

## TRAINING BULLETIN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### **“Lights On!” Equipment Violation Citation Alternative Program**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information and direction related to the use of the Lights On! program vouchers issued to persons stopped for minor lighting equipment violations. These vouchers will be given to assist with repairs, in place of a citation being issued.

#### **II. SCOPE**

This Training Bulletin applies to sworn personnel.

#### **III. BACKGROUND**

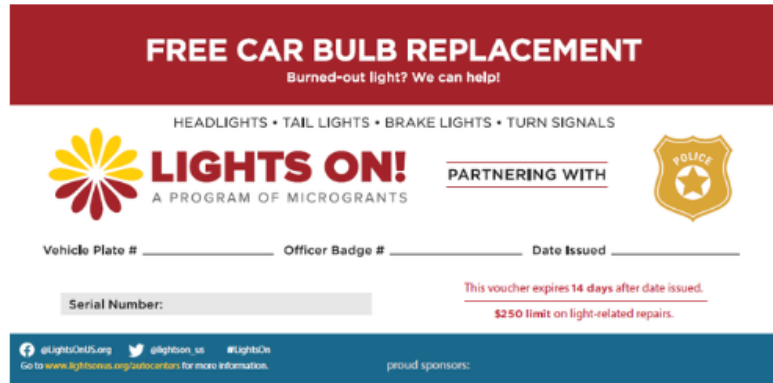
Lights On! is a program being implemented by law enforcement agencies nationwide, in collaboration with various private donors, to provide automobile lighting repair vouchers in lieu of traffic tickets. The goal of the program is to provide a positive alternative solution to certain citations that will benefit drivers impacted by socio-economic factors and improve community-police relations.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

- A. When an officer observes a vehicle with a federal or state-mandated lighting-related equipment violation (e.g., brake light(s) not functioning, headlight out, etc.) and they conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle, they shall do so in accordance with Department Procedure 7.01.
  1. Officers should take the time to show the driver the issue(s), when it is safe to do so, along with explaining the safety concerns with the particular equipment not functioning and how that could affect the driver or other motorists.

2. Once the necessary steps of the traffic stop have been completed and the stop has turned into a resolution where a citation is going to be issued for the equipment violation, officers should issue the driver the Lights On! voucher (Figure 1) instead.

[Figure 1]



3. To improve public safety on the road, the voucher is to be issued to all drivers. However, circumstances may affect the final issuance of a voucher.
  - a. If the driver states they do not need the voucher and it should be saved for someone else who needs it, officers should issue the driver a verbal warning for the violation and document such a warning in their Officer Daily Journal.
  - b. Officers should explain to the driver that other agencies might not participate in the program and they may be issued a citation if they decline the voucher.
  - c. If the driver is extremely hostile or uncooperative, or the officer believes the driver will be better educated about the safety issue involved in the lighting-related equipment by a more stringent method, officers should not provide a voucher and should instead issue a citation for the equipment violation.
    - (1) A citation should only be issued as a last resort in the contact, where the vehicle owner/driver has

demanding a citation or where the officer believes that a lesser education method will not be effective.

- d. If an officer has knowledge that a driver has been issued a voucher previously and that driver has not completed the repairs within 60 days of the initial violation, a citation should be issued to the driver, documenting the previous voucher issuance in notes or in a report.
  - (1) This determination can be by a statement from the driver or confirmed by other means, such as personal knowledge or information provided via the SDPD database.
  - (2) The violation must be for the same item(s) that the voucher was issued for initially, not new issues.
4. If the officer identifies other minor offenses that would require issuing a citation after a stop is made for the equipment violation, or the traffic stop is initiated for another minor traffic offense and an equipment violation is later identified, the officer should issue the voucher for the lighting equipment violation, in addition to the warning or citation for any other offenses.
5. After handing the driver the voucher, officers will explain the process to get the equipment repaired, as follows:
  - a. The driver, or the responsible party of the vehicle, should go to the Lights On! website ([www.lightsonus.org](http://www.lightsonus.org)) to locate a participating auto repair center (Figure 2).

[Figure 2]

## Redeem Your Voucher

We will fix your headlight, taillight, brake light, or turn signal light for free!  
Simply bring your voucher to any participating auto repair center.

FIND AN AUTO CENTER

- b. The driver, or the responsible party of the vehicle, should contact an auto repair center from the website to schedule an appointment to get their vehicle repaired.

- (1) Vehicle repairs can be completed up to the identified amount on the voucher.
    - (2) Vehicle repairs exceeding the identified amount on the voucher are the responsibility of the person responsible for the vehicle.
    - (3) The voucher is only valid for the vehicle which was the subject of the stop.
  - c. After the repair is completed, there is no further action required from the driver or responsible party.
  - d. These vouchers are not meant for extraneous lighting equipment not mandated by federal and state law, (e.g. fog lights, lightbars, off-road lighting, etc.)
6. Documentation of the stop shall be in accordance with AB 953 (RIPA) and Department Procedures 6.05 and 1.49.
1. Officers shall complete their Officer Daily Journal by using the drop-down menu and selecting “Voucher Issued”.
  2. In the Form Number, the officer should input the voucher number, if available.
  3. The officer will complete any other driver information and relevant data.
  4. After the traffic stop, in accordance with DP 1.49, officers shall categorize their BWC. On traffic stops where a voucher was issued, officers shall categorize their BWC as “Traffic Equipment Voucher” if there was no other enforcement. If further enforcement was required, or the voucher was not issued for the reasons stated above, the officer shall categorize the BWC appropriately.

Department Procedure 1.49 and 7.01 will be amended to reflect these changes.