



# Ithaca Police Department

120 East Clinton Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850

General Order Number: 531

Title: Comprehensive Roadside Safety Checkpoints

Issuing Authority: Chief John Barber

Effective Date: May 11, 2015

Rescinds/Supersedes: All previously issued directives

Review Date: May 2016

Applicable NYSLEA Standards: 41.2; 43.5; 47.3

Number of Pages: 7

## I. Purpose

To establish a departmental policy for conducting comprehensive roadside safety checkpoints (CRSC) and the procedures for their operation and conduct.

## II. Policy

It is the policy of the Ithaca Police Department to promote safety for motorists using the public highways and to provide a deterrent for those who violate laws contained in the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. The intent of a checkpoint is to increase the motorists' perceived risk of detection/arrest and to affect a greater public awareness of the problem which is targeted by the checkpoint.

## III. Objectives

- A. Deter drivers from operating vehicles without proper insurance and/or registration.
- B. Deter drivers from operating vehicles without a valid driver's license.
- C. Deter vehicles from being operated on the highways with defective equipment.
- D. Deter DWI and thereby reduce death, injury and property damage caused by alcohol and drug impaired drivers.
- E. Deter currently impaired drivers before the crash occurs.

F. Conduct checkpoints with a minimum amount of intrusion and motorist inconvenience.

G. Ensure the safety of the effected motorist and officers.

#### **IV. Procedures**

##### **A. Site Selection**

1. A CRSC supervisor or his/her designee must approve the location and time of the checkpoint. The time of the CRSC should not interfere with the commuter rush hour traffic and should be held in light to moderate traffic conditions.
2. The site location to be selected will fulfill certain minimum requirements as follows:
  - a) The frequency of traffic violations and traffic collisions shall be a primary consideration in the determination of the checkpoint.
  - b) Adequate safety and visibility to oncoming motorists.
  - c) Ample room for police and subject vehicles.
  - d) Availability of a secondary screening area.
  - e) Freedom of business and residential driveways, alleys and intersecting streets or highways that may be impacted by the checkpoint.
  - f) Advanced warning signs and sufficient lighting, to ensure motorist and officer safety, will be utilized, as well as traffic safety vests, signage, road cones or flares.
  - g) Checkpoints will not be held under conditions of poor visibility, rain, fog, snow, or on ice or snow covered roadways.

## B. Operational Procedures

1. An Operational Plan will be completed and submitted not less than eight (8) hours prior to the start of the CRSC to the Operations Sergeant. Upon approval, the Operations Sergeant will then forward the plan to the Deputy Chief of Operations. The Operational Plan will contain the following:

- a) Purpose
- b) Objectives
- c) Agencies involved / manpower
- d) Specific job assignments
- e) Operational time line
- f) The selection of vehicles to be stopped (i.e., every vehicle, every other vehicle, every fifth vehicle) will be prescribed and uniformly applied during the operation
- g) Equipment list

2. Each Operational Plan for a CRSC will specify the techniques to be used (i.e., driver's license inquiry, registration and insurance inspection, vehicle equipment inspection, and sobriety inspection). The purpose of the CRSC will be uniformly applied during the operation.

3. Only the CRSC supervisor has the authority to change the Operational Plan. An explanation for any adjustments shall be explained in the Operational Plan and/or After Action Report (AAR).

## C. Communications

1. Close cooperation between checkpoint personnel and the Department of Emergency Response shall be provided to assure rapid reply in those cases where an inquiry is considered necessary.

2. If an inquiry is necessary, the CRSC personnel will switch to an alternate channel for quality communication purposes, so as to not interfere with regular patrol radio traffic.

3. A Spillman incident number will be created with the Department of Emergency Response by the CRSC supervisor for the checkpoint and a separate incident number will be created for every arrest.

#### D. Public Relations

It is important for members conducting the checkpoint to be extremely courteous to motorists to minimize any inconvenience or displeasure that they may experience.

