



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

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<b>Chapter:</b> Operations	<b>Section:</b> 405.2
<b>Subject:</b> Vehicle Operations	<b>Topic:</b> Emergency Response
<b>Accreditation:</b> ADM.25.01	<b>Revised:</b>
<b>Enacted:</b> 07/30/2015	<b>Reaffirmed:</b>
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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines for response to situations requiring the emergency operation of Sheriff's Office vehicles.

## II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff to conduct all emergency vehicle operations in strict accordance with existing laws and statutes. Deputies engaged in emergency vehicle operations shall utilize both audible (siren) and visible (lights) emergency warning equipment in response to calls for assistance. All vehicles shall use headlights during emergency responses.

All personnel operating Sheriff's Office vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons. No assignment shall be of such importance and no task shall be expedited with such emphasis that the principles of safety become secondary. There are no tasks in the department of such importance that they justify the reckless disregard for the safety of innocent persons.

Agency personnel will be held strictly accountable for their emergency response conduct. Responding vehicles are statutorily obligated to use due regard for the safety of others when disobeying traffic laws such as passing on the right, proceeding against a traffic signal, or exceeding speed limits. These maneuvers must be cautiously executed to avoid crashes or other incidents as defined in General Order 405.1.

## III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Emergency Response:** Situations where the physical safety and well-being of an individual is directly jeopardized. This includes "life and death" situations such as serious felonies that involve an actual or threatened attack, situations where a deputy has reasonable cause to believe that serious bodily injury may occur or has already occurred (e.g., aggravated assault, armed robbery, murder, etc.), and other serious crimes in progress.
- B. **Response Driving:** Driving a Sheriff's Office vehicle in an expeditious manner when proceeding to the location of an emergency that is consistent with the provisions of Section 46.2-920 of the Code of Virginia, to include the usage of emergency lighting

equipment and siren and having due regard for the safety of persons and property. The term "response driving" includes operation of a law enforcement vehicle both in the apprehension of persons suspected of committing a violation of law or in a response to an emergency call.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Deputies shall use emergency warning equipment in accordance with applicable laws and statutes.
  - 1. Deputies shall respond with due regard for the safety of all persons.
- B. Calls or events that would necessitate emergency responses\response driving:
  - 1. Deputy in trouble
  - 2. Felony in progress
  - 3. Other serious crimes in progress
  - 4. Assaults in progress with weapons involved
  - 5. Instances where human life may be in jeopardy
  - 6. Other exigent circumstances as directed by a supervisor
- C. In certain situations during response driving, it is sometimes prudent and necessary to discontinue the siren operation prior to the deputy's arrival at the scene. These situations include but are not limited to silent hold-up alarms during business hours, robbery in progress calls, potential hostage/barricade situations, and other similar types of calls where the announcement of the Sheriff's deputies' arrival at a scene may endanger citizens, provoke hostage/barricade situations, or otherwise place additional hazards upon the general public. Deputies operating vehicles under these conditions shall ensure they drive with extreme caution and with consideration for the rights and safety of other motorists. Upon discontinuing both emergency lights and siren, deputies must abide by all traffic laws.
- D. Emergency Communications Center Responsibilities
  - 1. Receive and record all incoming information on the call for assistance
  - 2. Dispatch appropriate patrol personnel and immediately notify the ranking patrol supervisor of the action taken
  - 3. Perform relevant record and motor vehicle checks, if appropriate

4. Control all radio communications during an emergency by clearing the channel
  5. Coordinate assistance under the direction of the patrol supervisor
  6. Continue to monitor the situation until it has stabilized or has been terminated.
- E. Initiating or Primary Response Unit's Responsibilities
1. When a deputy initiates a request for assistance in a situation where help is needed, the deputy must be aware that a non-specific request will result in an uncoordinated response. This may be a greater hazard to life and property than the originating incident. The deputy must minimize this hazard by providing the following information to the ECC:
    - a. Unit number
    - b. Exact location
    - c. Reason for the request
    - d. Specify EMERGENCY (Signal 1), if required
    - e. Specify BACKUP (Signal 2), if routine
    - f. Number of units required to handle the situation
  2. The deputy making the request shall remain on the radio long enough to determine if the call has been received by the ECC.
  3. Primary response units shall identify themselves and provide the ECC with a conservative estimated time of arrival ("ETA") based on distance, traffic, and weather conditions.
  4. Primary response units shall proceed to the specified location in accordance with the assigned response code.
  5. Primary response units shall immediately notify ECC upon arrival at the scene and provide a status report as soon as possible.
  6. Upon being notified to terminate, responding units shall discontinue emergency operation and return to their assigned area unless specifically requested to continue to the location by a supervisor under normal driving conditions.
- F. The patrol supervisor shall monitor the response until it has stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing specific units into or out of the response, as necessary.