



Chapter 10

Traffic Incidents

A comprehensive guide to traffic enforcement, legal procedures, and incident resolution for law enforcement officers





Chapter Overview

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Unit 1: Traffic Basics

Traffic law, legal terms, Florida driver's licenses, registration, insurance requirements, and uniform traffic citations

2

Unit 2: Resolving Traffic Incidents

Parking violations, abandoned vehicles, vehicle searches and inventory, and traffic direction procedures

Unit 1: Traffic Basics

Traffic Law and Legal Terms

Lesson 1 provides the foundation for understanding traffic enforcement through essential definitions and common violations





The Primary Goal of Traffic Enforcement

The primary goal of traffic enforcement is to encourage drivers to comply with all traffic laws and to drive safely. Traffic enforcement includes all aspects of law enforcement related to vehicles, roadways, and pedestrians.

Directing Traffic

Managing traffic flow and ensuring safe passage

Issuing Citations

Documenting violations and enforcing compliance

Vehicle Management

Handling unattended, abandoned, or disabled vehicles



Traffic Enforcement: More Than Citations



Traffic enforcement will likely make up a large portion of your interaction with the public, and it involves more than writing citations for speeding or equipment violations. It covers all aspects of law enforcement related to vehicles, roadways, and pedestrians, including traffic stops. Because driving is such a primary means of transportation, it constitutes a major aspect of public safety and serves as a key point of contact between law enforcement and the public.

Through effective traffic enforcement and engagement with drivers, you can prevent or solve crimes and identify critical situations that impact public safety.



What Traffic Enforcement Can Reveal, Prevent or Detect

Criminal Activity

- Car theft and carjacking
- People with outstanding warrants and escaped prisoners
- Illegal weapons
- Drug use or trafficking
- Criminals fleeing crime scenes
- Human trafficking
- Terrorist activity

Safety & Compliance Issues

- Drivers with suspended licenses
- Abused, kidnapped, and runaway children
- Minors in possession of alcohol
- Impaired drivers under the influence
- Uninsured motorists



Essential Traffic Legal Terms

To enforce traffic laws effectively, you need to know legal terms as they are defined in the Florida Statutes. Understanding these definitions is critical for proper enforcement and documentation.

Driver

A person who is in physical control of a vehicle or is controlling or steering a vehicle in tow

Pedestrian

A person on foot on a road, berm, shoulder, or sidewalk

Vehicle

Every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except personal delivery devices, mobile carriers, and devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks



Vehicle Definitions

Examples of vehicles that you can pull over include a bicycle, an electric scooter, or a riding lawn mower.



Motor Vehicle

An automobile, motorcycle, truck, trailer, semitrailer, truck tractor and semitrailer combination, or any other vehicle operated on the roads, used to transport persons or property, and propelled by power other than muscular power



Recreational Vehicle

A vehicle designed as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use, that is self-motorized or mounted on or pulled by another motor vehicle



Autonomous Vehicle

Equipped with technology that senses the environment and allows the vehicle to move on the road without a person actively controlling or monitoring, such as a driverless, self-driving, or robotic car

- Important:** A motor vehicle does NOT include a traction engine, road roller, personal delivery device, special mobile equipment, vehicle that runs only on a track, bicycle, swamp buggy, moped, or motorized scooter



Roadway Definitions

Roadway (Road)

A portion of a highway used for vehicular travel that does not include the berm, shoulder, or sidewalk

Street or Highway

The entire width between the boundary lines of a public space for vehicular traffic, or privately owned space for vehicular traffic by the owner or those given permission by the owner

Laned Highway

A road divided into two or more clearly marked lanes for vehicular traffic

Limited Access Facility

A road adjacent to private property to which the property owners have no right or easement to; however, the owners may have access to the light, air, or view over the property



Additional Roadway Terms

Private Road or Driveway

A privately owned space that owners and people who have permission from the owners use for vehicular traffic

State Road

A highway the Department of Transportation designates as a state-maintained road

Bicycle Path

Any road or path open to bicycle travel. An open space or a barrier separates a bicycle path from motorized vehicular traffic and is often located either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way

Sidewalk

The area that pedestrians use between the curb, or lateral line of a roadway and the adjacent property lines

Crosswalk

An area of a road within an intersection, distinctly marked on the surface to indicate a pedestrian crossing. The marks connect the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway from the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the road



Understanding Intersections

An **intersection** has two legal definitions under Florida law:



