

PROCEDURE – Patrolling & Incidents on Fast Roads

Number: H 0403

Date Published: 19 December 2019

Version 12 – December 2019

1.0 Summary of Changes

This procedure has been amended on its review as follows:

- Resource types (Appendix B) has been updated;
- Sections 3.2 – 3.5 have been updated and re ordered and made more concise for ease of reading;
- New paragraphs added within section 8 regarding data security and retention and disposal of records;
- Author details have been updated.

This procedure will need to be read by all police officers and staff.

2.0 What this Procedure is about

This procedure details the process that shall be used by all Essex Police officers and staff when using, patrolling or attending incidents on Fast Roads. It also covers the process for the command and control of such incidents.

Dealing with incidents on Fast Roads carries a risk of serious injury or death to all involved. Those attending and managing such incidents must take all possible steps to ensure their own safety, the safety of all emergency service staff and members of the public at the scene of an incident.

2.1 Use of the term “Fast Road”

The use of the term Fast Road is intended to cover other terms such as trunk road, strategic road and the strategic road network (SRN). For the purposes of this procedure the term Fast Road is split into two defining categories:

- **Category 1 Fast Roads**
All motorways and roads with a hard shoulder or 3 or more lanes in the same direction and subject to a permanent national speed limit. May also include other specified roads. For examples and specified roads see Appendix A.
- **Category 2 Fast Roads**
All roads subject to a 40mph speed limit and above (not including roads already mentioned in category 1).

2.2 Key Initial Deployment Principles

Deployment to an incident will always depend on its nature. There are 4 key factors relating to the initial deployment of resources to incidents on Fast Roads and it is impossible to look at just one factor to make an informed decision. These factors are:

- Training;
- Relevant experience;
- Type of vehicle;
- Level of equipment carried.

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Nothing in this procedure prevents an officer from taking immediate action in carrying out their duty to preserve life. Officers are reminded that they have a responsibility for their own safety as well as that of the person they are trying to assist. Where acting outside of this procedure officers must be able to justify their actions in line with the National Decision Making Model (NDM).

2.3.1 Resource Types

This procedure refers specifically to different resource types which are described in Appendix B. It is the responsibility of the driver of any police vehicle to ensure that they are appropriately booked on and any deficiencies in meeting the description of that resource are highlighted within STORM.

2.3.2 Police staff in liveried vehicles (Transport services, Crime Scene Investigators)

Police staff using marked vehicles in the daily course of their duties will inevitably observe incidents covered by this procedure. It is recognised that in many cases the staff member is only required to notify FCR with the exact location and pass on their observations, no more than a member of public. If the carriageway is blocked then, following a dynamic risk assessment they should render what assistance they are able to within their confines of their training and what is reasonable in the given circumstances.

Compliance with this procedure and any governing policy is mandatory.

3.0 Detail the Procedure

3.1 Deployment to an Incident

In assessing whether a location is a Fast Road then all the initial information and in particular the speed limit must be considered. STORM **should** flag any known category 1 Fast Roads in the location comments. It is important that when making the assessment not to assume a road is not Category 1 due to the absence of a location comment.

The allocation of resources will be considered in line with 2.2 Key Initial Deployment Principles and the NDM. Where the deployment falls outside of the following parameters, rationale for that decision will be annotated onto the STORM incident. FCR will continue to identify more appropriate resources and will make them available for deployment to the incident at the earliest opportunity.

It is the responsibility of any officer allocated by the FCR to a Fast Road to identify if their training or available equipment falls outside of this procedure.

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3.1.1 Vehicles with Insufficient / Damaged Equipment

As part of the daily vehicle checks officers/ staff will replace any damaged or missing equipment. If a replacement is unavailable then another vehicle should be used that does have sufficient equipment. Failing that a marker must be placed against the callsign on STORM to highlight the deficiency. This may impact what the unit can be deployed to under this procedure.

3.1.2 Initial Deployment to Incidents on Category 1 Fast Roads

Initial deployment should be fulfilled by a Roads Policing (Core) Resource.

Where this is not possible tactical advice should be sought from a Roads Policing Sergeant (QT01). This should be with a view of them taking command of that incident, remotely if necessary, and providing safety advice in relation to approaching and managing a scene.

3.1.3 Initial Deployment to Incidents on Category 2 Fast Roads

Initial deployment should be fulfilled by a:

- Roads Policing (Core) Resources
- Roads Policing (Non-Core) Resources
- Operational Policing Resources
- Local Policing Resources

3.1.4 Dynamic Deployment

Any police units may come across incidents on Fast Roads which require immediate action to be taken. Prior to taking any action FCR must be notified.

