

PUSH / PULL / DRAG (AND DRIVE)



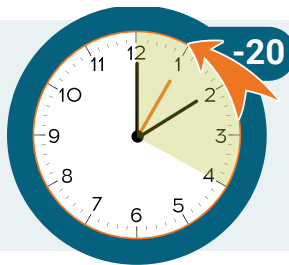
TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT
SAFER. TOGETHER



When arriving at the scene of an incident, law enforcement officers will decide if it is best to work the scene as they find it, or to move the scene off of the roadway to aid in safe, quick clearance. State statutes authorize peace officers to remove vehicles, cargo, or other property obstructing a roadway or creating a hazard to traffic.

When moving an incident scene from the roadway, there are multiple methods available to quickly and efficiently clear the scene and restore traffic back to normal flow. If the vehicle is drivable, it should be moved to a safe, workable space. If the vehicle is not drivable, the push and pull/drag method should be considered. The risk of pushing, pulling, dragging, or driving a vehicle off the roadway is far less than the risk of a secondary crash. Secondary crashes are often more severe than the primary incident. These methods require thinking outside the box and making safe, quick clearance a priority.

Note: There is a distinct difference between a disabled motorist and a crash. This information is related to crashed vehicles.



Why is push/pull/drag important? It reduces clearance times!

Between 2013-2019, Oregon DOT found an average of **20 minutes** was saved in median roadway clearance time when using push/pull/drag methods.

Methods

Always follow your agency's policies and guidelines.



DRIVE

If the vehicle is still drivable, have the motorist move it out of the roadway and onto the shoulder, off-ramp, or parking lot.

If the driver is not able to drive the vehicle, law enforcement has the authority to drive the vehicle out of the travel lane themselves.

Photo Courtesy of Adobe Stock



PUSH

If the vehicle is not drivable, use push bars to move the disabled vehicle out of the travel lanes. The cost-benefit of a scratched bumper outweighs the risk of a secondary crash.

Other types of vehicles, such as snowplows, could also be used to push the vehicle.

Photo Courtesy of Oregon DOT



PULL/DRAG

If the vehicle is not drivable or able to be pushed, attach a tow chain/tow straps to move the disabled vehicle out of the travel lanes.

Photo Courtesy of Douglas County, Colorado Sheriff's Office



Implementation

Two things required, concurrently: **Training and Policies**

Training

- Ensure staff is aware of standards and guidelines outlined by your agency
- Schedule exercises on how to properly use push/pull/drag equipment and methods

Policies

The following is a list of best practices to consider including when implementing a push/pull/drag policy:

- If the vehicle will move under its own power (even if highly damaged) drive it instead of pushing it
- Use push bars to move damaged / disabled vehicles from the traveled portion of the roadway when that vehicle is creating a safety hazard
- Push the vehicle in a straight line
- Push the vehicle completely off the roadway
- Don't use push bars for pulling or towing
- Only officers that have successfully completed department approved training should use push bars
- A driver consent form can be developed and utilized with the vehicle owner to ease the process, but law enforcement does have the authority to remove a vehicle from the travel lane without driver consent

Example Language:

- Virginia DOT PPD Instructional and Informational Memorandum includes:
 - Criteria for using an authorized push bumper
 - Use of devices to move disabled vehicles from the travel lane only
 - Eligible vehicle requirements
 - Release of liability through a driver consent form
 - Procedures for the use of push bumpers and tow straps



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Policy Implementation Contacts

The following agencies have policies in place and are available as resources:

Bellevue, NE
Police Department
Operations Division
402-682-6627

Council Bluffs, IA
Police Department
Traffic Unit
712-328-4948

Nebraska State Patrol
Contact your local troop area