# Speed Measurement Devices

## 506.1 PURPOSE

The Sheriff's Office mission has been and will continue to be the enforcement of laws in St. Mary's County. Those laws are not limited to violations of the Annotated Code of Maryland, but fully encompass the Maryland Transportation Article and County Code. The Sheriff's Office strives to afford the citizens of St. Mary's County the best protection possible through the enforcement of traffic laws. The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for training and use of the Sheriff's Office speed measurement devices.

## 506.2 AGENCY VEHICLE SPEEDOMETER

An agency vehicle's speedometer may be used as a device to measure the speed of another vehicle through pacing.

(a) The speedometer of any agency vehicle used for this purpose will be calibrated by a certified RADAR operator prior to the issuance of any speeding citations.

(b) A Speedometer Calibration Card (SMCSO Form #111) will be completed upon the initial calibration by the Radar operator. The card will be updated on each subsequent calibration.

(c) The speedometer will be calibrated semiannually and after repairs or replacements are made to the affected vehicle transmission, rear-end or when tire size changes.

(d) The SMCSO Form #111 will be maintained within the agency vehicle.

## 506.3 RADAR / LASER OPERATOR

Each RADAR/LASER operator is solely responsible for the proper care and control of the RADAR/LASER unit and accessories during the time the unit is assigned to the deputy sheriff.

RADAR/LASER units are to be carried and/or stored in their approved cases when not in use.

Each RADAR/LASER operator will be responsible for maintaining the necessary records following a traffic arrest through the use of RADAR/LASER for the successful prosecution of the accused speeding violations.

RADAR/LASER operators will not certify or check a non-law enforcement vehicle speedometer without authorization from the Sheriff, Assistant Sheriff or the division commander.

The division commander, shift commander or traffic safety unit supervisor during normal shifts, from time to time, will assign RADAR/LASER operators to selective enforcement assignments. Additionally, requests for selective enforcement assignments may be made to the traffic safety unit supervisor from other divisions or the public. Such requests will be coordinated through the traffic safety unit supervisor.

RADAR/LASER operators engaged in selective enforcement will initiate a "RADAR, LASER or Community Traffic Enforcement" event with the communication specialist at the Emergency

Communications Center or by use of the Self-Initiated Call screen on the MDB, ensuring the proper location is captured upon entry. The event will record the date, time, location and those units working the assignment. At the conclusion of the assignment, the ranking deputy will either advise the communication specialist for entry into the comment section of the CAD entry or enter into the notes of the call utilizing their MDB the total number of traffic stops, citations and warnings written for the event.

RADAR/LASER operators will use discretion in establishing standards of tolerance of speed compliance in accordance with the nature and severity of the violation and/or existing conditions.

RADAR/LASER operators, when functioning alone or in conjunction with a stopping team operation, will allow for the safety of other motorists and agency employees when pursuing or apprehending a violator.

RADAR/LASER operators, when having to appear for court regarding a traffic arrest involving traffic RADAR/LASER, will have in their possession the appropriate file and records pertaining to the specific unit. These files will be maintained by the traffic safety unit and available through the traffic safety unit supervisor.

Careless use and/or abuse of the RADAR/LASER equipment will not be tolerated and will result in the operator's RADAR/LASER unit being reassigned and their privileges being suspended.

### 506.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRAFFIC SAFETY UNIT SUPERVISOR

Maintain a current knowledge of NHTSA approved RADAR/LASER equipment as well as recent court decisions and/or legislation relating to the use of RADAR/LASER operations. This information will be provided to the operators.

Maintain a current inventory of agency RADAR/LASER equipment.

Arrange for service or repair of RADAR/LASER units and accessories as needed.

Maintain calibration and service records on RADAR/LASER units.

Arrange and ensure RADAR and LASER Units are calibrated at least annually.

Maintains a list of agency certified Radar and Laser operators.

Maintain selective enforcement activity records.

