

**CHAPTER 1**  
**PATROL AND GENERAL ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES**  
**REVISED MARCH 2026**  
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<u>PATROL RESPONSIBILITY</u> .....	1-3
General .....	1-3
Beat Accountability .....	1-3
Command Responsibility .....	1-4
<u>GENERAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY</u> .....	1-4
Racial or Identity Profiling .....	1-4
Enforcement Activity—Dispatch Notification .....	1-5
Enforcement Stop .....	1-5
Procedures .....	1-6
In-View Patrol .....	1-8

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## CHAPTER 1

### PATROL AND GENERAL ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES

#### 1. PATROL RESPONSIBILITY.

##### a. General.

(1) The Department of California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for protecting life and property on the highways of California. This responsibility primarily involves the application of preventive enforcement to reduce traffic crashes.

(2) The Department is also responsible for rendering services to the motoring public. These services include, but are not limited to, providing information, assisting those who are disabled or otherwise need help, and removing traffic hazards.

(3) In fulfilling these duties, the Department uses the basic method of in-view patrol based on the belief that people do not generally violate the law when they know they are being observed by officers. While patrolling, officers will also be readily available to offer services to those in need of assistance.

b. Beat Accountability. Traffic laws are basically safety rules designed to ensure the efficient, crash-free flow of vehicles over the roads of the state. Their purpose is to protect persons from injury and to prevent property damage.

(1) The maximum effectiveness of each beat officer in crash prevention cannot be obtained until the officer fully accepts the concept of "beat accountability." When a beat officer's actions deviate from the steady, efficient, conscientious, and professional execution of the Department's obligations, the officer is doing less than full duty. Consequently, the beat officer must accept a degree of moral responsibility for each traffic crash or incident that occurs on their assigned beats.

(2) The Department believes it is essential that beat officers aggressively seek out and apprehend those who violate the law. The ultimate disposition of the case by the judge who passes on innocence or guilt, and who administers punishment, is **not** the Department's concern. **The Department's job is to enforce the law.**

c. Command Responsibility.

(1) Each level of command shall evaluate every subordinate's demonstrated willingness to accept personal obligations for the fulfillment of departmental duties and objectives within the scope of assigned responsibilities.

(2) Command and supervisory personnel are responsible for instilling in each enforcement officer a lasting personal interest and sense of individual obligation to prevent traffic crashes on their assigned beat. This can be accomplished by:

(a) Identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

(b) Establishing methods for increasing individual effectiveness.

(c) Personally providing high-quality leadership and expert direction.

(3) Division Chiefs or Area commanders are responsible for the implementation of these objectives and policies to ensure the most efficient performance of personnel and the best use of available equipment and facilities.

2. GENERAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY.

a. The Department's enforcement efforts must be consistent with the organizational values of respect for others, fairness, ethical practices, and equitable treatment for all. Accordingly, all enforcement action by members must be based on sound professional judgment and accomplished in a businesslike, firm, impartial, courteous, and consistent manner.

b. Racial or Identity Profiling. Per Section 13519.4(e) of the Penal Code, racial or identity profiling is "the consideration of, or reliance on, to any degree, actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability in deciding which persons to subject to a stop or in deciding upon the scope or substance of law enforcement activities following a stop, except that an officer may consider or rely on characteristics listed in a specific suspect description. The activities include, but are not limited to, traffic or pedestrian stops, or actions during a stop, such as asking questions, frisks, consensual and nonconsensual searches of a person or any property, seizing any property, removing vehicle occupants during a traffic stop, issuing a citation, and making an arrest." Officers shall not engage in racial or identity profiling or discrimination of any kind. Racial or identity profiling and discrimination of any kind are prohibited by the Department and will not be tolerated.

c. Enforcement Activity—Dispatch Notification.

(1) Upon initiating an enforcement activity, an officer shall advise dispatch of the action by activating the F4 button on their Mobile Digital Computer (MDC) or advising dispatch via radio. At no time should an employee jeopardize their safety, the safety of any other employee, or a member of the public, in order to activate the F4 button. At the conclusion of the enforcement activity, the officer shall advise dispatch the action has concluded by activating the F6 button on their MDC or advising dispatch via radio (e.g., 10-98 or similar).

(2) For the purposes of this policy, an enforcement activity includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Enforcement stops (including pedestrians).

(b) Confrontational interactions with members of the public, to include civil disturbances, crimes in progress, or other situations where an employee anticipates encountering a disturbance or an uncooperative person.

(c) Traffic crashes.

(d) Assisting disabled motorists.

(e) Traffic hazards.

(3) This policy does not apply to officers making incidental contact with members of the public. (For example, an officer answers a question while walking into a gas station.)

d. Enforcement Stop.

(1) Officers shall not conduct traffic enforcement stops for the primary purpose of drug interdiction in the absence of probable cause or reasonable suspicion to believe the motorist or an occupant of the vehicle is involved in illegal drug-related activity. Officers must have specific and articulable facts to support their determination; a mere suspicion or “hunch” is not sufficient.

