

## Deputy Response to Calls

### 308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides deputies with guidelines for the safe and appropriate vehicular response to emergency and non-emergency incidents or requests for assistance, whether these are dispatched or self-initiated.

### 308.2 POLICY

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

### 308.3 DEFINITIONS

**Emergency Vehicle** - Any vehicle owned and properly registered by the Talbot County as an "emergency vehicle" as defined by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (Maryland Transportation Article TR SS 11-118).

**Emergency Vehicle Operation** - All vehicles so registered and approved as emergency vehicles may be operated consistent with the standards, statutes, and required personal obligations as they apply to driving a vehicle to an emergency, as defined by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (Maryland Transportation Article TR SS 21-106).

**Audible and Visual Signals** - All emergency vehicles will be equipped with approved audible (siren) and visual signals (permanently mounted or portable approved emergency lighting) to qualify it for use as an emergency vehicle as defined by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (Maryland Transportation Article TR SS 22-218).

**Emergency Response Code** - The numeric level of response that is consistent with the need for response as based upon the information learned about the call, conditions for response, and the abilities of the Deputy to initiate a proper response.

### 308.4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE CODES

#### Code 1 Response

- (a) A code 1 response directs an expeditious response and authorizes the use of emergency lights and sirens. Operation of a vehicle during an emergency response must conform to the requirements, conditions, and statutes of operating a vehicle under emergency conditions. A Code 1 response is usually prompted by one of the following conditions:
  1. A police officer needs help, or all instances in which the safety of an officer is directly threatened.
  2. A situation where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a human life is in jeopardy or peril, and where the police have the primary responsibility for acting or intervention.

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3. A situation where an emergency response could prevent the loss of life or serious injury.

### **Code 2 Response**

- (a) A Code 2 response directs a police response in an emergency vehicle consistent with conformance to all traffic laws and guidelines. Emergency equipment may be used in certain instances to facilitate a response and expedite movement through traffic if the Deputy considers it appropriate. The "on - off" use of emergency equipment must be consistent with the call information and the need for an expedited response.

### **Code 3 Response**

- (a) A Code 3 response is the general operation of an emergency vehicle when on routine patrol and when not responding to calls for service by emergency vehicle operation. All rules of the road and statute requirements for the operation of a vehicle on the highways will prevail and govern the operation of a vehicle during this type of driving.

### **LIFE AND DEATH EMERGENCY**

- (a) A life and death emergency is when the presence of a deputy will save a life and where reducing the arrival time can make a difference in the handling of the incident. A life and death emergency includes the following:
  - (b) When another police officer has placed a call for immediate assistance. B. When a life-threatening crime is in progress or has just occurred.

### **308.5 RESPONSE TO CALLS**

Deputies responding to nonemergency calls shall proceed accordingly, unless they are sent or redirected to a higher priority call, and shall obey all traffic laws.

#### **308.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS**

Deputies should only respond to a call as an emergency response when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required. This includes, but is not limited to (Md. Code TR § 21-106):

- (a) When in pursuit or apprehending a violator or suspected violator.
- (b) When responding to a reported emergency involving possible personal injury, death or significant property damage.
- (c) When immediate assistance is requested by a deputy or other law enforcement agency.

If a deputy believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the deputy shall immediately notify the dispatcher.

Deputies not responding to a call as an emergency response shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

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### **308.6 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

When requesting emergency assistance, the involved office member should reasonably believe there is an imminent threat to the safety of him/herself or another person, or that assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to the public.

If circumstances permit, the requesting member should provide the following information:

- Identifying call sign
- Location of the emergency situation
- Suspect information, including weapons
- Reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of deputies or resources required
- Hazards and any known or potential dangers for responding deputies

In any event where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting member shall immediately notify the dispatcher.

### **308.7 SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

Deputies responding to an emergency call shall proceed immediately as appropriate and shall continuously operate the emergency vehicle lighting and siren as required by law (Md. Code TR § 21-106(c)).

Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property, and does not protect the operator from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. However the deputy may, when responding to a call with an emergency response, and provided there is no endangerment or unnecessary risk to persons and property (Md. Code TR § 21-106(b)):

- Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
- Exceed the speed limit.
- Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- Park or stand without regard to parking restrictions.

#### **308.7.1 NUMBER OF DEPUTIES ASSIGNED**

Only the number of deputies that are reasonably necessary should be assigned to respond to an emergency call or request for assistance.

An emergency response involving more than one sheriff's vehicle should be coordinated by Talbot Center to avoid any unanticipated intersecting of response routes. The dispatcher shall notify the

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Shift Sergeant or field supervisor, who will make a determination regarding the appropriateness of the response and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

### **308.7.2 MOTORCYCLES**

A deputy operating a sheriff's motorcycle should not be assigned to an emergency response. However, a deputy operating a sheriff's motorcycle in an emergency response should be replaced by an authorized emergency vehicle equipped with emergency lights and siren as soon as practicable.

### **308.8 EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT**

Vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and siren are prohibited from initiating or joining in an emergency response. Deputies in such vehicles may provide support to pursuing vehicles as long as the vehicles are operated in compliance with all traffic laws. Those deputies should terminate their involvement in any emergency response immediately upon arrival of a sufficient number of emergency law enforcement vehicles.

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the deputy must terminate the emergency response and continue accordingly. The deputy shall notify the Shift Sergeant, field supervisor or the dispatcher of the equipment failure so that another deputy may be assigned to the emergency response.

### **308.9 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The decision to initiate or continue an emergency response is at the discretion of the deputy. If, in the deputy's judgment, the weather, traffic and road conditions do not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the deputy may elect to respond to the call without the use of emergency lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the deputy should immediately notify the dispatcher. A deputy shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

Upon receiving authorization or determining that an emergency response is appropriate, whenever practicable, a deputy shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

The first deputy arriving at the emergency call should determine whether to increase or reduce the level of the response of additional deputies and shall notify the dispatcher of his/her determination. Any subsequent change in the appropriate response level should be communicated to the dispatcher by the deputy in charge of the scene unless a supervisor assumes this responsibility.

### **308.10 TALBOT CENTER**

When information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death or a deputy requests emergency assistance and immediate law enforcement response is needed, the dispatcher shall assign an emergency response and ensure acknowledgement and response of handling and assisting deputies. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from the Shift Sergeant or a field supervisor prior to assigning an emergency response.

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#### **308.10.1 RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon notification or assignment of an emergency response, the dispatcher is responsible for:

- (a) Confirming the location from which the deputy is responding or requesting assistance.
- (b) Attempting to assign the closest available assisting deputies to the location of the emergency call.
- (c) Continuing to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitoring the situation until it is stabilized or terminated.
- (d) Notifying and coordinating allied emergency services (e.g., fire, emergency medical services).
- (e) Notifying the Shift Sergeant as soon as practicable.
- (f) Controlling all radio communications during the emergency and coordinating assistance under the direction of the Shift Sergeant or field supervisor.

#### **308.11 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated or requested, the Shift Sergeant or the field supervisor shall verify that:

- (a) The proper response has been initiated.
- (b) No more than those deputies reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
- (c) Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practicable.

The field supervisor shall monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated and assert control by directing deputies into or out of the response, if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional deputies to be assigned an emergency response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in his/her judgment is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize an emergency response, the Shift Sergeant or the field supervisor should consider the following:

- The type of call or crime involved
- The type and circumstances of the request
- The necessity of a timely response
- Weather, traffic and road conditions
- The location of the responding deputies and the location of the incident