Where the unit concerned does not satisfy the parameters set out in 3.1.2 Initial Deployment to Incidents on Category 1 Fast Roads or 3.1.3 Initial Deployment to Incidents on Category 2 Fast Roads a more appropriate unit should be deployed to the incident immediately.

The officer will have to make an assessment of the incident and consider the 2.2 Key Initial Deployment Principles and the NDM when deciding what action they can reasonably take.

3.1.5 Subsequent Deployment to an Incident

Once an incident is being attended by an appropriate unit(s), any additional supporting units need only be deployed in line with the NDM, and in consultation with the lead unit at the scene.

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3.1.6 Deployment to Smart Motorways

Some sections of motorway have all lanes running (ALR) with no hard shoulder and intermittent Emergency Refuge Areas (ERA's). Lane restrictions and speed limits are controlled via a series of matrix signs operated by the Highways England Regional Control Centres, South Mimms (ERCC).

Highways England will seek to clarify the exact location of any incident and provide access advice to responding officers via FCR or inter-agency radio channels. Direct contact can be made on airwave channel.

Any incident requiring attendance on any Category 1 Fast Road warrants a timely and correctly graded response. Unless Highways England are already on scene, dealing and have cancelled our attendance, police units will still deploy until updated by a unit in attendance. The closest, and most suitable unit will attend

3.2 Management of Incidents on Fast Roads

It is essential for the efficient management of any incident on a Fast Road that an appropriate officer is identified to take command of the incident taking into consideration the location resources and incident type. All communications and decisions should go through this officer once identified.

Where an incident on a Category 1 Fast Road requires several resources or will result in serious or severe highway disruption an accredited Road Scene Manager or Roads Policing Sergeant should be identified to take command of the incident.

The CLEAR Initiative will be adopted for any incident on a Category 1 Fast Road, but remains best practice for all incidents.

3.2.1 Emergency Removal of Disabled Vehicles

The ability of a police unit to remove a broken down vehicle to a safe location, away from the live lane, will depend on the nature of the vehicle and its defect. If being towed, this will be an emergency recovery to the nearest suitable safe place. This will be based on all the circumstances known at the time. It is for the officer to use the available information to ascertain what is the nearest safe and suitable place. The nearest place may be an ERA or other suitable location off the main carriageway.

If a vehicle cannot be readily moved from a live lane, then Emergency Traffic Management (ETM) should be deployed. If ETM is likely to be in place in excess of 20 minutes, then full Traffic management (TM) should be requested to replace the ETM pending the successful removal of the stricken vehicle. This takes significant coordination of emergency responders, and should be requested as soon as it is identified that it will be required. (Chapter 8 full TM will take at least 2 hours to put in place, when not on a HATOS patrolled route).

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3.2.2 Complete Carriageway Closure

In the event of a complete carriageway closure where access by normal means is not possible, attendance can be secured from the opposing carriageway. This practice poses a serious risk of injury to officers and must only be considered where the risk is deemed proportionate to the information known at the time.

Access across the central reservation by an officer on foot will only be carried out following the complete closure of the opposing carriageway which will be achieved by a rolling road block. Officers must be satisfied that all traffic is stationary on the affected carriageway before attempting to cross the central reservation.

Stationary traffic on the opposing carriageway should be allowed to flow once there is no longer a risk to the safety of officers or the public at the scene of the incident. This decision will only be made by an officer at the scene.

3.2.3 Reverse Access

It may be appropriate to access an obstructed carriageway by approaching the scene contrary to the normal direction of traffic. This process has been previously referred to as reverse running.

Officers must recognise the inherent risks to staff, other emergency responders and the public in facilitating reverse access. This must only be carried out once the officer who has command of the scene is satisfied the carriageway is sterile or otherwise safe to do so. Consideration should be given to deploying police or Highways England resources to physically check the carriageway for potential dangers or utilising CCTV on Highways England managed roads which have sufficient coverage.

Units responding to an incident via reverse access should approach the scene by driving on the left most lane. Any vehicles leaving the scene will also use their left most lane. This effectively makes the carriageway behave as a normal two way road.

3.2.4 Re-opening a Carriageway

If a carriageway has been closed for sometime the risk of having broken down vehicles in the tail backs will be high. The police unit in charge, in conjunction with the FCR operator, will consider deploying a unit specifically to sweep the tail back to ensure there are no disabled vehicles, or other vulnerable motorists, before all units leave the incident location. If the scene has been handed over to HE then their own SOP will apply.