Investigate unauthorized or indiscriminate use of RADAR/LASER equipment when directed by the Sheriff, Assistant Sheriff, and division commander or when gaining knowledge of such abuse. The traffic safety unit supervisor will forward the findings and recommendations by formal communications to the division commander for appropriate action.

### 506.5 RADAR / LASER OPERATORS CERTIFICATION

Prior to any deputy sheriff being authorized to use a Sheriff's Office RADAR or LASER unit they must complete an approved training course.

(a) Certification for Radar must include a minimum of eight (8) hours of formal instruction on Doppler RADAR operations. The training will include classroom instruction and practical use of equipment as approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

(b) Certification for LASER must include prior Radar certification and a minimum of eight (8) hours of formal instruction on LASER operations. The training will include classroom instruction and practical use of equipment as approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

A deputy sheriff who has been certified while employed by another agency prior to hire with the Sheriff's Office may submit their certification card and/or a certificate of training. Those individuals will be considered on a case-by-case basis for approval in using Sheriff's Office RADAR/LASER equipment. Documents of certification will be submitted to the traffic safety unit supervisor who will make a recommendation to the Sheriff through the chain of command for approval or disapproval.

Newly approved RADAR/LASER operators will complete twenty (20) written warnings with a Radar unit and (10) written warnings with a Laser unit prior to being authorized to issue citations for speed violations.

## 506.6 RADAR / LASER EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY

Radar units are assigned to individual deputies. This ensures the whereabouts of a Radar unit are known at all times and improves accountability. Assignments are made by the traffic safety unit supervisor to deputies who have shown an interest in traffic enforcement. Should a supervisor desire a Radar unit be re-assigned from one deputy to another, the Radar unit is to be turned in to the traffic safety unit supervisor. The traffic safety unit supervisor will set up and test the unit to ensure it is in operational condition prior to reassignment.

Personally Owned RADAR/LASER Equipment - personally owned speed monitoring equipment may be authorized. A deputy sheriff will not use personally owned speed monitoring equipment (RADAR/LASER) without first obtaining written permission from the Sheriff or the Assistant Sheriff. If personally owned equipment is authorized, the speed monitoring unit will be certified for accurate calibration annually by a certified maintenance or calibration technician prior to implementation. Sections of this policy apply to all personally owned RADAR/LASER equipment. The TSU supervisor will maintain records of all (agency and deputy owned) speed monitoring equipment to assure proper calibration and annual certification.

## 506.7 SAFETY / HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Risks due to exposure to RADAR microwave radiation are negligible. However, there are some common sense precautions that should be taken to reduce the possibility of exposure to microwave radiation. To reduce or prevent exposure to microwave radiation emitted from traffic Radar devices, the following procedures or techniques are recommended:

(a) Hand-held devices should be equipped with a switch requiring active contact to emit radiation. Such a switch must be held down for the device to emit radiation, even though the electrical power to the device is on.

(b) Operators should not place activated RADAR units on their laps. If so equipped, the hold mechanism should be utilized so that the signal will not operate continuously.

(c) When using two-piece Radar units, the antenna should be mounted so that the radar beam is not directed toward the vehicle occupants. The preferred mounting location would be outside the vehicle altogether, although this may not be practical. Other options (e.g., mounting on the dashboard or windshield of the vehicle), are acceptable if the antenna is at all times directed away from the operator or other vehicle occupants. Mounting the antenna on the inside of a side window is not recommended.

(d) Radar antennas should be tested periodically (e.g. annually or after exceptional mechanical trauma to the device) for radiation leakage or backscatter in a direction other than that intended by the antenna beam pattern.

LASER speed devices are inherently safe for the operator and violator's eyes. However, operators should take the following precautions during operation:

(a) Refrain from staring directly into the LASER.

(b) Refrain from staring into the beam while using devices such as a telescope or a pair of binoculars.

(c) Refrain from pointing the laser beam directly in the eyes of any other person.