



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

ASSISTANCE TO MOTORISTS

DIRECTIVE NO:**FC 1033****EFFECTIVE DATE:****July 10, 2023****CANCELS:**

FC 1033, dated January 29, 2018

ACCREDITATION:

CALEA Standards: 41.2.4, 61.4.1, 61.4.2

PROPONENT UNIT:

Traffic Operations Division

AUTHORITY:**Marcus G. Jones, Chief of Police**

If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, rule, or procedure conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61).

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD) to provide a safe environment for all individuals using the roads within Montgomery County, Maryland. Officers observing a motorist in need of emergency assistance *should* stop and determine the nature of the emergency and will take appropriate action to provide reasonable assistance. This will include providing a communications link to needed emergency services and ensuring that the motorist is in a position that does not present an undue hazard to the motorist's safety or other individuals using the roadway.

II. PROCEDURES FOR ASSISTING STRANDED MOTORISTS

- A. Upon observing a motorist or pedestrian who is in obvious need of assistance, the officer will, while operating a department vehicle:
1. Stop and position the vehicle to afford the best protection to the citizen, the officer, and other persons using the roadway.
 2. Determine the nature of the emergency.
 3. Offer appropriate assistance.

B. The assistance offered may consist of the following:

1. A request via *the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC)* for a tow truck from the authorized tow list (refer to FC 1060, "Towing of Motor Vehicles").
2. A request via *the PSCC* for a tow truck from a company that the motorist specifies (refer to FC 1060).
3. Minor assistance with vehicle repairs at the officer's option.
4. Use of the push bumper, with the agreement of the motorist, to push the disabled vehicle to a safe location (refer to FC 0421, "Operation of Police Vehicles").
5. A request that the district station calls a third party to come to the location to assist the motorist.
6. Providing the motorist a ride to a reasonably close service facility or telephone so that they may secure their own services.
7. Any other reasonable service which would meet the motorist's needs.

C. Vehicles in Unsafe Locations

If the disabled vehicle is at an unsafe location, the officer *should* remain with the vehicle until it can be safely removed. In certain circumstances, due to the danger presented by the vehicle's continued presence on the roadway, officers may have to arrange for its removal, regardless of the owner's wishes. Should the vehicle be in a place that affords the occupants relative safety and no other unusual circumstances threaten the safety or well-being of the occupants, the officer may leave after arranging for emergency service assistance. If appropriate, the officer may assist the motorist by setting up road flares for safety and visibility until the assistance arrives.

D. Officers Unable to Stop

In the case where the officer is unable to stop for the motorist due to heavy or dangerous traffic conditions (e.g., I-495, I-270) or where a condition exists which would make stopping impractical (e.g., a prisoner in transport or priority call), the procedure is as follows:

1. Advise *the PSCC* of the location and vehicle description.
2. Request that another county unit, Maryland State Police (MSP), in the case of the Interstate Highway System or the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Police, in the case of the Intercounty Connector, be notified to respond.

III. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- A. Should an officer encounter a motorist experiencing a medical emergency, the officer will request the assistance of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), render first aid as appropriate, and attempt to stabilize the situation until rescue personnel arrives.

IV. VEHICLE LOCKOUTS

A. Citizen Safety Risks

The PSCC will dispatch a patrol unit to a citizen locked out of a vehicle when:

1. The vehicle is located in a remote area, posing a safety risk.
2. The report is received at such a late hour that it poses a safety risk.
3. A young child is locked in the vehicle. MCFRS will also be notified.
4. Any circumstance which presents a safety risk or where a hazardous situation exists.

B. No Citizen Safety Risks

In situations that do not present a safety risk to the citizen, *the PSCC* will advise the caller to contact a tow or locksmith service to assist them in unlocking their vehicle. The caller will be advised that the police lack the proper tools to unlock vehicle doors.