

Officer Response to Calls

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy ~~provides~~ provides officers with guidelines for the safe and appropriate vehicular response to emergency and non-emergency situations ~~whether~~ incidents or requests for assistance, whether these are dispatched or self-initiated.

316.1.1 LEVELS OF RESPONSE

316.1.2 DEFINITIONS

- **Code-1:** A non-emergency response. Officers should respond to the assignment as soon as practical, operate their vehicles without activation of emergency equipment, and obey all traffic laws.
- **Code-2:** A non-emergency response. Officers should respond directly to the assignment without unnecessary delay, operate their vehicles without activation of emergency equipment, and obey all traffic laws.
- **Code-3:** An emergency response. Officers will respond without delay, operate their vehicles with emergency equipment activated (minimally, red light forward and siren), and proceed with due regard for the safety of all persons and property.

316.1.3 REQUIRED CIRCUMSTANCES FOR CODE-3 RESPONSE:

Code-3 responses may only be used under the following circumstances:

- (a) When a situation involves the reasonable potential for serious injury or death to officers or other persons (e.g., in-progress robberies, aggravated assaults, medical emergencies).
- (b) When a Code-3 response would significantly enhance the likelihood of apprehending a felony suspect who has caused, is likely to cause, or has threatened to cause, serious injury or death.
- (c) When there is a public hazard that presents an imminent or immediate threat to public safety (e.g., fire, explosion, chem-bio incident).
- (d) When an officer requests Code-3 cover or broadcasts an "11-99."
- (e) When approved by a sergeant or command officer.

316.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Officers dispatched "Code-3" shall consider the call an emergency response and proceed immediately. Officers responding Code-3 shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment, including at minimum a steady forward facing red light, and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary pursuant to Vehicle Code § 21055.

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Responding with emergency light(s) and siren does not relieve the officer of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide any exemption from the Vehicle Code.

~~Any call that is not dispatched as Officers should only respond Code-3 is a routine call. when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required.~~ Officers not authorized to respond Code-3 shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

316.2.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPONDING CODE-3

The vehicle's steady forward facing red light must be activated and visible under normal atmospheric conditions for 1000 feet. All other auxiliary lights should be activated as reasonably necessary. The auxiliary lights should be activated when entering and traveling through an intersection or if the vehicle is being driven against traffic controls.

The driver of the vehicle should sound the vehicle's siren as reasonably necessary. It should be sounded when entering and traveling through an intersection or if the vehicle is being driven against traffic controls.

The vehicle should be driven in compliance with California's basic speed law, which reads, "no person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent, having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property." (Vehicle Code §22350)

The provisions regarding authorized emergency vehicles responding Code-3 do not relieve the officer/driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property (Vehicle Code §21807).

316.3 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 Integrated Security Response Center.

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
- The number of units required

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316.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS ASSIGNED

Normally, only one unit should respond to an emergency call Code-3 unless the Watch Commander or the field supervisor authorizes an additional unit(s).

316.4 INITIATING CODE 3 RESPONSE

If an officer believes a Code-3 response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify Integrated Security Response Center. Generally, only one unit should respond Code-3 to any situation. Should another officer believe a Code-3 response is appropriate, Integrated Security Response Center shall be notified and the Watch Commander or field supervisor will make a determination as to whether one or more officers driving Code-3 is appropriate.

316.4.1 STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

If an officer is in need of emergency assistance, he/she should state, "send Code-3 cover," or "11-99" as appropriate. Non-standard terms such as "expedite cover" or "step it up" should not be used as a request for Code-3 cover, nor should assisting units automatically respond Code-3 when hearing these types of terms.

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

The decision to continue a Code-3 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 red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify Integrated Security Response Center. An officer shall also discontinue the Code-3 response when directed by a supervisor.

Upon receiving authorization or determining a Code-3 response is appropriate, an officer shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

316.5.1 INITIATING/CONTINUING EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The first officer arriving on scene at an emergency should evaluate whether any other units need to initiate or continue a Code-3 response. The officer should broadcast this information via radio as soon as possible so that other units may respond appropriately.

When a Code-3 response is no longer required, and the unit(s) responding Code-3 become aware of this, those units are responsible for terminating their emergency response and advising the Communications Center of this.

Officers should not respond Code-3 with an arrestee or civilian in the vehicle.

316.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

A dispatcher shall assign a Code-3 response when an officer requests emergency assistance or available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death

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and immediate police response is needed. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from the Watch Commander or a field supervisor prior to assigning units Code-3. The dispatcher shall:

- (a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance
- (b) Immediately notify the Watch Commander and appropriate field supervisor
- (c) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding
- (d) Notify and coordinate allied emergency services (e.g., fire and ambulance)
- (e) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated
- (f) Control all radio communications during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the Watch Commander or field supervisor

316.6.1 TERMINATION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Upon termination of a Code-3 response, the communications center should advise all responding units of the termination. The Communications Center is responsible for confirming that each responding unit has acknowledged the termination.

316.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that a Code-3 response has been initiated, the Watch Commander 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 be assigned a Code-3 response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate a Code-3 response that, in his/her judgment is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize a Code-3 response, the Watch Commander 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

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316.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the Code-3 response and respond accordingly. In all cases, the officer shall notify the Watch Commander, field supervisor, or Integrated Security Response Center of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

316.9 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to appropriately respond to emergency and non-emergency calls for service or requests for assistance, whether these are dispatched or self-initiated.