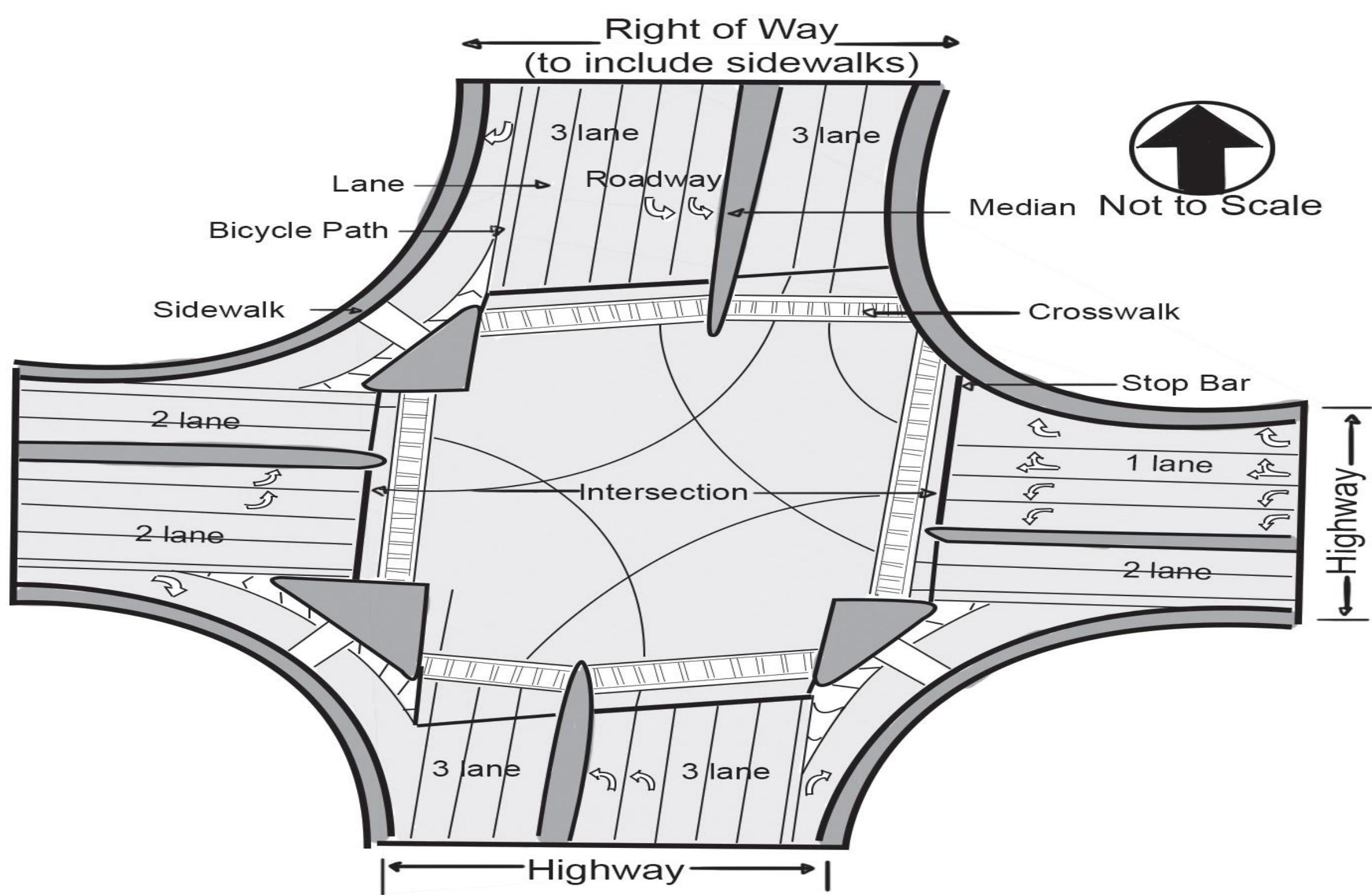
The area within the connection of the lateral curbs or boundary lines of two or more roadways of two highways joined at approximately right angles or any other angle that may connect the two roads



Where a highway includes two roadways 30 feet or more apart, every crossing of each roadway of the divided highway by an intersecting highway is a separate intersection



Understanding Intersections





Traffic Statutes: Criminal vs. Civil

Some traffic violations may result in criminal charges; others are civil infractions and non-criminal in nature, including moving and non-moving violations. Some infractions may require a mandatory court appearance.

Civil Traffic Infractions

Many civil traffic infractions in chapters 316, 320, and 322, F.S., are punishable by fines, court costs, driving school, or community service hours. A driver with a civil traffic infraction does not face incarceration; they have no right to a trial by jury or court-appointed lawyer. The driver may elect a hearing before a judge or hearing officer.

Chapter 318, F.S.

Refer to chapter 318, F.S., for ways to deal with a traffic infraction, including appeals, fees, and limitations

- ❑ **Chapter 316, F.S.** provides regulations regarding bicyclist and pedestrian activities you should watch for to maintain roadway safety. For example, bicyclists should use lights at night and pedestrians should cross a roadway at a marked crosswalk.



A Florida driver's license and a vehicle registration form are shown. The license is pink with the text 'FLORIDA LICENSE' and the state seal. The registration form is blue with the text 'Driver & Vehicle Licensing' and 'FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'.

Lesson 2: The Florida Driver's License, Registration, and Insurance

Driver & Vehicle Licensing

Understanding the different formats of driver and vehicle licensing, proof of insurance requirements, and common licensing violations in Florida



Think About This

You stop a vehicle at 11 p.m., and the driver hands you their license. You see that the driver is 16. What do you do?

Understanding license restrictions and requirements is essential for proper enforcement. A 16-year-old driver may have time-of-day restrictions that limit when they can legally operate a vehicle.



The Florida Driver's License

The **Florida driver's license** is issued to Florida residents who have passed the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) tests, allowing them to legally drive in Florida. DHSMV is the agency responsible for issuing driver's licenses, motor vehicle titles, license plates, and vessel registrations.



Florida ID Card

A Florida ID card is not a driver's license but a form of identification. Because it resembles a driver's license, be careful not to confuse it for one. An individual cannot have both a valid driver's license and a valid Florida ID card or more than one driver's license.



License Requirements

All drivers in Florida must have a valid driver's license from Florida, another state, or an entity approved by the state of Florida or the U.S. government. Drivers **must** show their driver's license when asked by a law enforcement officer.



Verifying Driver's License

If you stop a vehicle and the driver is unable to produce a valid driver's license, request another form of photo or military ID, or conduct a database query. If the driver is licensed but does not have the license with them, determine whether to issue a citation for failure to carry and exhibit the license upon demand and collect a fingerprint where it is required on the citation.

- Critical:** A person may not legally operate a motor vehicle if they do not have a valid driver's license.

Suspended License

Without Knowledge

Moving violation if the driver does not know their license is no longer valid

Suspension *With Knowledge*

Misdemeanor if the driver *operates a motor vehicle* knowing that their license is suspended

Habitual Offender

Felony if a person habitually drives with a suspended license

License Validity and Foreign Visitors

Florida law does not allow anyone to drive with a suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified license. A driver's license also cannot be faded, altered, mutilated, or defaced. If you confiscate the driver's license due to suspension, mutilation, revocation, or altered data, dispose of it according to your agency policies and procedures.

Foreign visitors are not required to obtain an international driving permit. However, they must be in the country legally and carry a valid driver's license from their country of origin while operating a motor vehicle.





