GENERAL

It is the policy of the VCUPD to provide safe and consistent regulation of traffic throughout the VCU community. Traffic safety is the responsibility of every police officer. Only sworn and trained security officers are permitted to direct and control traffic. Whenever any officer notices a defect or hazard, the location should be relayed to Traffic Engineering to maximize safety. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for traffic signal emergency service and procedures for the regulation of traffic.

PROCEDURE

A. Directing Traffic:

At the scene of a situation requiring traffic control including, but not limited to, an accident, fire, disabled vehicle, incident involving death or injury, hit and run, impairment of operator due to alcohol or drugs, damage to public vehicles or property, hazardous materials, disturbances between principals, major traffic congestion, towing or any other like situation requiring traffic control, the involved police officer shall:

1. Utilize the police vehicle’s (marked or unmarked) emergency lights to warn motorist,

2. Exit the police vehicle and direct traffic to ensure the orderly flow of traffic, and

3. Utilize the department’s reflective traffic vest or the reflective reversible raincoat, which is to be worn over the outer most garments. The traffic vest is to be worn regardless of weather conditions, lighting conditions or time of day. After dark or during inclement weather, the flashlight or flares will also be utilized.

B. Motorist Assistance:

When assisting a motorist, officers shall:

1. Ensure the safety of the motorist(s) and other highway users. If necessary, stand by until assistance arrives on the scene;

2. Identify any injured parties and begin first aid procedures if needed;

3. Summon emergency medical services or fire service if needed;

4. Use flares or other reflective devices to establish a safety zone for the vehicle, if needed;
5. Consider the time of day and location and ensure the safety and security of the occupants of the disabled vehicle;

6. Request road assistance, wrecker for the vehicle or other necessary assistance if requested or required;

7. If necessary, assist the disabled vehicle off of the roadway;

8. If necessary, transport the stranded motorist to a location where assistance can be obtained;

9. Provide motorist with travel directions, information pertaining to necessary services and initiate notification of third parties, if requested or necessary; and,

10. Return to their regular patrol duties as soon as traffic and personal safety issues have been resolved.

C. Hand Signals:

Pursuant to VA Code Section §46.2-834, signals by law enforcement officers shall be as follows:

1. Police officers and uniformed security officers may assume control of traffic at any intersection regardless of whether such intersection is controlled by lights, other traffic control devices or uncontrolled. In such events, signals by such officers shall take precedence over such traffic control devices.

2. Police officers and uniformed security officers may assume control of traffic otherwise controlled by lights. In such events, signals by uniformed crossing guards shall take precedence over such traffic control devices.

3. Police officers and uniformed security officers may control traffic at any marked crossing whether such crossing is at an intersection or another location.

4. Instructions for Hand Signals:

   a. To stop traffic by hand - Stand facing traffic with shoulders squared. Raise arms 45 degrees above shoulders with hands extended, palms toward moving traffic to be stopped.

   b. To move traffic by hand - Stand with shoulders parallel to traffic to be moved. Extend the arm and hand full length at shoulder height toward traffic to be moved, hand extended and fingers together. Bring hand sharply in direction traffic is to move. Repeat movement with opposite arm and hand to start traffic from opposite direction.

   c. To stop and start traffic by whistle - One long blast to stop traffic, two short blasts to start traffic. (The whistle shall be used in conjunction with the appropriate hand signals.)

5. Emergency Stop of Traffic by Whistle:
a. Three or more short blasts, all traffic shall immediately clear the intersection and stop.

b. The hand signal for “stop” shall be used in conjunction with the whistle and directed toward all traffic.

NOTE: Officers shall never rely solely on the whistle to stop traffic as many citizens cannot hear and will not respond to the whistle while inside a vehicle.

D. Traffic Light or Mechanical Signals:

Officers and security guards shall be familiar with traffic light signals pursuant to VA Code Section §46.2-833 (i.e. red, green, amber, flashing red and flashing amber lights).

E. Hazardous Highway Conditions:

Officers shall take immediate corrective action, if possible, when any hazardous highway conditions exist.

