



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-43

Effective: 06/20/2022 Review: 06/20/2023 Replaces: 11/14/2019

## 2-43 ROADBLOCKS AND CHECKPOINTS

### Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

- [2-1 Uniforms \(Formerly 2-06\)](#)
- [2-45 Pursuit by Motor Vehicle \(Formerly 2-55\)](#)

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

City of Las Cruces v. Betancourt, 1987-NMCA-039, 735 P.2d 1161.

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

### 2-43-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) in the planning and use of roadblocks and checkpoints.

### 2-43-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department to use roadblocks when reasonably necessary to detour motorists from hazardous roadway conditions, for selective traffic enforcement, to prevent the escape of a felon(s) from a contained area, and to stop the driver of a vehicle attempting to avoid apprehension after all other means have failed.

### N/A 2-43-3 Definitions

A. Checkpoint

A planned enforcement activity with a specific violation targeted and where vehicles are stopped and drivers are contacted.

B. Roadblock

1. An emergency intentional obstruction of traffic for the safety of the community. The three types of roadblocks are:
  - a. Class A Roadblock: To stop traffic with portable signs and warning devices without physically blocking the roadway;



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- b. Class B Roadblock: The physical blocking of the roadway with lightweight materials and/or equipment that will cause little or no damage to a vehicle with four (4) or more wheels when struck (i.e., lightweight barricade devices, flares, pylons, etc.). Due care and caution must be considered for two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles (e.g., motorcycle, scooter, bicycle, trike) when physically blocking a roadway with any material; and

**2-43-4 Procedures**

**7** A. Roadblock Classifications

1. Sworn personnel may use:

- a. A Class A Roadblock to inspect individuals and vehicles in the event of jail/prison escapes, major felony investigations, and DWI detection; and
- b. A Class B Roadblock to warn motorists of severe road conditions due to inclement weather, or to reroute traffic due to special events, traffic accidents, or crime scenes.

2. Sworn personnel are prohibited from seizing a tractor trailer or another such vehicle.

B. Roadblock Sites

1. Sworn personnel shall select the site of a roadblock:

- a. To ensure the safety of motorists and to ensure it is convenient when stopping motorists; and
- b. Based on a reasonable location, such as:
  - i. Physically divided roadways or raised medians;
  - ii. Away from a blind curve or hill; and
  - iii. A predesignated area so motorists are safely moved off the roadway, such as a parking lot for tow trucks and/or for officers to further their investigation.

C. Initiating a Roadblock

1. Sworn personnel shall decide whether to initiate a roadblock based on:

- a. The seriousness of the crime;
- b. Sufficient information and description on the wanted individuals or vehicles; and
- c. The elapsed time between the criminal act and its discovery.

**6** D. Checkpoint Criteria

1. Supervisory sworn personnel at the rank of sergeant or above shall be responsible for the site selection and procedures for conducting a roadblock.



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PROCEDURAL ORDERS

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N/A

2. Sworn personnel shall not randomly stop motorists.
  - a. Sworn personnel shall use a pre-established method of selection when determining which motorists to stop.
  - b. Sworn personnel shall establish uniform procedures when interacting with each motorist in precisely the same manner.
    - i. However, with approval from their chain of command, sworn personnel shall have the discretion to determine whether to pursue a motorist who avoids the checkpoint by committing a separate traffic violation, consistent with SOP Pursuit by Motor Vehicle (refer to SOP Pursuit by Motor Vehicle for sanction classifications and additional duties).
3. Sworn personnel shall consider which safety measures shall be used for warning approaching traffic, the degree to which the roadblock causes traffic congestion, and whether the roadblock places other motorists and sworn personnel at risk.

2

4. Sworn personnel shall not select a roadblock location to target motorists within specific racial or ethnic groups.
5. Sworn personnel shall select a reasonable time and duration for the roadblock; therefore, sworn personnel shall not make a roadblock excessively long.
6. The official nature of the roadblock shall be immediately apparent.

N/A

- a. Sworn personnel shall be uniformed and shall wear a reflective police vest or jacket, consistent with SOP Uniforms (refer to SOP Uniforms for sanction classifications and additional duties).
  - b. Police vehicles shall be highly visible and marked.
  - c. Sworn personnel shall use warning or stop signs and pylons.
  - d. Sworn personnel shall post checkpoint signs.
  - e. Sworn personnel may use flares.
7. Sworn personnel shall minimize the average length of time a motorist is detained at the roadblock and the degree of intrusiveness.
    - a. When an officer observes facts that warrant further investigation, they shall direct the motorist suspected of a traffic or criminal offense to pull into a separate area to (something) the flow of traffic.
  8. Sworn personnel shall give advance notice to the public on selective traffic enforcement to enhance deterrence.
    - a. Sworn personnel shall email the notice to media outlets.

E. Authorization for Checkpoints



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1. The Metro Traffic Division Commander or their designee shall approve all sobriety checkpoints submitted by a sergeant.
2. In all cases, supervisory personnel at the rank of sergeant or above shall be in charge of the checkpoint.