3.2.5 Roles and Responsibilities on Motorways

In all cases conventional methods of approach will be used where possible in the first instance. The techniques in section 3.2.2 Complete Carriageway Closure of this procedure will be considered only in extreme cases where delays in attendance would result in an unacceptable risk to life.

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Under the CLEAR principles if it is not a Police led incident then the HETOS (Highways England Traffic Officer Service) will take over as soon as possible and if available.

Both FCR and individual officers have direct communications to ERCC at South Mimms to confirm if HETOS are on scene, and if they still require additional support from a police unit. If completed by an attending police unit, and not FCR, then they must request that FCR fully update the STORM incident. Police units, if required by HETOS will still attend a non police led incident if they have safety concerns and are unable to manage themselves (Preservation of Life).

Where there is no injury or alleged offence, Highways England will lead in the management of incidents to:

- Manage Congestion;
- Ensure rapid and safe removal of obstructions;
- Assist vulnerable road users.

Essex Police will maintain primacy for incidents involving:

- Injury or death;
- Criminality or allegations of;
- Threats to public order and safety.

3.3 Patrol of Fast Roads

Routine patrol of Fast Roads should only be conducted by appropriate units for the category of road concerned. The stopping of vehicles should take place in a suitable location such as lay-bys or other similar designated areas and in line with the driver's training and driving authority. The use of the hard shoulder or emergency refuge areas to stop a vehicle should only be done in circumstances that the driver can justify its use and manage the associated risks.

3.3.1 Patrolling Category 1 Fast Roads

Roads Policing (Core) Resources and Roads Policing (Non-Core) Resources primarily conduct this role but may also be undertaken by Operational Policing Resources.

3.3.2 Patrolling Category 2 Fast Roads

Patrols can be conducted by:

- Roads Policing (Core) Resources;
- Roads Policing (Non-Core) Resources;
- Operational Policing Resources;
- Local Policing Resources.

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3.3.3 Stopping Vehicles on a Live Carriageway

Stopping a vehicle on a live carriageway involves an obvious greater risk and can be justified subject to a dynamic risk assessment of the location, and consideration of the 2.2 Key Initial Deployment Principles and the NDM.

On Category 1 Fast Roads a stop in the live carriageway can only be justified where the threat to human life or risk of serious injury is so immediate there is no other realistic option. Where this takes place the driver of the police unit will notify FCR immediately. This should only be conducted by units identified at 3.3.1 Patrolling Category 1 Fast Roads.

3.3.4 Smart Motorways

Officers will continue to patrol Smart Motorways as part of routine patrols, but officers will not routinely stop vehicles on these sections of road. Any decision to stop a vehicle on a section of Smart Motorway will have to be proportionate to the risk such a stop will pose to the public as well as officers carrying out the stop.

3.4 General Use of Fast Roads

Any police unit may use any Fast Road as part of a normal journey or response to an incident where that road forms part of the natural route subject to the driver's driving authority.

3.4.1 Use of Hard Shoulder under Response Conditions

Police advanced and response drivers may use the hard shoulder in order to make progress past stationary or slow moving traffic when in a suitable vehicle to be driven under emergency conditions. However, use of the hard shoulder should be strictly in accordance with the driver's training and the speed of the police vehicle should only be sufficient to safely pass other road users and should not exceed 20 mph over the speed of the traffic flow in the live carriageway.

The exception to this will be for appropriately trained officers when involved in the tactical phase of a pursuit.

3.4.2 Turnaround Points

Police advanced and response drivers may use designated turnaround points for any policing purpose when in a vehicle suitable to be driven under emergency conditions.

3.4.3 Pursuits

The conduct of pursuits is covered by a separate policy and procedure.

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3.4.4 Conveyance of Prisoners on Category 1 Fast Roads

The conveyance of prisoners on a Category 1 Fast Road must always be subject to a dynamic risk assessment by the driver of the vehicle being used. If a prisoner becomes violent during transit, due to the greater risks involved it will not be appropriate to stop on a Category 1 Fast Road. Conveyance of potentially violent prisoners should be done utilising a Marked Operational Van fitted with a cage or another route should be used. Where a violent prisoner is arrested on the motorway and no Marked Operational Van is available, the conveying vehicle should exit at the nearest appropriate junction.

