

Disabled Vehicles

520.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Vehicle Code § 20018 provides that all law enforcement agencies having responsibility for traffic enforcement may develop and adopt a written policy to provide assistance to motorists in disabled vehicles within their primary jurisdiction. This policy will also cover responsibilities associated with locked motor vehicles.

520.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

When an on-duty officer observes a disabled vehicle on the roadway, the officer should make a reasonable effort to provide assistance. If that officer is assigned to a call of higher priority, the dispatcher should be advised of the location of the disabled vehicle and the need for assistance. The dispatcher should then assign another available officer to respond for assistance as soon as practical.

520.3 EXTENT OF ASSISTANCE

In most cases, a disabled motorist will require assistance. After arrangements for assistance are made, continued involvement by department personnel will be contingent on the time of day, the location, the availability of departmental resources, and the vulnerability of the disabled motorist.

520.3.1 MECHANICAL REPAIRS

Department personnel shall not make mechanical repairs to a disabled vehicle. The use of push bumpers to relocate vehicles to a position of safety is not considered a mechanical repair.

520.3.2 RELOCATION OF DISABLED VEHICLES

The relocation of disabled vehicles by members of this department by pushing or pulling a vehicle should only occur when the conditions reasonably indicate that immediate movement is necessary to reduce a hazard presented by the disabled vehicle.

520.3.3 RELOCATION OF DISABLED MOTORIST

The relocation of a disabled motorist should only occur with the person's consent and should be suggested when conditions reasonably indicate that immediate movement is necessary to mitigate a potential hazard. The department member may stay with the disabled motorist or transport him/her to a safe area to await pickup.

520.4 LOCKED MOTOR VEHICLE

Officers will be dispatched and respond to a public safety assist involving a locked motor vehicle as needed. Officers will not attempt to access a motor vehicle that is locked unless public safety demands that a locked vehicle be accessed immediately. Examples of this are:

- (a) When a helpless person or animal is locked inside the motor vehicle and due to the weather conditions or other public safety issues, the vehicle must immediately be accessed.

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- (b) When the vehicle, as parked, is a public safety hazard and must be moved immediately.

Officers who feel that circumstances do not meet the guidelines provided will notify the motorist that they should contact a locksmith or tow company to unlock or access their vehicle. Recommendations of a locksmith or a tow company will not be made. An officer may assist the motorist, through dispatch, in contacting a locksmith or tow company of the motorists choice, if appropriate.

520.5 PUBLIC ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

This written policy is available upon request.