

Officer Response to Calls

301.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The State of Minnesota finds that emergency vehicle operations are an integral part of law enforcement's commitment to public safety. This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458, Subd. 1).

301.2 POLICY

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

301.3 RESPONSE TO CALLS

301.3.1 RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY CALLS

Officers responding to an emergency call shall proceed immediately as appropriate. Officers responding to an emergency call shall sound the siren or display at least one lighted red light to the front of the vehicle. Whenever practicable, during an emergency call response the officer should continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and sound the siren (Minn. Stat. § 169.03 et seq.; Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

Responding with a red light, emergency lighting and/or siren does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle or a law enforcement vehicle of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and does not protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others. The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not provide an exemption under Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

Officers should only respond with a red light, emergency lights and/or siren when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is appropriate. Officers not responding with a red light, emergency lights and/or siren shall observe all traffic laws.

301.3.2 LIGHTING EXEMPTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES

An officer may operate a vehicle without lights as otherwise required while performing law enforcement duties when the officer reasonably believes that operating the vehicle without lights is necessary to investigate a criminal violation or suspected criminal violation of state laws, rules or orders, or local laws, ordinances or regulations. The operation of a vehicle without lights must be consistent with the standards adopted by Minnesota Peace officer Standards and Training Board (POST) (Minn. Stat. § 169.541).

301.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICERS

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. During a response to an emergency call officers may (Minn. Stat. § 169.03; Minn. Stat. § 169.17):

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- (a) Proceed cautiously past a red or stop signal or stop sign but only after slowing down and utilizing a red light or siren as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (b) Exceed any speed limits, provided this does not endanger life or property.
- (c) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions as authorized by law.
- (d) Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.

The decision to continue an emergency call 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 Dispatch. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency call response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

Upon determining that an emergency call response is appropriate, an officer should give the location from which he/she is responding as soon as is practical.

When emergency vehicles are on the scene of an emergency and pose any hazard, or when the vehicle operators seek exemption to park, stop or stand contrary to any law or ordinance pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 169.541, adequate warning lights shall be operated whenever practicable.

301.5 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency call response and respond accordingly. The officer shall notify the Patrol Bureau Commander, field supervisor or Dispatch of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

301.6 TRAINING

The Training Sergeant shall ensure the frequency and content of emergency vehicle operations training meets or exceeds that required by law (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458).