
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT			
	Enforcement of Speed Violations			
	GENERAL ORDER	620.3		Related CALEA Standards: 61.1.5
	Effective Date	11/25/2025		
Authorized by:		Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE	
			DATE 11/25/2025	

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. Excessive speed is a leading contributing factor in fatal and serious-injury traffic collisions. Accordingly, the Department prioritizes the enforcement of speed-limit violations within the City, especially in school zones, construction areas, and other locations where reduced speeds and heightened driving awareness are critical. The purpose of this directive is to preserve officer discretion while providing procedures that help ensure compliance with court decisions and applicable law.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. The Department provides specialized training and certification for personnel in the use of police traffic lasers and other speed-measurement systems. These officers enforce speed limits while conducting routine patrol duties or as part of the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **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 to ensure they are functioning properly and producing legally defensible results.
- 3.2. **Pace:** Within the context of this directive, the terms “pace” and “pacing” refers to the use of a police vehicle and its certified calibrated speedometer, as a speed measuring device to determine the target vehicle’s speed.
- 3.3. **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, and calibrated vehicle speedometers are examples of speed measuring devices.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1. General Provisions

- 4.1.1. The Department utilizes laser and other speed measuring devices.
- 4.1.2. Officers will use only those speed measuring devices owned by the Department and approved by the Chief of Police.
- 4.1.3. Use of speed camera systems is outlined separately in General Order 620.5.
- 4.1.4. Officers enforcing speed violations should take the following factors, among others, into consideration:
 - 4.1.4.1. Severity of speed violation relative to the posted speed limit;
 - 4.1.4.2. Environmental conditions and road hazards;
 - 4.1.4.3. Vehicle speed through congested areas, construction areas, school zones, and other special caution areas;
 - 4.1.4.4. Number, placement, visibility, and signage deficiencies of speed limit signs in the area where the violation was observed;
 - 4.1.4.5. Danger posed, such as negligence or recklessness, by the offense;
 - 4.1.4.6. Contribution to, or cause of, a speed-related collision; and/or
 - 4.1.4.7. Recurring citizen complaints of speed related hazards.

4.2. Operator Training and Certification

- 4.2.1. Prior to conducting speed enforcement activities that utilize a laser unit, or other speed-measuring devices, officers must attend and successfully complete Department approved training and attain certification as an operator of the equipment.
- 4.2.2. In addition to completion of an approved training course, operator certification includes:
 - 4.2.2.1. 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

- 4.2.2.2. Issuance of a prescribed number of warning notices while using the laser unit or other speed-measuring device under actual field conditions over a designated time period.

4.3. Care and Maintenance of Equipment

- 4.3.1. Laser units shall be kept dry at all times and shall be carried in a protective case when not in use.
- 4.3.2. Preventive and programmed maintenance will be performed in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- 4.3.3. Records pertaining to laser units, to include records of maintenance, receipts and any certificates of testing/calibration, shall be maintained by the Quartermaster.
- 4.3.4. 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.

4.4. Operational Guidelines

- 4.4.1. Speed-measuring devices will only be utilized in a manner that is in accordance with Department-approved training and the manufacturer's operating guidelines.
- 4.4.2. Pre-operational tests and checks of laser units, as outlined in training materials and manufacturers' documentation, will be performed prior to use of a unit on duty.
- 4.4.3. 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.
- 4.4.4. Speed measuring devices must be operated in a manner that complies with training, FCC and other applicable regulations and manufacturer's specifications.

5. Measuring Rate of Speed by Vehicle Pace

- 5.1. Police vehicle speedometers used for the enforcement of speed violations shall be calibrated and certified by a laser operator annually or when modifications have been made to the vehicle that

would affect the accuracy of the speedometer (e.g., tire replacement, etc.).

- 5.2. Certification shall be conducted on a roadway with a minimum of 50 miles per hour. The road surface should be dry and as level as possible. Certification should be scheduled to minimize interference with other traffic.
- 5.2. Vehicles will be certified at 35, 55, and 65 miles per hour with a minimum of two passes at each required speed.
- 5.3. When a speedometer is tested and certified, a record is logged on Department-approved Form # 62.
- 5.4. The record shall include the name of the officer who conducted the speedometer test, the assigned officer of the test vehicle, the date of the test, and the measured vehicle speeds as compared to the readings from the laser unit.
- 5.5. The speedometer in each police vehicle will meet the vehicle manufacturer's specifications. Any officer with a certified speedometer 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.