

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Title: *OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES* **Procedure: 4.002**

Date Issued:

Revised:

PURPOSE:

To provide for the safe operation of Department vehicles as emergency vehicles.

POLICY:

To carry out the mission of protecting life it may become necessary for an officer to operate a police vehicle as an emergency vehicle. It is the policy of this Department to safely respond to emergency situations.

DEFINITION:

An emergency is a situation in which there is a high probability of injury or death to a person that could be averted or reduced by the presence of an officer.

An emergency vehicle is a police vehicle operated with its emergency lights and siren activated.

PROCEDURE:

1. Police vehicles will be operated as emergency vehicles when the officer has reasonable cause to believe a life is in danger or when in immediate pursuit of an offender. Communications personnel will attempt to ascertain the true degree of emergency involved in all complaints and relay this information to the cars dispatched.

2. The following may be considered some examples of emergency situations necessitating the operation of a police vehicle as an emergency vehicle:

Officer needs assistance.

Report of a forcible felony in progress.

A person calling for help in such a manner as to indicate immediate danger.

Report of an explosion.

Report of a shooting or stabbing.

Report of an auto accident with injury or other extenuating circumstances.

Pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

An industrial accident

Responding to a crime in progress in which there is a threat of physical danger to the parties involved.

3. Regardless of the nature of the emergency, officers should not drive in such a manner as to endanger the life and property of another. Officers shall always consider road, traffic and weather conditions and their ability to control vehicles under adverse circumstances.

4. When responding to an emergency situation, an officer driving an authorized emergency vehicle may:

Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down, as may be required and necessary for safe operation.

When approaching a "red" traffic light or stop sign an officer will:

decelerate and be prepared to stop,

enter the intersection only when it is safe,

yield to all moving vehicles and pedestrians,

accelerate only when it is safe.

When approaching a "green" traffic light an officer will:

decelerate and be prepared to stop,

enter the intersection only when it is safe.

Accelerate only when it is safe.

Exceed speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property.

Disregard regulations governing direction of movement and turning.

Drive against traffic on one-way streets only when there is no danger to life or property and then only with caution.

5. The following guidelines shall apply when operating a police vehicle as an emergency vehicle:

Emergency Lights

The lights should be used in all situations in which the officer is to take liberties in his driving and to expedite his free movement in order to reach his destination more quickly.

The lights are also to signal traffic violators to the extreme right of the roadway and stop. It may be necessary to use both the lights and the siren to effect the stop.

The lights are also used to assist motorists parked or stopped in hazardous locations.

When the patrol vehicle is parked or stopped on the roadway or in a hazardous location.

Siren

The officer should be discreet in his use of the siren as it frequently complicates traffic problems. Under extreme conditions the siren should be actuated continuously.

The siren should also be used to signal violators to stop when other means of attracting the violator's attention have failed.

Officers should use the siren based on existing traffic, roadway conditions, and the urgency of their arrival.

Emergency lights and siren in combination shall be utilized in the following circumstances:
During pursuit situations.

When responding to emergency situations.

When responding to an alarm, the siren may be deactivated so as not to announce your pending arrival.

Spotlight

The spotlight should be used as a protection to the officer when hazardous conditions exist.

The spotlight should be used to signal violators to stop but care must be exercised so as not to cause temporary blindness to the violator or other drivers on the roadway.

Public Address System

The public address system may be utilized to stop violators and direct their actions from a safe distance, so as to minimize the hazard to the officer.

The public address system may also be used in directing persons when unusual conditions exists, such as temporary traffic hazards or conditions and communicating with other persons.

Hazardous Warning Light

When off the road with a disabled motorist or traffic violator the officer may use the hazardous warning light in conjunction with the overhead emergency lights, if appropriate.

If it is necessary to escort funeral processions, parades, or slow moving vehicles with oversize loads, the police vehicle's flashing lights may be used. Caution should be exercised while the escort is in progress.

When pulled off the side of a roadway to complete an assignment or assist other units, these lights should be used to warn motorists.

6. Unmarked police vehicles will not generally be operated as emergency vehicles. Officers operating unmarked vehicles will use extra caution because unmarked cars are more difficult for other drivers to identify as police vehicles.

7. Officers will not conduct an emergency escort without prior approval of the Supervisor.

Officers will not escort other emergency vehicles using flashing lights and sirens unless it is absolutely necessary to guide them to their destination.

Caution should be exercised especially when crossing intersections. Speed limits should not be exceeded.

Officers will not follow ambulances, fire apparatus, or other emergency vehicles so closely as to constitute a hazard.

Except as qualified below, officers will not use flashing lights and siren to escort non-emergency vehicles. This is an extremely dangerous practice that could expose the officer, Department and City to civil liability.

In cases of serious illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. Sick or injured persons should not be transported in Police Department vehicles.