



# Colorado Springs Police Department

## General Order

### 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation

#### Section 900 – Vehicle Procedures

Effective Date: 4/19/2022

Supersedes Date: 2/18/2021

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### **.01 Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to set conditions and procedures for operating department vehicles when conventional traffic regulations cannot be observed.

### **.02 Cross-Reference**

[GO 900 Vehicles: Normal Operation](#)

[GO 904 Vehicle Pursuits](#)

[GO 1063 Communications Protocols](#)

### **.03 Discussion**

Colorado motor vehicle laws (CRS § 42-4-108) exempt emergency vehicles from certain rules of the road, in specified manners, when responding to an emergency call or fire alarm, or when pursuing a suspected or actual violator of the law. The ability to respond in an emergency manner does not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor will such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

### **.04 Policy**

Emergency lights and sirens will be utilized by Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) personnel during an emergency response.

All officers engaged in an emergency response are required to exercise due regard for the safety of all persons using the roadway.

## **.05 Definitions**

*Code 3 Response:* A department vehicle being operated using emergency lights and siren and in a manner that may not conform to all traffic laws. Officers operating a vehicle Code 3 must follow CRS § 42-4-108.

## **.10 Authorization**

A sworn department member may operate a police vehicle Code 3 in the following situations:

- When responding to a serious public hazard
- For the preservation of life
- When responding to a crime of violence in progress
- When engaged in a vehicle pursuit
- When any unit requests assistance Code 3

The decision for a Code 3 response can be made by the responding officer or a supervisor. While the responding officer shall have the authority to determine whether a Code 3 response is warranted, a monitoring supervisor may overrule this decision.

No more than two vehicles will be authorized to operate in Code 3 status in any single response unless the vehicles are engaged in a vehicle pursuit as described in [GO 904 Vehicle Pursuits](#). Should a supervisor believe that exigent circumstances exist to justify more than two Code 3 units, that supervisor may provide such authorization.

Only in rare instances, where exigent circumstances dictate immediate action without prior approval, will more than two units operate Code 3 without supervisor approval. Officers making that decision without supervisory approval will be required to justify the exigency that led to their actions.

## **.20 Factors to Consider in Operating Vehicle Code 3**

When operating a vehicle Code 3, officers must carefully and continuously evaluate conditions, such as:

- Degree of risk created by the response
- Degree of emergency, urgency, or threat to others
- Ability of the officer to keep the vehicle under control
- Speed in relation to road conditions
- Traffic conditions including, volume, type, speed, and direction of vehicular traffic
- Weather conditions such as rain, fog, snow, wind, etc.
- Road conditions such as terrain, ice, construction, poor repair, visibility, etc.

- Whether the officer has slowed enough to allow safe passage through intersections
- Whether movements such as turning across traffic, U-turns, or other changes in direction can be made safely

### **.30 Emergency Vehicle Operation**

Upon making the decision to initiate a Code 3 response, the officer will immediately broadcast their intention.

While a vehicle is being operated Code 3, the officer operating the vehicle will use both the emergency lights and siren. Under CRS § 42-4-108, emergency vehicles are exempt from the following rules of the road, so long as the driver exercises due regard for the safety of all persons using the roadway:

- Park or stand, irrespective of applicable laws
- Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation
- Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as the operator does not endanger life or property
- Disregard regulations governing directions of movement or turning in specified directions

As soon as practical, officers will notify communications after they conclude the Code 3 response.

### **.40 Stationary use of Emergency Equipment**

Unnecessary use of emergency equipment can compound traffic problems. Officers are authorized to operate emergency lights, hazardous warning lights, spotlights, and other emergency equipment at a minimum level necessary to ensure safety to the officer and the public under such conditions as stopping violators, parking contrary to legal requirements, and assisting motorists.

### **.50 Code 3 Escorts**

Officers are prohibited from escorting under Code 3 conditions, except when performing the following:

- Escorting for the purpose of preserving life. Officers will consider the nature of the emergency, the dangers and hazards involved, and the emotional condition of the person to be escorted before deciding to escort Code 3.
- Expediting the movement of supplies or personnel during a national, state, or local emergency

- Escorting the Peterson Field Security Police emergency response team to the Cheyenne Mountain Complex, in an actual emergency, according to written procedures agreed upon between the department and the Air Force
- Specific dignitary escorts as approved by the Specialized Enforcement Division (SED) Commander

## **.60 Other Escorts**

CSPD may be asked to provide escort services for dignitaries, public officials, or in other unusual circumstances. If such a request is made, it will be handled or coordinated through SED.

Funeral escorts and requests for escort services for oversize vehicles, hazardous cargo, or other routine circumstances will be arranged by the department's extra duty coordinator.