

<b>MESA POLICE</b>  Department Policy Manual	<b>Philosophy &amp; Definitions</b>	<b>DPM 2.3.1</b> Effective 10/10/2012 Revised 02/11/2014 Reviewed 08/01/2024
Approved by: <b>Chief of Police</b>	Chapter: <b>Emergency Vehicle Operations</b>	Page: <b>1 of 5</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with the philosophy and definitions related to emergency vehicle operations.

## 2. AUTHORITY

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) provides certain standards and conditions pertaining to the operation of emergency vehicles that apply to MPD emergency vehicle operations.

## 3. PHILOSOPHY

- A. The MPD places the highest value on the lives and safety of its officers and the public.
- B. The MPD recognizes that enforcement of the law may necessitate the initiation of emergency vehicle operations in order to apprehend the violator(s) and members must use good judgment and discretion in operations emergency vehicles.
- C. Officers must continually evaluate the nature and seriousness of the offense(s) against the risk of initiating and continuing emergency vehicle operations and must recognize that the safety of the public is of a primary concern. Under no circumstances shall emergency vehicle operations be conducted in such a manner as to recklessly endanger the lives of officers and/or citizens.
- D. An officer will not be criticized for terminating emergency vehicle operations when, in the officer's opinion, the lives of others would have been at undue risk had emergency vehicle operations continued.

## 4. GUIDELINES

- A. The MPD shall be responsible for training members, managing incidents, and evaluating performance in all emergency vehicle operations.
- B. Driving under emergency conditions does not relieve the member from the **duty to drive with due regard** for the safety of others.
- C. Consider the following factors during emergency vehicle operations:
  1. Traffic volume.
  2. Time of day.
  3. Type of crime or violation involved.

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4. Location and direction of travel (e.g., toward very congested areas, schools, residential areas, large public gatherings, etc.).
  5. Vehicle condition and limitations.
  6. Weather conditions (e.g., rain, fog, dust storms, etc.).
  7. Road conditions.
- D. Shift Lieutenants shall perform a monthly inspection on emergency vehicle operations for police vehicles equipped with AVL (automatic vehicle location) technology.
1. Audits shall be randomly performed on one call per month, per shift.
  2. Include audit findings in the monthly line inspection report.
  3. If necessary, supervisor findings may be documented in the member's workstation file or forwarded to the affected Division Commander for further review.

## 5. GENERAL DEFINITIONS [ALEAP 21.1A,B]

**Imminent or Impending Threat** - "Imminent" does not mean "immediate" or "instantaneous" but that an action is pending. A threat is imminent on circumstances where:

- It appears that a subject's actions may cause death and/or serious physical injury to the officer or others; **and**
  - It appears the subject has the means or instrumentalities to do so; **and**
  - It appears the subject has the opportunity and ability to use those means or instrumentalities to cause death or serious physical injury.

**Driving: Non-Routine** - Traveling over the speed limit or disobeying traffic laws while operating with emergency lights and siren.

- Officers are authorized to drive up to 25 mph over the speed limit when responding "Code 3" under favorable conditions (e.g., light/moderate traffic, good roads, good visibility, etc.) while responding to an emergency or in pursuit of a violator and in the performance of a law enforcement function. Officers must drive at a speed which is reasonable and prudent for the actual and potential hazards that exist.
- Officers are authorized to exceed the speed limit by more than 25 mph when responding "Code 3" during extreme circumstances while responding to an emergency or in pursuit of a violator and in the performance of a law enforcement function. Officers must drive at a speed which is reasonable and prudent for the actual and potential hazards that exist.

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- Officers may be required to justify exceeding the speed limit by more than 25 mph while driving “Code 3” to their affected Division Commander upon request. It is the Division Commander’s responsibility to determine if the speed was justifiable under the conditions (e.g., traffic, weather, roadway, severity of the crime, distance from officers requesting backup, etc.).
- Under all circumstances officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and will be held accountable for any reckless disregard for the safety of others.

**Driving: Routine** - Driving a police vehicle without emergency equipment activated in performance of a law enforcement function (e.g., responding as backup, catching up to a traffic violator, etc.).

