

City of Johns Creek Police Department

<i>Subject:</i>	Responding to Calls and Vehicle Operations	<i>Number:</i>	02-03
<i>Reference:</i>	See also “Motor Vehicle Pursuits”	<i>Amends:</i>	
<i>Effective:</i>	04/08	<i>Review Date:</i> Annually	<i># of Pages:</i> 11
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PURPOSE:

Establish guidelines concerning the safe and proper response to emergency situations and proper operation of a police vehicle.

POLICY: (02-03)

The Department shall respond to all calls for service received and dispatched. All calls, whether emergency or non-emergency, shall receive immediate attention by the assigned patrol unit. Procedures contained in this policy provide officers with guidance and authority in the performance of their duties, and in some instances, provide certain limitations.

Departmental vehicles, including leased, rented, borrowed, etc., when used in the performance of one’s duty, shall, at all times, be operated within established policy of the Department and the City of Johns Creek and within the laws of the State of Georgia. Violations of law or policy are not permitted except as stated within this manual.

Emergency response using a police vehicle will only be allowed in response to calls of an immediate or potentially life-threatening nature, an “in progress” forcible felony (or immediately, just occurred), or in instances where failure to immediately respond would allow a perpetrator who poses a risk to themselves, officers, or the public to escape. All emergency operations of

departmental vehicles shall be only with blue lights and siren activated and shall be with the employment of extreme caution that would minimize peril to the officer and those around him/her. Officers of the Department shall not unreasonably endanger the lives or property of citizens of this community by the reckless operation of a motor vehicle.

Civilian riders accompanying a police officer during a normal tour of duty must understand, agree to, and sign a waiver prior to each riding opportunity. Civilian riders must also sign a GCIC Awareness Statement and complete a criminal history release form **prior** to the scheduled ride-a-long. No civilian rider will be permitted to ride if convicted by any state or federal government of any felony or have been convicted of sufficient misdemeanors to establish a pattern of disregard for the law. Also, no rider will be permitted to ride if their conviction of any crime was within one year of the requested ride-a-long. Civilian riders who currently have any pending criminal or traffic charges are not permitted to participate in a ride-a-long. Certified police officers are exempt from the criminal history review, however must comply with all other elements of the policy. Civilian riders shall have no authority to act on behalf of any police officer and will never be used to perform any law enforcement duty or function. The City of Johns Creek Police Department, individual police officer, shift supervisor or rider, at any point, and without explanation can terminate a ride along. The willingness to accommodate a ride along will be at the discretion of the shift lieutenant in conjunction with the hosting police officer. A civilian ride along is permitted to observe any and all aspects of a normal tour of duty, however caution shall be exercised so that a civilian is not placed in a situation where prior knowledge exists that such situation may pose a threat of imminent danger to them. At no time will civilian personnel be permitted to ride in a vehicle engaged in a pursuit or possess or carry any weapons during the ride along.

All civilian riders are required to wear casual business attire during the entire ride-a-long; jeans and t-shirts are not considered casual business attire. Family members are permitted to ride in the same car as their family member or significant other, but only after approval from the shift lieutenant. All ride-a-longs will be approved or denied at the discretion of the shift lieutenant or supervisor.

PROCEDURES:

Legal References (02-03-01)

- A. O.C.G.A. 40-6-6 provides that a police officer driving an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency call, or in pursuit of an actual and/or suspected violator of the law, may:
 - 1. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping to ensure that he/she may safely negotiate the intersection.
 - 2. Exceed the maximum speed limit as long as the officer does not endanger life and/or property.
 - 3. Disregard traffic rules and regulations governing the direction of movement and/or turning in a specific direction.
- B. These exceptions to the uniform rules of the road are granted by law, but only apply when such emergency vehicles are being operated while utilizing an audible signal (siren) and flashing blue lights.
- C. The provisions of O.C.G.A. 40-6-6 do not in any way relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.
- D. Reminder: The courts have found police officers negligent when operating their vehicle with less than **all** emergency equipment activated (using blue flashing lights, but not their siren) or if they have operated their vehicle in a reckless manner.
- E. An often acceptable definition of "due regard" is when a reasonably careful man, performing similar duties under similar circumstances, would have acted in the same manner.

