

River Bend Police Department
Checking Stations
General Order 25
Effective Date 05/01/2012

25.01 **Policy:** It is the policy of the River Bend Police Department to encourage appropriate driving attitudes, skills, behaviors and habits so that all members of the community and its visitors enjoy a safe environment. To that end, officers will follow guidelines established for conducting vehicle checking stations including: tactical response to criminal activity; soliciting information on specific crimes; vehicle safety inspections; detection of intoxicated/impaired drivers.

25.02 **Purpose:** Checking stations are established pursuant to NCGS 20-16.3A and are operated for the purpose of ensuring compliance with North Carolina's motor vehicle code. All officers are required to comply with this policy when participating in a checking station established by this Department. When participating in checking stations with other law enforcement agencies, the checking station plan of the agency in charge will be in effect.

25.03 **Standard Checking Stations:** Officers may conduct checking stations to determine compliance with minor vehicle laws. Examples, for which this type of checking station may be used include:

- A. Verification of drivers' licenses,
- B. Vehicle registration checks,
- C. Insurance checks,
- D. Seat belt compliance checks, and
- E. Driving while impaired.

25.04 **Checking Station Requirements:**

- A. A Checking Station conducted for the purpose of driver license, registration, insurance or seat belt compliance shall be performed by utilizing a Checking Station Authorization form (RBPD Form). The checking station authorization form shall be approved by the unit's immediate supervisor or designee. The plan must follow the guidelines set forth by North Carolina General Statute 20-16.3A.
- B. A pre-planned DWI Checking Station, including those involving multiple jurisdictions, shall be approved by the Chief of Police. The plan will be in the form of a "Task Order" and must follow the guidelines set forth by North Carolina General Statute 20-16.3A
- C. Checking Station Plan (Task Order or Checking Station Authorization RBPD Form) – A Supervisor or designee will prepare the plan for any checking station or special enforcement operation. Checking station plans shall include:
 1. Date,
 2. Time,
 3. Location,
 4. Duration, and
 5. Officer designated to be the on-site supervisor of the checking station.
- D. Location - The site for a checking station shall be random or statistically indicated and

selected with due regard for the safety of motorists and the members operating the checking station as well as:

1. Roadway conditions - sufficient distance must be provided to allow a motorist traveling at the speed limit to stop his/her vehicle in a normal manner under the existing conditions.
2. Adequate area must be available off the traveled portion of the highway to allow for the safety of motorists when enforcement action is taken.
3. Patrol vehicles must be parked to allow access to the highway for pursuit in any direction.
4. Checking stations shall be operated so as to avoid unnecessary traffic congestion and delay to motorists.
5. Lighting of roadway and testing site.
6. Provide an escape route for other law enforcement officers, emergency vehicles, and the public, and
7. Any other factors which may impact officer safety or the safety of the citizens.

E. Notification to the public - The public shall be advised that an authorized checking station is being conducted by having, at a minimum:

1. One marked law enforcement vehicle with its blue lights activated at all times during the operation of the checking station,
2. Signs, lights, cones and other warning devices may be used but are not required.
3. Marked Patrol vehicles parked in conspicuous locations, or
4. Other ways to ensure motorists are aware that an authorized checking station is being conducted.
5. The senior officer present shall also coordinate with the Chief of Police regarding media involvement.

F. Manpower

1. Checking stations will have at least two uniformed officers present.
2. Officers shall wear their Department's official uniform, including reflective traffic vests, at all times while participating in the checking station.
3. Officers shall wear their body armor at all times while operating the checking station,
4. Officers must maintain radio contact with the Communications Center.
5. Officers operating the checking station shall position themselves and their vehicles in a manner that will provide a tactical advantage and maximize officer safety.

G. The on-site supervisor shall be responsible to:

1. Assemble the personnel and equipment necessary to establish the checking station.
2. Brief all participants of the checking station on
 - a. Purpose of the checking station,
 - b. Establishment and operation of the checking station,
 - c. Limitations imposed, as well as
 - d. Participant's responsibilities during its operation.

3. Advise the Communications Center of the location and time the checking station will be activated and when the checking station operation is secured.
4. Monitor the checking station to ensure that it is fulfilling its function and is not presenting unnecessary safety risks.
5. Immediately discontinue the checking station operation upon accomplishing its goal or when the risks involved outweigh public safety.

H. Pattern for stopping vehicles - The pattern for stopping vehicles shall be to stop every vehicle. The on-site supervisor of the checking station may alter this pattern in the event of unreasonable traffic delays or other factors that create a hazard. The alteration of the pattern shall consist of permitting all vehicles to pass through the checking station until the delay or hazard is abated. The altered pattern must ensure that no individual officer is given discretion as to which vehicle is stopped.

I. Pattern for Requesting Information - The pattern for requesting documentation is that the drivers of every vehicle stopped shall be requested to produce their driver's license and vehicle registration. The on-site supervisor of the checking station may alter this pattern if unreasonable traffic delays or other hazards occur. The altered pattern must ensure that no individual officer is given discretion as to what documentation a given driver is required to produce.

J. Reasonable Suspicion - During the course of a stop at a checking station, if an officer determines that there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a driver or other occupant has violated a provision of Chapter 20 or other provision of law, the officer may detain that driver or occupant for a reasonable period of time in order to investigate further.

K. The operator of any vehicle may be requested to submit to an alcohol screening test under NCGS 20-16.3 if during the stop the officer determines the driver had previously consumed or has an open container of alcoholic beverage in the vehicle. The officer so requesting shall consider the results of any alcohol screening test or the driver's refusal in determining if there is reasonable suspicion to investigate further.

25.05

Informational Checking Station: Officers may conduct informational checking stations for the purpose of seeking motorists' assistance in solving a crime. This type of checking station may be appropriate in cases involving death or serious injury and where motorists may be able to provide pertinent information to help identify the offender or otherwise provide pertinent information related to the death or injury.

25.05.01

Informational checking stations should, whenever feasible, be approved, in writing, by a supervisor. The authorizing supervisor shall designate the purpose, location and approximate time of operation of the checking station.

25.05.02

Because an informational checking station is not designed to determine whether a vehicle's occupants are violating a provision of the motor vehicle law, drivers shall not be asked to produce a drivers' license or any other documentation.

2506

DWI Enforcement Strategies: The River Bend Police Department regularly participates in the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program: "Booze It and Loose It" campaign as well as conducting checking stations at other times and locations. The "Booze It and Loose It" campaign is a multi-jurisdictional team that conducts periodic traffic enforcement activities to include checking stations in an attempt to reduce the number of DWI incidents. These activities involve officers from different jurisdictions working under mutual aid agreements.

25.06.01 The Chief of Police or designee shall be the department's representative on all state wide campaigns and will be responsible for planning the department's participation.

25.07 **Mutual Aid Requests:** Once the plan is approved, Chief will be requesting mutual aid from participating agencies.

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