

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
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<b>Emergency Vehicle Operations</b>		



Cross Reference: 4.01, 5.02, 5.09, 11.07

Patrol SOP: 1.06, 2.01, 2.02

## I. Introduction

- A. In order to serve and protect the public, sworn personnel are authorized to respond to emergency calls for service. The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and the Columbus City Code (CCC) provide exceptions to certain traffic laws for public safety and emergency vehicles responding to emergency calls, as long as the driver is using emergency equipment and exercising due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.
- B. On a police vehicle, the emergency equipment consists of safety devices intended to:
  1. Assist sworn personnel in responding to an emergency call;
  2. Alert the public of emergency vehicles responding to emergency calls;
  3. Cause other drivers and pedestrians to yield to emergency vehicles; and
  4. Prevent crashes and injuries during emergency vehicle operations.

## II. Definitions

### A. Emergency Call

A call to duty including, but not limited to, communication from citizens, police dispatches, and personal observations by sworn personnel of inherently dangerous situations that demand an immediate response on the part of a law enforcement officer.

### B. Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVO)

Any time Division sworn personnel are responding to an emergency call in a police vehicle with lights and sirens/emergency equipment activated.

### C. Lights and Sirens/Emergency Equipment

The Division-authorized visible and audible equipment on the police vehicle designed to signal and warn other drivers and pedestrians on the roadway when activated. The Division-authorized emergency equipment includes flashing lights and sirens that meet the standards set forth in the ORC.

### III. Policy Statements

- A. Division personnel shall always operate vehicles with due regard for their safety and the safety of other drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.
  - B. Division personnel operating a vehicle shall drive at a speed and in a manner that is reasonable considering the following factors:
    - 1. Traffic conditions
    - 2. Weather and/or roadway conditions
    - 3. Type of vehicle
    - 4. Any other factor that may affect driving
    - 5. The seriousness of the call for service
  - C. Sworn personnel should normally limit using high speed to situations involving a life-threatening condition or a risk of serious physical harm. The dangers of using high speed should not outweigh the dangers presented by the situation creating the need for an emergency response; thus, high speed may require justification.
  - D. When it is reasonable, sworn personnel assigned to a call for service have the authorization to respond using EVO when dispatched or responding to any of the following **10**-codes:  
10-3, 10-5, 10-5A, 10-7A, 10-8, 10-8A, 10-8B, 10-9, 10-10, 10-10A, 10-14, 10-17, 10-20, 10-23B, 10-25, 10-26, 10-30, 10-31, 10-33, 10-33A, 10-34, 10-34A, 10-34B, 10-34O, 10-35, 10-38, 10-39, 10-41, 10-42, 10-42A, 10-42E, 10-43, 10-43A, 10-43S, 10-44, 10-47A, 10-57
- Note: The use of EVO in the above situations does not necessarily require or warrant high speed.
- E. Sworn personnel assigned to a call for service should, regardless of the **10**-codes, respond using EVO if there is a reasonable belief that any of the following criteria are present:
    - 1. The situation is likely to result in serious physical harm to a person
    - 2. There is an immediate need to apprehend a suspect due to the serious nature of the crime committed
    - 3. There is an immediate need to secure a crime scene or witness(es)
    - 4. There is an immediate need for traffic or crowd control
    - 5. There is an immediate need for officer assistance or backup
    - 6. At the direction of a sworn Division supervisor
  - F. Sworn personnel shall consider the following factors when determining whether to respond using EVO and/or while responding using EVO:
    - 1. Adverse traffic, weather, and/or roadway conditions
    - 2. Proximity to and/or the proximity of other sworn personnel to the emergency call
    - 3. Notified the situation is under control or there is no longer a need to respond

4. The required visible and/or audible emergency equipment is inoperable
  5. Any other information known to responding personnel that would indicate using EVO is too dangerous or inappropriate at that time, such as possibly alerting a suspect of the arrival of sworn personnel
- G. Sworn personnel shall cancel EVO when notified or ordered to do so.**
- H.** If a passenger is onboard a police vehicle, and unless exigent circumstances dictate, EVO is not authorized except when the passenger is a(n):
1. Sworn law enforcement officer;
  2. City of Columbus official or employee riding in an official capacity;
  3. Columbus Division of Police Cadet or Public Safety Corps Member; or
  4. Adult civilian who has signed a Citizen Ride-Along Request/Release form, U-10.119.
- I.** Entering intersections against a stop sign or signal while using EVO poses a heightened level of risk to sworn personnel and the public and thus requires an increased level of caution to meet the due regard standard. In order to show due regard when approaching intersections against a stop sign or red traffic signal, sworn personnel shall slow down as necessary for the safety of traffic and shall proceed into these intersections at a speed which would allow sworn personnel and/or other drivers and pedestrians a reasonable opportunity to avoid a traffic crash.
- J.** Sworn personnel **shall** use EVO when violating traffic laws **except in limited exceptional circumstances when doing so could pose a safety risk to other personnel or the public. For example,** sworn personnel may **deactivate their emergency equipment when approaching an active aggressor situation to avoid alerting the suspect of their arrival.** Sworn personnel shall **continue to operate vehicles with** due regard in these exceptional circumstances.
- K.** Sworn personnel shall not violate any of the following traffic laws from the CCC, even while responding using EVO:
1. 2131.28 Driving over a fire hose
  2. 2131.36 Stopping for school bus, signals on bus
  3. 2133.02 Reckless operation on streets, public, or private property
- L.** Sworn personnel shall follow the “Vehicular Pursuits” directive if a driver attempts to flee for any reason.
- M.** Sworn personnel at the scene of an emergency call for service shall advise the dispatcher when EVO is no longer needed.

## IV. Procedures

### A. Responding to Emergency Calls

#### 1. Communications Personnel

- a. Document on the CAD that sworn personnel are responding using EVO and, if applicable, the sworn Division supervisor directing its use.
- b. Advise assigned sworn personnel when:
  - (1) EVO is cancelled by sworn personnel assigned to the incident;
  - (2) A sworn Division supervisor determines that EVO is no longer needed;
  - (3) Advised that the situation is under control; **or**
  - (4) The call for service has been held an extensive length of time before dispatched or since the incident reportedly occurred.

#### 2. Sworn Personnel

- a. When using EVO, notify the dispatcher as soon as practical.
- b. When EVO is determined appropriate:
  - (1) If **equipped**, activate the Cruiser Video System (CVS) for the entire response. Do not deactivate the CVS until the response to call or situation is complete.
  - (2) Advise the dispatcher when EVO is no longer needed as soon as practical.

### B. Sworn Supervisor

1. Acknowledge notification of EVO as soon as practical.
2. Monitor the response.
3. As necessary, cancel EVO and/or the response to an emergency call.
4. As necessary, review the cruiser video(s) and debrief personnel.
5. Advise the Advanced Training Operations Unit of situations that could be utilized for future training on EVO.