



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
18.4 Replaces 404.7  
Chapter 18 – Traffic  
Section 4 – Traffic Direction

Date: January 1, 2013  
Revised: 02/09/2022

Signature:

Traffic direction and control is a joint function between the police department, the Wyoming Department of Transportation, and the city engineering division to ensure safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians. The majority of traffic control and direction will be by unmanned mechanical devices such as signals and signs or pavement markings.

#### 18.4.1 Manual Traffic Direction

- A. Police officers shall be assigned to carry out traffic control functions only at those times and places where human intervention is required to ensure safety and efficiency, and only until such time that the problem is resolved or temporary traffic control apparatus can be installed.
- B. Under normal circumstances, the patrol division will handle manual direction of traffic. Manual direction will be used in situations where traffic control signals or devices are not present or adequate or when emergency conditions dictate the manual control of traffic. These include crashes, disabled vehicles, and special functions.
- C. Direction of traffic by an officer will be handled in a manner that will enable drivers and pedestrians to recognize and respond to verbal and gestured motions.
  - 1. To stop traffic an officer extends his or her arm outward with the palm toward the car to be stopped. The officer may use verbal and/ or whistle commands to enhance the physical gesture.
  - 2. To start from the stop position, the arm will be moved at the elbow in a manner to indicate the traffic may now proceed. This is done by swinging the arm upwards (from elbow down) toward the direction in which traffic is to flow.
  - 3. Right Turns: The officer shall gesture to the driver of a vehicle turning right to perform the turn by extending the arm toward the direction in which the turn is to be made.
  - 4. Left Turns: These turns are to be made only when there is a gap in traffic or oncoming traffic is completely stopped. The officer will point in the direction of the turn when such a movement can be made safely.
  - 5. Officers may use flashlights with traffic wand attachments and/or road flares while manually directing traffic. These will be used in a manner to enhance visibility. To stop traffic, slowly swing the beam of the light across the path of oncoming traffic.
- D. Officers should remain calm and professional whenever directing traffic. There may be times when drivers and pedestrians do not understand the officer's directions or may refuse to obey such directions. The officer will handle these instances with courtesy and professionalism.
- E. All patrol vehicles will be equipped with a high visibility vest. The use of the vest will be required whenever an officer is manually directing traffic.

#### **18.4.2 Situational Traffic Control**

**A. Special events**

The patrol operations lieutenant or his or her designee will insure the preparation/implementation of a traffic plan for special events, which addresses:

1. Ingress and egress of vehicles/pedestrians;
2. Parking provisions;
3. Spectator control;
4. Alternate traffic routing for emergencies;
5. Emergency vehicle access;
6. Manual operation of city traffic control signals if needed;
7. Media coverage; and
8. Officer assignments and relief.

**B. Fire scenes**

Officers on the scene of fires will assess the hazards present and take action to minimize further damage to property or life. These may include directing traffic and/or evacuating the immediate area.

1. Officers will assist the fire department in making sure the scene is clear for emergency vehicles to enter but restrict entry to unauthorized vehicular or pedestrian traffic;
2. Officers will ensure that fire apparatus is not blocked by other traffic nor will vehicles be allowed to cross fire hoses without the permission of the fire incident commander.

**C. Adverse weather**

1. Adverse weather may create adverse road conditions. These include hazards such as downed power lines or other debris and natural conditions such as ice and snow or flooded roads.
2. Officers will be cognizant of changing weather conditions so emergency measures can be taken if warranted. This includes notifying snowplow crew. An officer will notify a supervisor of such problems so a determination can be made to notify the appropriate agency.
3. The on-duty supervisor must approve notification of the local radio stations, public works, fire department, emergency medical services and other local law enforcement agencies of adverse road conditions that will affect the motoring public.
4. Pursuant to Wyoming Statute 24-1-107, the police department may close a street if a dangerous condition creates a menace to public health or safety. In such cases, notification shall immediately be made to the governmental agency having control over the highway, which shall be informed of the reason for the closure. Local news media should also be made aware of the closure.
5. The on-duty supervisor will request dispatchers to notify the proper utility company and assign officers to direct traffic and safeguard movement at the scene of all downed power lines, broken gas or water mains or at construction sites when the situation endangers the safe movement of traffic.

