


FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

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|  | SUBJECT TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL | POLICY NUMBER 17.17 |
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17.17.01 PURPOSE

To provide uniform guidelines for the directing and controlling of traffic.

17.17.02 AUTHORITY

Section 321.05, Florida Statutes
 23 CFR Part 634, Federal Highway Administration, USDOT

17.17.03 POLICY

Roadway obstructions, malfunctioning traffic signals, special events, critical incidents and other occurrences often restrict the normal flow of traffic. In such cases, it may be necessary to institute temporary measures to provide for the safety of emergency personnel, possible victims, and the general public; the expedient and efficient management of a scene; and the maintenance and/or restoration of an unobstructed flow of traffic. It is therefore the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to, when necessary, provide for the orderly flow of traffic by assisting local authorities in planning for special events, make recommendations to correct conditions that restrict the flow of traffic, and provide for manual traffic direction when circumstances dictate.

17.17.04 OBJECTIVES

To ensure the smooth flow of traffic in and around areas of obstructed or unusually congested roadways, or other significant road closures.

17.17.05 DEFINITIONS

- A. **CRITICAL INCIDENT** – For the purpose of this policy, a critical incident is an occurrence or event, natural or human-caused, which requires an emergency response to protect life or property. For example, incidents may include **critical** public health and medical emergencies, war-related disasters, terrorist threats/attacks, urban and wildfires, smoke/fog conditions affecting roadways, hurricanes/tropical storms/floods, tornadoes, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, hazardous material spills. Major planned events and law enforcement

incidents requiring an emergency response may also be included. This definition does not include routine serious traffic crashes.

- B. **SIGNIFICANT ROAD CLOSURE** – For the purpose of this policy, a significant road closure is a road closure in excess of 20 minutes that occurs on a limited access highway or main arterial roadway that is the direct result of a critical incident.

17.17.06 PROCEDURES

A. **TRAFFIC DIRECTION OR CONTROL**

1. Traffic direction or control may be required in various situations including, but not limited to:
 - a. Traffic crash scenes
 - b. Fire and smoke, or smoke/fog scenes
 - c. Adverse weather conditions
 - d. Damaged or malfunctioning traffic control devices/signals
 - e. Special events
 - f. Man-made or natural disasters
 - g. Other events/incidents that adversely affect the orderly flow of traffic
2. Upon the discovery or notification of conditions necessitating manual traffic direction or control, a member will:
 - a. Notify the on-duty supervisor and/or TWS and the Regional Communications Center, and request assistance if needed
 - b. Ensure that appropriate agencies/officials (i.e., utilities/traffic light management, DOT, etc.) are notified
 - c. Provide traffic direction or control
 - d. Take any other appropriate action to safeguard the public and to restore the normal, orderly flow of traffic
3. Emergency equipment on patrol cars, traffic cones, fusees, and other temporary traffic control devices may be used in situations requiring the manual direction or control of traffic. The assistance of the Department of Transportation and their traffic control equipment may be requested for certain situations, such as significant road closures. The member in charge of the scene will direct the placement and removal of such signs

or devices unless relieved by higher authority. The high-visibility reflective traffic vest will be worn at **ALL** times members are involved in directing traffic, investigating crashes with roadblock or affected by motoring traffic, and handling lane closures, obstructed roadways, and disasters on the roadway. During rainy weather, the high-visibility reflective rain gear may be worn in lieu of the traffic vest.

4. Before initiating traffic direction or control, members should consider such variables as visibility, traffic volume and speed, the number of pedestrians present, anticipated duration of the congestion period, and the presence or absence of traffic control devices. Manual traffic control should not be used when the use of a traffic control device will alleviate the problem.
5. Bystanders and their vehicles should not be allowed to interfere with emergency operations or the flow of traffic.
6. Emergency services personnel should be encouraged not to interfere with emergency operations or unnecessarily disrupt the flow of traffic with their vehicles or operations. When traffic is adversely affected, members will take reasonable steps to protect the scene. Conflicts with emergency services personnel should be reported to the appropriate supervisor who will relay the information to the District Commander. If necessary, the District Commander will meet and confer with the affected emergency services director to resolve such conflicts.
7. Manual operations of traffic signal lights and similar automated devices will normally be confined to emergency situations, major traffic congestion, special events, or specific sites where the Division has responsibility for the operation of those devices.

