



DEPARTMENTAL
GENERAL
ORDER

Effective Date:
30 May 07

J-4.1

Index as:

Emergency Driving Procedures

EMERGENCY DRIVING PROCEDURES

The purpose of this order is to establish Departmental policy and procedures for members operating a police vehicle in emergency driving status (Code 3) and the responsibilities and duties of officers. For the purpose of this order, the term "officer" shall include members, rangers, and reserve officers. This order additionally provides specific criteria and direction for officers pertaining to emergency driving, including Department Safety Belt regulations.

This order is intended to reduce potential hazards to the public and members engaged in emergency driving.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Code 2 Status:** A call or response not requiring red lights and siren. Units in Code 2 status shall comply strictly with all traffic laws and regulations.
- B. **Code 3 Status:** An emergency call requiring an emergency driving response in all practical haste. A response in Code 3 status shall obey all rules of the road, not exceed a speed of 20 m.p.h. over the posted speed limit, AND require red lights visible from the front as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians and sirens operating, as reasonably necessary, to give warning of the approaching emergency vehicle in accordance with the provisions of California Vehicle Code Sections 21055(a) & (b) and 21056.

II. POLICY

- A. A Code 3 response, is justified only when the necessity of immediate apprehension or the emergency outweighs the level of danger created by the need for an emergency driving response.
- B. Officers shall continually weigh the risk factors¹ of a collision against the gravity of the offense or response whenever the risk outweighs the benefits of continuing in Code 3 status.
- C. The provisions of this order comply with California Vehicle Code Sections 17001, 17004, 21055, 21056, 21806, 21807, 22350, 25102, 25252, 25258, 25259, and 27002.

¹ Risk factors enumerated in DGO J-4, PURSUIT DRIVING, Part IV.

- D. Employees shall never engage as the driver in a Code 3 response.
- E. Officers shall drive Code 3 only when specifically instructed to do so by the Communications Division or by a supervisor or commander, except as specified below:
 - 1. An officer who receives a dispatched Code 2 assignment may, on the basis of field information not available to the dispatcher, respond Code 3, provided that the officer has knowledge of specific, identifiable circumstances that warrant a Code 3 response pursuant to this order and that he/she immediately informs the Communications Division of the code upgrade.
 - 2. An officer who receives field information regarding an emergency may initiate a Code 3 response, provided that the circumstances warrant a Code 3 response and that he/she immediately informs the Communications Division of the Code 3 action.
 - 3. Officers may drive Code 3 in response to a 940B call. Units shall advise the Communications Division of their Code 3 response, as practical.
- F. An officer who receives a dispatched Code 3 assignment may respond Code 2 on the basis of field information not available to the dispatcher and shall respond Code 2 if ordered by a supervisory or command officer. In either case, the responding officer shall immediately inform the dispatcher of the code change.
- G. Officers shall not respond Code 3 with a prisoner in the police vehicle.

III. SUPERVISOR AND COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisors and commanders shall be mindful of radio traffic at all times. Upon being notified of a Code 3 response, the monitoring supervisor/commander shall continually weigh the risk factors of a collision against the gravity of the offense or response whenever the risk outweighs the benefits of continuing in Code 3 status.
- B. The supervisor or commander shall monitor the Code 3 response until the situation has stabilized or terminated and shall assert control by directing the actions of field personnel.

- C. A monitoring supervisor or commander may modify the actions of the dispatcher or the field unit engaged in a Code 3 response.
- D. Supervisors and commander shall pay particular, continuing attention to their subordinates' driving habits to ensure that they drive safely and reasonably and follow the regulations contained in this order. Supervisors and commanders shall implement continuing measures to ensure that improper driving behavior is recognized and corrected through non-disciplinary, or, if necessary, disciplinary measures.

IV. USE OF SAFETY BELT

- A. All members, employees and other persons (except prisoners) operating or riding in Departmental vehicles shall be required to wear an occupant safety restraining device as prescribed by California Vehicle Code Sections 27315, 27315.3, 27315.5, 27360(b).
- B. A Department vehicle is any motor vehicle which is under the direction and control of the Police Department including privately-owned vehicles used for City business.
- C. Officers engaged in a Pursuit Immobilization Technique (P.I.T.) **shall wear the safety belt.**
- D. When a potentially dangerous situation is perceived or anticipated by an officer (except that noted in Section III, C), and the officer is able to articulate the dangerous conditions of said situation and/or exigent circumstances, the officer's safety belt may be removed to allow adequate time for safe response to the situation. During such operations, the safety belt may be removed when, in the belted officer's judgment, wearing the safety belt might adversely affect such operation or endanger the vehicle's occupants.

By Order of

Wayne G. Tucker
Chief of Police

Date Signed: _____