

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Title: *ANCILLARY MOTORIST SERVICES* **Procedure: 4.606**

Date Issued:

Revised: June 11, 2009

PURPOSE:

To provide general guidelines for officers to help motorists in need of routine and emergency highway assistance.

POLICY:

It is the policy of this Department to take appropriate action to assist lost or stranded motorists, disabled vehicles, correct hazardous situations when possible and provide general assistance to highway users.

PROCEDURE:

GENERAL POLICE SERVICES

1. Protecting lives and aiding the injured, locating lost persons, keeping the peace, and providing for other needs are basic services provided by the Department.

2. To satisfy these requests, the Department responds to calls for service and renders such aid or advice as is necessitated or indicated by the situation.

3. Because of the danger presented by the stranded motorist both to himself and to other motorists on the highway, the Department offers reasonable assistance to motorists who appear to be in need of aid.

4. Such service as applies will be rendered during all hours of the day, but will receive particular attention during nighttime hours, and during severe weather conditions.

5. When an officer assists a motorist, and the vehicle is disabled or towed, the officer will transport the motorist to a place of safety. A place of safety being the police station, or a business establishment in the City that will be able to provide temporary

shelter for the motorist to get their own assistance and make phone calls.

MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Anytime an officer encounters a motorist who requires the services of a service station or tow company the officer will:

Check with the motorist to ascertain if he has a preference for a local service station and request the communications dispatcher to make notification.

If the motorist has no preference, or the service station cannot provide timely service, the officer will advise the motorist that the Department has arrangements with local tow companies to provide services.

The motorist shall have the opportunity to select the tow company he prefers from those authorized by the Department.

If the motorist has no preference the officer will advise the communications dispatcher to contact the next tow service on the list.

2. When an officer finds that a vehicle is left unattended upon a street or highway in violation of any of the provisions regulating stopping, standing or parking and the vehicle constitutes a definite hazard or obstruction to the normal movement of traffic, the officer is authorized to have the vehicle moved.

3. The towing of any vehicle shall conform to the requirements outlined in Department procedure 4.608.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officers are expected to be alert for motorists who appear to need assistance.
2. When consistent with other assignments, officers are expected to stop and offer help to motorists who appear to be in need of help.
3. If an assignment prevents the officer from rendering the assistance personally, arrangements should be made for another police unit to render the necessary service. If practical, the motorist should be advised of this by the original officer.
4. Officers who assist stranded motorists should remain alert to the following possibilities:
 - The driver has not been authorized to use the vehicle;
 - The vehicle is unsafe;
 - The motorist is not licensed;
 - The motorist is unable to safely operate the vehicle; or,
 - The vehicle's occupants have engaged in criminal activity.
5. Officers are not to use patrol vehicles to push disabled vehicles from the roadway.
6. The patrol car may not be used to "jump start" a motorist's vehicle without supervisory approval.
7. Officers should:
 - provide information and directions upon request;
 - become familiar with the streets and highways in their area; and
 - be knowledgeable of the various services and facilities available in the City and service area.

EXCEPTIONAL MOTORIST SERVICES

1. If reasonable care is taken to prevent damage or injury, when necessary,

officers may, at their discretion, render the following exceptional services:

- transporting fuel to the motorist; changing a tire, or
- transporting the motorist to public transportation or other convenient location.
- Before rendering any exceptional services, officers should consider:
 - availability of commercial roadside services;
 - time of day;
 - accident hazard caused by the motorist;
 - physical condition of the motorist, and weather conditions.
 - The shift's activity and officer's estimated "down time".

EMERGENCY MOTORIST SERVICES

1. Officers will notify communications immediately of any emergency situation and take appropriate action.
 - Provide basic first aid.
 - Obtain medical assistance if necessary.
 - Obtain fire assistance.
 - Use the fire extinguisher in the patrol car, when necessary.
2. Escorting civilian vehicles is extremely dangerous and is prohibited.
3. When possible officers should call medical assistance to the location of an emergency.

VEHICLE LOCK OUTS

1. Officers will only unlock vehicles in instances where circumstances suggest that a life-threatening emergency exist. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Unattended child locked in the vehicle.
- b) Unattended animals locked in the vehicle.
- c) Incapacitated person locked in the vehicle.

2. Officers should not attempt to unlock a vehicle unless they are familiar with the slim jim tool.

3. Obtain the identification of the motorist and a listing for the vehicle, prior to unlocking the vehicle.

4. Advise the motorist that the Cambridge Police Department assumes no liability for damage from an attempt to unlock the vehicle in an emergency situation.

5. Have the motorist sign the Vehicle Liability Release Form and if an officer attempts to unlock a vehicle, an incident report is required.

6. In the event that a vehicle with keys locked inside does not meet the criteria for unlocking, the vehicle operator/owner will be advised by the on-scene officer or the police dispatcher of the telephone number of at least two locksmiths.

7. Communication Center will maintain a list of locksmiths.