

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
CHARLES COUNTY
MARYLAND**

**AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT
UNIT**

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Contents

- 1-001 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL ESTABLISHED 4
- 1-002 NATURE OF THE MANUAL 4
- 1-003 TERM OF THE AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT SOP MANUAL 4
- 1-004 ORDER OF PRECEDENCE AND SAVING CLAUSE 4
- 1-005 KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED..... 4
- 1-100 AEU OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES..... 5
 - 1-101 UNIT ORGANIZATION 5
 - 1-103 SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES 5
- 2-101 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT UNIT OFFICER..... 5
 - 2-102 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT UNIT OFFICE SPECIALIST 5
 - 2-150 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT RECORDS RETENTION 5
- 2-200 RED LIGHT CAMERA DEFINITIONS 6
 - 2-201 RED LIGHT CAMERA TRAINING..... 7
- 2-300 DAILY OPERATIONS COMPUTER PROCEDURES..... 7
 - 2-301 APPROVALS: DAILY CITATION APPROVING PROCEDURES..... 7
 - 2-302 QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW 7
 - 2-303 CRITERIA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION 7
 - 2-304 REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS 8
 - 2-305 PROCESSING PAYMENTS..... 9
 - 2-306 COURT PRESENTATIONS 10
 - 2-307 STOLEN VEHICLE OR REGISTRATION PLATE 10
 - 2-308 RECORD KEEPING 11
 - 2-309 SITE SELECTIONS AND ACCEPTANCE 11
- 2-400 SPEED CAMERA PROGRAM 11
 - 2-103 SPEED CAMERA STRUCTURE 12
 - 2-401 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR NEW SCHOOL ZONE ENFORCEMENT LOCATIONS 12
 - 2-402 TRAINING 12
 - 2-403 CITATION APPROVAL PROCEDURE..... 12
 - 2-404 QUALITY CONROL REVIEW 12
 - 2-405 CRITERIA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION 13
 - 2-406 REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS 13
 - 2-407 CORRECTION PROCEDURES DURING PROCESSING 14
 - 2-408 PROCESSING PAYMENTS..... 15
 - 2-409 COURT PRESENTATIONS 15
 - 2-410 STOLEN VEHICLE OR REGISTRATION PLATE 16
 - 2-411 RECORD KEEPING 16
 - 2-412 OFFICE SECURITY 16



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF, CHARLES COUNTY, MD
AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT UNIT SOP MANUAL



2-413	CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY	16
2-414	SITE SELECTIONS AND ACCEPTANCE	16
2-415	MONTHLY SITE INSPECTION.....	17
2-416	COURT EVIDENCE BOOK.....	17
2-417	SPEED CAMERA HOLIDAYS.....	17
2-500	SCHOOL BUS MONITORING PROGRAM	17
2-501	SCHOOL BUS MONITORING STRUCTURE	17
2-502	TRAINING	18
2-503	QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW	18
2-504	CRITERIA FOR ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION	18
2-505	REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS	18
2-506	CORRECTION PROCEDURES DURING PROCESSING	19
2-507	PROCESSING PAYMENTS.....	19
2-508	COURT PRESENTATIONS	20
2-600	SICK AND SAVE LEAVE.....	20



1-001 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL ESTABLISHED

This document is hereby established as the Standard Operating Procedures Manual of the Automated Enforcement Unit of the Charles County Sheriff's Office. This document may hereinafter be referred to as the "Automated Enforcement Unit SOP Manual," or an individual procedure within the document as an "Automated Enforcement Unit SOP."

The rules, policies and procedures contained herein are binding upon all Charles County Sheriff's Office personnel who work within the Automated Enforcement Unit and those who may be assigned duties which fall under the control of the Field Operations Section.

The material contained within this document is intended to amplify and support the Agency Administrative and Operational Manual (AOM). This document is subordinate to the Manual and is established in compliance with and under the authority of Chapter 0, Section 009 of the Administrative and Operational Manual of the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

1-002 NATURE OF THE MANUAL

This document is administrative in nature. Its dictates require conformance by those persons who are subject to the supervision of the Commander, Field Operations Section, Automated Enforcement Unit. This document does not create or modify law. Violations of the rules, policies and procedures set forth in this document may expose persons who are subject to its authority to administrative sanctions. This document is not, however, intended to create a greater civil or criminal liability than would otherwise be available under law. Finally, this document is not, and should not be construed to be, a contract.

1-003 TERM OF THE AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT SOP MANUAL

This document is established August 1, 2001. All material legitimately placed within this document shall remain in effect until modified or removed by the Commander, Field Operations Section. All material shall remain in effect through changes in administration of the Unit unless modified or canceled by the new Commander.

1-004 ORDER OF PRECEDENCE AND SAVING CLAUSE

This document is superior to any and all conflicting documents within the Automated Enforcement Unit. Any portion of other subordinate documents which are in conflict are void. Those documents containing rules, policies or procedures which are not in conflict, or have portions which are not in conflict, remain in force until replaced, modified or rescinded.