(2) The primary purpose of the CHP is traffic safety and officers should enforce the California Vehicle Code (CVC) with the goal of ensuring and maximizing the safety of hundreds of thousands of motorists on California roads and highways every day.

e. The direction provided in this manual constitutes broad policy designed to direct enforcement toward crash and congestion-causing violations. Emphasis

should be placed on quality enforcement rather than quantity alone. Areas of specialized enforcement, such as auto theft and commercial vehicle inspection, have their own guidelines that are addressed in other publications.

f. Procedures. Officers should take appropriate enforcement action for all violations of the law witnessed. The Department recognizes that there will be situations when an officer will be unable to take action on an observed violation due to extreme congestion, officer safety, or other considerations. All actions shall be accomplished in a businesslike, firm, impartial, courteous, and consistent manner using one of the four following procedures:

(1) Physical Arrest. Physical arrests must be made in those cases required by law. Where the law or departmental policy permits, but does not require a physical arrest, the decision to arrest must be based upon sound professional judgment. All physical arrests shall be made in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in Chapter 2, Arrest Policies, of this manual.

(2) Issuance of a CHP 215, Notice to Appear. The notice to appear process serves to bring the violator before the court without the officer taking the arrested person immediately before a magistrate. The CHP 215 is issued on the condition that the violator gives their written promise to appear as directed. The CHP 215 is completed as directed in Highway Patrol Manual (HPM) 100.9, Enforcement Documents Manual.

(a) A CHP 215 should normally charge a single, major, hazardous violation observed during the continuing movement immediately prior to the enforcement action.

(b) Additional charges are permitted when there is clear-cut evidence of other violations which are not connected to the major violation charged. The following are examples, but are not all-inclusive:

- 1 Driver's license violations.
- 2 Mechanical defects of which the driver has knowledge or should have had knowledge.
- 3 An unregistered or improperly registered vehicle.
- 4 Violations of the size, weight, or loading requirements.
- 5 An open container of an alcoholic beverage or marijuana.
- 6 Violations of occupant restraint requirements.

7 Violations of smoking in a vehicle while a minor child is present in the vehicle.

8 Consuming alcohol or smoking or ingesting marijuana while driving or while riding as a passenger.

(c) The single violation concept does not preclude charging a violator with reckless driving for a series of violations which clearly constitute the elements of that offense.

(d) Normally, correctable violations identified in Section 40303.5 CVC should be charged on a CHP 281, Notice to Correct Violation. However, when enforcement action is taken on a CHP 215, a correctable mechanical defect or other violation eligible for dismissal under Section 40610(b) CVC shall be identified by checking the "YES" box on the CHP 215 violation line. When citing for a registration, driver's license, or equipment violation that meets the disqualifying conditions (for dismissal) of Section 40610(b) CVC, check the "NO" box.

(3) Issuance of a CHP 281, Notice to Correct Violation. The CHP 281 will normally be used to cite CVC violations of a correctable nature (registration, driver's license, and equipment violations) where there is no evidence of persistent neglect, there is no immediate safety hazard, and the violator promises to correct the violation(s) promptly. Refer to local Standard Operating Procedures for local policy and HPM 100.9, Chapter 3, CHP 281, Notice to Correct Violation, for procedures regarding the completion of the CHP 281.

(a) If the officer has reason to believe the violator will not comply with the conditions of the CHP 281, the CHP 215 should be used to cite the violation(s).

(4) Issuance of a Verbal Warning.

(a) This procedure is to be used when a violation of law is observed but the officer is not certain of the accuracy of the observation regarding elements of the violation or when, using professional judgment, such action is deemed proper.

(b) This enforcement action shall be accomplished by stopping the vehicle and discussing the unsafe act or omission with the driver. Verbal warnings shall be recorded in the Automated Tracking System.

f. After stopping a passenger vehicle or light-duty truck (pickup) for an observed violation, officers are encouraged to inspect the vehicle in accordance with

Highway Patrol Guide 83.2, Vehicle Equipment Guide, to ensure compliance with equipment, driver's license, and registration requirements. Inspections are conditioned by the following:

- (1) Normally, equipment inspections will be limited to vehicles over three years old and should not be conducted on vehicles stopped on congested freeways.
  - (2) Routine "under the hood" inspection of emission control devices will not be made by officers who do not possess the necessary technical expertise.
  - (3) The depth and degree of the inspections should be reasonable, considering traffic conditions, location, weather, officer safety, and the nature of the original violation.
- g. In-View Patrol. Officers patrolling the highways observing motorist behavior or writing reports shall remain on their assigned beats and in public view at all times. Officers shall not create an appearance of concealment.
- (1) Parking on freeway ramps for the purpose of observing motorist behavior is normally prohibited. Parking on freeway ramps is restricted to providing services, investigating traffic crashes, or taking enforcement action against a violator.
  - (2) The following exceptions apply to observing driver behavior:
    - (a) The Area commander may direct the use of off-street observation for **limited periods** for the purpose of reducing a specific condition which has not responded to visible enforcement.
    - (b) Each use of off-street observation shall have prior approval of the appropriate Division Chief who shall designate the termination date.
  - (3) Traffic Monitoring.
    - (a) Officers monitoring traffic from the side of the roadway shall not use the technique of parking on the wrong side of the highway facing oncoming traffic.
    - (b) Parking in the center median to monitor traffic for any reason, including radar use, is discouraged. However, there may be situations where it becomes necessary. For example, enforcing high occupancy vehicle and/or high occupancy toll lane laws.

1 Monitoring traffic from the center median requires Division approval; requests will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

2 Officers shall not face the wrong direction while monitoring traffic from the center median.

3 Officers shall maintain reasonable, continuous patrol of their assigned beats. Traffic crash trends by hour of day and location may require officers to concentrate on specific portions of their beats during periods of high traffic crash frequency.

h. Area commanders shall refrain from **assigning** officers to the duty of enforcing any city or county ordinance. This does not, however, preclude officers from the responsibility of enforcing any valid city or county ordinance when they observe a violation incidental to traffic law enforcement in the CHP's jurisdiction.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK