


Fort Collins Police Services

Policy Manual

 FORT COLLINS POLICE	POLICY	316
	TITLE	Officer Response to Calls

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations.

316.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Officers responding to any call shall proceed with due regard for the safety of all persons and property. Officers not responding to a call as an emergency response shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren. Officers responding to emergency calls for service shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and shall sound the vehicle's siren as reasonably necessary (CRS § 42-4-108(3) and CRS § 42-4-213).

Responding with emergency lights and/or siren does not relieve the officer of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property and does not protect the officer from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others (CRS § 42-4-108(4)). The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and/or siren does not generally provide an exemption from the vehicle law (CRS § 42-4-108(3)). Officers should only respond to a call with an emergency response when responding to circumstances the officer reasonably believes involves the potential for immediate danger to persons or property.

316.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Officers may request emergency assistance when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen.

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

- (a) The unit number
- (b) The location
- (c) The reason for the request and type of emergency
- (d) The number of units requested

Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify Dispatch.

316.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

A Patrol supervisor is responsible to monitor the number of officers responding to incidents and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

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Officers or supervisors may make adjustments to the particular personnel assigned by Dispatch to an incident based on the location of responding officers, officer availability or other factors; however, generally only the number of responding units suggested by Dispatch should respond to a call. This allows Dispatch the flexibility to assign other calls for service to available officers.

316.4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

A Patrol supervisor will monitor the appropriateness of the response and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

Each responding officer will determine what level of response is needed based on the incident, distance to the incident, and any other factors which a reasonable person would consider while maintaining public safety. When circumstances permit, the first officer on the scene of an emergency incident will determine if additional resources are required and which type of response is required. If an officer on-scene of an incident decides there is no additional need for emergency response by assisting officers, the officer will make notification for a response downgrade.

Officers who are not dispatched to emergency incidents should avoid unnecessary radio traffic in order to provide the most opportunity for dispatchers and dispatched units to communicate information.

316.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONDING OFFICER

- (a) Officers shall exercise sound judgement and care with due regard for life and property when responding to a call with an emergency response. During a call involving an emergency response officers may (CRS § 42-4-108(2)):
 - 1. Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.
 - 2. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
 - 3. Exceed any speed limits provided this does not endanger life or property.
 - 4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- (b) Community service officers have different response criteria, which include:
 - 1. Are not permitted to exceed any posted speed limit while responding to calls for service.
 - 2. May disregard rules governing flow of traffic when arriving at and remaining on scene of a motor vehicle accident or other traffic related incident.
- (c) The decision to continue as an emergency response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgement, 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. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

316.5.1 EMERGENCY RESPONSE SPECIAL CONDITIONS

While performing certain emergency response tasks, the use of emergency lights or sirens may increase the danger to the responding officers or the public. In the following circumstances, officers may consider the appropriateness of an emergency response without siren, emergency lights, or both:

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- (a) An officer is attempting to confirm his/her suspicion that a driver has violated the traffic code and there is no other reasonable suspicion or probable cause to stop the driver (CRS § 42-4-108(3)).
- (b) An emergency response requires an element of stealth that would be defeated by the use of emergency lighting or siren. This response should use a siren and emergency lights until a stealth response without lights and siren is required, and the response should then continue accordingly.

Any emergency response without the use of emergency lights and siren shall be conducted with due regard (as defined by CRS) for the safety of the public and property and the recognition that such a response may not provide an exemption from the vehicle laws (CRS § 42-4-108(3)).

Any emergency response without the use of lights or siren shall cease if the circumstances no longer warrant such a response.

316.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

Dispatch shall ensure acknowledgement and response of assisting units when an officer requests emergency assistance or when the available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and an immediate law enforcement response is needed. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher will request the level of response by officers; however, the response will ultimately be determined by responding officers and/or a Patrol supervisor. The dispatcher shall:

- (a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance.
- (b) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding.
- (c) Notify and coordinate outside emergency services (e.g. fire and ambulance).
- (d) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated.
- (e) Control all radio communication during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the watch commander or Patrol supervisor.

316.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the watch commander or Patrol supervisor shall verify the following:
 - 1. The proper response has been initiated.
 - 2. No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
 - 3. Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practicable.
- (b) The Patrol supervisor shall, whenever practicable, monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in his/her judgement, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.
- (c) When making the decision to authorize an emergency response, a Patrol supervisor should consider the following:
 - 1. The type of call or crime involved
 - 2. The necessity of a timely response

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3. Traffic and roadway conditions
4. The location of the responding units