

Officer Response to Calls

309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to emergency and non-emergency situations whether dispatched or self-initiated.

309.1.1 DEFINITIONS

- Emergency Response Mode - Driving while using emergency warning devices or in accordance with 625 ILCS 5/11-205.
- High Speeds - Speeds of 21 or more MPH over the statutory limit.
- Marked Squad Cars - Marked squad cars will typically be equipped with roof-mounted light mechanisms to include red and blue flashing or strobe lighting, as well as auxiliary lights (such as alley/takedown lights); spotlights controlled from within.
- Unmarked Squad Cars - Vehicle with no exterior markings, but equipped with a siren and strobes or flashing interior-mounted lights for emergency responses and traffic stops.

309.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

If an officer reasonably believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall initiate an emergency response in accordance with this policy.

Officers using emergency lights and siren shall consider the call an emergency response and proceed immediately. Officers responding using emergency lights and siren shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment, and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary.

The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may (625 ILCS 5/11-205):

- (a) Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of the Illinois Vehicle Code (625 ILCS).
- (b) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be required and necessary for safe operation.
- (c) Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as he/she does not endanger life or property.
- (d) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- (e) In emergency responses, officers driving at high speeds shall continuously employ both the emergency lights and siren of the police vehicle.
- (f) When driving in emergency response mode, the officer must exercise sound judgment and carefully consider the immediate conditions, including roadway and weather conditions, density/flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, time of day, and nature of the location (e.g., school, hospital, residential area, etc.).

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- (g) Escorting other vehicles in emergency response mode is a dangerous practice and can only be done with prior approval by a Supervisor.
- (h) Non-sworn personnel are not permitted to respond to calls for service in violation of Illinois Traffic Laws. The use of emergency equipment by nonsworn personnel is limited to traffic control and direction, at the direction of a Shift Supervisor.

The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is not relieved from the duty of driving with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor do such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others (625 ILCS 5/11-205(e)).

Officers should only respond using emergency lights and siren when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required. Officers not authorized to respond using emergency lights and siren shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

309.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Requests for emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an immediate threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen. In any event, where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall immediately notify METCAD.

If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency

309.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICER(S)

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 to such a degree that they shall have complete control of the vehicle.

The decision to continue a response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of lights and siren at the legal speed limit. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor.

Upon determining an emergency response is appropriate, an officer shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

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309.4.1 UNMARKED VEHICLES

Officers operating unmarked police vehicles in emergency response mode will use extra caution in view of the fact that unmarked cars are more difficult for other drivers to identify as police/emergency vehicles.

309.5 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon learning that an emergency response has been initiated, the shift 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 shift 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 be assigned, the supervisor may do so.

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

When monitoring and emergency response, the shift 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

309.6 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 supervisor, or METCAD of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.