3.4.5 Category 1 Fast Road Boundaries with other Police Areas

Due to the nature of patrolling Category 1 Fast Roads police units will regularly go into adjoining police areas especially where boundaries are part way between junctions. It is important that offences and incidents are dealt with positively. Essex police units will continue to follow this procedure when operating in those areas. Where appropriate a request for resources from the local police area should be made to take over from Essex police units.

3.5 Dartford River Crossing Boundaries

Essex Police will attend all incidents on the A282 (QEII bridge) from the County Boundary up to the end of the bridge identified as the point at which the Armco barrier protecting the bridge structure terminates. Direct contact with Highways England can be made on airwave channel.

Kent Police will attend all incidents in either the West or East tunnel from the County Boundary to the Northern end of the tunnels.

If there is initial confusion as to where an incident is, both forces will attend to ensure public safety.

Any mention of zones will relate to security led incidents and are outside of the scope of this policy.

Appendix D lists the relevant boundaries.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment

This procedure has been assessed with regard to an Equality Impact Assessment. As a result of this assessment it has been graded as having a low potential impact as the proposals in this procedure would have no potential or actual differential impact on grounds of age, sex, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity.

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5.0 Risk Assessment

The following risk assessment is in place and officers and staff who may be expected to deal with a Fast Road incident must be provided with a copy including any revisions or updates. A record shall be kept of the provision of all risk assessments to officers and staff members including confirmation they have read and understood them:

- Risk Assessment – Incidents on High Speed Roads

5.1 Standards of Dress

5.1.1 High Visibility Jackets

When working on any road officers and staff will wear their Force issued high visibility jacket. In respect of firearm and surveillance operations where circumstances are such that the wearing of a high visibility jacket or the delay in putting the jacket on outweighs the risk of wearing it the decision should be recorded with supporting rationale by the tactical/operational commander.

5.1.2 Uniform Hats

It is important that officers project a professional image at all times. It is expected that when dealing with incidents or stops on a Fast Road that uniformed officers wear their uniform hat. Where circumstances are such that wearing of a hat would increase the risks involved then the officer should not wear it. Each occasion will be taken on its own merits and the officer will be expected to justify their actions.

6.0 Consultation

The following have been consulted during the formulation of this document:

- Federation
- Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator
- FCR Inspector
- Driver Training
- Roads Policing Unit Inspectors and Sergeants
- LPT Sergeant
- H&S
- Superintendents Association
- Code of Ethics/PSD
- Support Networks
 - MESA
 - Disability Network
 - Women's Leadership Development Forum
 - Work Life Balance
 - NEXUS – Acting Chair
 - Christian Police Association

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7.0 Monitoring and Review

The Head of Roads Policing, OPC is responsible for monitoring the practical implementation and effectiveness of this procedure and associated risk assessments. They will ensure it is reviewed annually and updated to incorporate new legislation and national guidance. This procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis.

8.0 Governing Force policy. Related Force policies or related procedures

- H 0400 Policy – Road Incident Management
- H 0100 Policy – Roads Policing
- H 0200 Policy - Pursuit
- D 2000 Policy - Safe Driving
- H 0402 Procedure - Dangerous Goods Incidents
- H 0401 Procedure – Abnormal Indivisible Loads
- H 0601 Procedure - Road Traffic Collisions (Recording)
- H 0602 Procedure – Road Traffic Collisions (Investigations)
- H 0201 Procedure - Pursuit
- D 0401 Procedure - Dealing with Critical Incidents

8.1 Data Security

Essex Police have measures in place to protect the security of your data in accordance with our Information Management Policy – W 1000 Policy – Information Management.

8.2 Retention & Disposal of Records

Essex Police will hold data in accordance with our Records Review, Retention & Disposal Policy – W 1012 Procedure/SOP - Records Review, Retention and Disposal.

We will only hold data for as long as necessary for the purposes for which we collected. Victims/public should be reminded that Essex Police take the protection of personal data seriously as described in the privacy notice <https://www.essex.police.uk/hyg/fpnessex/privacy-notice/>.

9.0 Other source documents, e.g. legislation, Authorised Professional Practice (APP), Force forms, partnership agreements (if applicable)

- APP Managing Incidents on the Strategic Road Network
- CLEAR Initiative
- Chapter 8, Part 2 Traffic Signs Manual 2009
- Smart Motorways - Regional Operating Agreement
- Appendix A

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- Appendix B – Roads Policing Resources/Resource Types
- National Decision Making Model
- Index to Relevant Highways Authority