Florida Driver's License Types and Classes

There are different formats of driver's licenses that depend on the date the license was issued. You need to know the basic features of all formats, as you will encounter all in routine patrol and traffic enforcement.

Three Types of Licenses

Commercial, Non-commercial, and Learner's

Four Classes

Classes A, B, C, and E indicate what type of vehicle a driver can operate legally and the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) they are allowed to drive



License Format by Age and Type

Horizontal Format

Licenses issued to drivers **21 and older** have a horizontal format

Vertical Format

Licenses issued to drivers **younger than 21** have a vertical format

Florida's driver's licenses have several security features that can only be seen under a black light.

Color Headers Identify License Type

- **Blue:** Commercial Driver License (CDL)—Classes A, B, and C
- **Green:** Driver License—Class E
- **Orange:** Learner's License—Class E
- **Red:** DHSMV-issued identification card



Post-2017 License Format

The currently issued Florida driver's license has three headshots on the front, one of which is transparent. It also has a light blue Florida seal. On the back is another headshot and an image of the state of Florida that rests against ocean waves.



Safe Driver Label

For qualified drivers, a red safe driver label appears near the front center of the card, above the issue date



Tactile Features

A tactile feature appears on the bottom right side of the card, with designations located above the smaller headshot. For learner's licenses, tactile features appear on the bottom left side



Barcodes

The reverse side displays 1D and 2D barcodes for scanning and verification



Pre-2017 License Format

Florida driver's licenses issued before 2017 have a very different format. Card types and license classes are identified by the following color headers:

Yellow Header

Learner License—Class E

Green Header

Driver License—Classes D and E

Blue Header

Commercial Driver License (CDL)—Classes A, B, and C

Pink/Red Header

Florida identification cards issued before 2017

- ❑ An officer will need to closely inspect older formats to obtain required information, including the expiration date.



Endorsements, Restrictions, and Designations



Endorsement

A special authorization printed on a Florida driver's license permitting a driver to operate certain types of vehicles or transport certain types of property or number of passengers. Examples include operation of motorcycles, school buses, or combination vehicles with double or triple trailers.



Restriction

Printed on a Florida driver's license, may limit a driver from operating certain types of motor vehicles or require that they meet certain conditions when driving. For example, someone who needs corrective lenses may be restricted from driving without them.



Designation

Informs you of a person's health condition or public safety status. For example, a license for a person with diabetes may display "insulin dependent" in red print. Designations are called informational alerts before 2017.



Post-2017 Endorsements and Designations

Beginning in 2017, motorcycle-also and motorcycle-only endorsements are designated by an "A" or "O" in the endorsement field on the front of the card and by "A-MTRCL Also" or "O-MTRCL Only" on the back of the card. Motorcycle endorsements are not spelled out on the front of the license.

More information is available in the Driver and Vehicle Information Database (DAVID) for drivers who are deaf or hard of hearing, so that officers have the ability to see this information while running the driver's license.

Sexual Predator

Appears on the front of the license in the bottom right corner for individuals registered in the Florida Sexual Offender and Predator System

Sexual Offender

Designated as "943.0435, F.S." on the front of the license in the bottom right corner



Lifetime Designations and Symbols

Lifetime designations appear on the back of the license under the headshot and are represented by various symbols:

Endorsement, Restriction, or Designation	Symbol
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	
Developmentally Disabled	
FWC Lifetime Boater	
FWC Lifetime Freshwater	
FWC Lifetime Hunting	
FWC Lifetime Saltwater	
FWC Lifetime Sportsman's	
Insulin Dependent	
Organ Donor	
Veteran	



Special Designations: D and V

“D” Designation

Upon request by a person who has a developmental disability, or by the parent or guardian of a child or ward who has a developmental disability, DHSMV will issue a driver's license or an identification card with a D.

“V” Designation

Any honorably discharged U.S. military veteran may have a veteran designation placed on their driver's license or ID card.

These designations appear on the bottom right of a Florida driver's license or ID card.



Pre-2017 Endorsements and Restrictions

Before 2017, required endorsements and restrictions appear on the front of a driver's license. Explanations of the endorsements and restrictions are on the back.

Motorcycle Authorization

For drivers authorized to operate a motorcycle, "Motorcycle Also" or "Motorcycle Only" appear on the front under the expiration date.

Sex Offender Alerts

A sexual predator alert is indicated as "s. 775.21 F.S." or a sexual offender alert as "s. 943.0435 F.S." in the right corner in black.



Classes of Florida Driver's Licenses

Beginning in 2017, the license class type is located at the top right of the license, either near or below the Department of Homeland Security Real ID-compliant gold star emblem. Real ID-compliance means that Florida meets the federally established security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards.

Class A

Required for drivers of trucks or truck combinations with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more, provided the towed vehicle is more than 10,000 pounds

Class B

Required for drivers of straight trucks (all axles attached to a single frame) with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more

Class C

Required for drivers of vehicles transporting placard-able amounts of hazardous materials, or for drivers of vehicles designed to transport more than 15 people (including the driver) with a GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds



Class E and Learner's Licenses

Class E

Required for drivers of any noncommercial motor vehicle with a GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds. This includes passenger cars, 15-passenger (including the driver) vans, trucks or recreational vehicles, and two- or three-wheel motor vehicles 50 cc (cubic centimeters) or less, such as mopeds or small scooters. Farmers and drivers of authorized emergency vehicles are exempt from obtaining a commercial driver's license, but they must obtain a Class E license.

Class E Learner

Required for drivers with a learner's license and limited to driving motor vehicles weighing less than 8,000 pounds. The driver must be accompanied by a person 21 or older who holds a valid driver's license and who occupies the closest seat to the right of the driver. The learner may initially drive only between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Three months after receiving the learner's license, they may drive between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. A driver with a learner's license may not operate a motorcycle without a motorcycle endorsement.



