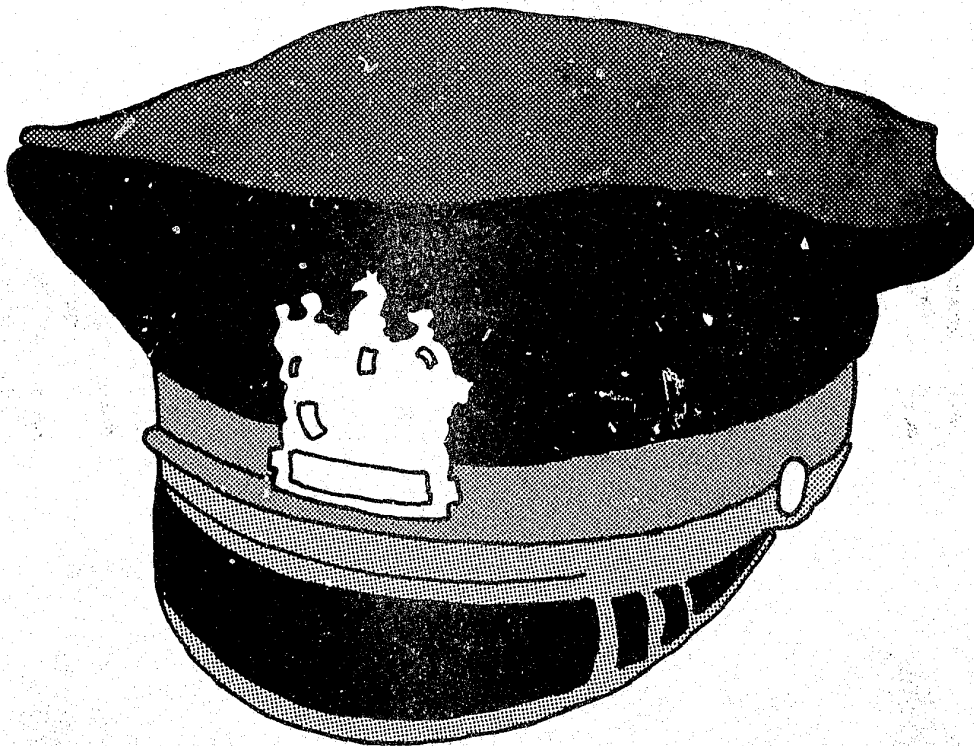


15

AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAFFIC DIRECTION & CONTROL IN THE POLICE FUNCTION



52076



Distributed by the
MARYLAND POLICE TRAINING COMMISSION
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Pikesville, Maryland 21208
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Maryland Police Training Commission would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following persons and organizations in their effort to develop training tools which are appropriate for the entrance-level student officer.

In the development of the materials, special recognition goes to:

Officer Bruce Elliott	Prince George's County Education & Trng. Division
Sgt. Larry Johnston	Baltimore Police Department-Traffic Division
Officer William Kehne	Baltimore County Police Department-Trng. Division
Agent Phillip Reid	Baltimore Police Department-Education & Trng. Center

The Police Training Commission would also like to recognize the Training and Education Center of Baltimore Police Department, the Education and Training Division of Prince George's County Police Department, and the Training Division of Baltimore County Police Department for their assistance in the administration and implementation of the pilot programs.

The Police Training Commission would also like to thank all of those individuals and their departments for participating in the pilot programs and for their contributions in the evaluation of the self-instructional units.

Below are the sites, dates and a listing of departments who participated in the pilot programs:

Baltimore City Police Academy - 9/29/75-11/21/75

Aberdeen Police Department
Baltimore County Sheriff's Office
Rowie State College
Brunswick Police Department
Cecil County Sheriff's Office
Coppin State College
Department of General Services
Harford County Sheriff's Office
Md. Center for Public Broadcasting
Mass Transit Administration
Military Department of Maryland
North East Police Department
University of Maryland-Baltimore County Campus