Response to Calls (02-03-02)

- A. **Routine Calls (non-emergency) Calls which carry with them no sense of urgency. Not an emergency.**

As a general rule, routine calls are dispatched as calls for service and/or assistance and include general requests for reports, general alarms, etc. Officers shall respond to all routine calls without delay in the following manner:

- 1. Proceed to the incident location using the most direct route;
- 2. Use of emergency equipment prohibited; and
- 3. Adhere to all traffic laws, including speed limits and all traffic control devices.

Officers must balance the need for an immediate response against the dangers which are inherent to emergency vehicle operations when making the decision to operate in emergency or non-emergency mode.

- B. Emergency Calls - Calls of a critical nature, where the lives of citizens or fellow officers are or may be subject to danger, or where a delay in responding may allow an offender to escape. An emergency is any situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury and the actions taken by a police officer may reduce the seriousness of the situation. The decision to respond to a call in the emergency mode shall be made after carefully considering the facts known to the officer at the time. Officers can upgrade or downgrade the response as additional information is provided. The following calls are classified as emergency calls and are examples of those authorized for emergency response, but is not intended to be conclusive:**

1. Accidents with injuries, more serious than a complaint;
2. Domestic situation in progress;
3. Fight (Affray) in progress;
4. Any dispute involving weapons or shots fired;
5. Officer down and/or in trouble;
6. Suicide attempts;
7. Structure fires (dispatched car only); and

8. Person shot/stabbed.

Officers shall respond to emergency calls in the following manner:

1. Carefully, evaluate the nature of the call to determine the degree of seriousness. Proceed to the incident location by using the most direct route available.
2. If necessary (meets all the criteria of a emergency call), officers are permitted to exceed the posted speed limits as follows:
 - a. Activate all emergency equipment.

- b. Operate the patrol vehicle with extreme caution at a speed which is safe and the officer is able to maintain absolute control over the vehicle.
 - c. The officer shall not take any unwarranted risks which are likely to endanger the public under any circumstances.
 3. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping to ensure that he/she may safely negotiate the intersection.
 4. Should an officer determine it necessary to approach a scene of an emergency call without utilizing his/her emergency equipment, the officer will first slow the vehicle down to a speed within the posted speed limit, then deactivate their emergency equipment.
 5. At no time shall an officer violate any traffic laws without activating his or her emergency equipment.
 6. Officers will consider the following conditions when they are involved in emergency vehicle operations:
 - a. Heavy traffic, weather and road conditions;
 - b. Capabilities of their vehicle; and
 - c. Driver experience and training.
 7. Officers are strictly prohibited from using a cellphone, handheld or hands free, while operating emergency equipment.

C. Emergency Escorts

Escorting a motor vehicle in an emergency fashion is inherently dangerous **and is permitted only when authorized by a supervisor.** Supervisors shall only approve emergency escorts for life threatening situations, which exceed the normal operating conditions of the department.

D. Pursuit Actions

Officers should refer to the chapter on “Motor Vehicle Pursuits”.

E. Unauthorized Emergency Response

1. Officers shall not be permitted to respond to a call utilizing their emergency equipment unless they have been dispatched, are so

directed by a supervisor, or are responding to an "officer in trouble/needs assistance" call.

2. Unauthorized use of emergency equipment and or emergency call response is a violation of policy and procedure.

F. Other Considerations

1. All police personnel operating emergency vehicles shall have a current State of Georgia operator's license.
2. All personnel and passengers in an emergency vehicle shall utilize his/her safety restraints in accordance with city and departmental policy.

G. Communications Responsibility

1. Communication Officers shall advise the nature of the call and other known information to the responding officer and his/her back-up officers so they and the supervisor may make the best determination as to what type of response is needed. Officers at the scene shall also attempt to provide all necessary information and their status concerning the situation to communications, other fellow officers and supervisors.
2. Also, any further information received which would seem to escalate or de-escalate the nature of the call shall be relayed to the officers by the dispatchers.

