



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 612 – Emergency Vehicle Operations/Pursuits

Office with Primary Responsibility:	COP	Effective Date: Prior Revision Date:	March 7, 2018 NEW
Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:		Number of Pages:	3
Forms Referenced in Procedure:		Related Procedures:	ALL

.01 INTRODUCTION

This procedure establishes guidelines for officers in situations necessitating the use of emergency vehicles for emergency response.

.02 POLICY

- A. The Department recognizes its responsibility to apprehend criminals and to respond in an expedient manner to requests for immediate assistance to save a life or to prevent a victim from sustaining serious injury.
- B. Officers, in the emergency operation of emergency vehicles, exercise due regard for the safety of all persons, constantly aware no assignment is too important and no tasks are to be expedited with such emphasis that the basic principles of safety are jeopardized.
- C. Officers are held accountable for the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others and violations of this procedure.

.03 DISCUSSION:

- A. The VIA Transit Police Department requires its officers to exhibit a sense of prudent judgment derived from departmental training, acquired knowledge, skills, and ability in the operation of all emergency vehicles.
- B. The sanctity of human life and individual liberties are immeasurable elements of modern society which vests police officers with the responsibility for the preservation and protection of its paramount values. In the pursuit of this responsibility, officers maintain the understanding that protection of property and apprehension of criminal offenders is subservient to the protection of life, including their own.

.04 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Officers operating emergency vehicles must exercise sound judgment, carefully consider the facts, and weigh the seriousness of the offense against the consequences of jeopardizing the safety of others by continually evaluating the following existing environmental factors:

1. Time of day and day of week;
2. Lighting conditions;
3. Volume of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular;
4. Type of roadway;
5. Condition of the roadway (i.e., dry, wet, paved, or gravel);
6. Weather conditions (i.e., clear, overcast, rain, or fog);
7. Condition of the emergency vehicle and fleeing vehicle;
8. Speeds of the emergency vehicle and fleeing vehicle;



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9. Distance to be covered;
10. Types of traffic control signals or devices; and
11. School zones or areas where large crowds gather.

.05 EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDELINES

- A. Only emergency vehicles will be utilized for emergency operations.
- B. Officers will not drive emergency vehicles the wrong way on an expressway, an expressway exit or entrance ramp, a divided highway, or any other street or highway designated for one-way traffic.
- C. Officers will not transport prisoners, witnesses, suspects, complainants, or any person who is not a member of the Department who has not been cleared by a supervisory officer as an authorized “Ride-Along”, when driving emergency vehicles in emergency operations.

.06 RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY CALLS

- A. Authorization for Code-Two or Code-Three emergency response:
 1. Officers are authorized to make a Code-Two or Code-Three response only when assigned by the dispatcher or with verbal, on-air supervisory approval.
 2. The dispatcher shall verbally specify the response is Code-Two or Code-Three. The officer shall verbally acknowledge the response is Code-Two or Code-Three.
 3. If an officer on a Code-One response determines a need to increase to a Code-Two or Code-Three response, he may only do so with verbal on air approval from a field supervisor.
 4. If information becomes available which changes the status of a response from Code-Two or Code-Three to Code-One, all officers assigned shall verbally acknowledge the change and immediately slow down to a Code-One response.
- B. Officers authorized to respond to Code-Two or Code-Three emergency calls may utilize emergency vehicles for emergency operations, provided:
 1. The emergency lights and siren are activated;
 2. The posted speed limit is not exceeded by more than ten (10) miles per hour on Code-Two calls;
 3. Officers will come to a complete stop at all traffic control devices which require a stop under normal driving conditions and in consideration to vehicular and pedestrian traffic (i.e., stop signs, red lights, and flashing red lights) and proceed when it can be done safely;
 4. Officers will reduce speed for vehicles and pedestrians at intersections marked by yield signs or yellow flashing lights and proceed when it can be done safely;
 5. Officers will reduce speed and proceed when it can be done safely when driving emergency vehicles into or through school zones during normal school hours or into areas where large crowds are known to congregate, such as city parks and outdoor public events; and
 6. Officers will exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.



- C. For an officer to respond to a Code-Two or Code-Three emergency call without using emergency lights or siren, as allowed by the Texas Transportation Code, Section 546.004, an officer must first receive verbal, on-air authorization from a supervisory officer.

.07 FOOT PURSUITS

- A. When engaging in a foot pursuit of a suspect, officers must exercise sound judgment, carefully consider the facts, and weigh the seriousness of the offense against the consequences of jeopardizing the safety of others by continually evaluating the following existing environmental factors:
1. Nature of offense committed
 2. Presence of weapons on suspect(s)
 3. Location and time of day/night
 4. Number of suspects
 5. Amount of support for officers
 6. Terrain and physical barriers (fencing, waterways, industrial, residential, etc.)
 7. Physical condition of the officer
 8. Is the I.D. of the suspect(s) known?
 9. Presence of cover and concealment
- B. While engaged in a foot pursuit officers should, as soon as safe to do so, update the Dispatcher with the following information, as available:
1. Present location
 2. Direction of flight
 3. Number of suspects/description
 4. Presence of weapons
 5. Nature of offence of incident
 6. Consider what additional resources are needed (K-9, Eagle, Quadrant, etc.)

.08 VEHICLE PURSUITS