Commercial Driver License (CDL) Exemptions

There are six exemptions to the requirement to hold a commercial driver's license:

1 Emergency Vehicles

Drivers of authorized emergency vehicles that are equipped with extraordinary audible warning devices (lights and sirens) that display red or blue lights and are on call to respond to emergencies

2 Military Personnel

Military personnel driving military vehicles

3 Farmers

Farmers transporting farm supplies or farm machinery, or transporting agricultural products to or from the first place of storage or processing or directly to or from market, within 150 miles of their farm

4 Recreational Vehicles

Drivers of recreational vehicles used for recreational purposes

5 Personal Property Transport

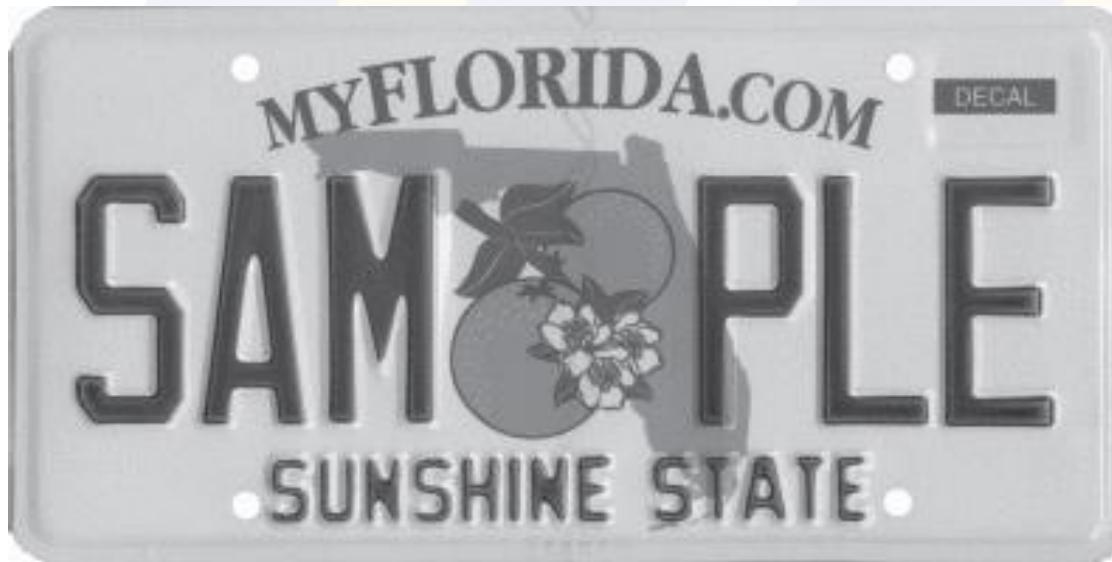
Drivers who operate straight trucks (single units) that are exclusively transporting their own tangible personal property which is not for sale

6 Transit System Employees

An employee of a publicly owned transit system who is limited to moving vehicles for maintenance or parking purposes exclusively within the restricted-access confines of a transit system's property



Vehicle License Plates



Florida's DHSMV issues standard and specialized license plates. While the majority of specialized plates are "vanity" plates displaying the owner's nickname or commemorating a college, sports team, or cause, some have specific uses and restrictions.

Commercial/Government Use

Some plates are limited to commercial or government vehicles

Status-Based Plates

Others are based on the owner's status, such as a state legislator

Special Prefix Requirements

Some specialized plates must have additional prefix characters or descriptions not preprinted on the plate. Examples include various Florida universities, breast cancer awareness, antique vehicle, and Purple Heart plates



Vehicle Registration Requirements

Any vehicle in the state of Florida must have a valid registration to operate on Florida roads. Vehicles with out-of-state registrations are required by law to be registered within 10 days of the owner either becoming employed, placing children in public school, or establishing residency.

- ❑ **Exemption:** People who live in another state and commute to work in Florida are exempt from this licensure and tag requirement. However, their license and tag registration must be current in their state of residency.

Renewal Periods

Registrations are renewed semiannually, annually, or biannually

Expiration Dates

Registrations expire at midnight on the registered owner's birthday, except vehicles weighing more than 5,000 pounds GVW expire on December 31



Validation Decal and Registration Card

A vehicle registration comes with a validation decal and registration card. Understanding these components is essential for proper verification during traffic stops.

Validation Decal

The validation decal will have its own identification number, along with the month and year when the registration will expire. This will be displayed on the top right corner of the registered vehicle's license plate.

Registration Card

The registration card contains important data unique to the registered vehicle and its owner. Appearing on the card are the decal number with the expiration date, and important vehicle information such as the plate number, vehicle description, and vehicle identification number (VIN) with the owner's name and address.

- Critical:** Information from the license plate and vehicle registration must match.



Sample Registration Card

FLORIDA VEHICLE REGISTRATION		TEST DOCUMENT	CO/VAGY	68 / 97	T#	528951120			
PLATE	YZZ10D	DECAL	00001061	Expires	Midnight Tue	12/29/2025			
YR/MK	2016/HOND	BODY	4D	COLOR	BLU	Reg. Tax	71.20	Class Code	1
VIN	01234012340123401			TITLE		Init. Reg.		Tax Months	24
Plate Type	RGS	NET WT	2500			County Fee	6.00	Back Tax Mos.	0
DL/FEID	S514797514691					Mail Fee		Credit Class	
Date Issued	11/30/2024	Place Issued	6/17/2016			Sales Tax		Credit Months	
						Voluntary Fees			
						Grand Total	77.20		
IMPORTANT INFORMATION									
<p>1. The Florida license plate must remain with the registrant upon sale of vehicle.</p> <p>2. The registration must be delivered to a Tax Collector or Tag Agent for transfer to a replacement vehicle.</p> <p>3. Your registration must be updated to your new address within 30 days of moving.</p> <p>4. Registration renewals are the responsibility of the registrant and shall occur during the 30-day period prior to the expiration date shown on this registration. Renewal notices are provided as a courtesy and are not required for renewal purposes.</p> <p>5. I understand that my driver license and registrations will be suspended immediately if the insurer denies the insurance information submitted for this registration.</p>									

The registration card displays critical information including the decal number, expiration date, plate number, vehicle description, VIN, and owner information. The number on the registration must match the plate number on the vehicle.



