.

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iii. Traffic Control Device Failure: The failure of a traffic control device is a potential hazardous situation. Supervisors and the appropriate servicing agency shall be notified anytime a device fails. Supervisor will determine the department response based on the following criteria:

1. Roadway affected.
2. Design of the affected intersection.
3. Time of day.
4. Volume of traffic flow.
5. Physical observation of the traffic flow.
6. Environmental conditions.

## 7. ESCORTS:

- a. Emergency: The department will not provide emergency escort services unless a life-threatening emergency exists and no reasonable alternative exists.
- b. Ambulances/Medical Vehicles: Police supervisors may authorize a police escort of a medical vehicle under the following circumstances:
  - i. The medical vehicle is transporting an emergency medical victim to an emergency medical care facility, such as a hospital emergency room; and  
b. The operator of the medical vehicle is unfamiliar with the route to his/her destination: OR c. The medical vehicle has no working emergency warning equipment.
  - ii. Emergency Medical Supplies Emergency transportation of medical supplies such as medicine, blood, or donated body organs may be done via police vehicle. Escorting vehicles that are transporting medical supplies or body organs should only be done as a last resort, and upon supervisory approval.
- c. Civilian Vehicles:
  - i. Escorting civilian vehicles under emergency circumstances is an extremely dangerous practice and will only be done in life-or-death situations where there is no alternative. Supervisory authorization is

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required. Whenever possible, the officer will either call for an ambulance or transport the victim in the police vehicle.

- ii. If an emergency escort of a civilian vehicle is authorized, the escorting officer will activate all emergency equipment on the police vehicle. When possible and under these limited circumstances, a second police vehicle should be used to follow behind the civilian vehicle with all emergency equipment activated. The authorizing supervisor will coordinate the emergency run with other police districts and foreign jurisdictions.
- d. **Non-Emergency Escorts:** Arrangements for non-emergency escorts (military convoys, motorcades, funerals, VIPs, oversized vehicles, highway construction equipment, hazardous material cargo containers, etc.) are the responsibility of the commanding officer of the Special Services Bureau. The use of any roadway with a speed limit in excess of 50 mph for such an event requires the approval of the Traffic Safety Commander and shall be utilized on a limited basis. The closure of any roadway with a speed limit in excess of 50 mph (for any period of time) requires the approval of the commanding officer of the Special Services Bureau.
  - e. **Funeral Escorts:** Requests received from the Funeral Home Director shall be accepted and directed to the Traffic Safety Commander, or their designee, who shall determine if the request requires the participation of police department personnel. The department may provide such services when requested in sufficient time (usually at least 24 hours). Consideration of travel route, traffic safety concerns, and available personnel are factors in authorizing a funeral escort.
    - i. **Small Funeral (less than 25 vehicles):** The Traffic Safety Section Commander, or designee, may coordinate with the affected District Commander, or designee, to request the assistance of district personnel, and/or to request that the district take charge of a small funeral escort service.
    - ii. **Large Funeral (greater than 26 vehicles):** Should be handled by the Traffic Safety Section as determined by the Traffic Safety Section Commander, or designee. The Traffic Safety Section Commander, or designee, will coordinate with the affected District Commander, or designee, for assistance of district personnel. The Special Operations Division Commander may request a District Commander, or designee, to take charge of a large funeral escort service.
    - iii. For each event handled by the Traffic Safety Section, or District, an Officer in Charge (OIC) must be designated to supervise the event. d.

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Funeral escorts that significantly impact or disrupt traffic flow on State roads/highways or require the complete closure of such roads, the Traffic Safety Commander and/or designee, or the Officer in Charge will contact affected public safety agencies, affected districts within the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Police Department Public Information Office, the Police Department Communications Section, and the State Highway Administration SOC (Statewide Operational Center 410-582-5650 or 1800-543-2515).

## 8. SPECIAL EVENTS:

- a. Parades and Special Events: Organizations requesting assistance for parades or special events utilizing State or County roads are to be directed to the Traffic Safety Commander or their designee to determine if County and/or State permits are required. The organization will be directed to the appropriate agency, or district if a permit is not required for the event. The Traffic Safety Commander or their designee shall notify the District's Traffic Coordinator when an event is scheduled in their district. The Traffic Safety Commander will determine whether or not the event is safe for the public in general when approving permits for the State Highway Administration or County roads. The Traffic Safety Commander or their designee will ensure that an Officer in Charge (OIC) has been designated to supervise the event. Reserve Officers shall be utilized when appropriate, and their use coordinated through the Community Relations Division. The commander of the Special Operations Division and/or the affected District Commander will determine if an Incident Action Plan is required for the event.
- b. Notifications: The Traffic Safety Commander, their designee, or the Officer in Charge will contact affected public safety agencies, affected districts within the Anne Arundel County Police Department, and the Police Department Public Information Office. The State Highway Administration SOC (Statewide Operational Center 410-582-5650 or 1-800-543-2515) shall be contacted if traffic is to be significantly affected (SHA Guidelines: 30 minutes or more) or for the closure of any state road for a planned event, when time constraints allow. However, no state agencies need to be notified if an SHA Permit was issued for the event.
- c. Responsibilities of the Officer in Charge (OIC): The Commander of the Traffic Safety Section, their designee, or the OIC (Officer in Charge) will prepare and arrange for police presence at such events. Planning for such events will include provisions for ingress and egress of vehicles, pedestrians, parking, spectator control, public transportation, relief of officers assigned point control duties, media, alternate routes for through traffic, temporary traffic controls, parking prohibitions, and emergency vehicle access. The officer in charge of planning the

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event may obtain temporary traffic control devices, such as movable barriers and temporary signs from the County Department of Public Works and the State Highway Administration. Safety of the participants and the public in general is paramount. The OIC (Officer in Charge) of any event has the authority to shut the event down for any situation perceived to be threat to public safety that cannot otherwise be quickly resolved.

## **9. FIRE SCENES: THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS IN COMMAND OF ALL FIRE SCENES.**

- a. Police Department personnel are responsible for assisting and facilitating the operations of the Fire Department. Responsibilities of the Police Department include:
  - i. Ensuring that no one hinders or obstructs Fire Department personnel.
  - ii. Maintaining fire lines/hoses, by ensuring that vehicles do not park upon or drive over them.
  - iii. Excluding unauthorized persons and vehicles.
  - iv. Ensuring control and free maneuverability of fire apparatus.
- b. Police officers responding to a fire scene will not congregate directly at the scene of the fire. The officer in charge will establish traffic control points at a distance from the fire.
- c. In discharging their responsibilities at a fire scene it is important that the rights and privileges of citizens, business interests, pedestrians and vehicular traffic not be interfered with or obstructed any longer than the public safety requires.