B. PREVENTION OF TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

1. Troop and District Commanders will cooperate and assist the Florida Department of Transportation and local agencies in identifying locations and times where traffic control may be needed.
2. For special events needing traffic direction or control, the member in charge will analyze traffic control needs, in conjunction with local authorities, including the following:
 - a. Ingress and egress of vehicles and pedestrians
 - b. Emergency vehicle access
 - c. Parking and parking restrictions
 - d. Temporary traffic controls
 - e. Public transportation

- f. Crowd control
 - g. Assignment of personnel to specific locations
 - h. Relief of members
 - i. Communication procedures (coordinate through the Regional Communications Center Manager and Duty Officer Supervisor)
3. Potentially hazardous parking situations that require corrective action by another agency should be reported to the District Commander. District Commanders will verify the existence of the hazardous parking situation(s) and ensure the proper agency is notified in an appropriate and timely manner.

C. PROCEDURES FOR THE MANUAL DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC

1. Members will comply with the following procedures when directing traffic:
- a. Position themselves and any traffic control devices in a location that is clearly visible to motorists and pedestrians.
 - b. In the interest of trooper and public safety, members may not routinely park a Division vehicle upon a roadway simply to protect a disabled vehicle or other property. However, a member may park upon a roadway behind a disabled vehicle for the purpose of placing flares or other warning devices, or to assist drivers or passengers to exit the vehicle. Members may also park on a roadway to protect victims or warn other motorists of roadway obstructions or hazards. Anytime a patrol vehicle is parked on a roadway, the emergency lights shall be activated. In any event, the patrol vehicle shall be removed as soon as practical from the roadway.
 - c. Be attentive to traffic and maintain an erect, alert, and balanced stance.
2. To get motorists' attention and direct vehicle movement, members should attempt to make eye contact with drivers of approaching vehicles; use a whistle and crisp, clear hand movements. For greater visibility, members will wear reflective traffic gloves when directing traffic. Uniform signals should be used for manual traffic direction.
- a. Stopping the traffic flow:
 - (1) Point and look directly at the driver that is to stop until eye contact is made.

- (2) Raise one hand with palm toward the driver until he/she stops. The member may point with the other hand to the exact location the driver is to stop.
 - (3) When stopping vehicles on open, high-speed highways, members should face the traffic to be stopped and extend both hands above their head.
- b. Starting and maintaining the traffic flow:
- (1) Point and look directly at the driver that is to start and make eye contact.
 - (2) Rotate the hand/palm up and over the chin bending the arm at the elbow.
- c. Making right/left turns:
- (1) Turns will only be allowed when they can be accomplished safely.
 - (2) Point and look directly at the driver that is to turn right or left and make eye contact, then point in the desired direction of the turn.
- d. Traffic police whistles may be used to supplement hand signals in the following manner:
- (1) One long blast signals motorists to stop
 - (2) Two short blasts signal motorists to proceed
 - (3) Several short blasts in an attempt to get the motorist's attention
- e. Flashlight signals during darkness:
- (1) Directing traffic at night or during inclement conditions is difficult because of limited visibility and difficulty making eye contact with drivers. Therefore, members should be extra cautious when directing traffic during these times.
 - (2) The emergency lights and fusees should be utilized to warn approaching motorists of the member's presence. However, members should be aware that being backlit by bright lights might reduce the ability of approaching motorists to see them.
 - (3) Members can improve their visibility by using the flashlight with the orange direction or signal wand.

- (4) The beam of the flashlight may be aimed at and across the pavement in front of approaching cars as a signal to stop.
 - (5) The beam may be rapidly flashed in the direction of the approaching vehicle to get the driver's attention.
 - (6) The beam should be moved along the roadway in a small come-along arc to indicate the path the vehicle should proceed.
 - (7) When using a flashlight direction/signal wand, the member should make bigger and slower motions because drivers may have difficulty interpreting short, sharp motions.
- f. Refer to FHP Policy 17.17A – Traffic Direction and Control Diagrams on the SafetyNet or PowerDMS. Minor variations of the uniform signals used for traffic direction may be made to facilitate the flow of traffic in unusual situations.

D. TRAFFIC CONTROL BY PRIVATE CITIZENS

- 1. In exigent circumstances, members may allow or request responsible citizens to provide assistance with traffic direction or control to safeguard lives or property.
- 2. Members who allow or request assistance from private citizens should take necessary, reasonable measures to protect the safety of such citizens.