



# MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

### 485 – TRAFFIC RELATED DUTIES

**GENERAL ORDER:** 2021-17  
**ISSUED:** June 18, 2021

**EFFECTIVE:** June 18, 2021

**REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:**  
Assistant Chief Steven Johnson  
**DATE:** February 23, 2026

**ACTION:** Amends General Order 2014-130 (November 11, 2014)

**WILEAG STANDARD(S):** 6.2.9, 6.2.10,  
6.2.12, 6.2.13

#### **485.00 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish procedures for department members to ensure the safe and efficient movement of motor vehicles and pedestrians within the city of Milwaukee.

#### **485.05 TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS (WILEAG 6.2.9)**

##### **A. MANUAL TRAFFIC DIRECTION**

Manual traffic direction will be performed by members when necessary to ensure the safe efficient movement of motor vehicles and pedestrians. Circumstances and situations will dictate whether members should direct traffic or permit the traffic to flow without assistance.

1. Manual traffic direction by a member will be handled in a manner that will enable drivers and pedestrians to easily recognize and respond to clearly visible and easily understood audible signals (traffic whistle) and visual signals (hand signals) from the member.
2. Members may position their squad car to assist in traffic control or as a warning for oncoming motorists. The squad's emergency lights shall be activated, and if the member is out of the vehicle, all doors shall be locked.
3. Members may use flares, cones, barricades, and police tape to assist in traffic control. Flares, traffic cones, barricades, or police tape should be utilized as additional traffic direction and spaced accordingly to give drivers ample time to react.

##### **B. EQUIPMENT**

1. The wearing of an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) compliant high visibility reflective garment is mandatory for any police member under the following circumstances:
  - a. When standing on the roadway directing traffic, lane closures, or investigating a traffic crash.

- b. When performing public safety duties at disasters.
  - c. As determined by the officer-in-charge at situations where member safety and visibility is paramount.
2. Flashlights with cones shall be used by the member during darkness or limited visibility conditions when conducting manual traffic direction.

#### **485.10 ASSISTANCE TO ROADWAY USERS (WILEAG 6.2.12)**

Members shall check on and offer to provide assistance to disabled or stranded motorists on all roadways within the city of Milwaukee. The safety of the vehicle occupants, the member, and other motorists is the first priority. Removal of vehicles posing a hazard or blocking traffic is essential to continuous safe and efficient traffic movement.

##### **A. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY**

1. When a member observes a disabled vehicle on the roadway, the member shall make a reasonable effort to provide assistance. If that member is assigned to a call of a higher priority, the dispatcher shall be advised of the location of the disabled vehicle and the need for assistance. The dispatcher shall then assign another available member to respond for assistance as soon as practicable.
2. In most cases, a disabled motorist will require assistance. Members who encounter motorists in need of emergency medical services or assistance, shall request medical attention immediately. After arrangements for assistance are made, continued involvement by the member will be contingent on the availability of department resources, the vulnerability of the disabled motorist, and the safety of other roadway users. If necessary, members may assist a disabled motorist in having the vehicle towed in accordance with SOP 610 – Towing of Vehicles.

##### **B. RESTRICTIONS**

1. Members shall not jump-start another non-department vehicle using department vehicles without supervisory approval.
2. Members shall not attempt mechanical repairs to non-department vehicles.

##### **C. LOCKOUTS**

1. Members shall not use any type of lockout tool in non-emergency situations. Members shall refer members of the public to utilize a towing agency.
2. Members may make forced entry with department supplied equipment in emergency situations and shall follow the procedures set forth in SOP 950 – Damage Claims.
3. Members shall not use department vehicles to move or push disabled vehicles except in exigent circumstances.

**485.15 HAZARDOUS HIGHWAY CONDITIONS (WILEAG 6.2.13)**

- A. Adverse road and weather conditions may include, but are not limited to:
1. Debris in the roadway.
  2. Defects in the roadway itself.
  3. Downed power lines.
  4. Fallen trees.
  5. Hazardous roadway conditions due to weather.
- B. Upon discovering or being dispatched to an adverse road or weather condition affecting safe roadway travel, members are to advise their dispatcher of the adverse road or weather condition.
- C. Members shall request the help needed to remedy the hazard by contacting the appropriate city department, state agency, public utility, etc.
- D. Members shall provide traffic direction and control services, when necessary, until the condition has been corrected. Members shall conduct traffic and control services in accordance with section 485.05.