If any part of this document is found to be in conflict with any law or decision of any Court of competent jurisdiction, that part so in conflict is null and void. However, all other parts of this document shall remain in full force. In the event of conflict between any sections of this document, the most recently dated section shall control.

1-005 KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

All persons who are subject to the supervision of the Commander, Field Operations Section, Automated Enforcement Unit shall read and be familiar with the contents of this document. Knowledge of this document and the ability to operate in conformance with its contents shall be used in rating each employee's job performance.

This document will be published on the Charles County Sheriff's Office intranet and will be accessible to all employees or other people subject to the supervision of the Commander, Field Operations Section. This document will be referred to for guidance in situations where it may apply, and knowledge from memory will not suffice.



1-100 AEU OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the AEU is to manage the speed camera, red light camera and school bus enforcement camera programs. This is done by reviewing and issuing all automated camera citations, handling transfers of liability and being able to testify in court to all citations issued.

1-101 UNIT ORGANIZATION

The Automated Enforcement Unit is a component of the Special Operations Division within the Field Operations Section. The Unit supervisor is accountable for all operations which fall under the Unit's responsibility and will delegate those assignments among the Unit's members. Those responsibilities may be amended or expanded at any time with the approval of the Commander, Field Operations Section.

1-103 SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Automated Enforcement Unit supervisor will be responsible for the daily activities of all people assigned to the Unit. The supervisor will be the main point of contact for all matters dealing with speed camera, red light camera and school bus enforcement camera programs. The Automated Enforcement Unit supervisor will also act as the Agency's representative at all meetings or boards that pertain to automated enforcement.

2-101 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT UNIT OFFICER

This is a sworn law enforcement officer with duties limited by the Sheriff. Responsibilities include reviewing pre-approved speed camera citations and finalize, review and approve red light camera citations, review and approve school bus camera citations. This position will be required to handle telephone inquiries, complete court dockets, testify in court and other assigned support functions. This position reports to and receives supervision directly from the Automated Enforcement Supervisor.

2-102 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT UNIT OFFICE SPECIALIST

Responsibilities include pre-approving speed camera citations, review and approve red light camera citations, review and approve school bus camera citations. This position will be required to handle telephone inquiries, complete court dockets, testify in court and other assigned support functions. These employees report to and receive supervision directly from the Automated Enforcement Supervisor.

2-150 AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT RECORDS RETENTION

Purposes of the policy include retention and maintenance of documents necessary for the proper functioning of the AEU as well as to comply with applicable legal requirements.

The goals are to:

- Retain important documents for reference and future use;
- Delete documents that are no longer necessary

Document Destruction:

The Document Retention and Destruction Policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of the AEU staff, for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the AEU documents and records.

AEU staff are required to honor the following rules:



Paper documents indicated under the terms for retention in the following section will be maintained by AEU staff. Please refer to the chart for minimum requirements for each type of document.

Record Retention:

The following table indicates the minimum requirements for document retention in the AEU. Any document needed to be scanned must be completed within ten (10) days of receiving the document. The required minimum requirements have been obtained from the Charles County Government and Howard County Police Department MD RAEC.

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Audit reports	Permanently
Correspondence (general)	Can be destroyed after scanning
Correspondence (lawsuits and important matters)	Permanently
Correspondence (court requests)	7 years or Scanned
Court Dockets	7 years or Scanned
Internal audit reports	7 years
Transfer of liability (rental cars and sworn statements)	Until paid + Scanned
Voided citation documentation	Can be destroyed after scanning

Destruction of Records:

Records should be destroyed by shredding or some other means that will render them unreadable. AEU staff may shred or destroy according to the time schedule above.

Compliance:

Failure on the part of employees to follow this policy can result in possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals.

2-200 RED LIGHT CAMERA DEFINITIONS

Incident: A set of digital violation images and associated data are combined into one file. This file is encrypted with a proprietary technique and cannot be viewed with conventional, standard image viewer software. A security stamp is then applied to verify the integrity of the violation image during processing.

Violation: An incident which has passed the BOSS (Back Office Support Staff) review stage.

Citation: A violation which has passed the County approval process.

Issued Citation: A citation that has been approved and mailed through the United States Postal Service.

Spoiled Citation: A citation that is voided immediately after approval or on the same day as approval.

Voided Citation: A citation that is voided after the approval day; for example, stolen tags, funeral procession, uniformed issued ticket from an officer for the same violation.

Flagged Status: An issued citation with non-payment after one hundred five (105) days and the Maryland registration is flagged by the MVA. A \$30 administrative fee is added by the MVA.



2-201 RED LIGHT CAMERA TRAINING

All personnel reviewing and approving red light camera citations must complete the mandatory training conducted through the Maryland Regional Automated Enforcement Center (RAEC) and Verra Mobility. Refresher training will be conducted on an as-needed basis.

2-300 DAILY OPERATIONS COMPUTER PROCEDURES

2-301 APPROVALS: DAILY CITATION APPROVING PROCEDURES

By law, all citations must be approved and mailed within fourteen (14) days of the alleged violation.

