

	Policy & Procedures				No. 5.04	
	Subject: Traffic Assistance					
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					References:	
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STANDARDS

41.2.4 61.4.1 61.4.2

I. Policy

It will be the policy of this department that officers will render assistance to roadway users that will ultimately ensure their safety and the safety of others. Officers will provide reasonable assistance to the public, including checking disabled vehicles, assisting stranded motorists, providing information and directions, and identifying and correcting roadway hazards.

II. Procedure

A) General Assistance 61.4.1 A

Officers shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a professional manner and cordially provide information and services to the best of their ability. Officers should provide general assistance to the motoring public at any time, to include:

- Giving directions and information if needed
- Summoning a tow truck for disabled vehicles
- Offering appropriate first aid and summoning an ambulance for medical emergencies

B) Mechanical Assistance and Towing 61.4.1 B, 61.4.2

Whenever a disabled motor vehicle is observed, officers shall stop and check on the wellbeing of the operator and offer any services unless a call or assignment prohibits them from doing so. Whenever possible, an officer shall stand by with emergency lights on to assist with traffic control and to ensure the vehicle is removed without incident.

Officers are prohibited from using an agency vehicle to physically push or remove a vehicle on the roadway unless in an extreme situation. **61.4.1 D**

If the officer is required to direct traffic around a disabled vehicle, a reflective vest should be used. Officers should take precautions to insure the safety of the occupants and ensure they remain off the roadway.

A disabled vehicle will be towed from the roadway if it poses a traffic hazard or danger to the public. The towing company under contract with the department shall be utilized. If more than one towing company is being used, officers must be aware of this when calling for a tow (which company is towing on that day). If the vehicle is not a hazard and the operator has arranged for another tow company to respond, this will be acceptable unless their response is too excessive. **61.4.2**

Officers are not required to push vehicles, change tires or make mechanical repairs, but will give transportation to the police station or another location within reason to allow the occupant(s) to call for assistance. The Canton PD does not provide fuel or tools to unlock doors. Officers will assist in making phone calls to the appropriate agency such as the on-call tow company to see if further assistance can be rendered.

Occupants will be allowed to remain in a police vehicle or at the station for safety and comfort while awaiting help. If a disabled motor vehicle must be towed from a roadway, officers will follow the guidelines of Towing and Abandoned Vehicles Policy.

C) Protection and Assistance to Stranded Persons 61.4.1 C

Stranded motorists should not be abandoned when exposed to hazardous situations. Consideration should be given to traffic hazards, weather conditions, time of day, and the necessity of the officer to respond to other calls.

Officers may provide transportation to a local residence or business, to the police station where arrangements can be made for transportation or lodging, or to the garage where the vehicle was towed. Male officers will call in starting and ending mileage when transporting a female passenger(s).

D) Emergency Assistance 61.4.1 E

Officers shall provide appropriate emergency assistance to motorists.

In the case of a medical emergency, officers shall notify the dispatching officer that an ambulance is needed and provide first aid until the ambulance arrives. We do not provide medical transportation.

For a vehicle fire, the Canton Fire Department will be notified. The officer will assist in removing occupants from the vehicle, keep bystanders away, use a fire extinguisher if appropriate, and divert traffic away from the vehicle.

E) Hazardous Roadway Conditions 61.4.2

Upon discovery of a hazardous roadway condition, officers shall notify a dispatcher of the situation and the type of assistance that will be needed. The officer will protect bystanders, direct traffic, and take any action necessary to correct the situation.

If necessary, the officer should stand by to protect the area until the hazard is removed or corrected, or until relieved. In cases which would consume an extended amount of time, the Shift Supervisor may arrange for a detail officer.

F) Notifications 41.2.4 (1,2), 61.4.2

First Responding Units identifying any hazard on any roadway in Canton shall notify dispatch right away. Dispatch will ensure the appropriate agency shall be notified.

The following are some examples:

- Downed electric wires notify CFD
- Tree across the roadway notify the DPW or on-call tree removal agent if after-hours.
- Roadway flooding, notify the DPW/Water Department or the on-call Water Department agent if after-hours.
- Debris in the road notify the DPW/Highway Department
- Malfunctioning traffic signal notify Bell Atlantic
- Missing stop sign, notify the DPW/Highway Department
- Large Pothole, notify DPW/Highway Department
- Damage to a light pole, notify DPW if it is Town property or NSTAR Electric if it is a service pole.

Whenever conditions necessitate that a roadway be closed or a detour established, officers will utilize cones, detour signs, or barriers to inform the public. Dispatching officers shall notify the following of the road closure:

- A Supervisor
- Canton Fire Department
- The Principal from each school that may be impacted by the closure

The Canton Fire Department will be notified for:

- Spills involving gasoline, motor oil, or antifreeze
- Hazardous material spill

G) Hazardous Materials 61.4.1 E, 61.4.2

Officers will be extremely cautious when a situation is discovered which may involve hazardous materials. If any kind of hazardous material is spilled or dumped on a roadway, officers will immediately make provisions for shutting off traffic flow into and out of the area. If safe to do so, officers will attempt to identify the materials involved by obtaining information from the container placards and giving this information to the dispatching officer.

The immediate area around the scene must be secured and bystanders must be kept far enough away so that removal operations will not be impeded and the potential danger from the materials will be minimized. Officers will maintain an outer perimeter and direct traffic away from the scene. If the material is toxic, flammable or explosive, arrangements may have to be made for evacuations of buildings. This determination will be made by the Commanding Officer from the Canton Fire Department.