

Officer Response to Calls

309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

309.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Officers responding to any call shall proceed with due regard for the safety of all persons and property.

Officers not responding to a call as an emergency response shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

Officers responding to a call as an emergency response shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary (CRS § 42-4-108(3) and CRS § 42-4-213).

Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve the officer of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property and does not protect the officer from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others (CRS § 42-4-108(4)). Officers, absent extraordinary circumstances, are directed not to exceed more than 20 mph over the posted speed limit when responding to any emergency call.

The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not generally provide an exemption from the vehicle laws (CRS § 42-4-108(3)).

Officers should only respond to a call as an emergency response when so dispatched or when responding to circumstances the officer reasonably believes involves the potential for immediate danger to persons or property. Examples of such circumstances may include:

- An officer who requires urgent assistance.
- A burglary in process that appears to involve a threat to any person's safety.
- A robbery in progress.
- A person brandishing a weapon.
- An apparent homicide.
- A suicide in progress.
- A fight, riot or other large disturbance involving or injuries.
- An assault or other violence in progress.
- A domestic dispute where injury is reasonably believed to be imminent, or has just occurred and the suspect is present.
- A kidnapping in progress.

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- A traffic collision or other event involving a serious injury or the likelihood of injury that may reasonably require immediate medical aid.

309.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Officers may request emergency assistance when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen.

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

Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify the Communications Center.

309.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary should respond to a call with an emergency response. The Shift Supervisor or the field supervisor should monitor all emergency responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

309.4 INITIATING EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE

If an officer believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify the Communications Center. An emergency response of more than one unit should initiate notification of and coordination by the Communications Center to avoid any unanticipated intersecting of response routes.

An emergency response of more than one unit should initiate notification by the Communications Center to the Shift Supervisor or field supervisor. The Shift Supervisor or field supervisor will make a determination regarding the appropriateness of the response and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

309.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONDING OFFICER

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to a call with an emergency response. During a call involving an emergency response officers may (CRS § 42-4-108(2)):

- a. Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.
- b. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.

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- c. Exceed the speed limit, provided this does not endanger life or property; and absent extraordinary circumstances, they do not drive more than 20 mph over the posted speed limit.
- d. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

The decision to continue as an emergency response is at the discretion of the officer. There are many variables that can influence an officer's decision to discontinue an emergency response such as:

- Ability of the officer to control the situation
- Speed in relation to road conditions
- Weather
- Road surface
- Surroundings
- Traffic and pedestrian congestion
- Degree of emergency, urgency or threat to others

If, in the officer's judgment, the totality of the circumstances does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk to the safety of the public or the officer, 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 the Communications Center. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

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

The first officer arriving at an emergency response scene should determine whether to increase or reduce the level of the response and notify the Communications Center of their determination. Any subsequent change in the appropriate response level should be communicated to the Communications Center by the officer in charge of the scene unless a supervisor assumes this responsibility.

309.5.1 EMERGENCY RESPONSE SPECIAL CONDITIONS

While performing certain emergency response tasks, the use of emergency lights or sirens may increase the danger to the responding officers or the public. In the following circumstances, officers may consider the appropriateness of an emergency response without siren, emergency lights or both:

- a. An officer is attempting to confirm his/her suspicion that a driver has violated the traffic code and there is no other reasonable suspicion or probable cause to stop the driver (CRS § 42-4-108(3)).
- b. An emergency response requires an element of stealth that would be defeated by the use of emergency lighting or siren. This response should use a siren and emergency lights until a stealth response without lights and siren is required, and the response should then continue accordingly.

Any emergency response without the use of emergency lights and siren shall be conducted with due regard for the safety of the public and property and the recognition that such a response may not provide

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an exemption from the vehicle laws (CRS § 42-4-108(3)); and it does not exclude the officer from limiting the emergency response to no more than 20 mph over the posted speed limit, absent extraordinary circumstances.

Any emergency response without the use of lights or siren shall cease if the circumstances no longer warrant such a response.

309.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

A dispatcher shall ensure acknowledgment and response of assisting units when an officer requests emergency assistance or when the available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and an immediate law enforcement response is needed. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from the Shift Supervisor or a field supervisor prior to assigning an emergency response. The dispatcher shall:

- a. Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance.
- b. Immediately notify the Shift Supervisor.
- c. Confirm the location from which the unit is responding.
- d. Notify and coordinate outside 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 communication during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the Shift Supervisor or field supervisor.

309.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the Shift Supervisor 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 practicable.

The field supervisor shall, whenever practicable, 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 an emergency response, 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 making the decision to authorize an emergency response, the Shift Supervisor or the field supervisor should consider the following:

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

309.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency response and continue accordingly.

The officer shall notify the Shift Supervisor, field supervisor or the Communications Center of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