Day 1 is the date of the violation. Citation approval should commence as soon as possible after the violation to allow for any quality control issues that may arise.

The AEU Office Specialist will approve citations any time during the workday, Monday through Friday. Citations approved Monday through Friday before 1200 will be printed and mailed the same business day. Citations approved after 1200 will be printed and mailed the next business day.

2-302 QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW

All citations are inspected for Quality Control by the Howard County Police Department prior to being mailed. Any citation that is questionable, contains poor images or poor clarity will result in the citation being "spoiled". Upon discovery of a data processing error within the initial fourteen (14) days of issuance, a Post Approval Edit process can be completed. Anything after day fourteen (14) will be voided.

2-303 CRITERIA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION

This section establishes policy, procedures, and criteria used by the AEU Office Specialist in determining if recorded violation images meet the standard of citation issuance. These citations are civil infractions; it should be noted that the standard of proof for these violations is a "preponderance of evidence" as in other civil matters.

The current back officer vendor (Verra Mobility) presents still photographs and video images of violations. Approvers may utilize the three images and the video, if attached, to determine if the criteria for issuance has been achieved.

The first stage in a red light violation incident captures two (2) high resolution images of the violating vehicle along with video. When the light turns red and radar identifies a vehicle exceeding the site's preset threshold trigger speed, the detection system determines a violation may occur. Then, it sends a message to the camera to initiate the picture sequence. The camera then takes a total of two (2) images of the violating vehicle. The license plate is cropped from one of the two (2) high resolution images.

First image must clearly show:

- The vehicle prior to touching the painted stop line on the roadway.
- The vehicle and the stop bar line must be clearly visible.
- The red traffic signal light of the governing traffic signal must be illuminated and have been red for a minimum of .10 seconds.
- The information in the data box at the top of the photograph must be legible.

Second image must clearly show:

- The vehicle image captured in the first image must be the same.



- The vehicle's rear bumper is past the stop line and is clearly within the intersection, past the stop line, while the governing traffic signal is still red.
- The vehicle and stop line must be clearly visible.
- The information in the data box at the top of the photograph must be legible.

Third image must clearly show:

- The vehicle's registration plate is clearly readable to the naked eye.
- Evidence that the registration plate image is from the same vehicle displayed in the first and second images. A portion of the vehicle is shown in the tag photo that verifies it is the same vehicle.
- The information in the data box at the top of the photograph must be legible.

The video:

The video is available to enhance the evidence. If the stop-line relationship to the violator's vehicle is partially obstructed in the first photograph, the video can be viewed to confirm the violator was definitely on the near side of the stop line when the light turned red.

On occasion there will be a set of images for a violation that does not include a video. When this occurs, the AEU Office Specialist can make a decision to approve or reject the citation based on the review of the still images.

In addition to the above criteria, the following must be observed:

- The images must not show any visible factors that would invalidate the violation (*i.e.*, public safety official waving the drive through the intersection, emergency vehicle, funeral processing, etc.);
- The name and complete mailing address of the registered owner of the vehicle can be obtained from the appropriate motor vehicle administration;
- The vehicle description obtained from the appropriate motor vehicle administration appears to match the vehicle image captured;
- The citation issued must be mailed no more than fourteen (14) days after the alleged violation occurred;
- All citations will bear the signature and identification number of the issuing employee.

2-304 REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The AEU Office Specialist may reject citations during the approval process prior to issuance if:

- The images show the visible factors that invalidate the violation (*i.e.*, police waving the driver through the intersection, emergency vehicle, funeral processing, etc.)
- The name and mailing address of the registered owner cannot be obtained through the appropriate motor vehicle administration
- The vehicle description obtained from the motor vehicle administration does not appear to match the vehicle in the captured image
- The violation has exceeded the fourteen (14) day time period for mailing
- The vehicle is an emergency vehicle (police, fire, or EMS) that has their lights on in emergency mode



The AEU Office Specialist will reject the violation using the most appropriate cause. It is essential that the correct reason for rejecting the citation be used. The AEU Office Specialist will make an effort to have any technical problems corrected that may be responsible for the rejection.

CITATIONS MAY BE REJECTED ONLY FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE. REJECTING CITATIONS FOR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, OR POLICE/FIRE PERSONNEL NOT TAKING OFFICIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY, IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE. IF IT IS DETERMINED AN AEU OFFICE SPECIALIST IS ENGAGED IN THE INAPPROPRIATE AND/OR UNETHICAL REJECTING OF CITATIONS, THE OFFENDING JURISDICTION MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE R.A.E.C.

Spoiling Citations:

“Spoiling” a citation occurs during the final quality control inspection of citations that were approved that same day. Poor quality citations are identified, set aside, and then “spoiled” using the appropriate rejection code. The spoiled citations are emailed to the Charles County Sheriff’s Office. Only citations passing the final quality control inspection are issued. Howard County Police Department personnel also have the authority to spoil citations for the Charles County Sheriff’s Office.

