

 <b>City of Norfolk</b>	Operational General Order – 330		Assistance to Motorists
	<b>Department of Police General Order</b>		
	<b>CALEA:</b>	61.4.1	
	<b>VLEPSC:</b>	OPR.07.11	
LEGAL REVIEW DATE:	10/13/2010	PRESCRIBED DATE:	12-30-10 <sup>4/13</sup>
City Attorney:	<i>[Signature]</i>	City Manager/Director of Public Safety:	<i>[Signature]</i>
APPROVED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:		<i>[Signature]</i>	

Office of Preparation: Strategic Management Division / acb

### Purpose

To provide guidelines for police officers in providing assistance to motorists.

### Policy

All police officers of the Norfolk Police Department, under the direction of the Chief of Police, shall render general or emergency assistance and provide public information and direction to motorists who are in need of general assistance. This policy shall also apply to operations officers.

### Supersedes:

1. G.O. OPR-330, dated May 14, 2009
2. Any previously issued directive conflicting with this order

### Order Contents:

- I. General
- II. Push Bumper Vehicles
- III. Pushing Vehicles
- IV. Private Residence/Parking Lots
- V. Road or Tow Service
- VI. Escorts
- VII. Request for Assistance by Stranded Motorists
- VIII. Road Hazards

I. General (CALEA 61.4.1) (VLEPSC .07.11)

Police officers shall assist operators of disabled vehicles which are blocking traffic, creating a safety hazard or generally in need of assistance.

II. Push Bumper Vehicles

Police vehicles equipped with push bumpers may be used to push disabled vehicles, following the below listed safeguards:

- A. No unattended vehicles shall be pushed by police vehicles, except in extreme emergencies.
- B. Vehicles are not to be pushed for the purpose of starting them.
- C. Disabled vehicles are to be pushed clear of the traveled portion of the road or to the closest safe place on the side of the road, employing speeds not to exceed 10 m.p.h.
- D. Extreme care must be taken to avoid causing any damage to the police unit or the assisted vehicle.

III. Pushing Vehicles

In the event that a police vehicle equipped with push bumpers is not available, or can not be used in the manner for which they were designed, or may damage the citizen's vehicle (e.g. spare tire cover), officers may physically push disabled vehicles to a safe place on the side of the road. Officers shall take such action only after they have assessed the size and weight of the vehicle (in relation to the potential for safe movement), the road conditions, and the hazard which the disabled vehicle is causing, and have determined that such action can be taken safely.

IV. Private Residence/Parking Lot

- A. Police vehicles shall not be dispatched to assist disabled vehicles at private residences or parking lots, except in lockout cases where an emergency exists.
- B. When a telecommunicator determines that an emergency does exist (e.g., child/infant left in vehicle, vehicle left running), officers shall be dispatched.
- C. Officers shall not use slim-jims, coat hangers or similar devices while attempting to open a vehicle equipped with electric locks. Doing so may cause the lock mechanism to melt or fuse or may activate the side impact air-bag mechanism and lead to damage or injury.

V. Road or Tow Service

Unless the motorist requests a specific road or tow service, police officers shall contact the City's Towing and Recovery Services which will dispatch the next wrecker on its established list.

VI. Escorts

No motor vehicle escorts shall be provided unless directed by the City Manager, except in the following instances:

- A. Wide loads, when directed by the Officer in Charge, Traffic Unit.
- B. Funerals, when directed by the Officer in Charge, Traffic Unit.

VII. Request for Assistance by Stranded Motorists

When requested by a motorist in need of assistance other than those specific incidents mentioned above, police officers shall utilize radio communication to request the following:

- 1. Fire-Rescue assistance.
- 2. Emergency transportation.
- 3. Emergency communications (e.g., contacting family member to come to the location).

VIII. Road Hazards

- A. Police officers on patrol or responding to non-emergency calls for service who discover in the traveled surface portion of the roadway, large or deep holes, or other defects or conditions of the roadway such as objects or debris, that pose a traffic hazard or create the potential for significant damage to vehicles or injury to cyclists, pedestrians, or motorists, shall immediately stop and take measures to protect users of the roadway from such damage or injury.
  - a. Initially, officers shall block the hazard with the vehicle (marked unit preferred) with emergency lights activated and shall employ appropriate methods to direct traffic so as to avoid the hazard, adhering to procedures outlined in G.O. OPR-310: Accident Investigation.
  - b. When required as a temporary measure, arrange for placement of cones, flares, and/or barricades to cordon off the hazard.

- c. If size and weight permits, attempt to safely remove the object or material from the road.
  - d. Notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) dispatcher of the location of the hazard, who in turn will notify the appropriate personnel to remove the hazard.
- B. Police officers, including officers in unmarked vehicles, observing road hazards while on a message or responding to emergency calls for service, shall notify the ECC telecommunicator as soon as practical of the location of the hazard. ECC shall dispatch another unit to the location to take action consistent with VIII. A, above.
- C. Police officers shall notify a sector supervisor if eliminating the traffic hazard will take longer than 30 minutes. The sector supervisor shall decide whether continued police presence is warranted at the road hazard or whether the use of temporary measures, as described in VIII. A.1 b., shall suffice. In making this decision, the sector supervisor will be guided by the advice of street construction division of the Department of Public Works, if available.
- D. If the conditions of the roadway such as small potholes or other irregularities do not present a traffic hazard or create the potential for significant damage or injury, including any condition that may be safely negotiated or avoided in the normal flow of traffic by properly equipped vehicles traveling at or below the posted speed limit, and whose operators are maintaining a proper lookout and otherwise observing all applicable traffic laws, officers discovering such conditions need not take the measures described in Section VIII. A., above, but shall complete a quality watch notice in accordance with G.O. ADM-442: Abatement Notification.

## Definition

Extreme emergency: An extreme emergency exists when failure to push the unattended vehicle presents an immediate danger that leaving the vehicle where it is will result in injury to motorists, pedestrians, or police officers, or significant property damage, and that the danger cannot be alleviated by traffic control or other measures while awaiting a tow truck.

## Related Documents:

1. G.O. ADM-442: Abatement Notification
1. G.O. OPR-310: Accident Investigation
2. G.O. OPR-340: Towing