

## **DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 99-77**

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE  
REPLACES: SOP 501.43.00

DATE: December 30, 1999

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### **MOTORIST ASSISTANCE**

#### **I. PURPOSE.**

To establish guidelines governing the delivery of assistance services to motorists.

#### **II. GENERAL ASSISTANCE.**

As members of a public service agency, department personnel will render such aid and advice to motorists as may be requested or necessary. This shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Providing information and directions.
2. Assisting stranded or disabled motorists.
3. Locating misplaced vehicles.
4. Maintaining peace on the roadways.
5. Providing for miscellaneous needs.

Motorist assistance services will be initiated in response to a citizen-generated call for service, or as a result of on-view patrol activity. In either case, the department employee involved shall present a professional demeanor and render such assistance as possible.

Patrol officers shall be on alert for motorists in need of assistance, particularly during the hours of darkness and at peak commute times. In the event an assignment prevents an officer from rendering immediate assistance, arrangements should be made for another marked unit to

respond. The vehicle operator should then be advised (if possible) that another police officer will be enroute to assist.

Officers responding to a stranded or disabled motor vehicle should take all necessary safety precautions in the event:

1. The vehicle may be stolen or wanted.
2. The occupants have, or are, engaged in criminal activity.
3. The driver is intoxicated or otherwise impaired.
4. The driver is unlicensed or suspended.

### III. MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE AND TOWING.

In those instances where a motorist requires mechanical assistance or a tow for a disabled auto, the type of problem will determine the officer's or parking controller's actions. Department employees may, at their discretion, change a flat tire for a motorist; however, employees shall not make minor mechanical repairs, provide fuel to a motorist, or jump start a dead battery.

In cases where a motorist requires a tow or service truck, the officer will determine if the driver has an emergency roadside service (e.g. AAA) and desires to contact same. Should this be the case, the information will be relayed to the communications unit who will contact the appropriate agency. In the event the motorist prefers a private tow, pertinent information will again be relayed to communications which will make the appropriate notification. Depending upon the situation and the desires of the motorist, the officer may also convey the vehicle operator to a convenient location where they may initiate contact with a service company themselves.

If, in the officer's opinion, the ETA (estimated time of arrival) for a private tow or service truck is excessive, and the disabled vehicle poses a traffic hazard, the officer will advise the motorist that delay is unacceptable due to safety reasons, and shall request the department's tow service respond.

The motorist requesting roadside and/or towing service shall be responsible for all charges associated with same, to include payment in those instances where the City's towing service was contracted to remove the vehicle.

Vehicles which are towed by a member of this department shall be documented in accordance with established procedure.

### IV. LOCKOUTS.

When a non-emergency situation exists whereby the rightful owner, agent, lessee, and/or vehicle operator requests an officer or parking controller to attempt to gain entry into a vehicle, or push

their vehicle from a roadway via police car, the employee shall complete a departmental "Waiver of Claim" form (to include the owner's/complainant's signature), prior to any action being taken.

Should the owner, operator, or complainant decline to sign a waiver, no attempt at entry shall be made, and depending upon the circumstances, the vehicle in question may be towed.

Once entry has been gained, the officer or parking controller handling the assignment shall return the waiver form to this department and forward same to the Administrative Division. The waiver form will then be filed.

It should be noted that the above procedure shall also apply to private residences and other property where this department has been requested to gain entry.

#### V. MOTORIST/PASSENGER PROTECTION.

Upon arrival at the scene of a stranded or disabled motorist (whose vehicle has broken down on a roadway), the officer should activate the police vehicle's emergency equipment and angle the vehicle so that same protrudes slightly beyond the left rear corner of the stopped auto.

Conditions permitting, the officer should then remove the driver and passengers onto the curb or shoulder of the roadway in an effort to assess the problem. In all cases, the vehicle operator and passengers should be restrained from walking around or loitering in the roadway as much as possible. Should weather be inclement, the officer may transfer the driver/passengers to the interior of the police vehicle.

Contingent upon the time of day, current weather, traffic load, availability of motorist services, and the personal preference of the vehicle operator/owner, officers may remain with the stranded motorist until such time as towing, mechanical, or family assistance arrives, or transport the motorist to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained.

Should assistance services be unavailable, or substantially delayed, the officer may convey the motorist/passengers to this department, to a public transportation location, or other place of safety, to await assistance or make arrangements for same. In the event the motorist and passengers are Clayton residents, or live within a short distance of the City's jurisdictional boundaries, the officer shall also have the option to convey the subjects to their residence. However, in those cases where civilians are transported by police vehicle, the officer shall provide communications with the destination of the conveyance, and the beginning and ending mileage on the police vehicle.

#### VI. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.

Should a motorist or occupant of a vehicle require emergency assistance, the responding officer shall request the dispatch of the proper emergency services units (e.g. fire, EMS, MODOT), and then provide immediate medical, fire fighting, or other assistance until such time as specialized units arrive at the scene. The officer will then render support to the paramedics, firefighters, etc. as necessary.

Actions taken by an officer in such situations should be of a temporary nature and remain within the constraints of their training. Consideration to personal safety shall also be a determining factor, especially when dealing with a vehicle fire.

Civilians with medical emergencies shall be transported by ambulance only.

Incidents involving emergency assistance to a motorist shall be documented in accordance to established procedure.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS  
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 61.4.1