

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

April 19, 2013
16.2

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: VEHICLE BLOCKING INTERSECTIONS CREATING TRAFFIC
CONGESTION AND GRIDLOCK - COUNCIL FILE NUMBER 12-1885

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE this report; and,
2. That the Board TRANSMIT this report to the Transportation Committee.

BACKGROUND

On December 5, 2012, the Los Angeles City Council (City Council) considered a Motion presented by Councilmember Tom LaBonge and seconded by Councilmember Bill Rosendahl regarding the safety concerns created by vehicles blocking intersections. The Motion stated that intersections blocked by vehicles are common in the City of Los Angeles (City) especially during high traffic periods, which adds to the congestion and creates gridlock. The Motion noted that blocked intersections result in inconveniences and present significant safety issues.

Although Assembly Bill 667 made blocking an intersection a parking violation as defined in Section 22526 of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) in 1987, blocked intersections are still a common occurrence. Section 22526 CVC is commonly referred to as the Anti-Gridlock Act of 1987. This section states, "Notwithstanding any official traffic control signal indication to proceed, a driver of a vehicle shall not enter an intersection or marked crosswalk unless there is sufficient space on the other side of the intersection or marked crosswalk to accommodate the vehicle driven without obstructing the through passage of vehicles from either side."

Councilmembers LaBonge and Rosendahl believe increased enforcement of Section 22526(a) CVC may help alleviate blocked intersections and gridlock. The City Council referred the Motion to the Transportation Committee for consideration. On December 12, 2012, the Transportation Committee recommended that the City Council approve the Motion and instruct the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to report on the efforts to enforce Section 22526(a) CVC. The Motion further directed the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), LADOT and the Department to report on the safety issues posed by vehicle blocking intersections. On January 15, 2013, the City Council adopted the Motion.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Traffic Coordination Section (TCS), Emergency Operations Division, conducted a review of existing traffic enforcement efforts and activities regarding Section 22526(a) CVC. It was revealed that the Community Traffic Services Unit at each traffic division investigates community complaints for gridlock and deploys resources to conduct enforcement with the specific mission of targeting community members who violate Section 22526(a) CVC. Currently, there are six open gridlock complaints being investigated by the traffic divisions.

The LADOT was contacted to determine the extent of their enforcement efforts in regard to Section 22526(a) CVC. It was revealed that although the CVC authorizes the violation to be enforced on a parking citation by parking enforcement officers, as well as sworn peace officers, LADOT's common practice is to utilize Sections 80.69 "Parking Prohibited or Limited-Peak Hour" and 80.70 "Parking Prohibited or Limited in Anti-Gridlock Zones" of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to issue gridlock citations.

Furthermore, the LADOT does deploy the Totality Integrated Gridlock Enforcement Response (TIGER) Team to intersections that have posted gridlock signs. Prior to budget cuts, the LADOT deployed the Traffic Officer in Key Intersections (TOKI) to further address gridlock problems. The LADOT advised that in 2011, there were 124,592 citations issued for Section 80.69 LAMC, and 27,189 citations issued for Section 80.70 LAMC. They also advised that in 2012, there were 126,499 citations issued for Section 80.69 LAMC, and 26,537 citations issued for Section 80.70 LAMC.

The LAFD was contacted to determine the impact gridlock has on emergency responses. Captain Don Reyes, Emergency Services Bureau, LAFD, advised that he was unaware of any specific incident where gridlock caused significant delays. However, he did indicate that gridlock along the 405 Freeway Corridor located in the West Los Angeles area, as well as the various canyon roads leading into the San Fernando Valley, does impact emergency responses. The LAFD advised that they have no gridlock notification procedures to the LADOT or the Department to report problematic intersections. Consequently, the Department has requested that the LAFD report gridlock locations and intersections to the appropriate traffic division or LADOT to ensure enforcement and improve emergency responses.

CONCLUSION

Traffic gridlock at intersections is not a significant traffic collision causal factor. However, the Department recognizes that traffic congestion at intersections is a source of driver frustration that diminishes the quality of life for those community members who work, reside and visit the City of Los Angeles. The identification of problematic locations, coupled with the posting of appropriate signage and directed enforcement, will have a positive impact on the problem.

