

PA FIRE POLICE

Traffic Control

By Tony Riccardi - PA State Fire Academy Approved Fire Police Instructor

Traffic control is one of the most important functions that a fire police officer performs and does so on almost every response. Therefore, it is critical that it be performed in a manner that provides motorists with a clear, understandable signal. The method being used in this program, point-shoulder, is taught to police officers and is used by the military. Some fire police officers have been observed using a single finger to motion a driver to execute a movement. Some even use their hand, dropped all the way down to their thigh area, and motion drivers with a lackadaisical motion. Still others swing their arm in a wild motion that utterly confuses everyone. Unfortunately, using a swinging movement of the arm as a signal tends to confuse motorists who don't know if it means come ahead, speed up, I'm drying my fingernail polish, or whatever. Remember, according to PA Vehicle Code Section 3111, a motorist is required to obey the signals given but, they must be clear and understandable.

Fire Police Officers will rarely use their voices to direct and control traffic, but when drivers or pedestrians do not understand hand gestures or whistle techniques, the officer may choose to politely approach them and explain what they are to do.

- Use of a whistle during traffic control is critical
- Vehicles are being built tighter
- People listen to radios, or other devices
- People talking, rubber-necking, daydreaming, etc.

When directing or controlling traffic, it is important that you select a safe, visible location from which to operate. It is important that you maintain a comfortable position – your feet should be spaced approximately 6-8 inches apart. Always keep alert for drivers who may not be paying attention, talking on cell phones, texting, etc. Your safety should always be priority Number One! When your front or back is to the traffic, this is

an indicator for traffic to stop and remain stopped until told to proceed. When your sides are facing motorists – traffic may proceed even if you do not give that signal. If traffic control is being conducted at an intersection controlled by a stop sign or traffic signal – this may confuse the driver as to which they are to obey – you will have to advise them. When giving the signal for traffic to come to a stop – the palm of the hand must face the motorist you want to stop and the palm must be fully visible. If the arm is extended out, parallel to the ground, there is a great tendency for the palm to drop due to the pain experienced when forcing the hand back. For this reason, it is better to extend the arm upward so that the palm faces the motorist the entire time you want the motorist to remain stopped.

Proceed Signal

- Point toward the vehicle you want to proceed
- Palm should be facing upward
- Bend your arm at the elbow and bring your hand up so that your hand will pass in front of your face
- When using this signal for those vehicles on your left, the hand must pass to the back of your head since the lane of travel will be behind you

Slow Down

- For a variety of reasons, drivers may sometimes approach your position just a little bit faster than they should
- Place one or both hands palm down and begin gesturing by dropping your hands 12-18 inches

Right Turns

- Make certain that these drivers do not cause conflict with other motorists
- Point toward the driver you want to make this turn and then bring your arm up towards your body in a 90-degree forward movement

Continued on Page 28

FIRE POLICE *from Page 26*

- Extend the arm in the direction you want the motorist to turn

Left Turn

- Same movement as the right turn except now you use the left arm to motion drivers into their turn.
- Sometimes you may want to delay the left turn for the driver but you want traffic to continue to move forward.
- In this instance, motion the driver wishing to turn left to move to a point where you are positioned and have them wait until it is appropriate to turn.
- A traffic signal device is an electrical – mechanical device which signals traffic units to “STOP” “CAUTION” “GO” at alternate times.

When directing traffic at intersections controlled by a traffic signal device – it is best to work with the light since drivers will normally obey the signal. Protect pedestrians by holding them back behind curb (off roadway) until traffic movement has stopped. Start and stop pedestrian flow same as

traffic. Indicate where pedestrians should walk. Prevent jay-walking and other illegal crossing. Work with pedestrian crossing signals.

Traffic cones can play an important role in your efforts to direct and/or control traffic. Traffic cones must be 28” in height when operating on major highways. Traffic cones must be equipped with a 6-inch reflective tape at the neck of the cone and a four-inch reflective band 2-inches below the 6-inch band. Traffic cones may be used for multiple purposes. When requiring traffic to change lanes, cones may be used to provide a channel or guide for motorists to follow. They can be used as a barricade when roads need to be closed. Cones should be positioned so that spacing is equal to the speed limit – 35 mph, cones should be placed 35-feet apart and so on. Traffic cones and barricades are used to set up lane closures and their associated tapers to control traffic moving past the incident scene. Initial arriving fire police may only be able to carry minimal number of cones; however, the minimal amount needed for regulation tapers and closures will have to be provided.

WEH

» **CLICKMATE™**
Just **CLICK** to connect

Happy Holidays!

CLICKMATE™ TW157: The safe and easy solution for filling SCBA'S.
It connects directly to the cylinder valve thread (CGA 346/347) in just seconds.
No hand tightening required - just **CLICK** to connect!

Airpower International, Inc.
Specializing in High Pressure Breathing Air Systems
Proudly Serving Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware & Maryland
Call or Visit Us on the Web! - (800) 334-4509 www.airpower-intl.com
7303 River Rd., Pennsauken, NJ 08110 (856)663-1711 steve@airpower-intl.com