

Emergency Driving

312.1 EMERGENCY DRIVING PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to emergency situations.

312.2 EMERGENCY DRIVING POLICY

Only sworn members of the Unified Police Department, driving properly equipped vehicles, may respond in emergency mode with lights and sirens. To respond to emergency situations safely and quickly, those members will conduct all emergency driving in compliance with State statutes and this policy. Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve the officer operating an authorized vehicle of the duty to act as a reasonably prudent emergency vehicle operator in like circumstances. Sworn members, when in emergency driving mode, will always operate their vehicles with regard for all persons using the roadway and with the goal of arriving safely.

312.3 EMERGENCY DRIVING APPLICABLE UTAH CODE (UCA 41-6A-212)

The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle may, when responding to an emergency call:

- (a) Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter.
- (b) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (c) Exceed the maximum speed limits, unless prohibited by a local highway authority.
- (d) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

Privileges granted to the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle apply only when the operator of the vehicle sounds an audible signal or uses a visual signal with emergency lights which is visible from in front of the vehicle.

The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle shall sound the siren when reasonably necessary to warn pedestrians and other vehicle operators of the approach of the authorized emergency vehicle.

The privileges granted do not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle of the duty to act as a reasonably prudent emergency vehicle operator in like circumstances.

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312.4 DEFINITION OF EMERGENCY CALLS

It is clear from the duties imposed on law enforcement by statute, that emergencies are those calls that require an immediate response to a scene. While it is impossible to list all situations that constitute an emergency, they are characterized by the need for such an immediate response because of the risk of death or injury, serious property loss, the need to prevent the escape of a suspect, or to preserve evidence that could assist in a suspect's later apprehension. Responding members will act on the reasonable inferences of all available information.

The following calls would normally be considered emergency calls:

1. Officer needs help (10-33).
2. Crimes against persons reported as being in progress. (Hold-up or panic alarms would normally indicate such a response is appropriate. Other alarms normally would not.) Injury or probable injury traffic accidents.
3. A disaster requiring evacuation, crowd control, etc.
4. Pursuit driving.
5. Response to serious medical emergency calls, where members can safely arrive before medical help.
6. Response to the scene of major crimes where prompt arrival could facilitate the apprehension of the suspect, preserve evidence, etc.

312.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICERS

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. Officers shall reduce speed at all street intersections when proceeding against the right of way, to such a degree that they clear the intersection as necessary before proceeding and while maintaining complete control of the vehicle.

1. Upon determining that an emergency call or situation exists, members will notify dispatch that they are responding in emergency driving mode. (This notification provides supervisors the opportunity of being aware of any UPD units traveling in emergency driving mode.) The number of vehicles engaged in emergency driving will be limited to that number justified by the available information about the nature of the call.
2. Members will ensure that their seatbelts are fastened.
3. When emergency driving, members will engage both lights and siren; however, the department recognizes that there are certain situations when the nature of the emergency suggests that the member employ a more tactically correct response. Any such tactical response will be made in compliance with Utah State statute, which mandates either lights or siren; however, State law does require that "The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle shall

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sound the siren...when reasonably necessary to warn pedestrians and other vehicle operators of the approach of the authorized emergency vehicle."

4. When emergency driving, members will maintain complete control over their vehicles at all times.

5. Upon arriving at the emergency scene, the member will determine the need for other units to initiate, continue, or terminate an emergency response, and so advise dispatch. Members engaged in emergency driving will terminate such driving upon being advised that such response is no longer justified.

312.5.1 DEPARTMENT RESTRICTIONS ON EMERGENCY DRIVING

Members will not drive at more than 15 MPH over the posted speed limit, except when in pursuit.

Members will not drive through a school zone, as designated by flashing yellow lights, at more than 20 MPH.

Members will slow to a safe and reasonable speed (not greater than 20 MPH), and if necessary, stop, before passing a school bus with flashing yellow or red lights.

Members will slow to a safe and reasonable speed (not greater than 10 MPH), and if necessary, stop before proceeding through intersections against red lights or stop signs, and shall determine that all cross traffic has yielded before crossing said intersection.

Passing will be done on the left when possible. If a pass must be done on the right, the member will slow and proceed with caution.

If the member must turn right across traffic from the left lanes, they will slow and proceed only when all traffic has yielded.

Sworn members will drive to minimize the effects of gravel, water, and other similar objects if traveling off a paved roadway.

Members will not escort ambulances or other emergency vehicles.

Holding intersections for ambulances is permitted only when medical staff makes the request, and the members have sufficient time to arrive, and hold said intersections safely.

Members should not operate the MDC or any other electronic device while engaged in emergency driving.

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312.6 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES - EMERGENCY DRIVING

Upon being notified that an officer is responding with lights and sirens, the shift sergeant or the field supervisor shall verify the following:

- (a) The proper response has been initiated.
- (b) No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
- (c) Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practical.

The field supervisor shall monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units to respond in emergency mode, the supervisor may direct units as needed.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in their judgment, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize an emergency, or lights and sirens response, the shift sergeant or the field supervisor should consider the following:

- The type of call
- The necessity of a timely response
- Traffic and roadway conditions
- The location of the responding units

312.7 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency response and respond accordingly. In all cases, the officer shall notify the shift sergeant, field supervisor, or dispatch of the equipment failure so that another vehicle may be assigned to the emergency response.