



# TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

 Proudly Policing Since 1841	<b>SUBJECT</b>  Emergency Response Driving		 Nationally Accredited 1986
	<b>CHIEF OF POLICE</b>  <i>Signature on file</i>		
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## AUTHORITY/RELATED REFERENCES

FS 316.072, Obedience to and Effect of Traffic Laws  
 General Order 3, Alarm Response  
 General Order 12, Radio Communications  
 General Order 66, Vehicle Assignment and Operations  
 PTL-24, Vehicle Escorts

## ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

CALEA Chapters 41, 81  
 CFA Chapter 25

## KEY WORD INDEX

<b>Emergency Medical Escorts</b>	Procedures V
<b>Factors To Consider</b>	Procedures III
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## POLICY

Officers, in the performance of their official duties, shall follow statutory provisions and established Department protocols during emergency response driving.

## DEFINITIONS

**Authorized Emergency Vehicle:** Any Department vehicle equipped with approved emergency lights and siren, including marked patrol vehicles, unmarked vehicles and motorcycles.

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**Department Vehicle:** Any motor vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the City of Tallahassee and assigned to the Department.

**Emergency Response Driving:** The operation of an authorized emergency vehicle by an officer, utilizing emergency lights and sirens, while responding to a situation reasonably believed to be dangerous or where there is significant risk of injury or death to any person.

**Marked Patrol Vehicle:** Any Department vehicle painted or custom-wrapped in the manner approved by the Chief of Police designed to be easily recognized as a Department vehicle and equipped with emergency lights and siren.

## PROCEDURES

### I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Officers are authorized to engage in emergency response driving only when they reasonably believe an emergency exists.
- B. While engaging in emergency response driving, officers shall drive carefully and exercise due regard for the safety of others.
- C. The use of an alert tone in the dispatching of a call for service is designed to direct attention to a potentially serious call for service, but does not automatically require officers to engage in emergency response driving.

### II. INITIATION AND CANCELLATION PROTOCOLS

- A. Emergency response driving may be initiated or cancelled by an on-duty responding officer or field supervisor (to include an acting sergeant).
- B. When emergency response driving is initiated or cancelled, the involved officer shall notify the CDA of the response status as soon as practical via the police radio.
- C. Field supervisors are responsible for monitoring the appropriate radio talk group during calls for service involving emergency response driving.
- D. Field supervisors and the Watch Commander are authorized to alter the driving response of officers and the number of officers responding to calls for service based upon the factors listed in section III below.

**III. FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Officers shall consider the following factors prior to engaging in emergency response driving and constantly evaluate these conditions during emergency response driving:

- A. Nature and seriousness of the event precipitating the response,
- B. Safety of motorists and other persons in the area,
- C. Time of day and traffic conditions (e.g., pedestrian area, vehicle congestion, traffic pattern),
- D. Road conditions and characteristics (e.g., construction or school zones, residential/business, urban/rural, divided highway, one-way street),
- E. Weather conditions, visibility and, if at night, available lighting,
- F. The mechanical condition and performance capabilities of the authorized emergency vehicle,
- G. Their training and experience in emergency response driving, and
- H. Any other conditions which may pose a potential hazard to the responding officer, other officers or the public.

**IV. OFFICER DRIVING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. After weighing the risks to life and property, and in consideration of the factors listed in section III above, officers engaged in emergency response driving may:
  - 1. Exceed posted and non-posted speed limits,
  - 2. Disregard regulations governing direction or movement of traffic (including proceeding against the flow of traffic) but only after considering the likelihood of injury or damage to life or property, and ensuring it is safe to proceed, and
  - 3. Proceed past a stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping as may be necessary for safe vehicle operation, and ensuring:

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- a. The cross-traffic has yielded in each lane before attempting to cross that lane, and
  - b. It is safe to proceed through the intersection.
- B. In addition to the driving actions listed in subsection A above, officers engaged emergency response driving may disregard the laws governing normal parking of vehicles, being mindful of the following:
1. Officers shall not park an authorized emergency vehicle in a manner which blocks access to a fire hydrant at a fire scene or obstructs the passage of any fire apparatus, and
  2. Officers should strategically park marked patrol vehicles in roadways and other areas to protect crash and crime scenes, injured persons and/or officers directing traffic.
    - a. When parked in this manner, officers shall activate the emergency lights and, as appropriate when circumstances allow, deploy traffic cones.
    - b. When parked in this manner, officers should activate the vehicle's four-way flashers.
- C. Emergency response driving does not relieve an officer or other occupants of the responsibility to wear their seat belts.
- D. Officers shall not use the vehicle's four-way flashers while engaged in emergency response driving.
- E. Officers should use the vehicle's directional signals while engaged in emergency response driving.
- F. The provisions of this written directive do not relieve an officer from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor do they protect an officer from the consequences of exhibiting a careless disregard for the safety of or others.

### **V. EMERGENCY MEDICAL ESCORTS**

- A. Officers shall not provide escort services to a civilian vehicle carrying a sick or injured person.
- B. Officers encountering a vehicle containing a sick or injured person shall:

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1. Offer to summon emergency medical assistance and, if appropriate, render first aid pending its arrival, or
2. Offer to transport the person in the Department vehicle to a medical facility, if the sick or injured person can be moved to the vehicle without worsening their condition.

History: original title (*emergency response and pursuit*) – issued 07/15/1985, revised (change of title – *emergency response*) 08/01/1992, (change of title – *emergency response driving*) 10/15/2001, 11/18/2011, and 06/23/2015.