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**Section: THREE  
Chapter: TWELVE**

**SUBJECT:** Traffic Checkpoints and Roadblocks  
**ISSUE DATE:** 03-12-16  
**REFERENCE:** NYS 43.5

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**I. TYPES OF ROADBLOCKS**

- A. Crime Scene Perimeters- established to locate and apprehend a suspect fleeing from the scene of a crime.
- B. Traffic Control Points- established to limit access to or egress from a crime scene, accident, or situation involving the need to limit or reroute traffic.
- C. Traffic Check Points- established to check for vehicle equipment defects, expired inspection certification stickers, seatbelt violations, driver's license and registration validity, vehicle loads, etc.
- D. Sobriety Checkpoints- established to check vehicles for intoxicated operators as well as for other visible violations.

**II. AUTHORIZATION**

- A. CRIME SCENE PERIMETERS may be established by a command officer, or the first responding/investigating officer may authorize such perimeter.
- B. TRAFFIC CONTROL POINTS may be authorized by a command officer or the first responding officer.
- C. TRAFFIC CHECK POINTS must be authorized by a command officer of the rank of Sergeant or above.
- D. SOBRIETY CHECK POINTS must be authorized by a command officer of the rank of Sergeant or above. The Sobriety Checkpoint must be properly supervised by a Sergeant and planned and staffed as outlined in this General Order.
- E. In addition to the specific authorization, all roadblocks must conform to this order.

**III. ESTABLISHING / CANCELING ROADBLOCKS & CHECKPOINTS**

- A. Criteria to be used in planning a roadblock, although not all inclusive, are the following:
  - 1. Site Selection:
    - a. Sites must be approved by a command officer prior to commencing the Sobriety Checkpoint or roadblock.
    - b. The site must be in an area that will minimize the risk to the public and/or the police.

- c. The command officer will ensure that all guidelines established by this order are in effect and are communicated to the officers manning the Sobriety Checkpoint or roadblock.
    - d. In the case of a Sobriety Checkpoint, the Sergeant in charge of the detail will include a brief, written directive which will outline the site(s) selection and the system of vehicle selection (example: every car, every other car.)
  2. The Supervisor's site selection for Roadblocks or Sobriety Checkpoints will take into consideration the time of day, type of roadway, weather conditions, volume of traffic, the specific purpose of the detail, the number of personnel available, the amount of safety equipment available, and the availability of adequate supervision.
- B. Warnings will be set out to alert traffic whenever a Checkpoint or Roadblock is established and to direct traffic to the site area in a safe manner. Warnings may consist of the following:
  1. Flares
  2. Traffic cones
  3. Marked police vehicle with flashing lights engaged.
  4. Checkpoint warning signs.
  5. Uniform Officers directing traffic.

NOTE: Officers manning a checkpoint will wear full uniforms and a high visibility raincoat and/or glow vest.
- C. Any traffic checkpoint that is conducted must be conducted in a uniform and non-discriminatory manner with reference to which vehicles will be selected.
  1. A pattern as to which vehicles are to be checked must be established prior to the commencement of a Sobriety Checkpoint. Every vehicle or a system of every second, third, or fourth (etc.) vehicle will be utilized in choosing those vehicles to be directed to the Checkpoint site. Officers do NOT have discretion as to any other method of selecting vehicles other than those outlined prior to commencement of a Checkpoint.
  2. In the event a violation is observed, or an officer has probable cause to stop a vehicle that falls outside the established pattern, appropriate action can be taken.
  3. In the event that traffic becomes unduly congested or a manpower shortage has occurred due to the workload, traffic will be directed to continue and not be diverted to the checkpoint area. When, in the estimate of the on-site Supervisor, traffic congestion or manpower availability has eased so that the checkpoint may safely be resumed, vehicles will again be diverted to the checkpoint area pursuant to the original plan.
- D. Roadblocks consisting of vehicles or other types of physical barriers will not be erected as a means of terminating a pursuit.
- E. Authorized and established roadblocks will be immediately canceled at the direction of a command officer when it is determined that the roadblock conflicts with the best interests of the public or the Department.

By the Order of:  
David B. Smith  
Chief of Police