The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

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The Department will continue to work with the LADOT and LAFD in alleviating traffic congestion and gridlock on the streets of Los Angeles. The attached Fact Sheet has been completed to address the information requested by the City Council. In addition, TCS has drafted and prepared a Department Traffic Coordinator Notice to remind all Department personnel on the proper enforcement of Section 22526(a) CVC.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence, please have a member of your staff contact Captain Philip S. Fontanetta, Commanding Officer, Emergency Operations Division, (213) 486-0680.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHARLIE BECK', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachments

**DEPARTMENT TRAFFIC COORDINATOR
COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU**

NOTICE
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TO: All Commanding Officers

FROM: Department Traffic Coordinator, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

SUBJECT: ENFORCEMENT OF SECTION 22526 OF THE CALIFORNIA VEHICLE
CODE – ANTI-GRIDLOCK ACT OF 1987 - REMINDER

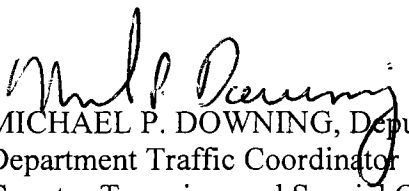
The Department recognizes that traffic congestion, blocked intersections and gridlock are significant sources of driver frustration and diminishes the quality of life for those community members who work, reside and visit the City of Los Angeles. In 1987, the California State Legislature enacted Section 22526 of the California Vehicle Code (CVC).


Section 22526 CVC is commonly referred to as the Anti-Gridlock Act of 1987, and includes several subsections. Section 22526(a) CVC is the most common gridlock section used, and it states, *“Notwithstanding any official traffic control signal indication to proceed, a driver of a vehicle shall not enter an intersection or marked crosswalk unless there is sufficient space on the other side of the intersection or marked crosswalk to accommodate the vehicle driven without obstructing the through passage of vehicles from either side.”*

To facilitate the safe and expeditious movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, Department personnel are reminded and encouraged to enforce Section 22526 CVC, particularly Section 22526(a) CVC as well as other subsections. In accordance with Department Manual Section 4/318.10, Department personnel are also reminded that a gridlock violator may be cited either on an absentee (parking) citation or on a Traffic Notice to Appear when the citing officer observes the driver commit the violation.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact Traffic Coordination Section, Emergency Operations Division, at (213) 486-0680.

APPROVED:


MICHAEL P. DOWNING, Deputy Chief
Department Traffic Coordinator
Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau


STEPHEN R. JACOBS, Deputy Chief
Chief of Staff
Office of the Chief of Police

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When making inquiries relative to
this matter, please refer to the
Council File No.

January 16, 2013

To All Interested Parties:

The City Council adopted the action(s), as attached, under Council File No. 12-1885, at
its meeting held January 15, 2013.

City Clerk
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TO THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

File No. 12-1885

Your **TRANSPORTATION** Committee

reports as follows:

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to safety issues posed by vehicles blocking intersections.

Recommendation for Council action, as initiated by Motion (LaBonge – Rosendahl):

INSTRUCT the Police Department and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to report to the Transportation Committee:

1. Relative to efforts to enforce California Vehicle Code § 22S26(a) which makes blocking an intersection a parking violation.
2. In conjunction with the Fire Department, relative to safety issues posed by vehicles blocking intersections.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None submitted. Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

SUMMARY

On December 5, 2012, Council considered Motion (LaBonge – Rosendahl) relative to safety issues posed by vehicles blocking intersections. Motion states that intersections blocked by vehicles are common in the city, especially during high traffic periods. This adds to traffic congestion and creates gridlock. In addition to the inconvenience of blocked intersections, these gridlocked intersections present significant safety issues. Motion movers believe that increased enforcement of California Vehicle Code § 22S26(a) may help alleviate blocked intersections. Council referred Motion to the Transportation Committee for consideration.

At its meeting held December 12, 2012, the Transportation Committee recommended that Council approve Motion's instruction to the Police and Fire Departments and DOT to report to Committee relative to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE



ADOPTED

JAN 15 2013



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

MEMBER	VOTE
ROSENDAHL:	YES
KORETZ:	ABSENT
PARKS:	YES
LABONGE:	YES
HUIZAR:	YES

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TRANSPORTATION

MOTION


Intersections blocked by vehicles are common in the City, especially during high traffic periods. This adds to traffic congestion and creates gridlock. While AB 667 (Katz) made blocking an intersection a parking violation, as defined in California Vehicle Code §22526(a), blocked intersections are still a common occurrence.

Blocking an intersection is prohibited, and "Do Not Block the Intersection" signs are not required be posted for citations to be issued. Parking citations can be issued at any signalized intersection or crosswalk. Increased enforcement of the Vehicle Code may help alleviate blocked intersections.

In addition to the inconvenience of blocked intersections, these gridlocked intersections present significant safety issues. Vehicles blocking intersections could prevent Fire, Emergency Medical Service, or Police vehicles from quickly responding to emergencies during high traffic periods, and add precious seconds to emergency response times.

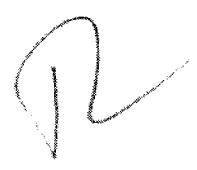
I THEREFORE MOVE the Police Department and the Department of Transportation be instructed to report to the Transportation Committee on efforts to enforce Vehicle Code § 22526(a); and

I FURTHER MOVE that the Police Department, the Department of Transportation, and the Fire Department be instructed to report to the Transportation Committee concerning the safety issues posed by vehicles blocking intersections.

PRESENTED BY 
TOM LABONGE
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY 

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ORIGINAL