

Officer Response to Calls

308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

308.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

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. 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.

308.3 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 harm to a citizen. In any event, where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall immediately notify Communications Division.

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

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

308.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS ASSIGNED

Normally, only one unit should respond to an emergency call Code-3 unless the Watch Commander or the field supervisor authorizes an additional unit(s).

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308.4 INITIATING CODE 3 RESPONSE

If an officer believes a Code-3 response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify Communications Division. Generally, only one unit should respond Code-3 to any situation. Should another officer believe a Code-3 response is appropriate, Communications Division shall be notified and the Watch Commander or field supervisor will make a determination as to whether one or more officers driving Code-3 is appropriate.

308.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICERS

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 a degree where they have complete control of the vehicle.

The decision to continue a Code-3 response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the weather or roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk to other drivers or citizens, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren and in compliance with all traffic laws. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify Communications Division of such decision. An officer shall also discontinue the Code-3 response when directed by a supervisor.

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

308.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

A dispatcher shall assign a Code-3 response when an officer requests emergency assistance or available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and immediate police response is necessary. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from the Watch Commander or a field supervisor prior to assigning units Code-3. The dispatcher shall:

- (a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance
- (b) Immediately notify the Watch Commander
- (c) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding
- (d) Notify and coordinate allied emergency services (e.g., fire and ambulance)
- (e) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated
- (f) Control all radio communications during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the Watch Commander or field supervisor

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308.7 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 circumstances known to the supervisor.

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
- Weather, traffic and roadway conditions
- The location of responding units

308.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the Code-3 response. In all cases, the officer shall notify the Watch Commander, field supervisor, or Communications Division of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned as the primary unit to the emergency response.