#### E. Inspection Procedures

1. CRSC operations will not begin and vehicles will not be stopped until the checkpoint site is properly set up to ensure officer and public safety.
2. Safety equipment such as department issued traffic vests, signage, road cones or flares and proper lighting will be utilized, when available.
3. The following introduction and follow up statement should be given to each motorist by members; "Good evening (afternoon), I am Officer \_\_\_\_\_ of the Ithaca Police Department, this is a roadside safety checkpoint."
4. Unless a driver's license check is a designated part of the checkpoint procedures, members are not requested to see a driver's license. However, if the driver offers the license to a member, it may be reviewed.
5. If the driver is also the registered owner of the vehicle, as shown by a comparison of the vehicle registration card with the operator's license, the member may require the driver to produce a proof-of-insurance card.
6. License plates will be inspected to determine whether they are current.
7. A check of the driver's license with eJusticeNY will not be made unless the member has reasonable grounds to believe that a violation has been, or is being, committed.
8. The use of the License Plate Reader (LPR) will be permitted for the purpose of running vehicle registration and it must be noted in the Operational Plan.

9. If a member has at least reasonable suspicion that a driver is in violation of the law, the driver and vehicle will be subject to further investigation and, if necessary, directed to a secondary screening area and appropriate action will be taken. Vehicle registration and insurance will be required.
10. If a member detects a violation or acquires probable cause to believe an offense has been committed or observes contraband in plain sight, appropriate action will be taken.
11. The member will listen for speech difficulties and look for signs that might indicate driver impairment such as bloodshot eyes, the odor of an alcoholic beverage or lack of coordination.
12. If an impaired driver is detected, the member will be responsible for the arrest procedures. (See General Order 506 Arrest of Person for Driving While Intoxicated and Under the Influence of Drugs.)
13. The member or assisting members shall observe the vehicle and look for equipment violations.
14. Traffic shall not be allowed to accumulate. If traffic congestion occurs and significant delay to motorists results, vehicles shall be allowed to proceed through without checking until the congestion is cleared. All traffic congestion which results in allowing vehicles to proceed through without checking shall be documented in the checkpoint After Action Report.
15. When a violation is detected, the member will direct the suspect's vehicle to the staging area and notify the Department of Emergency Response of the stop. At this location, the member will further investigate the violation.
16. A designated member may stop persons who commit a violation while attempting to avoid the safety check. If the member believes that a violation has been committed, such as an illegal U-turn, or has reasonable suspicion of criminal activity, such as driving under the influence, the member may stop the vehicle.
17. Record all traffic related arrests as a "road check" arrest on the simplified traffic information.

#### F. Assistance from other Agencies

1. Prior to implementation of a checkpoint, the CRSC supervisor shall notify the Department of Emergency Response and other law enforcement agencies of the planned operation.
2. The Ithaca Police Department has the ability to invite other agencies to participate. Only agencies having jurisdiction or a mutual aid agreement that provides its officers with jurisdiction at the checkpoint should be invited to participate.
3. All arrests made for DWI at checkpoints will be through the Ithaca Police Department.

#### G. Post Checkpoint Reporting

1. At the conclusion of the detail, the CRSC supervisor or his/her designee will complete a CRSC After Action Report (AAR) and submit it through the appropriate chain of command for review.
2. The AAR shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:
  - a) Date, time and location of checkpoint.
  - b) Recommendations regarding future operations.
  - c) Delay periods (approximate vehicles waved through).
  - d) Number of motorists passed through / stopped.
  - e) Number of arrests by offense with incident numbers attached.
  - f) Number of citations issued.
  - g) Brief Narrative describing the detail.

## H. Documentation and Data Collection

1. A CRSC log will be kept, indicating the checkpoint number, Spillman incident number, date, location and patrol zone, time, CRSC Supervisor and members. A copy of the CRSC log and each Operational Plan and AAR will be kept in the Comprehensive Roadside Safety Checkpoint Binder which will be kept in the Operations Sergeant's Office at Ithaca Police Department.
2. All DWI arrests will be documented in the DWI/DWAI (Drugs) Arrest log, located at the Ithaca Police Department. DWI Arrest Reports will be completed in a timely manner and submitted to the CRSC supervisor.

