



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-43

Effective: 11/14/19 Review: 11/14/20 Replaces: 01/17/16

2-43 ROADBLOCKS AND CHECKPOINTS

Related SOP(s):

[2-42 DWI Investigations and Revoked/Suspended License](#)

[2-45 Pursuit by Motor Vehicle](#)

2-43-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the 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, selective traffic enforcement, to prevent the escape of a felon(s) from a contained area, and when reasonably necessary to stop the driver of a vehicle attempting to avoid apprehension, after all other means have failed.

2-43-3 Definitions

A. Roadblock

Emergency intentional obstruction of traffic for the safety of the community.

B. Class A Roadblock

Stopping traffic by use of portable signs and warning devices without physically blocking the roadway.

C. Class B Roadblock

Physically blocking the roadway with lightweight materials and/or equipment which will cause little or no damage to a vehicle (a four or more wheeled vehicle) striking them, i.e., lightweight barricade devices, flares, pylons, etc. Due care and caution must be considered for two or three-wheeled vehicles (motorcycle, scooter, bicycle, trike) when physically blocking a roadway with any material.

D. Class C Roadblock

Physical blockage of the roadway with heavy material or equipment, i.e., patrol vehicles, city-owned equipment, etc. Only city-owned materials and equipment shall be used for a Class "C" roadblock. Commandeering a tractor-trailer or another such vehicle is prohibited.

E. Checkpoint



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Planned enforcement activity, with a specific violation targeted, where vehicles are stopped and drivers are contacted.

2-43-4 Rules and Procedures

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A. Classification of Roadblocks/Checkpoints

1. A Class A roadblock may be used to inspect individuals and vehicles in the event of jail/prison escapes, major felony investigations, DWI detection, etc.
2. A Class B roadblock may be used to warn motorists of severe road conditions, such as snow and ice, or to reroute traffic due to special events, traffic accidents, crime scenes, etc.
3. A Class C roadblock shall be used as a last resort after other reasonable, and less hazardous measures have failed and when stopping a vehicle is necessary to protect lives.

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B. Criteria for All Checkpoints

1. Supervisory personnel are responsible for the site selection and procedures for conducting a roadblock.
2. Vehicles should not be stopped randomly. A pre-established method of selection must be used when determining what vehicles to stop, i.e., every vehicle, every third vehicle, etc. Uniform procedures must be established for dealing with each motorist in precisely the same manner.
3. Safety measures must be considered for warning approaching traffic, the degree to which the roadblock causes traffic congestion and whether the roadblock is set up in such a way so as to put the motoring public and officers in unnecessary peril.
4. The roadblock location should be reasonable.
5. The time and duration of the roadblock should be reasonable.
6. The official nature of the roadblock should be immediately apparent. Officers should be uniformed; police cars should be highly visible and marked, and the use of warning or stop signs, flares, and pylons are advisable.
7. The average length of time a motorist is detained at the roadblock and the degree of intrusiveness should be minimized. Where facts within the observation of the officer warrant further investigation, the suspected motorist should be asked to pull into a separate area so as not to unreasonably inhibit the flow of traffic.
8. Advance notice should be given to the public on selective traffic enforcement to enhance deterrence.



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9. All personnel working any checkpoint will wear a reflective police vest or jacket.

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C. Authorization for Checkpoints

1. The Traffic Division Commander must approve all sobriety checkpoints. In all cases, a supervisor will be in charge of the scene.

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D. Initiating Road Blocks

1. The decision to activate a roadblock should be based on the following:

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

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E. Roadblock Sites

1. Selection of roadblock sites should:

- a. Provide safety and convenience in stopping vehicles; and
- b. Reasonable locations should be considered, such as:
 - i. Physically divided roadways (raised medians);
 - ii. Not on a blind curve or hill; and
 - iii. A predesignated area to have vehicles safely moved off the roadway (parking-lot for tow trucks and/or for officers to further their investigation).