

Pima County Sheriff's Department

Sobriety Checkpoint Guidelines

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the physical construction and operation of a sobriety checkpoint. The goal of the checkpoint will be maximizing its deterrent effect by increasing the perceived risk of apprehension of motorists who would operate a motor vehicle while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

II Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Pima County Sheriff's Department to implement a sobriety checkpoint program. The sobriety checkpoint program will be used as a part of the Pima County Sheriff's Department's ongoing comprehensive traffic enforcement efforts. To standardize this program, the following set of written guidelines has been developed governing the operation of sobriety checkpoints within the Pima County Sheriff's Department's jurisdiction.
- B. To implement this policy, the Special Operations Commander will ensure that the Traffic Unit or DUI Unit Supervisor complies with the following restrictions:
 - 1. Satisfy the legal requirements for sobriety checkpoints.
 - 2. Conduct sobriety checkpoints with a minimum amount of intrusion or inconvenience to the motoring public.
 - 3. Assure the safety of the general public and of the participating law enforcement officers.
 - 4. Objectively select a sobriety checkpoint site based on relevant data.
 - 5. Provide for public information and education to maximize the deterrent effect and heighten awareness of the impaired driver problem.
 - 6. Provide for a systematic procedure for both data collection and post checkpoint reporting to insure consistency with checkpoint guidelines.
 - 7. Select participating law enforcement officers based on relevant training, skills, and experience.
 - 8. Brief participating deputies on operational guidelines prior to the beginning of these checkpoints.

II Guidelines

A. General

1. Sobriety checkpoints will not be conducted without the approval of the Special Operations Commander or his designee.
2. A statistical summary and justification for establishing a sobriety checkpoint shall be presented to the Special Operations Commander for review and approval.
3. The selection of the date, time, and location of the sobriety checkpoint will be made by the Traffic or DUI Supervisor.
4. The Traffic or DUI Supervisor shall give no less than one day notice to the Press Information Officer Supervisor for dissemination to the general public. This announcement will not specify the location of the checkpoint but rather the Pima County Sheriff's Department's use of sobriety checkpoints for impaired driver deterrence.
5. The Traffic or DUI Supervisor shall conduct a briefing for all personnel assigned to operate the sobriety checkpoint. The Traffic or DUI Supervisor shall provide such personnel with required guidelines and procedures as well as answer questions concerning the operation.

B. Physical Construction of Sobriety Checkpoints

1. All sobriety checkpoints established by the Pima County Sheriff's Department shall strive for consistency with accepted procedures regarding the use of warning signs, barricades, traffic cones, warning lights, and other safety equipment and/ or warning devices that may be required.
2. Checkpoints will be categorized as follows:
 - A. **Large scale checkpoints** will be used on high volume, arterial type roadways and thoroughfares. These checkpoints will require a site plan with approval from the Pima County Department of Transportation as to the physical location and layout of the operation
 - B. **Small scale checkpoints** will be used on smaller, rural type

roadways. These operations will typically be manned by fewer personnel and constructed by Pima County Sheriff's Department personnel. The intent of these checkpoints is to be rapidly deployed and capable of tear down and relocation on short notice. These small scale checkpoints will generally be supported by a saturation type DUI patrol in the surrounding area.

- C. **Phantom checkpoints** will be used on either arterial roadways or on lower volume traffic ways. The intent of these set ups is to give the motorists the impression that a checkpoint is either being prepared or was just completed. The appropriate signing and an emergency vehicle will be deployed but the checkpoint will not actually stop vehicles. Generally, a saturation patrol will be deployed in the vicinity of these checkpoints.
- 3. For the safety of law enforcement officers and the motoring public, vehicles will be , where possible, directed by means of warning signs, lights, traffic cones, or other safety equipment into a single traffic lane.
 - 4. All vehicles shall be required to stop at the checkpoint except as outlined in this procedure. Portable stop signs in addition to the directions of a uniformed law enforcement officer shall be utilized for this purpose.
 - A. At large scale checkpoints, a staggered stop of all vehicles shall be employed. All vehicles shall be motioned to a stop approximately 30 to 50 feet from the contact law enforcement officer. As the contact law enforcement officer concludes speaking with the operator of a vehicle, the next vehicle waiting shall be signaled to pull forward and then stop in the immediate vicinity of the contact law enforcement officer.
 - B. At small scale checkpoints, operators will be directed to stop by the law enforcement officer making contact with each vehicle.
 - 5. Adequate off street parking for follow up investigation (field sobriety testing and screening) shall be available in the immediate vicinity of the sobriety checkpoint.

6. The Traffic or DUI Supervisor shall obtain permission from the owner or agent of any private property or parking area used for this police purpose.

C. Operator Contact at Sobriety Checkpoints

1. All contact law enforcement officers shall be uniformed so as to assure the public that the sobriety checkpoint is a legitimate governmental operation.
2. All contact law enforcement officers shall wear a reflective traffic safety vest.
3. Only those law enforcement officers with DUI training shall participate as contact law enforcement officers at sobriety checkpoints.
4. The contact law enforcement officer shall utilize a statement/ question similar to the following upon contact with the driver of a stopped vehicle:

"Good evening. This is a sobriety checkpoint aimed at deterring impaired driving. Have you consumed any alcohol or drugs today?"

If the driver's answer is no and there is no other compelling reason to detain the vehicle, the contact law enforcement officer shall permit the vehicle to proceed.

5. During the conversation with the driver, the contact law enforcement officer will establish if reasonable suspicion exists to warrant further investigation.
6. The contact law enforcement officer shall pay particular attention to any symptoms or indicators of impairment to include but not limited to
 - A. Ability to follow directions as to the physical layout of the checkpoint as well as those given by checkpoint personnel.
 - B. The driver's speech, coordination, appearance, eyes, and any odor of intoxicants or other contraband.
 - C. An odor of intoxicants warrants asking the driver if he or she has been drinking.