

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.

520.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY

When an on-duty deputy observes a disabled vehicle on the roadway, the deputy should make a reasonable effort to provide assistance. If that deputy 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 deputy 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 Members shall 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 Members 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 PUSH BARS

Push bars are to be used in situations where property damage and/or injury would be likely to occur if immediate clearing of the road hazard did not take place. Use whatever means available to clear the traffic lanes, including the use of push bars. Except in the most serious cases, restoration of the traffic flow shall take precedence to allow minimum discomfort and time loss to the motoring public.

In a more serious scenario, when a full investigation is warranted, remember to leave the vehicles at their original points of rest until measurements and photographs can be taken. Although contract tow vehicles should be used to clear the traffic lanes, do not leave a lane blocked merely because the summoned tow has not yet arrived.

Some examples of proper use of push bars would be:

1. Pushing a stalled vehicle creating a traffic hazard blocking the roadway or intersection to a point of safety.
2. Moving a vehicle from a point of danger after being involved in a traffic collision and use of the roadway is required.

The above situations are examples only and would be the most common times push bars would be used.

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department

Orange County SD Policy Manual

Disabled Vehicles

Push bars should not be used for:

1. Push-starting another vehicle.
2. Pushing another vehicle when immediate clearing of the roadway is not necessary or when alternative traffic control techniques could be used.

Any intentional misuse of County equipment is a violation of the Sheriff's Department Rules and Regulations and is subject to review and/or discipline.