Salisbury, Maryland - 10/6/75-12/2/75

Cambridge Police Department
Centreville Police Department
Chestertown Police Department
Crisfield Police Department
Denton Police Department
Easton Police Department
Federalsburg Police Department
Fruitland Police Department
Hurlock Police Department
Kent County Sheriff's Office
Ocean City Police Department
Pocomoke City Police Department
Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office
Queenstown Police Department
Rock Hall Police Department
Salisbury Police Department
Salisbury State College
Talbot County Sheriff's Office
University of Baltimore

Prince Georges County - 10/14/75-12/15/75

Armed Forces Police
Bladensburg Police Department
Brentwood Police Department
Calvert County Sheriff's Office
Charles County Sheriff's Office
Cheverly Police Department
GSA-Office of Buildings and Grounds
Hyattsville Police Department
Md. National Capital Park Police
Mt. Rainier Police Department
Riverdale Police Department
St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
Takoma Park Police Department
University Park Police Department
Washington County Sheriff's Office

A special recognition should go to the Criminal Justice Resource Center of the Police and Correctional Training Commissions for the design on each of the self-instructional unit covers.

A special thanks goes to the University of Maryland University College, Conferences and Institutes Division for their administration of the project and to Dr. Peter Esseff and his staff at "Educational Systems for the Future" for their development of the self-instructional units.

This publication was prepared under a grant from the Division of Transportation Safety, Maryland Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, United States Department of Transportation under project number PT 75-471-4.

The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State of Maryland or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL
IN THE POLICE FUNCTION

ABSTRACT

This unit provides the student with some introductory information concerning the law enforcement role in relation to the traffic engineer and traffic flow. The unit includes a discussion of routine police functions in traffic direction and control as well as a discussion of traffic engineering.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Gain a basic understanding of what traffic direction and control (TDC) encompasses.

- Police responsibilities in conducting TDC
- The role of the patrolman and the traffic engineer in TDC.

TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL

Introduction

Definitions

Traffic direction and control (TDC) is the part of police traffic services that involves telling drivers and pedestrians how, where, and when they may or may not move or stand at a particular place, especially during periods of congestion or in emergencies; generally, all police activities necessary to insure a smooth and orderly flow of traffic. The key words are how and when and where traffic can move. The control of vehicular and pedestrian movement by police at a particular place such as, but not limited to, an intersection is known as point traffic control.

Routine Police Function

A routine police duty of practically all patrolmen is to conduct TDC. The utilization of traffic signs, signals, and roadway markings helps the motorist and pedestrian under "normal" traffic conditions. However, the patrolman is still required, when human judgment is necessary, to handle unusual traffic flow situations. Therefore, TDC is performed by the patrolman assigned to a beat, as well as the patrolman in the police car.

TDC Objectives

The primary objectives that a patrolman is expected to fulfill while conducting TDC are as follows:

- Expedite the safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Relieve congestion on roads and highways
- Secure compliance with traffic laws.

Situations Requiring TDC

There are many situations where patrolmen must apply TDC techniques and procedures. Some of these situations are as follows:

- "Rush hour" traffic, namely the daily time periods people require to go from home to work and return
- Peak hours of business at shopping and/or business areas, which could occur several times during the day as well as during evening hours
- Twice daily school traffic
- Special or unusual situations:
 - Accident scenes
 - Fires or disaster areas
 - Special events
 - Parade
 - Sport arena, race track.

• Hazardous scenes

- Construction areas
- Fallen trees
- Downed lamp post/power lines
- Improperly/illegally parked vehicles,

• Escort of special traffic

- Oversized loads
- Military convoys
- VIP vehicles
- Funerals
- Parades
- Dangerous or valuable cargo,

Responsibilities

Performance Requirements

The patrolman is responsible for expediting the safe and smooth flow of vehicular/pedestrian traffic when he is assigned to a station or when he detects a traffic problem. Specifically, he is required to:

- Regulate cross flow
 - North and South
 - East and West
- Control turning movements
- Detour traffic in emergencies
- Supervise signal obedience
 - When necessary, direct traffic to enhance traffic control
- Protect pedestrians
 - Prevent jaywalking
 - Other hazardous crossings
- Secure compliance with traffic laws
 - Prevent illegal parking
 - Enforce traffic laws
- Provide safe passage of emergency vehicles
 - When a conflict exists, priority should be given to the heavier vehicle
 - Fire truck
 - Ambulance
 - Police car

- Select routes for escorted traffic
- Give routing and traffic law information.