Voiding Citations After Issuance:

Once a citation has been issued and mailed to the registered owner, authorized personnel may void or dismiss citations. When voiding citations, the AEU Office Specialist will utilize the most appropriate rejection code, and report the cause for the void/dismissal as needed. The AEU Office Specialist will have to make detailed notes on the citation and/or scan the appropriate documentation resulting in the void.

Correction Procedures During Processing:

During the approval process, the AEU Office Specialist may occasionally encounter a citation that will have image problems or a mistimed video. The AEU Office Specialist should make note of the issue and notify the appropriate representative of Verra Mobility and Howard County Police Department of the specific problem. Verra Mobility will make the appropriate corrections and make proper notification when the corrected version is available for review and approval.

Re-Issuance of Citation/Transfer of Liability:

Transfer of Liability can be done by the registered owner, if they were not operating the vehicle at the time of this infraction and they choose to identify the person who was driving. They shall provide to the District Court a sworn and/or affirmed statement which is sent by certified mail. The statement must indicate they swear or affirm that the person named in the citation was not operating the vehicle and include the operator’s name, address, and any corroborating evidence. All requests must be received no later than thirty (30) days after the mail date of the original citation.

The office will send a letter to the responsible individual advising them the citation has been re-issued and transferred to their name. At this time, this individual becomes responsible for paying the fine. The new customer will also receive a new copy of the citation along with the letter. All information regarding the transfer should be documented in the correspondence log.

2-305 PROCESSING PAYMENTS

There are several payment methods available through the Charles County Government’s Treasurer’s Office:

- Online credit card payments through www.Violationinfo.com;
- United States Postal mail;
- Drop box located at District III in Waldorf, Maryland;
- Walk-in payments at Charles County Treasurer’s Office.



Citations unpaid after forty-five (45) days will have a "Late Notice" mailed to the violator. Currently the Chief Judge of Maryland District Court prohibits the assessment of late fees and flagging fees.

Returned Checks:

Any red light camera citations that are paid for by a check that is subsequently returned by the bank will be assessed a \$35.00 returned check penalty. The Charles County Sheriff's Office Financial Services Section will send the check writer the appropriate legal correspondence and handle all duties in accordance with Maryland state law.

MVA Flagging:

Verra Mobility will electronically send a list of any and all citations with a Maryland registration that have gone unpaid for one hundred five (105) days for flagging. The MVA will immediately suspend the tag renewal process for these vehicles until the citations have been satisfied in their entirety. The MVA may attach an administrative fee of \$30.00 to each flagged registration. Once the registration is flagged, the citizen must pay all open citations prior to receiving a release. A release may be sent electronically by Verra Mobility within 24 to 48 hours or released in the AEU office via the Maryland Flagging Portal.

2-306 COURT PRESENTATIONS

The registered owner or the individual the citation was transferred to may request to appear in District Court by returning the completed form on the bottom of the citation, at least five (5) days prior to the due date shown on the front of the citation, to the Charles County Sheriff's Office Automated Enforcement Unit, Post Office Box 189, La Plata, Maryland 20646-0189.

If the judge finds the violator guilty the maximum amount that can be charged is \$100.00 plus court costs.

Once a court request is received by the AEU, the following steps should be taken for each court appearance:

A Court Evidence Packet for each contested citation will be prepared by the AEU Office Specialist for each trial docket. The packet will be printed directly in the AEU and will be delivered to the District Court seven (7) days prior to the trial date.

The AEU Office Specialist attending court for the Charles County Sheriff's Office at trial will have this case file from which to testify. The case file must contain the following:

- Copy of the trial notice;
- Copy of the citation;
- Signed court request slip received;
- Any other related correspondence or documents

Video evidence if available must be presented during trial via iPad or portable computer.

2-307 STOLEN VEHICLE OR REGISTRATION PLATE

The owner MUST provide a copy of the police report for the stolen vehicle or plates detailing that the vehicle or tag was reported stolen at the time of the violation. If the report was completed by the Charles County Sheriff's Office, the AEU will verify the information.



2-308 RECORD KEEPING

The AEU is responsible for completing, updating, and safeguarding all information received.

The following binders or files have been set up for all records:

- Pending court case file
- Red light enforcement binder
- Unsigned court requests
- Transfer of liability
- Late court requests

OFFICE SECURITY

All computers will be logged off and locked by the user at the end of the business day.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

All personnel whose duties require them to approve, issue, compile citations, and maintain records shall do so in accordance with the provisions of the law and which are established by the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

All employees shall treat the communications and business of the AEU as confidential information. Personnel and other persons shall not access or duplicate AEU records except where permitted by virtue of assigned duties. Personnel shall not remove photographs, citations, reports, records, or copies of it for their own interest or the interest of others who are not officially entitled to the information.