Proof of Insurance

Every owner of a motor vehicle in the state of Florida must register the vehicle and must maintain property damage liability insurance. When a driver fails to show valid and current proof of insurance in paper or electronic form, it is a non-moving violation.

1

2

Electronic Proof

If a driver presents you with an electronic form, only view the document and nothing else on the device

Verification

The only way to verify the current validity of the insurance information is for the operator to provide a current hard copy or digital copy of their insurance card

- DHSMV may suspend a license or put a seize tag order on a registration for an owner who does not maintain liability insurance.

Common Driver and Vehicle Licensing Violations

While on patrol, you will encounter several types of driver and vehicle licensing violations. The most common violations will involve the improper or unlawful use of vehicle registrations or driver's licenses.





Statutes Commonly Violated:

Statute	Description	Violation
s. 320.0605, F.S.	Certificate of registration; possession required	Failure to display registration
s. 320.07, F.S.	Expiration of registration	Operating a motor vehicle/using a mobile home with an expired registration
s. 320.131, F.S.	Temporary tags	Unlawful use of temporary tag
s. 322.03, F.S.	Drivers must be licensed; penalties	No driver license



Statutes Commonly Violated (Cont'd.)

Statute	Description	Violation
s. 322.15, F.S.	License to be carried and exhibited on demand; fingerprint to be imprinted upon a citation	Driver license not carried/exhibited on demand
s. 322.16, F.S.	License restrictions	Violation of restriction
s. 322.32, F.S.	Unlawful use of license	Possession/display/permitting use of suspended/revoked/canceled/disqualified driver license
s. 322.34, F.S.	Driving while license suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified	Operating vehicle while driver license suspended/revoked/canceled/disqualified

Traffic Basics: Citation Procedures

A comprehensive guide to uniform traffic citations, parking violations, vehicle procedures, and traffic direction for law enforcement officers.





Unit 1: Traffic Basics - Lesson 3

The Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC)

1

Understanding the UTC

The uniform traffic citation (UTC) is used for traffic offenses described in chapters 316, 318, 320, and 322, F.S. It is the only report needed for a traffic offense unless it involves a crash scene, which also requires a traffic crash report.

2

When to Issue

Use the UTC when violations result from aggressive careless driving, failure to stop at traffic signals, or certain nontraffic felonies and misdemeanors that can result in license suspension or revocation.

3

Format Options

Many agencies use the electronic version while others use the paper book format. Both forms are completed the same way and serve the same legal purpose.



Electronic UTC Procedures

When completing an electronic citation, electronically submit the citation to the clerk of the court's office. You may need to print a copy for your agency before electronic submission. Give the driver a copy of the UTC - they may request email delivery or a printed copy.

Follow your agency policies and procedures regarding electronic citations to ensure proper documentation and legal compliance.



Submit Electronically

Send to clerk of court



Print Agency Copy

Before submission

Provide Driver Copy

Email or printed



Paper UTC Accountability



Your agency will assign UTC books with preprinted numbers. It is your responsibility to account for each UTC in this book. If a UTC is lost or destroyed before you give it to the driver, document the circumstances in the UTC book.

- Critical:** It is official misconduct to dispose of a UTC in any manner other than as required by s. 316.650, F.S. DHSMV tracks all UTC numbers to ensure integrity in issuing citations.

Each law enforcement agency must keep records of and account for all citations supplied to them. There is a receipt on the front of the UTC book that you must sign to acknowledge receipt.



UTC Book Inspection Process

1

Sign Receipt

Acknowledge receipt of the UTC book on the front receipt form

2

Check Sequence

Verify citations are in correct numeric sequence

3

Count Citations

Ensure book contains 25 three-part citations

4

Verify Numbers

Confirm numbers on book match citations and receipt

DHSMV maintains an inventory of each UTC book distributed to a specific agency. Agencies cannot transfer UTC books to other agencies. If you leave employment with an agency, turn your UTC books over to your immediate supervisor. DHSMV periodically conducts audits of UTC books.



Completing a Paper UTC

The instructions for completing the uniform traffic citation are in the *Uniform Traffic Citations Manual* available on the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle website. Review the description and procedures sections of the manual.

1 Prepare the Form

Make sure that the hard divider separates the set (three copies of the citation) from the other sets in the book.

2 Use Proper Writing Tool

Use a pen with a hard tip, such as a black ballpoint pen, when printing to make sure that the information is legible on all three copies.

3 Fill Data Fields

Clearly fill in each data field or "X" the appropriate box based on the requested information at the top of each category.

4 Complete Applicable Sections

Complete all applicable sections and leave blank any that are not applicable.



Common UTC Errors to Avoid

Sometimes DHSMV returns a UTC to the issuing agency for correction or clarification. Avoid these common errors:

Illegible Handwriting

Write clearly and legibly using proper printing technique with a hard-tipped pen

Missing Statute Information

Failure to list a statute and subsection number that correspond to the violation

Incomplete Violation Entry

Failure to either check or write in a violation description

Incorrect Date of Birth

Incorrect entry of the driver's date of birth information



Three Parts of a Paper UTC

The paper UTC form HSMV 75901 contains three copies: one for the court, the driver, and for the officer's records.

Part One (White)

Complaint—Retained by Court

This part serves as a sufficient complaint for both civil and criminal cases. Judges and clerks use the reverse side to document court actions. Submit to clerk of court within five days after issuing the citation.

Part Two (Yellow)

Summons—Driver's Copy

The driver receives part two. The reverse side notifies people charged with traffic infractions that do not require a court appearance of their options when answering the offense charged.

Part Three (Pink)

Officer's Copy

Either you or your agency keeps part three to maintain accountability and a record of the court's action. You may want to keep a copy for your field notes in case you have to testify in court.

