

# WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## III-33 EMERGENCY HIGHWAY ASSISTANCE

**EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005**

CALEA Standards: 61.4.1, 61.4.2

CFA Standards: 25.01

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**I. POLICY:** The West Palm Beach Police Department has established guidelines for providing emergency services to highway users and to correct hazardous highway conditions. These services include medical assistance, towing, fire suppression services, transportation of civilians, and notifying the proper authorities to remove hazardous materials from the highway or repair hazardous highway conditions.

### **II. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES TO STRANDED MOTORISTS:**

A. Officers will provide assistance to stranded motorists by driving them to the nearest phone or having Dispatch Operations notify the requested business or individual by phone who can provide the necessary assistance.

1. Transportation should be limited to providing the motorist with a means to obtain service or additional transportation and should not require an unnecessary absence from duty by the officer.
2. Any requests for unusual transportation (leaving the City, etc.) will be cleared with the officer's supervisor prior to providing this assistance.

B. If the officer must leave the motorist after arranging for assistance, the officer will check back after a reasonable amount of time has passed to be certain the requested assistance has arrived.

C. The officer, if possible, will physically push the vehicle from the roadway. This may require the assistance of other officers or civilians. Officers are reminded that due care must be exercised when pushing a vehicle to prevent injury to the officer or other persons attempting to move the vehicle.

D. The police vehicle will not be used to push the disabled vehicle.

E. Whenever a motorist requires roadside assistance, repairs or towing, the officer will ask the motorist which repair or towing service he or she wants to be notified to respond. The officer will contact Dispatch Operations to notify the appropriate service company to respond to the scene.

1. If the motorist does not have a preference, Dispatch Operations will be requested to contact the company holding the current contract with the City.
2. The officer will provide any necessary traffic control during the removal process.
3. If the disabled vehicle causes a traffic problem and the response time for the service requested by the motorist is going to be lengthy, the officer may request the contract service company respond.

F. Unless leaving the disabled vehicle would cause a traffic problem or create a dangerous situation, the officer will not be prevented from responding to emergency calls for service.

1. Prior to leaving the location of a stranded motorist, the officer will ensure the motorist and any passengers are in a place of safety.
2. The officer will instruct all parties to remain in the safe area until the assistance arrives.
3. If the motorist is stranded in a hazardous location, the officer will stay with the motorist until help has arrived unless the officer must respond to an emergency.

**III. HIGHWAY EMERGENCIES REQUIRING MEDICAL ATTENTION:**

- A. It is the duty of each officer to provide first aid to motorists who exhibit a need for such service.
- B. At the first opportunity, the officer will contact Dispatch Operations and request the West Palm Beach Fire Medics respond to the scene of a medical emergency.
- C. Until the Fire Medics arrive, the officer will render first aid as necessary within the constraints of his or her training.
- D. Upon arrival of the Fire Medics, the officer will allow the medics to assume control of the medical emergency.
- E. The officer will remain and provide whatever assistance is required.
- F. Police Officers may not provide transportation in a medical emergency unless the situation is of such an immediate, life-threatening nature that waiting for the Fire Medics to arrive will place unnecessary risk on the injured party. In such circumstances, the officer should weigh the availability of medical facilities and the risks associated with transportation. In any event, the approval of a supervisor will be obtained.

**IV. FIRE FIGHTING AND FIRE SERVICE ASSISTANCE:**

- A. An officer on the scene of an incident where the threat of fire is imminent or actually involved will attempt to control the fire hazard using whatever means is necessary or available (fire extinguishers, hose, etc.).
- B. The officer will advise Dispatch Operations of the fire and will request the response of the Fire Department.
- C. The officer will assist the Fire Department by providing traffic control, crowd control, etc.

**V. TAKING ACTION TO CORRECT HAZARDOUS HIGHWAY CONDITIONS:**

- A. An officer will notify a supervisor and request Dispatch Operations notify the Public Works Department or proper utility in the event of the following:
  - 1. Roadway flooding causing hazardous conditions.
  - 2. Damage to, or the absence of, important regulatory street signs.
  - 3. Malfunction of traffic control devices.
  - 4. Non-hazardous spills on the roadway which cannot be cleared by the officer.
  - 5. Any hazardous condition that would necessitate the placing of street barricades to temporarily close a street.
  - 6. Damage to any light poles or downed wires maintained by Florida Power and Light (FPL) or the City.
  - 7. The supervisor on-scene will request the assistance of the fire department to wash down any area on the roadway on which gasoline, motor oil, or anti-freeze has spilled.
  - 8. The supervisor will request the assistance of the fire department with any hazardous material spill. Upon arrival, the fire department will take control of the scene and notify the appropriate agencies.

**VI. REFERENCES:**

- SOP # IV-18 Unusual Occurrence Procedure / Plan

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**Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police**

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Old SOP #: 22.06, 6.620.031, Section V.; 6.640.047; 6.640.053; 6.640.054  
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Job Title Task Files: Dispatch Operations, Supervisor