


PINE BLUFF POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

	SUBJECT:	POLICY NUMBER 403
	VEHICLE SAFETY CHECKPOINT	ISSUE DATE 02/19/2008
	CHAPTER: TRAFFIC	EFFECTIVE DATE 02/19/2008
	ISSUED By: Chief of Police John E. Howell	TOTAL PAGES 4

I. POLICY

This agency has a primary mission of creating a safer environment for the citizens within this community. In furtherance of this mission, this agency shall periodically conduct a vehicle safety checkpoint as directed by the Chief or his or her designee. All vehicle safety checkpoint operations shall be closely supervised as assigned by the Chief or his or her designee. The directives, as stated within this policy, shall be applied as a standard operating procedure in providing guidance to agency personnel in conducting all vehicle safety checkpoints. This policy applies only to vehicle safety checkpoints. It does not apply to sobriety checkpoints, drug interdiction checkpoints, or roadblocks for other purposes.

II. PURPOSE

To increase the effectiveness of this agency in checking for unsafe vehicles traveling upon the roadways. Vehicle safety checkpoints will also allow this agency the opportunity to periodically concentrate its efforts in checking for violations of Arkansas traffic and regulatory laws that will ultimately increase the safety of the citizens within the community.

III. PROCEDURES:

- A.** A decision to implement a vehicle safety checkpoint operation must be approved either by the Chief or his or her designee.
- B.** The maximum duration of any vehicle safety checkpoint operation shall be four hours unless otherwise directed by the Chief or his or her designee.
- C.** A safety checkpoint operation shall only be conducted by utilizing the proper equipment. The following shall be considered as being proper equipment:

1. At least three marked patrol units equipped with emergency lights, siren and communications devices. One of these marked units shall be positioned at the checkpoint central location and shall have emergency lights operational during the checkpoint operation. The other two patrol units shall be positioned at each end of the checkpoint area. Other patrol units, for prisoner transport, shall be called to the checkpoint area if necessary.
2. At least one portable sign (when traffic is only stopped one way) to be placed alongside the roadway approximately 300 feet from the checkpoint area. The letters on the sign shall be large enough so that passing motorists are able to read it easily. The sign shall display the following messages:
 - a. NOTICE-----You are now entering a vehicle safety checkpoint under the direction of the Pine Bluff Police Department.
 - b. Be prepared to stop.
3. When traffic is being stopped from both directions a second sign shall be utilized and displayed as stated above.
4. A vehicle safety checkpoint operation shall only be conducted by assigning the appropriate number of personnel. The following shall be considered an appropriate number of personnel:
 - a. At least two or three officers (depending on the time of day and the traffic flow) conducting the checkpoint in full departmental uniform or in clothing, as approved by an immediate supervisor, that identifies him or her as a law enforcement officer. Two officers shall be utilized to approach the vehicles stopped and one officer will be utilized to take any enforcement action as necessary.
 - b. At least one officer or a properly trained K-9 and K-9 handler occupying the other marked units. These officers shall be in full departmental uniform or in clothing, as approved by an immediate supervisor that identifies him or her as a law enforcement officer.
5. A supervisor as assigned by the Chief or his or her designee.
6. Law Enforcement officers of this agency participating in a vehicle safety checkpoint operation shall:
 - a. Establish a checkpoint only in an area where there is complete visibility for a minimum of 500 feet from both directions of oncoming traffic to the checkpoint area.
 - b. Establish a checkpoint whereby all vehicles or a designated number, every third vehicle for instance, is stopped. The Chief of Police or other supervisor assigned to the operation shall make a decision as to how the checkpoint will be conducted at the scene.
 - c. Cautiously approach all vehicles and be particularly alert to suspicious movements or actions of the vehicle occupants.

- d. Allow the driver and occupants to remain inside their vehicle unless their removal from the vehicle is necessary due to facts leading the officer to reasonably suspect that:
 - i. A crime has been or is being committed;
 - ii. The vehicle occupant(s) presents some danger to the officer or others; or
 - iii. The person is armed and presently dangerous.
 - e. Courteously advise the driver of the vehicle the following: This is a vehicle safety checkpoint being conducted by the Pine Bluff Police Department. We are checking vehicles for the safety of all motorists within the city of Pine Bluff.
 - f. Advise the operator of the vehicle to provide a driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of vehicle insurance. Also advise the vehicle operator that a brief vehicle safety inspection, checking the general condition of the motor vehicle, will be completed.
 - g. Complete the vehicle/document inspection and take any enforcement action deemed necessary or appropriate. Drivers of vehicles for which enforcement action is necessary will be directed to a "pull off area" that has been established prior to the beginning of the checkpoint operation. A pull off area is defined as a location such as the following:
 - i. The shoulder of the roadway that is wide enough that three or more vehicles can be parked in a safe manner.
 - ii. A parking area that can be utilized either by permission of the owner or a business parking lot for which the business is closed.
 - iii. The pull off area is necessary to avoid any lane blockage for prolonged periods and to provide for motorists and officer safety.
 - h. After completing the document/vehicle inspection or taking enforcement action and no arrests are made, law enforcement officers shall:
 - i. Thank the vehicle operator/occupants for the cooperation extended.
 - ii. Promptly release the vehicle and occupants.
 - i. The additional patrol unit(s), positioned at each end of the checkpoint area, shall provide back-up for the officers conducting the checkpoint and shall conduct traffic stops in a situation where a vehicle, after observing the portable signs, takes evasive action to avoid entering the checkpoint area.
7. Upon completion of a vehicle safety checkpoint operation, all signs will be removed from alongside the roadway and returned to agency storage.

8. Agency personnel assigned to a vehicle safety checkpoint operation must first attend a briefing for which a supervisor or designee will further familiarize personnel with agency operational procedures, discuss the location of the checkpoint and emphasize officer safety.
9. Information about any vehicle safety checkpoint operation, or subsequent arrests or seizures as a result of the operation, will be released to the news media in accordance with departmental policy concerning Freedom of Information.
10. At the conclusion of a vehicle safety checkpoint operation, the Chief or supervising officer in charge will assign one of the officers involved in the checkpoint to complete a full report outlining the details associated with the operation. The report shall include the date, time, and location of the checkpoint; personnel assigned including the use of a K-9 and in what capacity each individual was utilized; results of the operation such as, arrests made, searches conducted and items seized subsequent to the search; and any other information specific to the particular event.
11. A completed report shall be forwarded to the supervising officer making the assignment. The supervising officer shall forward a copy to the Criminal Investigation Division for investigative purposes if necessary. The original report shall be filed within the Police Department in accordance with departmental filing procedures.
12. Law enforcement officers of this agency may conduct a Vehicle Checkpoint operation in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies within the City only if the cooperating agency will agree to comply with the specific requirements set forth within this policy.