Explaining the Violation to the Driver

It is important that you understand Florida traffic laws well enough to explain the offense to someone unfamiliar with them because it is your responsibility to make sure that the driver understands the violation.

State the specifics of the violation slowly and clearly, making sure that the driver understands the verbal warning, the written warning, or the citation. Point to the section on the citation where you checked the violation and wrote specific information about the incident.



Driver's Options for Responding to a UTC

Explain to the driver their options for responding to the citation, as indicated in detail on the back of the driver's (yellow) copy, part two.



Moving Violations

May include paying a civil penalty or requesting a hearing in traffic court. Some moving violations require a court appearance, and others allow attendance and completion of a driver improvement course, if eligible.



Non-Moving Violations

Include paying a civil penalty or choosing a hearing in traffic court.



Criminal Violations

Require a court appearance on a scheduled date.



Special Citation Response Options

If charged with operating a motor vehicle that is in an unsafe condition or is not properly equipped, a driver may choose to provide certified proof of correction of the condition or equipment problem.

If charged with failure to display a valid driver's license, registration, or proof of insurance, or with a vehicle safety violation, the driver may choose to enter a plea of *nolo contendere* (no contest).

→ Safety of Vehicle Inspection
Section 316.610, F.S.

→ Failure to Display Valid Driver License
Section 322.15, F.S.

→ Failure to Possess Valid Registration
Section 320.0605, F.S.

→ Failure to Maintain Proof of Insurance
Section 316.646, F.S.

The driver must provide proof of compliance to the clerk of court within 30 days and pay a fine and court costs if charged with any of these violations.

Obtaining the Driver's Signature

Most citations no longer require the driver's signature, but if the driver has committed a violation that requires a hearing, ask the driver to sign the UTC, and explain that signing is not an admission of guilt.

These violations are serious in nature and include the following:





Violations Requiring Driver Signature

Fatal Crash Infractions

Any infraction that results in a crash that causes the death of another person (s. 316.027, F.S.)

Serious Injury Crashes

Any violation that results in a crash that causes serious bodily injury of another person (s. 316.1933, F.S.)

School Bus Violations

Any violation of passing a school bus, on the side where children enter or exit, while the bus is displaying a stop signal (s. 316.172, F.S.)

Dropping Loads

Any violation of dropping loads from vehicles (s. 316.520, F.S.)



Additional Signature-Required Violations

Excessive Speeding

Any violation of exceeding the speed limit by 30 mph or more (s. 316.183, s. 316.187, or s. 316.189, F.S.)

Suspended License

Any violation of driving with a suspended license (s. 322.34, F.S.)

Leaving Accident Scene

Any violation of leaving the scene of an accident (s. 316.061, F.S.)



Electronic Citation Signature Procedures

If the violation is criminal and you are issuing an electronic citation to the driver, print a copy and instruct the driver to sign it before submitting it to DHSMV. Add any relevant notes to the electronic ticket that can be referred to should the driver later contest the citation in court.

When you issue the citation, certify by signature that you delivered the citation to the driver cited. The signature may be electronic, electronic facsimile, or written. Check the block that certifies that the driver received a copy of the violation. This certification is evidence that you served the driver with the citation.

- ❑ **Important:** Refusal to accept and sign a UTC requiring a court appearance is a criminal violation under s. 318.14, F.S., that may result in arrest.

Handling Refusal to Sign

If a driver refuses to sign the citation, use effective communication and de-escalation skills to gain compliance. Stress that signing the UTC is not an admission of guilt or a waiver of rights. Explain that refusal to accept and sign the citation might result in arrest.

If the driver still refuses to sign, place them under arrest, and issue them another UTC for refusal to sign a citation.





Unit 2: Resolving Traffic Incidents

Lesson 1 - Parking Violations

While on patrol, you may be assigned to enforce various parking violations, such as parking illegally in a handicapped parking space, blocking a fire lane, or blocking a sidewalk. Enforce parking laws and ordinances by issuing a UTC for a violation of the Florida Statutes and a county or municipal citation for a violation of local ordinances.



Types of Parking Citations



Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC)

Use for violations of Florida Statutes. Complete and attach the citation to the vehicle in violation in a safe, conspicuous place (usually under the windshield wiper).



Municipal Parking Citation

If your agency uses a municipal parking citation to enforce the Florida Statutes on stopping, standing, or parking, complete and attach the citation to the vehicle in violation.



County Ordinance Citation

Use for violations of local county ordinances. Follow your agency's specific procedures for completing and attaching these citations.



Disabled Parking Enforcement



Anyone who parks in a designated disabled parking space must have the proper permit. A permit may be displayed by either a placard or on a specialty license plate.

Drivers who do not have permits and park in a designated disabled person's parking space commit a non-moving traffic violation.

The Florida disabled permit will have the Florida driver's license or ID card number of the authorized user. Anyone who unlawfully uses a disabled person's parking permit commits a criminal violation.



Unit 2: Resolving Traffic Incidents

Lesson 2 - Abandoned, Disabled, or Unattended Vehicles

An **abandoned vehicle** has no driver, or the person responsible for the vehicle is unknown. These vehicles may be disabled, illegally parked, or a potential crime scene. Abandoned vehicles should be investigated to determine if a crime has occurred, such as a vehicle theft or burglary.



Approaching an Abandoned Vehicle Safely

Identify Public Safety Hazards

When responding to an abandoned vehicle complaint, your first concern is to identify public safety hazards, which may range from roadway obstruction to a mobile meth lab.

Approach from Rear

Approach from the rear. Look for evidence of forced entry or of another crime. For example, a broken window may indicate a stolen vehicle.

Survey the Scene

Use caution when approaching an abandoned vehicle. Survey the scene for anything that may compromise officer safety or indicate a crime has occurred. Be aware of your surroundings.

Move Vehicle if Necessary

After it is safe to do so, you may need to have the vehicle moved due to dangerous conditions.



Locating the Vehicle Owner

Once you resolve all perceived safety concerns, attempt to locate the owner. The most common sources of vehicle and owner information are the license plate number and the vehicle identification number (VIN).

