



Carrboro Police Department

Subject: Chapter 42: TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT POLICY		Number: IV. Subsections
Issued: 01-01-2022	Revised: N/A	Pages: 1 of 3

- I. Purpose
- II. Operating Parameters
- III. Training, Compliance, and Review

I. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this policy is to guide officers in prioritizing traffic stops for violations of North Carolina motor vehicle laws. Research has shown that focusing traffic enforcement on hazardous moving violations is effective in reducing traffic-related deaths, injuries, and collisions. In addition, regulatory and equipment enforcement has been shown to impact community sub-groups differently, especially along racial and socio-economic lines. This policy is not intended to address stopping vehicles based on reasonable suspicion or probable cause of non-traffic violations of law.

II. OPERATING PARAMETERS

- A. Officers shall concentrate their enforcement of traffic laws on violations of law that constitute a threat to the safety of the public. Violations that commonly constitute a threat to the safety of the public include, but are not limited to:
 1. Traveling in excess of the posted speed limit;
 2. Reckless or aggressive driving;
 3. Driving while impaired;
 4. Failure to stop at a stop light or stop sign;
 5. Failure to yield the right-of-way;
 6. Passing a stopped school bus;
 7. Following too close;
 8. Driving on the wrong side of the road;
 9. Illegal passing;
 10. Operating a vehicle without liability insurance;
 11. Operating a vehicle without a valid operator's license;
 12. Failure to properly restrain a child in a child passenger restraint system or seat belt.



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- B. Officers should not stop a vehicle for one or multiple instances of regulatory or equipment infractions unless the officer determines that the violation constitutes an immediate threat to the safety of the public. Examples of regulatory or equipment violations include, but are not limited to operating a motor vehicle
 - a. Without a light illuminating a license plate;
 - b. With defective or improper equipment;
 - c. With a brake light or a high mount stop light not working;
 - d. Without an exhaust system that prevents excessive or unusual levels of noise (unless the noise also violates Carrboro Town Code Section 5-12.1);
 - e. With certain sun-shading materials and tinting films;
 - f. With an expired registration;
 - g. Without an inspection or with an expired inspection.

- C. If an officer makes a traffic stop in compliance with Section A above, the officer may also issue a citation for additional regulatory or equipment violations. The officer may also use their discretion to give a verbal or written warning for any or all observed violations.

- D. A vehicle with no visible registration plate or an improperly displayed registration plate may be stopped under this policy.

- E. Supervisors shall not solely measure an officer’s productivity based on the quantity of vehicle stops made, nor should their performance be evaluated on the number of citations issued.

- F. Officers should primarily focus their traffic enforcement efforts in areas where crashes or unsafe conditions most frequently occur, or where traffic complaints are most commonly received.

- G. Officers shall document all traffic stops in accordance with department policy and state law.

- H. The duration of any traffic stop shall be no longer than necessary to accomplish the traffic mission or the stop, or to investigate violations of law for which an officer develops reasonable suspicion or probable cause.



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- I. Notwithstanding any other section of this policy, if officers have a compelling public safety reason to stop a vehicle, any lawful reason for the stop may be utilized. A compelling public safety reason is defined as an immediate hazard to life or safety that necessitates a vehicle be stopped and the officer otherwise lacks reasonable suspicion for another type of traffic stop. This will be a rare exception to this policy and the factors giving rise to this necessity will be documented in an incident report.

III. TRAINING, COMPLIANCE, AND REVIEW

- A. All officers will be trained on this policy.
- B. Shift supervisors are tasked with primary responsibility for ensuring that officers under their supervision are in compliance with this policy. Supervisors should utilize CAD, RMS traffic stop data, E-citation, and other means to verify compliance on an ongoing and consistent basis.
- C. Division Captains are expected to verify compliance with this policy for officers in their respective divisions.
- D. This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed.