

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

No: 205

Supersedes: NA

Effective: January 1, 2016

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Dated: December 10, 2015

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**TRAFFIC COMPLAINTS/CALMING**

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- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish general guidelines for the Department's Handling of traffic related complaints.
- II. **OBJECTIVES:**
  - A. To ensure a high degree of highway safety and convenience for the traveling public.
  - B. To have a system designed to effectively and efficiently address traffic complaints with the goal of mitigating traffic problems based on the level of danger posed to motorists and pedestrians.
- III. **POLICY:** Upper Merion Township police officers will take appropriate enforcement action when Vehicle Code violations are observed or uncovered through investigation. Enforcement action will be documented on traffic citations, written warning forms or with verbal warnings.
- IV. **CROSS-REF:** Policy #200, Traffic Enforcement
- V. **TRAFFIC COMPLAINT FORM:**
  1. The Traffic Complaint Form will be made available to the general public on the Police Department's website with express directions on how to direct their complaints to the Traffic Safety Sergeant for follow-up.
  2. All traffic complaints received via electronic means will be forwarded to the Traffic Safety Sergeant.

## VI. PROCEDURES:

### A. DISPATCHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Traffic complaints and parking complaints received by phone through the Communications Center, which are in-progress, should be dispatched as per current policy. Traffic complaints where the caller has some identifying characteristics on the suspect or suspect vehicle should also be dispatched. Generally, an in-progress condition should result in a patrol officer being dispatched.
2. If the call has been determined to be a follow-up to a previously reported complaint then current procedures to contact the assigned officer should be followed.
3. All traffic and parking complaints that are determined to be a new complaint, which do not rise to the level of immediate dispatch, should be documented in CODY using the incident type code of "Traffic Complaint." When in doubt, the dispatcher should confer with the shift supervisor.
4. Walk in Traffic complaints should be handled as outlined above. If the complainant chooses to complete a Traffic Complaint Form, the dispatcher receiving the form will assign it an incident number and forward it through inter-office mail to the Traffic Safety Sergeant. The CODY entry should be assigned the incident type code of "Traffic Complaint" and the notes should indicate that a Traffic Complaint Form was submitted.

### B. TRAFFIC SAFETY UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The Traffic Safety Sergeant will review the traffic complaints in CODY on a weekly basis. The Traffic Safety Sergeant will be responsible to assign and track the progress of the complaint.
2. A traffic safety officer will be assigned to each complaint. The assigned traffic safety officer will arrange to meet face to face with the complainant as soon as practical. Phone and email correspondence should be reserved for those times when the complainant does not make themselves available for a face to face meeting, or for when the complainant is an out of town motorist, rather than a township resident.
3. The assigned traffic safety officer will review all available data to identify if there is an actual problem or traffic issue. This may include conducting a speed survey utilizing traffic classifiers or analyzing accident data in the CODY RMS. The assigned traffic safety officer will determine if a specific enforcement effort is needed due to known violations commonly occurring at a specific time so that selective enforcement efforts can be conducted during those times
4. The assigned traffic safety officer will then convey their findings to the complainant and document their findings in a supplemental report. This supplemental report should include a recommendation as to what is required to address the issue and possibly resolve the problem. That would include but not be limited too, directed

patrols, selective enforcement, ghost car deployment, speed sign deployment, lawn signs or other traffic calming measures.

- a. Those other traffic calming measures would include recommendations of signal adjustments or changes in signage or roadway markings based on traffic engineering studies, or speed humps if the speed hump criteria are met.

- (1) Some of these measures may require the assistance of PADOT and the Township's Traffic Signal Division.

5. The Traffic Safety Sergeant will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate recommended traffic calming measures are completed and that the assigned traffic safety officer completes a final disposition report that includes the documentation of notification of the outcome of the complaint to the original complainant. The Traffic Safety Sergeant will then close out the complaint using the appropriate disposition in the CODY RMS.

## VII. TRAFFIC COMPLAINT PRIORITY SYSTEM:

**Priority 1:** This traffic complaint requires **immediate attention**. The assigned traffic safety officer will contact the complainant and arrange for a face to face meeting. Traffic safety compliance measures such as Directed Patrols, Selective Enforcement details, the use of classifiers, ghost cars, speed boards etc. will be conducted as soon as possible. This includes assigning an officer to make multiple checks of parking complaints during a shift over multiple days.

**Priority 2:** The assigned traffic safety officer will contact the complainant and arrange for a face to face meeting. These incidents will be followed up by a TSU or Patrol Officer to either obtain more information from the complainant or to evaluate the situation further with an on-site visit. The assigned officer has one week to complete or update the matter. The officer can recommend further attention by TSU which will change the complaint to Priority 3 status.

**Priority 3:** The assigned traffic safety officer will contact the complainant and arrange for a face to face meeting. Prior evaluation has determined that the condition can be corrected by Traffic Signal Service or other traffic safety compliance measures. The TSU Sergeant will coordinate the response with the Patrol Sergeants to be completed within two weeks.

**Priority 4:** Prior evaluation has determined that the condition needs referral by the TSU Sergeant to the Upper Merion Traffic Safety Committee, the Township Traffic Engineer or PennDOT. The condition will be monitored by TSU and could include the previously listed traffic safety compliance measures while the condition is resolved.

**Priority 5:** A rare occurrence or incident that reveals no pattern or presents no safety issue. This case will be filed for future reference, but no follow up will occur. This priority level will include complaints of a nuisance level which may be referred to the Community Relations Officer for further attention.

VIII. **SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT & DIRECTED PATROL:**

A. **SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT:** The purpose of the department's Selective Enforcement Program is to direct traffic enforcement activity to a confirmed traffic violation problem that is occurring on a regular basis, at specific times, and at a known location. Selective Enforcement details should be used in an effort to end this commonly occurring traffic violation at the location. The TSU Sergeant is responsible for the administration of the department's Selective Enforcement Program.

1. The TSU Sergeant will maintain records on selective enforcement activities. The Patrol Commander and TSU Sergeant will periodically evaluate the program.
2. Selective Enforcement Details will be set up by the Traffic Safety Assistant and will be coordinated with the Patrol Shift Supervisor.
3. The patrol shift supervisor will ensure that TSU officers will only respond to accidents of a serious nature (involving injuries) while assigned to a selective enforcement detail.

B. **DIRECTED PATROLS:** The purpose of Directed Patrols is to address traffic issues that have been determined to be occurring more occasionally or those that are due to a temporary condition caused by external factors such as road construction or detours.

1. Directed Patrol Details locations (with times) will be established on a weekly basis by the Traffic Safety Sergeant and communicated to the Patrol Division.
2. These directed patrols will be conducted by both Traffic Safety Officers and Patrol Officers at the direction of their respective supervisors.
3. The patrol shift supervisor will ensure that the officers on their squad are conducting directed patrol activities at the appropriate time and place to conform with the department's traffic calming plan.

IX. **TYPES OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION:** Refer to Policy #200, Section VI.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Thomas M. Nolan

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Captain James M. Early

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All Police Personnel  
All Police Dispatchers  
Township Manager  
File