

Deputy Response to Calls

308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to emergency and non-emergency situations whether dispatched or self-initiated.

308.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Responding with emergency light(s) and siren does not relieve the deputy of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide any exemption from the Vehicle Code.

Deputies not authorized to respond Code-3 shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

308.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Requests for emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an immediate threat to the safety of deputies, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen. In any event, where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting deputy shall immediately notify SHASCOM.

If circumstances permit, the requesting deputy should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

308.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS ASSIGNED

Normally, only one unit should respond to an emergency call Code-3 unless the Watch Commander or the field supervisor authorizes an additional unit(s).

308.4 INITIATING CODE 3 RESPONSE POLICY

The operation of police vehicles under emergency circumstances requires the consideration of two basic issues; providing a quick response to emergency calls where lives are endangered and the hazard/risk involved in a code three driving response. Responding to an emergency call for service does not justify endangering motorists, pedestrians, or fellow officers.

California law does not relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle from driving with due regard for the safety of all persons nor protect him/her from the consequences of arbitrary use of the privilege granted by section 21055 of the California Penal Code. Operators of an emergency vehicle, their supervisor, and the agency may be held liable for negligence, which could result in

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criminal, civil and disciplinary action. Deputies will be held responsible for determining the validity of a code three response and his/her supervisor has the authority and obligation to evaluate and modify the response if necessary. Deputies must exercise sound judgment and carefully consider the facts, seriousness of the incident, possible consequences and safety of the citizens and deputies.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a balance between a quick but safe response, while adhering to the guidelines set forth in the California Vehicle Code. This policy does not pertain to vehicle pursuits.

PROCEDURE

1. Prior to any deputy initiating code three driving, he/she generally should consider the following:

A. If the deputy makes a decision to drive code three, the deputy generally should notify SHASCOM via the radio. Deputies should ensure SHASCOM notification does not compromise Officer Safety; some incidents such as deputies requesting assistance, radio traffic should be minimized keeping the radio clear for involved deputies.

B. Attempt to ascertain as many details available about the call for service in order to make an informed decision on whether to drive code three to the incident.

C. Consider road conditions, traffic conditions, location, and time of day when determining your speed.

D. Consider whether there is a threat of death or great serious bodily injury.

When a deputy drives code three to a call for service he shall display a lighted red lamp visible from the front at all times and sound the siren when reasonably necessary. (Refer to California Vehicle Code, Section 21055(b)).

308.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING DEPUTY(S)

Deputies shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. Deputies shall reduce speed at all street intersections to such a degree that they shall have complete control of the vehicle and can safely enter.

The decision to continue a Code-3 response is at the discretion of the deputy and evaluated by a supervisor. If, in the deputy's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the deputy 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 deputy should immediately notify SHASCOM. A deputy shall also discontinue the Code-3 response when directed by a supervisor.

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308.6 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that a Code-3 response has been initiated, the Watch Commander 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 practical

The field supervisor shall 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 a Code-3 response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate a Code-3 response that, in his/her judgment is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize a Code-3 response, the Watch Commander or the field supervisor should consider the following:

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

308.7 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the deputy must terminate the Code-3 response and respond accordingly. In all cases, the deputy shall notify the Watch Commander, field supervisor, or SHASCOM of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.