**485.20 VEHICLE ESCORTS (WILEAG 6.2.10)****A. TYPES OF ESCORTS**

1. Emergency Escorts
  - a. Due to the considerable dangers involved, escort of civilian vehicles in emergencies is to be undertaken only if no viable alternatives exist.
  - b. In most situations, patients should be attended to and transported by trained EMS/medical personnel in an ambulance.
  - c. If an emergency escort is provided, safety of others on the roadways, the patient, and officers are paramount and should be conducted with due regard.  
(WILEAG 6.2.10.2)
2. Non-Emergency Escort
  - a. The department may conduct non-emergency escorts.
  - b. Non-emergency escorts may include the use of police vehicles for the purpose of escorting the following:
    1. Oversized vehicles.

2. Parades.
3. Dignitaries.
4. Celebrities.
5. Funerals.
6. Special events.
7. Hazardous materials.

#### B. ESCORT AUTHORITY

Department members are granted the authority to conduct escorts under [Wis. Stat. § 346.215](#) - Police Escorts and Right-of-Way Related to Escorted Vehicles:

1. Officers shall use due regard and obey all traffic laws at all times during an escort.
2. The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle conducting an escort may proceed past a red stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation if the operator gives visual signal by use of red and blue emergency lights.
3. Operators of emergency vehicles are not required to give an audible signal, but it is suggested.
4. The escort shall be conducted by a minimum of two emergency vehicles, one leading the procession and one at the rear.
5. All emergency and escorted vehicles shall yield the right-of-way upon approach of an authorized emergency vehicle giving an audible signal.
6. All operators of vehicles not involved in the escort shall yield the right-of-way at an intersection to the escort procession, unless authorized to do so by a traffic officer.  
(WILEAG 6.2.10.1)

#### C. PROCEDURES

1. A captain or above or designee shall approve all escorts.
2. Escorts may only be conducted with marked vehicles equipped with emergency lighting equipment and siren.
3. The department shall escort in situations when the requesting party has provided advanced notice and obtained a valid event permit or other exemption as authorized by local ordinance or as authorized by the Chief of Police or designee. The permit/exemption shall be in writing and will include the following:
  - Date and times of anticipated escort.
  - Approximate number of participants (persons, vehicles, floats).
  - Staging area where the escort is to begin.
  - Designated route of the escort.
  - End location.

#### 4. Officer Responsibility During Escorts

- a. Officers have authority to refuse to start any escort where the officer determines that the escort will pose a hazard to the officer, the participants in the escort, or the public.
- b. In such cases the officer shall immediately notify a supervisor of the decision and inform the sponsor that the escort procession cannot go forward until the supervisor reviews the circumstances.
- c. An officer may withdraw from an escort in cases where they are needed for an emergency call involving a threat of human life, or when authorized by a supervisor. In such cases the officer shall consider the safety of the escort procession participants as a factor in determining whether to withdraw, a safe location to withdraw to, and shall withdraw using due regard.

#### **485.25 REQUESTS FOR FUNERAL ESCORTS**

- A. Requests for funeral escorts will not be routinely approved unless the deceased is one of the following:
  1. An active or retired Milwaukee Police Department member.
  2. An active or retired member of another police department.
  3. An armed forces member killed in the line of duty.
  4. A dignitary (as determined by the work location shift commander).
- B. Funeral homes requesting a funeral escort that is subsequently denied shall be advised that they shall conduct their escort in conformity with [Wis. Stat. § 346.20](#), which gives funeral processions the right-of-way regardless of a police escort.
- C. All requests for funeral escorts shall be evaluated by the shift commander of the Specialized Patrol Division prior to approval.
- D. The shift commander of the Specialized Patrol Division may give special consideration to requests for funeral escorts from Milwaukee Police Department members.
- E. The Milwaukee Police Department's policy is to perform escorts for the above listed persons. No other funeral escorts will be performed unless prior approval is given by the Chief of Police (or designee) who shall have ultimate authority to deny or approve any funeral escort request.



JEFFREY B. NORMAN  
CHIEF OF POLICE