



# CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

## GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: DECEMBER 30, 2020	CHAPTER: 4 - Field Operations	PAGE: 1 of 4	NUMBER: 4.01.01
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RESPONSE DRIVING			
CHIEF: <i>Calvin D. Williams, Chief</i>			

*Substantive changes are italicized*

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for emergency response driving.

**POLICY:** *It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police* that no assignment shall be of such importance and no task shall be expedited with such emphasis that the principles of safety become secondary. All personnel operating Division vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Emergency Response Driving** - *the operation of a law enforcement vehicle utilizing emergency lights and siren in order to safely and quickly respond to and arrive at the scene of an emergency incident.*

**PROCEDURES:**

I. General Guidelines

A. When engaging in emergency response driving officers shall:

1. Not unnecessarily endanger the public, fellow officers, or themselves. This policy shall not be construed to mean delaying response to emergency calls. If officers become involved in preventable accidents, they may not arrive at the assignment.
2. Never assume that the public will yield the right-of-way simply because lights and sirens are used; ***your vehicle must be seen and heard.***
3. Not engage in emergency driving in any vehicle containing witnesses, suspects, complainants or other non-police personnel, unless necessary for the protection of the non-police personnel (e.g., sudden illness).
4. When determining whether to engage in emergency driving, consider the following:
  - a. Nature of the emergency (e.g., on-going threat, a suspect on scene, the severity of the crime, and the distance to the scene if responding as a back-up unit).
    - i. *The first car on the scene shall determine, as soon as possible, the severity of the emergency and shall broadcast such information including whether to call off any other units that may be responding or to call for additional units as needed.*

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- ii. *Similarly, if the situation on scene no longer requires emergency response driving, the first car on the scene shall make that known by radio broadcast.*
- iii. First responding officers shall not wait for a supervisor to make the determination to call off responding units that have not arrived yet; a supervisor may always request additional assistance as needed.
- b. Road conditions. Road conditions including *wet, icy roadways*, road configuration, and defects will govern driving actions.
- c. Vehicle type/condition. The type of vehicle being operated as well as the vehicle's condition must be considered. *Division vehicles without emergency lights and siren equipped shall not be utilized for emergency response driving.*
- d. Traffic. The traffic volume will often dictate how to proceed with emergency driving.
- e. Weather conditions. Because adverse weather conditions may raise the risk factor to unacceptable levels, officers shall carefully evaluate any hazard before engaging in emergency driving.
- f. Area. The officer shall consider the nature of the surrounding area (e.g., school zone, residential, business).
- g. Familiarity with area. On a known roadway, the officer could engage in emergency driving with more confidence than on unfamiliar roadways.
- h. Time. The time of day is of great importance. The limited visibility of dusk, dark or dawn will affect the officer's decision concerning emergency driving.

B. Civilian vehicles shall not be escorted for emergencies, unless authorized by a supervisor.

## II. Officer Responsibilities

A. Officers engaging in emergency response driving shall:

- 1. Activate emergency red and blue lights (must be visible from the front and back of the police vehicle) and *audible* siren.
- 2. Keep control of the police vehicle at all times.
- 3. Comply with the following sections of the Ohio Revised Code:
  - a. 4511.03 – Emergency vehicles at red signal or stop sign.

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- b. 4511.24 – Speed limits not applicable to emergency or public safety vehicle.
  - c. 4511.45 – Right-of-way of public safety or coroner’s vehicle.
  - d. 4513.21 – Horns, sirens, and warning devices.
4. Be aware that while ORC 4511.03 allows emergency vehicles to proceed cautiously past a red light or stop sign, there are times when traffic conditions (e.g., rush hour, congested intersection) *or other circumstances (e.g., external view obstructions)* make a **full stop necessary**.
  5. Immediately advise the Communications Control Section (CCS) if responding as a backup unit.
    - a. Responding units must receive an acknowledgement from CCS to continue an emergency response.
    - b. Supervisors of the responding units shall monitor, manage, and control their responding units to ensure an appropriate response and call off or call for more units as needed.

### III. Supervisor Responsibilities

#### A. Supervisors shall:

1. Closely monitor the response of their assigned officers *especially* when responding from distant locations.
2. Monitor radio communications and the Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL) system.
  - a. Track the response of officers assigned under their command.
  - b. *Call off* back-up cars that are responding to an emergency assignment when it has been determined that the situation is under control and the back-up cars are no longer needed.
3. *Request the Accident Investigation Unit (AIU) to respond through CCS when there is a motor vehicle crash arising from emergency driving.*
4. If AIU is unavailable, the sector supervisor shall assign a patrol section car to complete the reports and notify the Crime Scene and Record Unit to respond to the scene for photos.
5. *If the crash results in a confirmed serious injury or a fatality, CCS shall notify an AIU supervisor to determine the level of AIU response.*

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6. *Complete any required supervisory investigations as a result of the incident in the Division tracking software (i.e., motor vehicle crash investigation, injury to police officer investigation, etc.). The crash circumstances may dictate a District Investigation to be completed.*

**THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.**