
	MESQUITE POLICE DEPARTMENT
	236.00 TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS
	Effective Date: December, 2016
	Approved: _____  Chief of Police

I. Policy Statement

In compliance with Texas law, Mesquite Police Officers have the authority and discretion to enforce traffic laws by issuing a verbal warning, citation, or arresting the violator. Traffic enforcement is utilized to gain drivers' and pedestrians' voluntary compliance with traffic laws. Traffic enforcement shall be accomplished in a fair and impartial manner. Officers should be professional and courteous, taking appropriate enforcement action as warranted by the existing circumstances. This policy is designed to promote a uniform traffic enforcement policy among our police officers.

II. Procedure

A. Guidelines for Taking Enforcement Action:

1. Arrest

- a. Officers shall refer to state law for traffic offenses that may or may not result in an arrest.
- b. The decision to effect a physical arrest based on a "Class C" traffic violation should be based upon sound legal principles as opposed to peripheral issues such as the violator's "attitude." Officers are authorized to arrest "Class C" violators who do not have valid identification in their possession or drivers operating without a valid driver license. Officers must receive supervisor approval before arresting a violator for any other "Class C" traffic or city ordinance violation, unless emergency or exigent circumstances exist.
- c. Officers must receive supervisor approval before arresting a violator for a "Class C" traffic offense where the violator refuses to sign a citation.

2. Citations

- a. The issuance of a citation is an option for any "Class C" traffic violation or City Ordinance violation.
- b. Although officers have discretion when enforcing traffic laws, a citation should be issued to violators who jeopardize the safe and efficient flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, including but not limited to hazardous moving violations, no liability insurance violations, and driver license violations.
- c. The City of Mesquite Citation form should be accurately completed in its entirety and all applicable blanks filled out. The violator should receive a copy of the citation which contains appropriate court contact information. Officers should not discuss the possibility of dismissal of citations with violators. They should be referred to the information contained in their copy of the citation.
- d. Tickets issued by electronic means shall be administered by current departmental training.

3. Warnings

- a. Verbal warnings, at the discretion of the officer, may suffice in some cases to encourage voluntary driver compliance or a change in driver behavior.

B. Guidelines for Contacting Violators

1. Traffic stops are one of the most dangerous responsibilities of law enforcement and safety is of the utmost importance; no traffic stop should ever be considered “routine.”
 2. As soon as practical, police dispatch shall be advised via police radio of all traffic and suspicious activity stops. Ideally, this should be done prior to initiation of the stop, however, that is not always possible. Officers working stationary traffic enforcement (i.e. – school zones) may advise dispatch of their location and assignment. In lieu of marking out on separate traffic stops for each violator contact, the officer could keep the call sheet open and provide dispatch with the license plate numbers of each vehicle they stop, closing out the call at the end of the assignment.
 3. “High-Risk” traffic stops will be conducted in accordance with MPD General Order 221.00.
- C. Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Grant Guidelines
1. The STEP Grant is administered by a Project Director/Grant Supervisor. The Traffic Sergeant is the Grant Supervisor for the Mesquite Police Department. The Project Director and the Grant Supervisor will be responsible for verifying that all paperwork is completed and turned in on a timely basis. The Project Director and the Grant Supervisor will document all hours and keep a monthly log of all STEP paperwork and activity sheets. The Project Director and the Grant Supervisor will be responsible for Requests for Reimbursements as well as overseeing the police department’s performance toward meeting the grants requirements.
 2. All officers who work STEP will work under the direction of the Project Director and the Grant Supervisor if he or she is on duty. If the Project Director and the Grant Supervisor is not on duty, they will work under the direction of the on-duty patrol supervisor.
 - a. All police officers, up to and including Lieutenants are eligible to work the grant on an overtime basis. If an officer has never worked the grant, he/she will contact the Grant Supervisor for instructions and guidelines required in order to work the STEP grant.
 - b. An Officer’s Daily Activity Report form will be provided for each shift worked.
 - c. The Officer’s Daily Activity Report form will be filled out at the end of each shift worked and turned in to the Project Director or the Grant Supervisor. All citations and copies of arrest reports will accompany the Daily Activity Report.
 - d. The Officer’s Daily Activity Report form must have the unit number, mileage and officer’s signature. Both sides of the form must be completed. All appropriate blanks must be filled in for the form to be complete.
 - e. The Project Director or the Grant Supervisor shall review and sign all the activity reports for each period and ensure that all paperwork is complete and correct.
 - f. Officers will make traffic stops during the entire enforcement shift. Officers will concentrate their efforts on the violations for the grant they are working.
 - g. Working STEP is a privilege. Officers who do not follow the guidelines or do not perform to the minimum requirements of the Grant will not be allowed to continue to work STEP.

EFFECTIVE: March, 2013; REVISED: May, 2016; REVISED: December, 2016