1. Emergency Situations:

   a. Immediate action must be taken to ensure the safety of the motoring public and pedestrians when any condition(s) render the highway unsafe. Examples shall include but are not limited to:

      1) Major accidents
      2) Fatalities
      3) Crime Scenes
      4) Hazardous spills
      5) Industrial accidents
      6) Fires
      7) Adverse road and/or weather conditions, i.e. road cave-in or flooded road
      8) Large or excess debris in the road
      9) Fallen trees or electric wires in the road
      10) Traffic signal outage
      11) Missing traffic regulation signs
      12) Large holes or bumps
      13) Riots or large crowds in the street
      14) Gas or water main leaks

   b. The responding officer(s) shall:

      1) Notify Dispatch,
      2) Notify a supervisor, if necessary.
3) Close the highway and evacuate citizens from the area, if necessary.

4) Request the proper emergency service, if needed.

5) Notify the agency responsible for correcting the hazardous highway situation.

6) Manually operate and/or employ the use of temporary traffic control devices (cones, flares, reflective traffic vests), when necessary, employing the following procedures:
   a) Flares shall not be used if combustible material is present.
   b) Once cap is removed, the ignition end of the flare must be turned away from the officer.
   c) Officers may contact another officer if cones are needed and he/she does not have them in the trunk of the patrol vehicle.
   d) Officers are responsible for removing all devices he/she employs.

7) Stay on the scene until the highway is rendered safe or until police services are no longer needed.

NOTE: During emergency situations and/or adverse road conditions involving defective or non-functioning traffic signal light(s), officers shall handle the location as a four-way traffic stop.

2. Non-emergency situations:
   a. Situations that do not render the highway unsafe or require immediate attention shall be handled by an individual officer or forwarded to the appropriate department for attention. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
      1) Small, moveable debris in the roadway
      2) Missing street signs
      3) Minimal pot holes
      4) Traffic signal outage (If more than one indicator is displayed and one is working correctly)

   b. The responding officer shall:
      1) Notify Dispatch of defect,
      2) Notify a police supervisor for follow-up if repairs are not made in a timely manner, and
      3) Use the Mobile Data Computer to notify Dispatch of minor defects.

F. Unmarked Vehicles:

Unmarked vehicles are not utilized for general traffic enforcement or patrol. Unmarked vehicles utilized during traffic direction and control efforts are equipped with a siren and emergency lights in operational order with constant radio communication.
G. **Special Events:**

*Special events regulation of traffic will be conducted in accordance with the specific written plan created on a case-by-case basis.* Arrangements shall be made to assure that each event has been planned and that all involved persons have been given a copy of the plans. Provisions will be made to allow for:

1. Ingress and egress for vehicles and pedestrians
2. Parking and parking prohibitions
3. Relief of officers assigned to point locations
4. News media
5. Spectator control
6. Alternate routes for through traffic
7. Emergency vehicle access

H. **Escort Services:**

1. Escorts of an emergency nature may require the advance approval of the on duty supervisor. In situations where no advance warning is given, the officer shall use sound judgment.
2. Emergency equipment shall be utilized as appropriate while on escort. The shift supervisor shall be advised of the escort needed.
3. Escorts of a routine nature require no authority other than notification from Dispatch. They include:
   a. VIPs, dignitaries, public officials,
   b. Over-wide, oversized vehicles, and
   c. Hazardous or unusual cargo.

I. **Reporting Hazards or Defects:**

1. *Department members will notify Dispatch of the location of a traffic signal defect. The dispatcher has a list of major intersections that Traffic Engineering considers as needing emergency repair. If the location is on the list, the dispatcher will notify the traffic signal emergency repairperson on call.*
2. *If an intersection is not listed for immediate repair and the traffic controls operate abnormally and may, in the opinion of the police officer, create a hazard, the signals may be placed in the flashing mode of operation. The traffic signal red indication lamps will face side street traffic, whereas, the amber indication lamps will face the main street. The officer shall notify Dispatch to report when and why the signals were placed in flashing operation.*
3. At any intersection, the following traffic signal defects should be reported immediately to Dispatch:

   a) All traffic signals are non-functioning.

   b) The traffic signal red indication lamp is non-functioning in a location where only one traffic signal faces traffic movement. The officer may use the Mobile Data Computer to notify Dispatch of minor defects.

   c) At the discretion and direction of a supervisor, Dispatch personnel shall notify the traffic signal emergency repairperson to respond to any location determined to need emergency repair.

4. At any location of civil disturbance, man-made disaster, natural disaster or emergency situations, officers shall establish traffic control detours to continue the orderly flow of traffic around the situation so as not to interfere with any law enforcement action. Officers shall remain in the assigned location until replaced by another officer, a traffic control device or until relieved by a supervisor.