License Plate Number

Primary source for vehicle registration information



Vehicle Identification Number

Unique identifier for the specific vehicle

Complainant Information

Details from reporting party or witnesses



Computer Databases

Available law enforcement information systems



Resolving Abandoned Vehicle Situations



If you make contact with the owner, determine the status of the vehicle. Based on the information you receive, first secure the vehicle by making sure that it is locked. Next, you may have the owner remove the vehicle, arrange for it to be towed and impounded, or, if it is not a hazard, leave it in place.

When the vehicle is in violation of a local or state law, issue a citation and take action according to your agency policies.



Disabled and Unattended Vehicles

Disabled Vehicle

A **disabled vehicle** is not drivable. An example is a vehicle on the side of the highway with a flat tire.

If the vehicle is disabled and the owner or driver is present, they may request that a specific tow company respond. In this case, the owner or driver will make the removal arrangements.

If the owner or driver is not present, use FCIC/NCIC to determine if the vehicle is reported as stolen. Conduct an inventory of the vehicle for towing purposes in accordance with your agency policy.

Unattended Vehicle

An **unattended vehicle** is a vehicle that the driver has left, the engine is still running, the key is still in the ignition, and the brake is not set.

An example of an unattended vehicle is a vehicle parked illegally and the driver of the vehicle has stepped away to make a delivery.



Unit 2: Resolving Traffic Incidents

Lesson 3 - Search and Inventory of an Impounded Vehicle

Understanding proper procedures for searching and inventorying impounded vehicles protects both officers and agencies from false claims while maintaining legal standards for evidence collection.



Legal Authority for Vehicle Searches

In ***New York v. Belton, 453 U.S. 454 (1981)***, the scope of a vehicle search incident to an arrest includes the entire passenger compartment and all containers located inside the vehicle whether sealed or unsealed. The trunk of a sedan is not considered part of the passenger compartment, but the rear area of a van or SUV is included in the search area.

In ***Arizona v. Gant, 556 U.S. 332 (2009)***, the scope of the search incident to an arrest has been further defined. Officers may search the passenger compartment of a vehicle only when the arrestee is unsecured and the passenger compartment is within reaching distance of the arrestee or if it is "reasonable" to believe the vehicle contains evidence of the crime for which the subject was arrested.



Vehicles as Evidence

1

Transport to Secured Location

If a vehicle is evidence and needs to be held under the control of the investigating agency, a wrecker service should transport the vehicle to a designated secured location.

2

Treat as Crime Scene

Treat the vehicle as a crime scene until it is processed by the proper personnel. Follow your agency policies regarding securing vehicles as evidence.

3

Maintain Chain of Custody

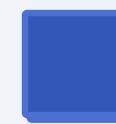
A secured storage facility will be used to maintain the chain of custody and to make sure that evidence is free from tampering.

Vehicles that are seized under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act will be thoroughly inventoried and taken to a secured location.



Conducting an Exterior/Interior Vehicle Search

A vehicle search is conducted only when authorized under the Florida Statutes, for example, when probable cause exists or consent is given. Use personal protective equipment, such as goggles and gloves, when necessary.



Use Logical Search Process

When searching a vehicle, use a logical search process that allows you to be consistent and thorough. Make sure that all compartments are checked.



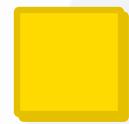
Check for Hidden Compartments

Be aware of hidden compartments that can be used to conceal weapons and contraband. Suspicious buttons or switches may indicate hidden compartments.



Minimize Vehicle Damage

Avoid unnecessary damage to the vehicle. The authority to search a vehicle's trunk is determined by the purpose of the search.



Follow Agency Procedures

Your agency policies and procedures determine how you conduct a search on a locked vehicle.

Vehicle Impoundment and Inventory

Impounding is the legal process of placing a vehicle in a lot or tow yard. A vehicle is impounded when towed at the direction of law enforcement. Follow your agency policies to determine if a vehicle should be impounded.

If a vehicle is to be impounded because it is disabled, abandoned, or unattended, or because it was involved in a traffic crash, the Florida Statutes require you to conduct an inventory of the vehicle and document all its contents. Failure to conduct the inventory constitutes a misdemeanor if the owner is not present.





Purpose and Legal Basis of Vehicle Inventory

What to Document

When taking a vehicle inventory, document the vehicle's overall condition, mileage if available, damage, all contents, and equipment.

An inventory is conducted to protect you and the agency from false claims of lost, stolen, or damaged property.

Courts have upheld the legality of an inventory when the agency has an established written policy regarding inventories that the agency's employees follow.

Legal Exception

An inventory of a vehicle is a recognized exception to the Fourth Amendment search warrant requirement. You do not need probable cause to inventory a vehicle, because the purpose of an inventory is to document items in or on a vehicle, not to search for evidence of a crime.



Processing Contraband Found During Inventory

1

Plain View Doctrine

If you observe contraband, such as controlled substances, weapons, or burglary tools, seizure of the item falls under the "plain view doctrine."

2

Consult Agency Policies

If you seize contraband, consult your agency policies regarding the documentation and recovery of evidence inside the vehicle.

3

Document and Report

After a decision is made to impound a vehicle, remove the vehicle from the scene. Agencies will provide inventory forms to document all items of value for reporting purposes.

- Important:** An inventory should not be used in place of a lawful search. However, evidence located during an inventory can be used to further a criminal investigation.



Inventory Documentation Requirements

When conducting an inventory or a search of a vehicle, complete the appropriate form and attach it to the related report. This documentation is critical for maintaining accountability and protecting against false claims.

Evidence located during an inventory can be used to further a criminal investigation, but the primary purpose remains documentation of vehicle contents for property protection purposes.

Unit 2: Resolving Traffic Incidents

Lesson 4 - Directing Traffic

You may be called to direct traffic for many reasons, including road obstructions, traffic crashes, special events, utility repairs, or inoperable traffic signals.