2-309 SITE SELECTIONS AND ACCEPTANCE

The Charles County Sheriff's Office will suggest sites to Verra Mobility for study and to confirm that a red light running issue exists. Upon completion of the study, Verra Mobility will obtain final approval from the Commander, Field Operations Section prior to building the site. The review should include site plans, permit review and study review. The Automated Enforcement Supervisor will ensure a site package is created on each site which will include the minimum:

- Relevant communication about the site;
- Site map;
- Copies of all permits;
- Copy of the completed study;
- A scale drawing of the location;
- Photographs of the site, including signage

Verra Mobility is responsible to ensure all the proper permits are obtained through the relevant government authority prior to construction of the site. Once the site has been completed and prior to it being placed in service, a member of the Automated Enforcement Unit and Verra Mobility will visit the site and review the following:

- Signage is in compliance with State Highway Administration and/or County road guidelines;
- Signage is within the acceptable distance by State Highway Administration/County road standards;
- All equipment is located at the proper location.

2-400 SPEED CAMERA PROGRAM



2-103 SPEED CAMERA STRUCTURE

For the purposes of complying with Maryland Traffic Law § 21-809, the Charles County Sheriff's Office has designated the Supervisor, Automated Enforcement as the Speed Program Administrator. The Commander, Field Operations Section has been designated as the "local designee" or "Ombudsman" for the speed camera program.

2-401 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR NEW SCHOOL ZONE ENFORCEMENT LOCATIONS

The criteria for speed camera locations are based on factors that have been established by the State Highway Administration. The placement of speed cameras on highways are as follows:

- Must serve a highway safety purpose;
- Must have documentation of existing or potential safety problems caused by excessive speed;
- Speed studies conducted during the enforcement day/times;
- Collision data shows a pattern of speed related collisions;
- Public input from the community.

The school zone roadway should be studied by traffic engineers to determine if the roadway meets the definition of a school zone as outlined in the Maryland Transportation Article TA 21-803 and TA 21-809.

The Charles County Sheriff's Office, Automated Enforcement Unit makes a determination for new speed camera sites based on speeding complaints and crash statistics. Collision and violation reduction will be the ultimate goal of camera installation and enforcement activity.

2-402 TRAINING

Personnel assigned the responsibilities in the speed camera program must complete the required training associated with the operation of the system. The training is currently conducted through the Maryland Regional Automated Enforcement Center at Howard County Police Department, along with Conduent.

Refresher training will be held on an as-needed basis. No employees are allowed to approve citations until they have attended training.

Speed camera system operators must attend training as applied by Conduent. Operators must attend the entire class, and must pass a written examination with a score of eighty (80) percent or better.

2-403 CITATION APPROVAL PROCEDURE

By law, all Maryland citations must be approved and mailed within fourteen (14) days of the alleged violation; out-of-state citations must be mailed within thirty (30) days. Day 1 is the date of the violation. Citation approval should commence as soon as possible after the violation enters the queue to allow for any quality control issues that may arise. All speed camera citations during final review are approved by a sworn law enforcement officer.

2-404 QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW

All citations are inspected for Quality Control by the Howard County Police Department prior to being mailed. Any citation that is questionable, contains poor images or poor clarity will result in the citation being "spoiled".



Upon discovery of a data processing error within the initial fourteen (14) days of issuance for in-state registrations or thirty (30) days for out-of-state registrations, a Post Approval Edit process can be completed. Anything outside of the fourteen (14) or thirty (30) days respectively, will be voided.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

First responder vehicles responding to a documented call for service and responding in an emergency mode will not be cited for speed violations. If there is no documented call for service, then the citation will be issued.

2-405 CRITERIA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION

Conduent presents two photographs of vehicles and a third photograph of the registration plate. These photographs are chosen as being the most suitable photographs available. The registration plate photo is cropped from one of the vehicle photographs.

Both photographs must contain the following information:

Data Bar TOP: County, specific roadway, compass direction, direction—receding

Data Bar BOTTOM: Date/time, speed limit, speed, lane, image index

In order to APPROVE a citation the following criteria must be met:

- Registration plates on vehicle matches information on citation;
- Lane identifier on Data Bar matches photograph;
- Speed shown on Data Bar is twelve (12) miles per hour or greater over the posted speed limit;
- Vehicle make closely matches that which is depicted in the photograph;
- Date/time of violation is within the time frame allowed by statute;
- Violating vehicle identifier is on violator vehicle in both photographs
- No major vehicles/objects obstructing the violator vehicle;
- Second photo shows clear progression past a fixed object.

Once the citation is printed Howard County Police Department will also ensure that:

- The images do not show any visible factors that would invalidate the violation—obstructing vehicle or object, emergency lights on first responder vehicle;
- The name and complete mailing address of the registered owner of the vehicle has to be printed on the citation;
- The vehicle description matches the vehicle in the image captured;
- The citation issued must be mailed no more than fourteen (14) days for in-state registration, or thirty (30) days for out-of-state registration;
- All citations will bear the signature and identification number of the issuing employee.

The approval process is conducted through the CiteWeb™ database. The photo enforcement system downloads data and images nightly, and violations are available online for processing within 24 to 48 hours. Conduent specialists adjust for clarity and lighting to optimize the violation images for review and plate identification. However, the original digital images are never altered and are protected from any changes within the database.

