
	MESQUITE POLICE DEPARTMENT
	201.00 OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES
	Effective Date: June, 2015
	Approved: _____  Chief of Police

I. Policy Statement

Operation of emergency vehicles is one of the most serious duties and responsibilities of police officers. This statement of philosophy is intended as a broad guide to the application of these procedures, and as a description of the attitudes and considerations that will be in the minds of officers before and during the operation of emergency vehicles.

When responding to an emergency situation, an officer's primary consideration is the safety of the citizens, his fellow officers, and himself. Regardless of the purpose of the emergency response, it must not be achieved when the distinct possibility exists that someone will be seriously injured. Despite the risks inherent in all operations of emergency vehicles, situations exist that require officers to respond quickly to life threatening emergencies. In any situation, an officer must always base his decision to operate his vehicle as an emergency vehicle on facts, and never on assumptions.

It is not the intent of this order to prohibit or restrict officers unnecessarily from their duty to respond quickly to emergencies. Prohibition of this duty would result in an unconscionable decrease in the safety of the public and the officers; however, with the authority to operate emergency vehicles comes the solemn responsibility of exercising due regard for the protection of life and property.

II. Routine Operations (Code I)

- A. All calls for police service and all police operations are Code I (Routine) unless otherwise designated. The legal speed limit and all other traffic laws shall be observed.
- B. Officers operating a patrol vehicle equipped with a mobile keyboard should limit typing while driving to a few key strokes.

III. Emergency Operations (Code II or Code III)

- A. Emergency operation of a "marked" police vehicle equipped with emergency lights and siren is authorized when reasonably necessary to protect life or property, or to apprehend a violator. The responding officer is authorized to make a preliminary determination regarding an appropriate response code to a particular call, based on the criteria established by Provision III.F.
- B. The responding officer shall advise the Public Safety Dispatcher if he is responding Code II or Code III and all available video equipment should be utilized. If the Public Safety Dispatcher has information which would assist the officer in determining an appropriate response code, he shall advise the officer of that information. A supervisor may direct a change in response code.
- C. The speed of a police emergency vehicle should not exceed that which is reasonable, with due consideration given to the time of day, weather conditions, traffic patterns, traffic volume, roadway design, nature of the emergency, and other factors affecting the operation. As a general guideline, a speed greater than 15 mph over the posted limit would be inadvisable except under ideal circumstances and conditions.
- D. When approaching a red signal light or stop sign, the police emergency vehicle shall stop and yield right-of-way to all moving vehicles and pedestrians. The intersection shall be entered only after all traffic has stopped. Vehicle speed through the intersection should not exceed 10 mph.
- E. When approaching an intersection or traffic control device, the police emergency vehicle must be prepared to stop.

- F. A marked police vehicle may be operated Code II (as an emergency vehicle, without the use of red lights and siren) when the officer is responding to an emergency call, or is in pursuit of a violator, and has probable cause to believe that:
1. knowledge of the officer's presence will cause the suspect to destroy or lose evidence of a suspected felony; or
 2. knowledge of the officer's presence will cause the suspect to cease a suspected continuing felony before the officer has acquired sufficient evidence for arrest; or
 3. traffic conditions on a multi-lane roadway are such that movements of motorists in response to the emergency may increase the potential for collision, or unreasonably extend the duration of the pursuit; or
 4. knowledge of the officer's presence will cause the suspect to evade apprehension or identification.
- Should the suspect begin evasive action or attempt to elude the officer, the incident will be treated as a pursuit; red lights and siren will be activated and the current Pursuit Driving Policy will apply.
- G. Before an officer operates a police vehicle Code II, as authorized by Provision II.F. of this order, and by the Texas Transportation Code, Section 546.004(c), he shall notify the Police Communications Center of his intention to do so. The Public Safety Dispatcher shall note the time of such notification in the call sheet.
- H. When an officer operates a police vehicle Code III (as an emergency vehicle, other than in accordance with Provision II.F. and G. of this order), red lights and siren shall be used. The officer shall notify dispatch (immediately upon activation of lights and siren) that the officer is operating the vehicle Code III.
- I. If any malfunction or damage to the police vehicle or equipment occurs while the vehicle is being operated that has potential to increase the risk to the officer or to the public, the officer should cease operation of that vehicle immediately and initiate the process to repair the damage or equipment.
- J. Emergency Escort for Private Vehicles
1. When an officer in the field is requested to escort a private vehicle carrying an injured or ill person, the officer will evaluate the severity of the injury or illness. The officer should offer to call an ambulance and offer to administer first aid, if applicable.
 2. If the driver and patient refuse the officer's offer and want to continue to the nearest medical facility, the officer may escort the vehicle Code I. The Public Safety Dispatcher will be notified prior to the escort.
 3. If the situation is not of a life threatening nature, the officer will politely suggest that the driver proceed carefully and obey all traffic regulations and, if it seems appropriate, suggest the quickest and safest route to the hospital. Should the driver not know the way to the hospital, the officer may furnish an escort Code I only.
 4. If the operator of a vehicle being escorted does not comply with instructions, the escort shall be discontinued.

EFFECTIVE: May, 1984; REVISED: September, 1990; FORMERLY: C/84-5, 74-5, 81-5; REVISED: January, 1996; REVISED: August, 2003; REVISED: August, 2011; REVISED: March, 2013; REVISED: June, 2015