H. Supervisor's Responsibilities

At all times the supervisor shall monitor the activity and response of his/her officers and shall maintain supervisory direction over their activities. He/she shall govern the number of vehicles responding to any event and the manner in which they respond. If new information indicates the nature or seriousness of the incident has de-escalated, the supervisor shall direct the de-escalation of the response accordingly. This does not preclude any of the Department's supervisors from providing input or such other direction necessary to expediently and safely handle the call or incident

Incidents Requiring Additional Officer Response (02-03-03)

- A. [REDACTED]
- B. Officers not needed at the scene of an incident or event should return to service.
- C. [REDACTED]
- D. For further directives refer to procedure and departmental order concerning pursuit actions, emergency vehicle response procedures, crimes in progress type calls, assist other officers, and responding to bank alarm procedures.

Situations Requiring Presence of Supervisor (02-03-04)

- A. Supervisors should respond as a backup, assist at, or assume command at:
 - 1. Critical scenes involving potential officer or citizen risks, high profile scenes, and scenes of protracted duration;
 - 2. Officer(s) injured or involved in any type of accident;
 - 3. Major crimes (Part I offenses);
 - 4. Searches involving lost/missing children, and/or infirm or elderly adults;

5. Search and rescue situations, disasters, major structure fires, hazardous material situations, traffic accidents of serious injury, death or major traffic disruption; and
 6. Hostage and/or barricaded situations.
- B. Also refer to departmental procedures for notification of the Chain of Command, and directives concerning special operations, unusual occurrences, disaster and hazardous material responses.

Response to Crimes in Progress (02-03-05)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Officers should not make any attempt to assist with the injured parties until the scene is safe. Once it is determined the scene is secure and no one is subject to harm, the responding officers should make contact with the victim/complainant. Where there are possible injuries, the responding officers first responsibility is to the injured. As soon as practical, E.M.S. personnel should be summoned to the scene.

A. General Alarm Responses

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

B. Bank and Robbery Alarms

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

C. Emergency Personnel

[REDACTED]

D. F.B.I. Notification

The shift supervisor will ensure the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been notified by the Department's Communication Center when a confirmed bank robbery has occurred.

E. False Alarms

As directed by city ordinance, false alarm notices will be issued when no evidence of a crime can be found.

Officers responding to an alarm will check all doors and windows in accessible locations at the alarm site. When no evidence of an unlawful entry, property damage and/or an agent/resident of the premise(s) can be found to substantiate any of these, the officer shall consider this a false alarm and shall issue a "false alarm" notice. Notices will be issued to the address of the occurrence. An "accidental" alarm shall also be issued a "false alarm notice". An accidental alarm occurs when the alarm is activated through a "wrong code" or an improper disarming procedure. Most accidents will be the result of human error, therefore, a person will usually be at the false alarm location.

If a person is found on the premises and it is established the person is a resident or an employee of the business (either directly or as a sub-contractor) the false alarm notice will note this person as being present. Usual identification methods will be used (i.e., driver's license, picture I.D.'s, neighbors, names on emergency contact lists, etc.).

The notice will be left with a resident or an employee of the company. If none are present the notice will be left in a secure, yet conspicuous location. The yellow copy is to be left at the alarm location. Officers will complete a false alarm report on every false alarm.

F. Definitions

Alarm - Any signal transmitted to Communications indicating a predetermined condition exists. Such signal may be transmitted by telephone line to a designated position on an alarm panel; by a private alarm service company relayed to Communications; by an automated telephone alarm system, playing a recorded

message when received at Communications; or, by an audible/visual signal relayed to Communications by a third party.

False Alarm - The activation of an alarm system where none of the emergencies for which the alarm system has been installed have in fact occurred.

Telephone alarm system - Any alarm system which automatically transmits by telephone line a recorded electronic or mechanical signal to a telephone instrument at the Communications Center. Such systems are totally automated and require no relaying or human action.

Response - The dispatch of any police, fire, or EMS unit to the premises where an alarm has been activated.