2-406 REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS

AEU office personnel performing approvals may reject citations at any time prior to citation issuance if:

- The violation is questionable; or
- It is not a violation in accordance with law; or



- Any of the images are of poor quality; or
- The citation contains erroneous or inaccurate information.

When rejecting citations, AEU office personnel will reject them based on the most appropriate cause as indicated in the Citation Processing Rejection Codes. It is essential that the correct reason for rejecting the citation be used and the employee make an effort to correct the problem which is responsible for the rejection.

CITATIONS MAY BE REJECTED ONLY FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE. REJECTING CITATIONS FOR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR POLICE/FIRE PERSONNEL NOT TAKING OFFICIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY, IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE. IF IT IS DETERMINED AN AEU OFFICE SPECIALIST IS ENGAGED IN THE INAPPROPRIATE AND/OR UNETHICAL REJECTING OF CITATIONS, THE OFFENDING JURISDICTION MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE R.A.E.C.

Spoiling Citations:

“Spoiling” a citation occurs during the final quality control inspection of citations that were approved that same day. Poor quality citations are identified, set aside, and then “spoiled” using the appropriate rejection code. The spoiled citations are mailed to the Charles County Sheriff’s Office. Only citations passing the final quality control inspection are issued. Howard County Police Department personnel also have the authority to spoil citations for the Charles County Sheriff’s Office.

Voiding Citations After Issuance:

Once a citation has been issued and mailed to the registered owner, authorized personnel may void or dismiss citations. When voiding citations, AEU office personnel will utilize the most appropriate rejection code, and report the cause for the void/dismissal as needed. AEU office personnel have to maintain documentation and justification records for the void/dismissal.

Once the citation is voided in the computer, it will be documented in the correspondence log, with a detailed explanation. A void letter is sent through Howard County to the individual of the citation, releasing them from any obligation for this citation.

Once a citation has been voided a letter will be generated by Conduent and mailed out to the violator.

2-407 CORRECTION PROCEDURES DURING PROCESSING

During the approval process, an AEU Specialist may encounter a citation or several citations that have issues. The AEU Office personnel should make any necessary corrections, if possible, prior to sending it to final approval. If the problem continues, or it cannot be easily corrected, the AEU Specialist should notify their Supervisor or Conduent and the Howard County Police Department of the recurring problem.

Re-Issuance of Citation/Transfer of Liability:

Transfer of liability can be done by the registered owner, if they were not operating the vehicle at the time of this infraction and they choose to identify the person who was driving. They shall provide to the District Court a sworn and affirmed statement by certified mail. The statement must indicate they swear or affirm that the person named in the citation was not operating the vehicle and include the operator’s name, address, and any corroborating evidence. All requests must be received no later than thirty (30) days after the mail date of the original citation.

This office will send a letter to the responsible individual advising them the citation has been re-issued and transferred to their name. At this time, this individual becomes responsible for paying the fine. The new customer will also receive a new copy of the citation along with the letter. All information regarding the transfer should be documented in the correspondence log.



2-408 PROCESSING PAYMENTS

There are several payment methods available through the Charles County Government Treasurer's Office:

- Online credit card payments through <http://www.citeweb.com>;
- United States Postal mail;
- Drop box located at District III in Waldorf, Maryland;
- Walk-in payments at Charles County Treasurer's Office.

Accepted payments are cashier checks, money orders, credit cards, and cash. No personal checks will be taken for late citations at any time.

LATE NOTICES, LATE FEES, AND PENALTIES

Citations unpaid after forty-five (45) days will have a "Late Notice" mailed to the violator. Currently the Chief Judge of Maryland District Court prohibits the assessment of late fees and flagging fees.

RETURNS CHECKS

Any speed camera citations that are paid for by check that is subsequently returned by the bank will be assessed a \$35,000 returned check penalty. The Charles County Sheriff's Office Finance Section will send the check writer the appropriate legal correspondence and will handle all duties in accordance with Maryland state law.

MVA FLAGGING

Conduent will electronically send a list of any and all citations with a Maryland registration that have gone unpaid for eighty-eight (88) days for flagging. The MVA will immediately suspend the tag renewal process for these vehicles until the citations have been satisfied in their entirety. The MVA may attach an administrative fee of \$30.00 to each flagged registration.

Once the Maryland registration is flagged, the citizen must pay all open citations prior to receiving a release. A release may be sent electronically by Conduent within 24 to 48 hours or released in the AEU office via the Maryland Flagging Portal.

2-409 COURT PRESENTATIONS

The registered owner or the individual the citation was transferred to may request to appear in District Court by returning the completed form on the bottom of the citation at least five (5) days prior to the due date shown on the front of the citation, and returning it to the Charles County Sheriff's Office, Automated Enforcement Unit, Post Office Box 189, La Plata, Maryland 20646-0189.

If the judge finds the violator guilty the maximum amount which can be charged is \$40.00 plus court costs.

