



Policy Manual Standard Operating Procedure	
SOP Number: 13-06b	Subject: Operation of Emergency Vehicles
Authorized by: Deputy Chief Robert Connolly	
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Signed: Robert Connolly	
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1. PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure establishes procedures for the safe operation of Departmental vehicles by employees of this Department, including when responding to routine and emergency calls for service.

2. POLICY

The Department authorizes officers to operate a patrol vehicle as an “authorized emergency vehicle” when responding to an emergency call for service and when engaged in an authorized pursuit of a motor vehicle.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 All Department employees operating a Department vehicle are accountable for the safe operation of the Department vehicle. Employees will follow these guidelines when responding to calls. There may be exceptions, and every employee is expected to use logic and common sense when confronted with situations that are unusual.

- 3.1.1 Department employees operating Department vehicles under normal, non-emergency situations will adhere to all state traffic laws and Department driving policies. Vehicle operators will drive defensively in a safe and courteous manner. All officers will abide by O.C.G.A. section 40-6-6, Authorized Emergency Vehicles.
 - 3.1.2 Certified police officers may operate emergency vehicles with blue lights and sirens.
 - 3.1.3 EVOC-trained Emergency Preparedness officials may operate emergency response vehicles with red lights and sirens.
 - 3.1.4 Employees will keep vehicles neat and orderly. Tobacco use is prohibited in Department vehicles.
- 3.2 Supervisors will monitor employees' driving and promote safe driving.
4. ACTION
- 4.1 General Considerations
 - 4.1.1 The driver and occupants of any State-owned or -leased motor vehicle (excluding motorcycles) will use safety restraining devices when the vehicle is in motion except when there are special circumstances present in which the use of a safety restraining device may hamper efficient conduct of a law enforcement function or cause a greater risk of injury to a sworn officer.
 - 4.1.2 Report any damage which the Department vehicle sustained (during the employee's shift) on an incident/accident report. The employee must report damage to a vehicle to the supervisor on duty; failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
 - 4.1.3 See SOP 13-02, "Vehicle Inspection" regarding checking a vehicle's readiness for service and maintenance issues.
 - 4.2 Responding to Calls for Service
 - CALEA 6th edition standard 41.2.1
 - 4.2.1 Priority Codes
 - 1. Priority One: The response will normally be immediate, taking priority over all other dispatches. Officers will utilize both emergency lights and siren when responding to the call in emergency mode. The officer must always write a report for a priority one dispatch unless the call is unfounded or a false call. An example of a Priority One call is an accident with injuries.

2. Priority Two: The response will be without delay, unless superseded by a Priority One dispatch and will normally be without using emergency lights and siren. An incident report is normally required. An example of a Priority Two call is an accident in a parking lot without injuries.
3. Priority Three: Response will be handled as time permits. A higher priority call will take precedence over a Priority Three call. An incident report may be required for a Priority Three call. An example of a Priority Three call is a request for a jump start.
4. Priority variations: Some incidents will change priority status based on the information given to the Communications dispatcher. Officer discretion is critical in response to calls.

4.2.2 Emergency Response: An officer responding to an emergency call for service under a Priority One or Two dispatch will use the vehicle's emergency lights and siren when exercising the privileges set forth in O.C.G.A. section 40-6-6, Authorized Emergency Vehicles. The officer will drive with due regard for the safety of all persons in the area.

4.2.3 Silent arrival: When responding to an emergency call such as a robbery in progress, the officer may turn off the emergency lights and siren when approaching the scene of the call. The officer will proceed with due regard for the other traffic and persons in the area and will obey the traffic regulations.

4.2.4 The speed used by an officer in responding to an emergency call will be based upon the priority of the call, seriousness of the type of call, traffic density, weather, and other related factors.

4.3 Accidents in Department Vehicle

4.3.1 Unless incapacitated, employees are responsible for notifying Communications of motor vehicle accidents. Communications will ensure the on-duty patrol supervisor acknowledges the call.

4.3.2 When a GTPD vehicle is involved in an accident, refer to section 4.6 of SOP 8-10b "Traffic Collisions."

4.3.3 The on-duty supervisor will investigate minor accidents involving GTPD vehicles and document the report in RMS.

4.3.4 The on-duty supervisor will inform the Patrol Division commander, the employee's Division commander (if different) and the Administrative

Division commander via e-mail of the accident. The e-mail should include a brief synopsis of the accident and the GTPD or APD accident report number.

- 4.3.5 Submit copies of reports to the Patrol Division commander, with additional copies up the chain of command. The Patrol Division commander will give copies to the chair of the Accident Review Board as soon as possible.

5. DEFINITIONS

Authorized law enforcement vehicle: “a motor vehicle belonging to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency, provided such vehicle is in use as an emergency vehicle by one authorized to use it for that purpose.” An authorized law enforcement vehicle must make use of an audible signal (siren) capable of being heard under normal conditions for a distance of not less than 500 feet and a flashing or revolving blue light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet to the front of the vehicle. A non-law-enforcement emergency vehicle will use an audible signal and a flashing or revolving red light. (O.C.G.A. 40-1-1, 40-6-6, and 40-8-94).

Due regard: The degree of caution that a reasonably careful officer, performing similar duties under similar circumstances, would use.

Emergency: a situation in which (1) there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss or damage and (2) action by an emergency vehicle operator may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

6. CANCELLATION

This directive cancels:

SOP 13-06a “Operation of Emergency Vehicles,” and
Section 4.5 of SO 2012-01 “Changes to Directives.”

7. REFERENCE

SOP 8-10, “Traffic Collision Investigation”
SOP 13-01, “Motor Vehicle Pursuits”
SOP 13-02, “Vehicle Inspection”
SOP 13-05, “Accident Review Board”

CALEA 6th edition standards 41.2.1