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## Authorized Emergency Vehicles

### 804.1 PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the use and/or operation of Department authorized emergency vehicles.

### 804.2 DEFINITIONS:

Authorized Emergency Vehicle: A publicly owned vehicle operated by specified peace officers in performance of their duties as defined in California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 165(b)(1).

Code 3 Response/Use of Emergency Lights and Siren: When an officer, who is engaged in the performance of their duties and is responding to an emergency call or engaged in rescue operations, sounds a siren and displays a lighted red lamp visible from the front as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians.

Emergency Lights: The color of a vehicle's emergency lights may denote the type of situation. For example, an amber light signifies there is an obstruction to traffic and to slow down/proceed with caution; a red light signifies an authorized emergency vehicle; a blue light signifies an authorized emergency vehicle operated by a peace officer.

Special Hazards: Potential risks that may be created on the roadway by emergency vehicles while engaged in official business.

### 804.3 RESPONSIBILITIES:

- I. General Use/Operation:
  - A. Officers shall successfully complete all required training prior to utilizing emergency lights and/or siren.
  - B. Officers are responsible for compliance with all applicable laws, County and Department rules, regulations, policies, procedures, etc.
  - C. Officers are not authorized to:
    1. Conduct traffic stops.
    2. Engage in vehicle pursuits.
  - D. The emergency lights and siren shall not be used unless it is determined a Code 3 response is appropriate.
  - E. An authorized emergency vehicle that is engaged in official business and may create special hazards on the roadway should utilize their flashing lights. Activities which may require use:
    1. Assisting with traffic collisions and/or traffic control.
    2. When double parked.
    3. When on scene at an incident and/or parked and conducting a field interview.

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4. Any situation where it is necessary to alert other law enforcement agencies and/or the community of your presence.
  - F. Support (non-sworn) staff shall not activate emergency lights under any circumstances.
- II. Code 3 Response/Use of Emergency Lights and Siren:
- A. Shall only be authorized when:
    1. The vehicle is being driven in response to an emergency call where circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required. For example:
      - (a) When directed to respond Code 3.
      - (b) An officer requests a Code 3 response.
      - (c) When circumstances indicate a Code 3 response may preserve a life.
      - (d) When circumstances indicate a human life is seriously threatened and an urgent response to the scene by an officer is imperative.
    2. While engaged in rescue operations.
  - B. Generally, the number of officers responding Code 3 should be based on the nature of the emergency and the reasonable response needed.
  - C. Officers should obtain Supervisor/Field Commander permission before responding Code 3 unless articulable exigent circumstances exist.
  - D. Officers shall immediately discontinue a Code 3 response when directed by a Supervisor/Field Commander.
  - E. "Code 2" responses are not authorized by this Department.
  - F. Officers who are not authorized to respond Code 3 shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.
  - G. Officers shall not respond Code 3 while transporting a client/detainee/ride-along/volunteer/etc. unless prior authorization is received from the Supervisor/Field Commander.
  - H. Officers shall not respond Code 3 if the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate and shall terminate the Code 3 response if failure of equipment happens while the Code 3 response is in progress.
  - I. Officers shall not respond Code 3 if they are an unreasonable distance from the call unless otherwise directed by the Supervisor/Field Commander.
  - J. When responding Code 3, officers should consider the following:
    1. Nature of the emergency/articulation for their decision to respond Code 3.
    2. Proximity/distance from the location and/or other available units.
    3. Time of day/road conditions (i.e. traffic, weather, etc.).

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- K. Officers responding Code 3 shall immediately notify dispatch and give the location from which they are responding.
  - L. 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. The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide exemption from the CVC.
  - M. Officers responding Code 3 shall reduce speed at all street intersections to such a degree that they shall have complete control of the vehicle.
  - N. Officers responding Code 3 should not generally drive in excess of 30 miles an hour above the posted speed limit and the reasonable speed for a vehicle being operated Code 3 may be slower when taking into consideration factors such as time of day, traffic conditions, pedestrians, etc.
  - O. Although CVC 21806 requires traffic to yield to an emergency vehicle, officers should not assume that right of way will be yielded.
  - P. Officers responding Code 3 shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property.
  - Q. Officers responding Code 3 are not relieved of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.
  - R. Officers responding Code 3 are not protected from the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of the privileges granted. Officers may be subject to administrative action or criminal prosecution for negligent emergency vehicle operation. Immunity from civil liability is in effect only when the vehicle is being operated with emergency lights and sirens activated in accordance with the CVC.
  - S. The decision to continue a Code 3 response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions, traffic congestion, etc. does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond without the use of lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such a case, the officer shall immediately notify dispatch.
- III. Requests for Code 3/Emergency Response:
- A. Should generally be limited to those situations where:
    - 1. Rescue operations are needed.
    - 2. The involved personnel reasonably believes there are circumstances where a Code 3 response may preserve a life.
    - 3. There are circumstances where a human life is seriously threatened and an urgent response to the scene by an officer is imperative.
  - B. If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information to dispatch:
    - 1. Call Sign and Location.

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2. Reason for the request/type of emergency and the number of units required.
  - C. When the situation has stabilized and emergency response is no longer required, the requesting officer shall immediately notify dispatch.
- IV. Supervising Probation Officers (SPO)/Field Commander:
  - A. When making a decision to authorize a Code 3 response, the Supervisor/Field Commander should consider the following:
    1. The type of emergency and the necessity of an urgent response.
    2. Traffic and roadway conditions.
    3. The location of responding units.
  - B. Upon being notified and/or becoming aware a Code 3 response has been requested and/or initiated, the Supervisor/Field Commander shall:
    1. Determine the appropriate response has been initiated and/or is being requested.
    2. Determine the number of units reasonably necessary under the circumstances.
    3. Assign the unit(s) closest to incident location to initiate Code 3 response and terminate any Code 3 response(s) that are inappropriate due to circumstances, location, etc.
    4. Notify, as practicable, any outside jurisdictions which may be affected.
  - C. The Supervisor/Field Commander shall monitor the response until it has been stabilized and/or terminated and assert control by directing units into or out of the response as necessary.
  - D. It is the Supervisor/Field Commander's responsibility to terminate any Code 3 response that, in their judgment, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.