Once a court request is received by the AEU, the court date will be set providing the court request is received in the time allotted and is signed by the registered owner. The AEU Office Specialist will schedule the trial for the next available court date through the vendor website. Conduent will be responsible for mailing out the trial notices.

A request for court that is received past the due date will not be scheduled. The request for late court dates must be sent to the Administrative Judge in the District Court of Maryland. Once the AEU receives the granted request signed by the judge, a court date will be scheduled.

The following steps should be taken for each court appearance:



A Court Evidence Packet for each contested citation will be prepared by the AEU Office Specialist for each trial docket. The packet will be printed directly in AEU and will be delivered to the District Court seven (7) days prior to the trial date.

Automated Enforcement Unit personnel representing the Charles County Sheriff's Office at trial will have this case file from which to testify.

The following information must be made available in the packet provided to the court:

- Copy of citation;
- Copy of each photograph and the registration plate;
- Instrument Calibration Record;
- Copy of court request;
- Any other document(s) related to the citation.

2-410 STOLEN VEHICLE OR REGISTRATION PLATE

The owner MUST provide a copy of the police report for the stolen vehicle or plates detailing that the vehicle or tag was reported stolen at the time of the violation. If the report was completed by the Charles County Sheriff's Office the AEU will verify the information.

2-411 RECORD KEEPING

The AEU employee is responsible for completing, updating, and safeguarding all information pertaining to the AEU. The following binders have been set up for all records:

- Court binder
- Speed camera information binder
- Binder for school enforcement zones

2-412 OFFICE SECURITY

At the close of business each day, all computers will be logged off and locked by the users.

2-413 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

All personnel whose duties require them to approve, issue, compile citations, and maintain records shall do so in accordance with the provisions of the law and which are established by the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

All employees shall treat the communications and business of the AEU as confidential information. Personnel and other persons shall not access or duplicate AEU records except where permitted by virtue of assigned duties. Personnel shall not remove photographs, citations, reports, records, or copies of them for their own interest or the interest of others are not officially entitled to the information.

2-414 SITE SELECTIONS AND ACCEPTANCE

The Charles County Sheriff's Office will suggest sites to Conduent for study and to confirm that the site has a safety and speed problem. Upon completion of the study, Conduent will obtain final approval from the Commander, Field Operations Section prior to building the site. The review should include site plans, permit review and study review. The Automated Enforcement Supervisor will ensure a site package is created on each site which will include the minimum:



- Relevant communication about the site;
- Site map;
- Copies of all permits;
- Copy of the completed study;
- A scale drawing of the location;
- Monthly inspection worksheet
- Latest copy of MUCTD that refers to automated enforcement

Conduent is responsible to ensure all the proper permits are obtained through the relevant government authority prior to construction of the site. Once the site has been completed and prior to it being placed in service, a member of the Automated Enforcement Unit and Conduent will visit the site and review at a minimum the following:

- Signage is in compliance with State Highway Administration and/or County road guidelines;
- Signage is within the acceptable distance by State Highway Administration/County road standards;
- Pad site is within the marked school zone

Each site must display a School Zone sign with proper headers, speed limit sign, proper photo enforcement warning sign and an end of school zone sign. Each sign must follow, depending on the location, the guidelines for either Charles County or the state of Maryland.

2-415 MONTHLY SITE INSPECTION

At least monthly a member of the Automated Enforcement Unit will conduct an on-site inspection of each location. This inspection will be documented on the Monthly Site Inspection Check List and placed into the Site Package and the Court Evidence Book.

2-416 COURT EVIDENCE BOOK

A court evidence book will be created for each site. The book will be taken to each court appearance. The book will include:

- Photos of the site and signage;
- Copy of the Transportation Article pertaining to Automated Speed Enforcement;
- Any other information pertinent to the particular site

2-417 SPEED CAMERA HOLIDAYS

The speed cameras will not be deployed on any weekend and the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

2-500 SCHOOL BUS MONITORING PROGRAM

2-501 SCHOOL BUS MONITORING STRUCTURE



For the purpose of complying with Maryland Traffic Law §21-706.1, the Charles County Sheriff's Office has designated the Supervisor, Automated Enforcement as the School Bus Monitoring Program Administrator.

2-502 TRAINING

All personnel reviewing and approving School Bus Monitoring citations must complete any necessary training, either in office or via web. The training will consist of BusPatrol's Alertbus System and Console. No employee will be allowed to approve citations until they attend the specified training. Additional training is offered on an as-needed basis.

2-503 QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW

BusPatrol inspects all citations for quality control prior to being mailed. Any citation that is questionable, contains poor images or poor clarity will result in the citation being "spoiled".

2-504 CRITERIA FOR ISSUANCE OF A VALID CITATION

By law, all citations must be approved and mailed within fourteen (14) days of the alleged violation. Day 1 is the date of the violation. Citation approval should commence as soon as possible after the violation enters the queue to allow for any quality control issues that may arise.

BusPatrol presents two photographs of the offending vehicle and a third photograph of the registration plate, either front or back. These are civil infractions. Bus Patrol will attach a video, if available.