Responding to an Obstructed Roadway



Assess Scene Safety

When approaching the scene, assess for scene safety, such as downed power lines, hazardous materials, and active threats.



Determine Obstruction Cause

Determine the cause of any road obstruction, which may include a traffic crash, debris, disabled vehicles, downed power lines, and pedestrian traffic.



Position Vehicle Safely

Park the patrol vehicle in a safe location and according to agency policy. Activate the vehicle's emergency lights to urge motorists to use caution and slow down.



Request Additional Help

Depending on the amount of traffic and traffic patterns, you may need to request additional help.

Clearing an Obstructed Roadway

If safe and possible, remove any obstruction. You may request assistance from bystanders while removing the obstruction.

If any road damage is severe enough to pose a danger to vehicle traffic, direct traffic around the damage and request assistance from the appropriate department to respond and provide barricades or road signs.

If the scene is a traffic crash or crime scene, follow the guidelines you will learn in Chapter 12 Traffic Crash Investigations.





Traffic Safety Equipment

Whether it is day or night, wear a reflective safety vest to be more visible to motorists. The type of safety hazard will help you decide on the appropriate safety and traffic warning equipment.



Whistles

For audible signals to drivers



Flashlights & Wands

For visibility and direction



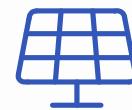
Traffic Control Devices

Cones, signs, and barriers



Reflective Gear

Vests and gloves for visibility



Traffic Control Box

For signal management



Determining Alternative Routes

Each situation and location presents challenges for directing vehicle traffic flow. Identify what options are available for rerouting traffic based on the specific situation, your knowledge of the area, and environmental factors.

Assess Route Options

Determine whether traffic can be safely routed through or around the immediate area. If the traffic must be routed away from the area, first identify alternate routes, such as alleyways, side streets, or parking lots.

Consider Critical Factors

When choosing an alternate route, consider factors such as school zones, time of day, local business hours, and any community events. The selected route must also be able to sustain the level of traffic flow.



Positioning for Traffic Direction



When directing traffic, determine the best place to stand, as well as the appropriate equipment to use for motorists to see you. The center of an intersection provides the greatest visibility, but it may also be the most hazardous.

If you are not at an intersection, find the safest possible location from which to direct traffic. Avoid standing between two vehicles or directly in front of or behind a vehicle. Always allow yourself a path of escape.

If additional emergency vehicles are responding, stop traffic and create access for these emergency vehicles.



Managing Traffic Flow

If handling traffic flow from more than one direction, try to give equal time to each direction of traffic; however, heavier lanes of traffic should be allowed to flow for longer periods.

If directing traffic in an intersection, follow typical traffic signal patterns to reduce confusion and improve traffic flow.

Get the drivers' attention when directing traffic by being seen, heard, and making clear hand movements. At night or during bad weather, drivers may have difficulty seeing or hearing you. Use the orange flashlight cone to enhance signals given with a flashlight. Flashlight signals mirror those of hand signals.



Hand Signals for Traffic Direction



To Stop Traffic

- Point at the driver being directed to stop, and make eye contact
- Raise one or both hands with your palm toward the driver until they stop
- Use an audible signal to alert drivers



To Start and Maintain Traffic Flow

- Point at the driver being directed to start, and make eye contact
- Rotate your hand with palm up, bending at the elbow, and bring it toward you
- Coordinate traffic direction with other officers when applicable



To Turn Traffic Flow

- Direct turns only when they can be accomplished safely
- Direct turns by pointing at the driver until eye contact is made, then point in the direction of the turn



Audible Signals for Traffic Control

Whistles can be used along with hand signals to enhance communication with drivers.



One Long Blast

Signals motorists to stop



Two Short Blasts

Signal motorists to proceed



Multiple Short Blasts

May be used to gain the attention of drivers not responding to your signals

Normal vehicle traffic patterns can resume once you confirm that the obstruction is removed or the road issue is resolved. Stop all lanes of traffic, remove and deactivate all traffic warning equipment, and signal drivers to continue normal traffic patterns.

Directing Pedestrian Traffic

You may be called to direct pedestrian traffic for coordinated events or unplanned incidents, such as parades, sporting events, festivals, natural disasters, critical incidents, or disabled traffic signals.

Regardless of the nature of the event or incident, wear a reflective safety vest and carry appropriate equipment as required by your agency. This may include a whistle or wand.





Planned vs. Unplanned Pedestrian Events

Planned Events

Coordinated events are typically planned in advance with established pedestrian routes. You may attend a pre-event briefing to obtain your duty location, responsibilities, and assigned time.

While directing pedestrian traffic from the duty location, maintain situational awareness to ensure the safety of all pedestrians and motorists. Some pedestrians may be guided by a service animal or white cane, indicating their partial or total blindness.

Unplanned Events

Unexpected or unplanned circumstances can arise at any time and require a plan to safely reroute pedestrians out of the area. Inform the event coordinator of any adjustments to the established pedestrian traffic route.

During an unplanned event, people may become emotionally charged or panicked; therefore, engage in empathetic listening and apply procedural justice when interacting with the public.



Pedestrian Traffic Safety Considerations

When setting up the plan for directing pedestrian traffic, consider the following factors:

Traffic Conditions

- Traffic volume and speed
- Number of pedestrians present
- Duration of the traffic congestion

Resources & Equipment

- Availability of any traffic control devices
- Staging of traffic control equipment
- Need for more resources

Environmental Factors

- Geographic area
- Nature of the event
- Any environmental hazards
- Most efficient and safest route



Best Practices for Pedestrian Traffic Control



Ensure Complete Vehicle Stops

Make sure that all vehicle traffic has stopped before allowing pedestrian traffic to flow.



Keep Walkways Clear

Ensure that pedestrian walkways are not blocked by vehicles, equipment, or other obstructions.



Maintain Visibility

Position yourself between pedestrians and vehicles while remaining visible at all times.



Use Command Presence

Be sure to use a command presence and provide clear instructions to maintain and establish order at the scene.