



## Newport News Police Department - Operational Manual

# OPS-310 - EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION

Amends/Supersedes: OPS-310 (09/20/2007)

Date of Issue: 05/07/2021

### I. GENERAL

- A. It is the policy of this Department that all employees operate city vehicles in the safest manner possible.
- B. When operating a police unit during emergency response, officers must exercise extreme caution at all times. The safety of the officers and the community must be of paramount concern. Officers are responsible for maintaining proper control of their vehicles at all times. [41.2.1(d)]
- C. Any police vehicle operating in an emergency mode is governed by [§46.2-920](#) of the Code of Virginia. The police vehicle must have both the emergency lights and siren systems in operation. If emergency lights and/or siren fails, emergency operation of the unit will be terminated. [41.2.1(d)]
- D. [§46.2-920](#) D of the Code of Virginia states that a law-enforcement vehicle operated by a law-enforcement officer may disregard speed limits, while having due regard for safety of persons and property:
  - 1. In testing the accuracy of speedometers of such vehicles
  - 2. In testing the accuracy of speed measuring devices specified in [§46.2-882](#)
  - 3. In following another vehicle for the purpose of determining its speed.

### II. PROCEDURE

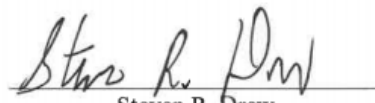
[41.2.1(d)]

- A. Calls for service will be prioritized based on the nature and severity of the situation (see [COM-710 Police Response Procedures](#)). Generally, calls will fall within the following priority designations:  
[41.2.1(a-c)]
  - 1. Calls involving an immediate threat to life will be given the highest level of priority (priority 1) for response;
  - 2. Calls involving an immediate threat to property or any call that is likely to escalate to an immediate threat to life without a prompt response from officers (priority 2); and
  - 3. Calls for service that may pend for a period of time without significant negative impact on the solvability of the crime. Generally, calls for service that are no longer in progress or a delayed report as well as all calls that do not meet the criteria for a priority 1 or 2 call are designated as non-emergency (priority 3 or 4).
- B. Emergency vehicle operation is authorized in situations that demand the immediate presence of the police in order to protect a person from possible death or serious injury (priority 1), such as:
  - 1. Response to motor vehicle accidents involving death, serious injury, or likelihood of such injury due to the location or condition of the accident scene.

2. Calls for emergency assistance from other police officers, or law enforcement agency personnel.
3. Response to violence-oriented calls (i.e., personal injury, civil disturbances involving weapons, cuttings and shootings).
4. Response to felony in progress calls where the threat of injury or personal safety is probable.

**NOTE:** A non-emergency response will occur when calls for service do not indicate an immediate threat to life. It is expected that, upon dispatch to a non-emergency call, officers will respond as promptly as possible without the use of emergency equipment.  
[41.2.1(c)]

- C. While operating a police unit during an emergency response, the police vehicle will be brought to a complete stop at any red traffic lights or stop signs. The officer must ensure that the intersection is clear before proceeding through the intersection.
- D. While operating a police unit during an emergency response, speeds shall not exceed the posted speed limits by more than twenty miles per hour, except in a pursuit situation (see [OPS-120 Vehicular Pursuits](#)).
- E. It is never mandatory that an officer operate a police vehicle in an emergency mode when factors such as distance and other safety conditions make an emergency response impractical.
- F. When responding to emergency calls, officers should make every effort to park police units in a safe and proper parking location. When circumstances arise which require officers to double park police units, the use of emergency flashers or flashing police lights shall be used when possible. When responding to non-emergency calls, police units shall be properly parked.
- G. Officers engaging in an emergency response will adjust their speed and use of emergency equipment when a supervisor or units on scene state that additional units should slow down and/or discontinue their response.
- H. Escorts will be conducted in accordance with [OPS-350 Traffic Directions & Control](#). Police units will not be used to escort civilians to hospitals during medical emergencies. Should a medical emergency situation be encountered by the officer, they should: [61.3.3; 61.4.1]
  1. Notify the Communications Division of the situation, including the condition of the subject, requesting an ambulance response.
  2. Administer first aid within the officer's capability or training until the ambulance arrives.

  
Steven R. Drew  
Chief of Police