- Under favorable conditions (e.g.; light/moderate traffic, good roads, good visibility, etc.) and in the performance of a law enforcement function, members are authorized to driver a maximum of 15 mph above the speed limit. In less than favorable conditions officers must drive at a speed which is reasonable and prudent for actual and potential hazards that exist.

**Emergency** - An imminent threat to public health, welfare, or safety.

**Emergency Vehicle Operations** - A police vehicle operating with emergency lights and siren activated as outlined in [ARS 28-624](#).

**Emergency Equipment** - Fully operational lights and siren meeting the definitions of [ARS 28-624](#). Additionally, MPD approves equipment which allows lights and/or siren to be temporarily or permanently attached to the vehicle grill or visor.

**Officer(s)** - The use of the term “officer(s)” indicates a sworn peace officer.

## 6. PURSUIT DEFINITIONS [ALEAP 21.2A-G]

**Pursuit** - An active attempt by sworn officer operating an authorized emergency vehicle utilizing lights and siren to apprehend the occupants of a fleeing vehicle that appears to be resisting apprehension by either:

- Maintaining or increasing their speed.
- Disobeying traffic laws.
- Refusing to yield to the officer’s emergency vehicle as defined in [ARS 28-622.01](#).

**Terminate Pursuit** - “Terminate Pursuit” means to cease active attempts to apprehend the suspect by vehicular pursuit.

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**Functional/Assigned Supervisor** - Any patrol or field supervisor who is assigned functional supervision and responsibility of a pursuit. The functional supervisor shall be responsible for the management and control of the pursuit and shall monitor the pursuit continuously to assess the situation and ensure it is conducted within Department guidelines, applicable traffic laws, and regulations.

**Primary Police Unit** - The police vehicle that initiates the pursuit or any police unit that assumes control of the #1 position behind the fleeing vehicle.

**Secondary Police Unit** - Any police vehicle with emergency equipment that becomes involved in a pursuit as a backup to the primary unit and assumes control of the #2 position behind the fleeing vehicle.

**Support Officer(s)/Unit(s)** - Police vehicles with emergency equipment which are not involved in the pursuit but are available if needed.

**Authorized Emergency Vehicle** - A Department police vehicle equipped with fully operational emergency lights and siren. **Note:** [ARS 28-101.4.b](#) defines “a police vehicle” as an authorized emergency vehicle. This policy definition of authorized emergency vehicle is more restrictive than ARS and will be the Department approved definition.

**Caravan** - A group or procession of vehicles traveling in the same direction.

**Parallel** - Following the pursuit on any street that extends in the same direction or that has a parallel relationship or manner with the pursuit.

## 7. CODE-3 DRIVING DEFINITIONS

**Code-3 Driving** - Driving with emergency lights and sirens activated in the furtherance of a law enforcement function.

**Code-3 Response** - An emergency response in which the use of emergency lights and siren are authorized.

**913 Code** - Used in situations where the officer needs immediate assistance but does not need more than two units to respond Code-3 (i.e., an officer trying to subdue a combative person).

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## 8. PRECISION IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE (PIT) DEFINITIONS

**PIT** - A form of intervention involving direct vehicle-to-vehicle contact between a law enforcement vehicle and a target vehicle in an attempt to render the target vehicle stationary.

**PIT Trained Officer** - A sworn officer who has successfully completed the MPD training course in the maneuver as authorized by the Training Section.

## 9. STOP STICK DEFINITIONS

**Stop Stick, Standard** - A device used to impede or stop the movement of a mobile target vehicle.

- If the target drives over the Stop Stick, it will result in tire deflation.
- Stop Sticks are designed for a controlled release of air from the target vehicle's tires, usually within 20-30 seconds.
- One Stop Stick is 3 feet in length and weighs 1.1 pounds.

**Stop Stick, Piranha** - A Piranha Stop Stick is a device for use on a stationary target vehicle.

- If the target vehicle is moved and the tire rides over the Piranha, it will result in quick tire deflation, usually in 5 seconds.
- One Piranha Stop Stick is 3-1/2 inches in length and weighs 5.2 ounces.

## REFERENCES

- [ARS 28-101](#)
- [ARS 28-622.01](#)
- [ARS 28-624](#)