

Emergency Call Response

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to emergency and non-emergency situations whether dispatched or self-initiated.

316.2 CODE-3 RESPONSE

Officers dispatched Code-3 shall consider the call an emergency response and proceed immediately. Officers responding Code-3 shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment, including at minimum a steady forward facing red light, and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary pursuant to Vehicle Code § 21055.

Responding with emergency light(s) and siren does not relieve the officer of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. Vehicle Code § 21056 - Requires that officers drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway. The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide any exemption from the Vehicle Code.

Officers should only respond Code-3 when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required. Officers not authorized to respond Code-3 shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

The following are examples of calls for service that may be authorized for Code-3 response, unless directed otherwise:

- 1) Assist an endangered officer.
- 2) Injury accidents (although only the primary responding unit may respond Code-3).
- 3) Robbery in progress calls where bodily harm has been committed or shots have been fired.
- 4) Any type of call where human life is seriously threatened and an urgent response to the scene by a police officer in a "Code-3" response is necessary.

NOTE: Since the vast majority of "No Detail" vehicle accidents turn out to be non-injury, and since most robbery and burglary alarm calls turn out to be unfounded, officers shall not use their lights and sirens when responding to these calls, unless known circumstances dictate a Code-3 response. When responding to these calls the officer shall drive at reasonable speeds and shall adhere to all traffic laws.

316.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Requests for emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an immediate threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious injury to a citizen. In any event, where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is no longer required, the responding officer shall immediately notify the dispatch center and reduce his/her response to normal driving conditions.

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If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

316.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS ASSIGNED

In most Code-3 responses, only one unit should respond to an emergency call Code-3 unless the watch commander or the field supervisor authorizes an additional unit(s). Additional circumstances that may require additional units to respond Code-3 may include:

- (a) Officer requesting immediate assistance.
- (b) Fights with multiple subjects, such as "Bar Fights".
- (c) Shootings with injuries or confirmed suspect still on scene.
- (d) Multiple vehicle / multiple injury traffic collisions.

316.4 INITIATING CODE-3 RESPONSE

If an officer believes a Code-3 response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify the dispatch center that he/she will be responding Code-3. Unless circumstances dictate a different response, only one unit should respond Code-3 to any situation. Should another officer, assigned to the same incident, believe a Code-3 response is appropriate, the dispatch center shall be notified and the watch commander or field supervisor will make a determination as to the need for additional units to respond in a Code-3 status.

316.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICER(S)

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. Officers shall reduce speed at all street intersections to such a degree that they shall have complete control of the vehicle.

When driving conditions or the ability of the officer to respond in a Code-3 status are unsafe, the decision to discontinue a Code-3 response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify the dispatch center. An officer shall also discontinue the Code-3 response when directed by a supervisor.

Upon receiving authorization or determining a Code-3 response is appropriate, an officer shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

Officers may use their emergency equipment (lights and siren) to clear heavily congested intersections when responding to high priority calls for service that do not warrant a Code-3 response, but do warrant an emergency response.

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316.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

In all circumstances where police department vehicles are making a Code-3 response, the dispatcher shall obtain the following information and make the following notifications:

- (a) Immediately notify the watch commander.
- (b) Notify and coordinate allied emergency services (e.g. fire, ambulance, allied agencies, etc.).
- (c) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated.
- (d) Control all radio communications during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the watch commander or field supervisor.

316.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that a Code-3 response has been initiated, the watch commander or the field supervisor shall verify the following:

- (a) The proper response has been initiated.
- (b) No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
- (c) Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practical.

The field supervisor shall monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated and assert control by directing units into or out of the response, if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units to be assigned a Code-3 response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate a Code-3 response that, in his/her judgment, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize a Code-3 response, the watch commander or the field supervisor should consider the following:

- The type of call.
- The necessity of a timely response.
- Traffic and roadway conditions.
- The imminent risk of serious injury or death.
- The location of the responding units.

316.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the Code-3 response and respond under normal driving conditions. In all cases, the officer shall notify the watch commander or field supervisor of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response if necessary.

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