In order to approve a citation the following criteria must be met:

- *The name and address of the registered owner of the vehicle
- *The registration number of the vehicle matches the information on the citation
- *The violation charged
- *The location of the violation
- *The date and time of the violation (time in GMT) within the given time frame allowed by statute
- * A copy of the recorded image

Once the citation is printed BusPatrol will also ensure that:

- *Two violations are not being processed for the same offense.
- *There are no visible factors that would invalidate the violation
- *The name and address are complete
- *All citations bear the signature and identification number of the issuing employee.
- *The citation will be mailed within the fourteen (14) day period.

The approval process is conducted through the AlertBus database. The violation is downloaded to BusPatrol for processing. No original is ever altered and are protected from changes within the database.

2-505 REJECTING CITATIONS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS

AEU office personnel performing approvals may reject citations at any time prior to citation issuance if:

- *The violation is questionable
- *It is not a violation in accordance with law
- *Any of the images are of poor quality
- *The citation contains erroneous or inaccurate information.



When rejecting citations AEU office personnel will reject utilizing the most appropriate cause. It is essential that the correct reason for rejecting the citation be used and the employee make an effort to correct the problem causing the rejection.

CITATIONS MAY BE REJECTED ONLY FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE. REJECTING CITATIONS FOR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR POLICE/FIRE PERSONNEL NOT TAKING OFFICIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY, IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE.

Voiding Citations After Issuance

Citations that have been issued with errors or incorrectly may be voided by an AEU Specialist or by scanning and emailing the request to void to Aariel.johnson@BusPatrol.com.

2-506 CORRECTION PROCEDURES DURING PROCESSING

During the approval process employees will occasionally encounter a citation that will have an issue of either the video or the photos. If the personnel have an issue with the name and address prior to approval, you may correct the issue and then approve the violation. If it is something you are not able to correct, reject the citation with the appropriate code and add a note, if necessary, and BusPatrol will attempt to correct the issue.

Re-Issuance of Citation/Transfer of Liability:

A transfer of liability can be done by the registered owner if they were not operating the vehicle at the time of the violation, if they chose to identify the person that was driving. They shall provide to the District Court a sworn to and/or affirmed statement and mail by certified mail, return receipt requested. All requests must be received no later than thirty (30) days after the mail date of the original citation.

A new copy will be sent out to the new violator indicated on the statement, at that time, they will be responsible for paying the fine.

2-507 PROCESSING PAYMENTS

There are several payment methods available they are as follows:

- *Online credit card payments through www.alertbus.com
- *By phone at 1-877-504-7080
- *Through the United States Postal Service
- *At the Charles County Treasurer's Office

Accepted payments are cashier's checks, money orders, credit cards, and cash. A personal check will only be accepted if the citation is not in a late status.

Late notices, late fees, and penalties

Citations paid after forty-five (45) days will have a "Late Notice" mailed to the violator. Currently the Chief Judge of Maryland District Court prohibits the assessment of late fees and flagging fees.

Returned checks

Returned Checks

A bus monitoring camera citation paid by a check that is subsequently returned by the bank will be assessed a \$35.00 returned check penalty. The Charles County Sheriff's Office Financial Services Section will send the check writer the appropriate legal correspondence and handle all duties in accordance with Maryland State Law.

MVA Flagging

BusPatrol will electronically send a list of all citations with a Maryland registration that have gone unpaid for ninety-one (91) days for flagging. The MVA will immediately suspend the tag renewal process for these vehicles



until the citations have been satisfied in their entirety. The MVA may attach an administrative fee of \$30.00 to each flagged registration.

Once the Maryland registration is flagged, the citizen must pay all open citations prior to receiving a release. A release may be sent electronically by BusPatrol within 24 to 48 hours or released in the AEU office via the Maryland Flagging Portal.

2-508 COURT PRESENTATIONS

The registered owner or the individual the citation was transferred to may request to appear in District Court by returning the completed form on the bottom of the citation at least five (5) days prior to the due date shown on the front of the citation and returning it to Charles County Sheriff's Office, Automated Enforcement Unit, P.O. Box 189 LaPlata, MD 20646.

If the judge finds the violator guilty, the maximum amount which can be charged is \$500.00 plus court costs.

Once a court request is received by the AEU, the documents will be scanned and email over to BusPatrol. BusPatrol will put the docket together and send it to us via email. BusPatrol will be mailing out the court notices.

A request for court that is received past the due date will not be scheduled. The request for late court dates must be sent to the Administrative Judge in the District Court of Maryland. Once the AEU receives the granted request signed by the judge, the information will be forwarded to BusPatrol to have a court date assigned.

The following information must be made available in the packet provided to the court:

- *Copy of citation
- *Copy of each photograph and the registration plate
- *Copy of court request
- *Any other documents related to the citation.

2-600 SICK AND SAFE LEAVE

Employees who need to use sick and safe leave must notify their immediate supervisor at least one (1) hour before the start of their scheduled shift.