
	<b>GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>		
	<b>Enforcement of Speed Violations</b>		
	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b> <b>620.3</b>	<b>Related CALEA Standards:</b>	
	<b>Effective Date</b> <b>10/24/2013</b>	<b>1.2.7, 61.1.5, 61.1.8, 61.1.9</b>	
<b>Authorized by:</b> <b>Mark P. Sroka</b> CHIEF OF POLICE		<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>

## I. PURPOSE

Excessive speed is a leading cause of fatal and/or serious injury traffic collisions. Therefore, the Department aggressively enforces the violation of speed limits in the City, particularly in areas such as school, construction, or other zones where it is critical to drive slower and with a heightened level of awareness. The purpose of this directive is not intended to restrict officer discretion, but to provide procedure that assists officers in maintaining compliance with Court decisions and applicable law.

## II. POLICY

The Department specially trains and certifies personnel in the use of police traffic radar, laser and other speed measurement systems; these officers enforce the speed limits while performing other patrol duties or in conjunction with the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program.

## III. DEFINITIONS

### A. Calibration

Within the context of this directive, the term “calibration” refers to using professionally recognized methods to periodically verify and document the accuracy of speed measuring devices utilized by the Department.

### B. Pace

Within the context of this directive, the terms “pace” and “pacing” refer to the use of a police vehicle and its calibrated speedometer, as a speed measuring device, to measure the rate of speed of another moving vehicle.

### C. Speed Measuring Device

Within the context of this directive, the term “speed measuring device” refers generically to devices that are utilized to measure the rate of speed of a moving vehicle; laser units, radar units and calibrated vehicle speedometers are examples of speed measuring devices.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE**

##### **A. General Provisions**

1. The Department utilizes radar and laser speed measuring devices.
2. Officers will use only those speed measuring devices owned by the Department and approved by the Chief of Police.
3. Use of speed camera systems is outlined separately, in General Order 620.5.
4. Officers enforcing speed violations should consider these, among other factors:
  - a) Degree to which the vehicle was traveling in excess of the posted speed limit;
  - b) Environmental conditions and road hazards;
  - c) Vehicle speed through congested areas, construction areas, school zones and other special caution areas;
  - d) Number, location and visibility of speed limit signs (or lack of adequate signage) posted in the area where the violation was observed;
  - e) Danger posed (negligence vs. recklessness) by the offense;
  - f) Contribution to, or cause of, a speed related collision; and/or
  - g) Repetitive citizen complaints of speed related hazards.

##### **B. Operator Training and Certification**

1. Prior to conducting speed enforcement activities that utilize a radar or laser unit, officers must attend and successfully complete Department approved training and attain certification as an operator of the equipment.
2. In addition to completion of an approved training course, operator certification includes:
  - a) Proficiency in visual speed estimation, to the degree that officers demonstrate an ability to recognize vehicles

travelling in excess of the posted speed limit before a speed measuring device is utilized; and

- b) Issuance of a prescribed number of warning notices while using the radar or laser unit under actual field conditions over a designated time period.

**C. Care and Maintenance of Equipment**

1. Radar and laser units shall be kept dry at all times and when not in use shall be carried in a protective case.
2. Preventive and programmed maintenance will be performed in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
3. Records pertaining to radar and laser units, to include records of maintenance, receipts and any certificates of testing/calibration, shall be maintained by the Quartermaster.
4. According to the manufacturers of Department authorized lasers, the units do not require regular service/calibration unless a failure is noted during pre-operational tests.
5. Per manufacturer specifications, radar units and their respective tuning forks shall be taken or sent to an authorized maintenance facility for testing, calibration and/or preventive maintenance annually, unless a unit is taken out of service for repair.

**D. Operational Guidelines**

1. Speed measuring devices will only be in a manner that is in accordance with Department approved training and the manufacturer's documentation.
2. Moving radar units will only be operated from inside designated police vehicles, utilizing an approved mounting position.
3. Radar units shall never be placed in a position where the radar antenna is against metal.
4. Pre-operational tests and checks of radar and laser units, as outlined in training materials and manufacturer's documentation, will be performed prior to use of a unit during a shift.

5. If a unit fails any pre-operational tests or checks, it will be taken out of service and returned to the Quartermaster who then will send it to the manufacturer for repair.
6. Speed measuring devices must be operated in a manner that is in compliance with training, FCC and other applicable regulations and manufacturer's specifications.
7. Units assigned to traffic officers should only be used by these officers.

**E. Measuring Rate of Speed by Vehicle Pace**

1. Police vehicle speedometers used for the enforcement of speed violations shall be tested by a certified radar or laser operator annually.
2. When a speedometer is tested, a record is made for Department vehicle files.
3. The record will indicate the name of the officer that tested the speedometer, the date of the test and the speed of the vehicle as compared to what is indicated by the radar or laser unit.
4. The speedometer in each police vehicle will meet the vehicle manufacturer's specifications. Any officer who discovers a malfunctioning police vehicle speedometer will remove the vehicle from service and submit a maintenance/repair request to the Department of Public Works.