



GENERAL ORDER:	5.30
CHAPTER:	Law Enforcement Operations
SUBJECT:	Operation of Agency Emergency Vehicles
ISSUED DATE:	February 24, 2005
REVISION DATE:	September 29, 2021
NOTES:	
RELATED ORDERS:	General Order 5.01
ATTACHMENTS:	

PURPOSE: To define the criteria for responding to routine and emergency calls, including guidelines for use of emergency equipment, including audible powered sirens during “wide scale” evacuations.

POLICY: All Agency members operating emergency vehicles shall, at all times, operate the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all other persons. In addition to provisions of this procedure, vehicle operators shall follow the provisions of the California Vehicle Code (VC) regarding the operation of emergency vehicles, including use of vehicle mounted and powered sirens VC 27002.

DEFINITIONS:

CODE 1: Response to non-urgent incidents without undue delay. No combination of emergency lights or siren shall be used and strict compliance with traffic laws and regulations is mandatory.

CODE 3: Response to emergency incidents. Use of emergency lights is mandatory and siren as may be necessary.

ORDER:

- A. Unless a “Code 3” response is justified, members will respond to all calls “Code 1.”
- B. Agency personnel shall only operate a vehicle "Code 3" when authorized by the Watch Sergeant or Watch Commander.
 1. Any time an Agency member engages in Code 3 operation, the Watch Sergeant/Commander will be immediately advised of the circumstances.
 2. The Watch Sergeant/Commander will immediately consider all factors and determine if Code 3 operation shall continue or terminate. These factors include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Type of call,
 - b. Time of day,

- c. The amount of traffic,
 - d. Safety of the public,
 - e. Driver's experience and abilities,
 - f. Road conditions (type of road, wet, dry),
 - g. Traffic conditions (heavy, moderate, light), and
 - h. Weather conditions (rain, fog, sunny).
3. The driver of the emergency vehicle shall consider the following at all times:
- a. Type of call,
 - b. Time of day,
 - c. Amount of traffic en-route to the destination,
 - d. Safety of the public,
 - e. Road conditions (type of road, wet, dry),
 - f. Traffic conditions (heavy, moderate, light),
 - g. Weather conditions (rain, fog, sunny), and
 - h. Proximity of other Agency members who may be closer resulting in less drive time in a Code 3 manner.
4. Agency members shall be mindful to never jeopardize their own safety, or the safety of the public, while operating Code 3.
- a. When responding Code 3, the Agency member must notify dispatch of the location he/she is responding from.
 - b. When discontinuing the Code 3 response, the Agency member shall immediately advise dispatch he/she has discontinued the Code 3 response.
5. The driver and passengers in any County owned, leased or maintained vehicle shall wear a seat belt whenever the vehicle is operating.
6. Agency personnel shall adhere to the requirements and procedures listed in General Order 5.01, whenever a vehicle pursuit occurs.

C. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21055: Sets forth the legal authority for an emergency vehicle to respond Code 3. Section 21055 exempts the driver of an emergency vehicle from adhering to the rules of the road under any of the following conditions:

- a. If the vehicle is being driven in response to an emergency call,
 - b. While engaged in rescue operations,
 - c. If the vehicle is being used in the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected law violator, and
 - d. If the driver of the vehicle sounds a siren, as may be reasonably necessary, and the vehicle displays a red lamp visible from the front as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians.
2. CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21056: Section 21055 does not relieve the driver of a vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all other persons using the highway, nor protect him/her from the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of the privileges granted in that section.
 3. CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21807: It is the duty of the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property.

D. CODE 3 OPERATION IN NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS:

1. Personnel operating emergency vehicles in a Code 3 mode, within or through a neighboring jurisdiction's city limits, will notify Dispatch of:
 - a. The route.
 - b. The approximate time of arrival.
2. Dispatch will notify the appropriate jurisdiction. Refer to Interagency Pursuit Guideline, General Order 5.01.

E. USE OF SIREN:

1. All Agency patrol vehicles are equipped with sirens. The sirens that may be utilized during Code 3 driving include, the "Wail" and "Yelp." Some agency vehicles are equipped with the "Hi-Lo" audible siren. The Hi-Lo siren is not permitted for use during normal vehicle operations or during any form of Code 3 driving.
 - a. Pursuant to Senate Bill 909 (2020), law enforcement agencies may use the Hi-Lo siren during wide scale evacuations as result of a natural disaster or other large scale emergency, that requires an evacuation act to take effect immediately. Common or possible large scale emergencies could include but are not limited to:
 - i. Wild fires,
 - ii. Earth quakes, and
 - iii. Flooding, etc.