Remember: Tow trucks and related equipment are not considered emergency equipment in Maryland.

Point Traffic Control

The control of vehicular and pedestrian movement by police at a particular place is known as point traffic control. A patrolman must decide who uses the roadway, in what order, for how long, and under what conditions. The directional flow of traffic can be any of the following: both streets two-way, both streets one-way, one street two-way, or between intersections. Although point traffic control is usually performed at intersections, it can also be performed on any type of roadway, which includes limited access highways.

Method of Control

The methods a patrolman uses to direct traffic are fundamentally the same. It is the conditions that vary. A patrolman manually directs traffic by means of a standard set of signals and gestures. The patrolman can also supplement traffic control devices in situations where they are inadequate by manually controlling the device or supplementing traffic signals and/or signs by using signals and gestures. A detailed discussion of signals and gestures and their application is contained in unit XVII, pages XVII - 4 through XVII - 13. For further reference, see Article 66 1/2, Section 11-103 and 11-201 of the Motor Vehicle Laws of Maryland.

Traffic Engineering

Definition of Traffic Engineering (TE)

The Institute of Traffic Engineers defines TE as "that phase of engineering which deals with the planning and geometric design of streets, highways, and abutting lands, and with traffic operation thereon, as their use is related to the safe, convenient, and economic transportation of persons and goods."

Some of the tasks for which the traffic engineer is responsible are:

- Conduct roadway surveys to determine the volume, speed, and destination of traffic
- Roadway design and layout; installation of traffic signals, signs, and pavement markings (traffic control devices)
- Parking regulation
- Establishment of traffic flow patterns, i.e., one-way streets, etc.
- Setting of speed limits for new roads and highways.

The traffic engineering field is relatively new. The title of "traffic engineer" was first officially recognized in 1921 in the State of Ohio. Today, many small cities and towns still do not have a traffic engineer. Cities in the population category of 50,000 or smaller tend to rely on the police to fulfill the traffic engineering function. Usually one officer is delegated the responsibility and his cost is part of the police budget.

The Individual Officer's Role in TE

Each police officer can help the traffic engineer to reduce traffic accidents and expedite the safe movement of traffic, since officers are in the best position to detect trafficway inadequacies. Typical examples of inadequacies and improvements which the patrolman can report are:

- A traffic control device which is obscured, damaged, or missing
- The need for a no parking zone near an intersection to facilitate traffic flow
- A street which needs new lane markings to facilitate traffic flow and prevent accidents
- A malfunctioning or inoperative traffic light
- Need to increase or decrease the intervals of a traffic light to aid in clearing a problematic intersection.

All the suggestions might not be implemented. However, the patrolman should be alert to suggest improvements. The traffic engineer will determine the final action that will be taken based on factual justifications.

Remember that TDC is a duty of every police officer. It is not a secondary function to regular crime prevention patrol.

Remember also that public relations are closely related to good TDC.

Directions: Circle the letter of the one item which best completes the following statements.

1. The patrolman is expected to conduct TDC:
 - a. in unusual traffic flow situations
 - b. when automatic signals are not operating properly
 - c. to relieve congestion on roads and highways
 - d. all of the above.

2. Point traffic control is usually performed at:
 - a. certain types of roadways
 - b. limited access highways
 - c. intersections
 - d. all of the above.

3. Traffic engineering includes:
 - a. roadway design
 - b. roadway construction
 - c. traffic control
 - d. all of the above.

4. A patrolman can help the traffic engineer to reduce traffic by reporting for his beat:
 - a. the number of accidents occurring each month
 - b. the approximate number and type of vehicles using the roadways
 - c. the need for a no parking zone near an intersection
 - d. all of the above.

Turn to the next page to check your answers.

KEY

1. d. all of the above.
(See pages XV - 2 and XV - 3.)
2. c. intersections.
(See page XV - 4.)
3. a. roadway design.
(See page XV - 7.)
4. c. the need for a no parking zone near an intersection.
(See page XV - 8.)