**D. Assistance to motorists**

Because of the danger to the stranded motorist and to motorists on the roadway potentially affected by the stranded motorist, the department will offer reasonable assistance at all times to the motorist who appears in need of aid. This will apply at all hours of the day, but particularly during the nighttime hours when the hazards are higher.

1. Officers should be constantly alert for roadway users who appear to need assistance. Officers should freely provide information and directions upon request. In an effort to better serve the citizens, officers should become familiar with the various services and facilities available in the area.
2. For emergency incidents, which require the immediate removal of a disabled vehicle from a traveled highway, the police vehicle equipped with “push bumpers” may be used to move the vehicle to safety. Officers will not use their vehicles to “jump start” other vehicles.
3. Officers may transport stranded motorists to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained, however, officers should be certain that the assistance is available. When transporting a stranded motorist, officers will ensure the in-car camera system is activated and recording for the duration of the transport. .
4. Stranded motorists should not be abandoned when exposed to a hazardous situation. Consideration should be given to traffic hazards, location, time of day, weather conditions and priority of calls for service. This does not preclude placing devices to warn oncoming traffic and clearing the scene if conditions are such that this can be done safely. Officers should periodically check to ensure the condition does not deteriorate.

E. Hazardous roadway conditions

When a hazard requires immediate correction, officers will contact the communications center with the information and identify the assistance or special equipment required. The officer will protect the scene and bystanders, and direct traffic or take any other action deemed necessary to correct the situation.

1. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential crash situation but the threat of such is not imminent, officers will notify the communications center, who will forward the information to the appropriate agency or department for correction. Officers locating hazardous debris in the roadway shall remove it whenever possible.
2. Officers shall report all highway defects to the communications center and dispatchers will contact the appropriate agency for correction. Requests for additional or new highway safety features will be forwarded through the chain of command to the chief of police who will forward the information to the appropriate department or agency.

### 18.4.3 Escort Services

Escort services may be provided in situations where such services would be advantageous to traffic control and direction. Coordination with outside agencies will determine the extent of such participation. It may include but is not limited to emergency vehicles, public officials and dignitaries, funerals and oversize loads.

A. Emergency escorts

1. Officers will not initiate emergency escorts without first notifying dispatch and receiving clearance by a supervisor.
2. Emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, will not be escorted by officers except under special circumstances. Two emergency vehicles traveling together more than double the hazard to traffic. Instead of escorting an emergency vehicle, officers are encouraged to provide traffic control at intersections which allow the emergency vehicle to move quickly through intersections. One exception would be to escort an

emergency vehicle to the hospital when the driver of the emergency vehicle is not familiar with the location of the hospital. Another exception would be when the emergency equipment on the vehicle needing to be escorted is malfunctioning.

3. No emergency escort will be provided unless the officer receiving the request has reasonable grounds to believe a real emergency exists. If such an emergency exists, the patient should be transferred to an ambulance or, in the event that an ambulance is unavailable, to the cruiser for the emergency run. The driver of the civilian vehicle should be directed to proceed to the emergency medical facility at a normal speed in compliance with all traffic regulations. If in the opinion of the officer, delay or transfer would jeopardize the patient's life, the officer may escort the civilian vehicle to the nearest emergency medical facility. During such escort, all emergency equipment will be utilized and the officer will not proceed through traffic control devices without first stopping and ensuring that both vehicles can safely proceed. Vehicles carrying emergency supplies such as blood should have the supplies transferred to the patrol vehicle, if practical.
- B. Legitimate requests for scheduled escort services include funerals, motorcades and other traffic of public officials and dignitaries, oversize vehicles, and vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo.
- C. Tactical control of the legitimate escort will be assigned to a specific commander, supervisor or officer in accordance with the complexity of the escort services being provided. The assigned officer will set the pace of the escort in accordance with prevailing conditions, and under no circumstances exceeding the pre-specified maximum speed for any segment of the route. The termination of the escort and continuance of normal traffic routes will be made when the continuation of the escort would constitute risk to the public, or is no longer necessary.
- D. Requests for escorts for local sports teams may be authorized by a patrol supervisor. The patrol supervisor shall ensure that any support vehicles to the local sports team are not involved in the escort. Support vehicles may trail the escort while obeying all traffic laws.