

COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure Manual

OFFICER RESPONSE TO CALLS

Approved By: Geoffrey Jones Chief of Police

CALEA 6th Edition Standard: 41.2.1

316 OFFICER RESPONSE TO CALLS

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines and procedures for the safe and appropriate response to all non-emergency and emergency situations to include:

- a. Defining non-emergency calls;
- b. Defining emergency calls;
- c. Prioritization of call types for response; and
- d. Guidelines for the use of authorized emergency equipment.

316.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Columbia Police Department to respond to and tactically deploy officers to emergency and non-emergency situations in a safe and efficient manner.

316.3 DEFINITIONS (41.2.1 a & b)

- a. **Emergency Call:** For use in this policy, emergency may be defined as a known or suspected violent, in-progress crime or any situation in which a human life is at risk. Examples of a violent in-progress crime could be: officer in need of aid; armed robbery; etc. Examples of a situation in which a human life is at risk could be: a person trapped; a child not breathing; a fire of an occupied dwelling; etc. An emergency call may be downgraded at any time in response to changing circumstances and stabilization of the scene.
- b. **Emergency Vehicle:** A department vehicle with siren and emergency lights, operated in accordance with RSMO 304.022 and responding to an emergency call or in pursuit of an actual or suspected law violator.
- c. **Emergency Response Driving:** The driver of an emergency vehicle in response to an emergency call may: park or stand irrespective to posted signs; 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 so long as it does not endanger life or property; and disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- d. **Non-Emergency Call:** Calls for service which do not rise to the level as defined for Emergency Call. Will require an immediate response from the officer but will not include the activation of emergency vehicle equipment. A non-emergency call may be upgraded at any time, due to changing circumstances, to an emergency call.
- e. **Overtaking Enforcement Driving (other than pursuit driving):** The operation of an emergency vehicle to overtake and/or stop another vehicle to enforce traffic laws or ordinances for the

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investigation of traffic violations of the law, or any other circumstance not rising to that of an emergency.

- f. **Officer Deployment:** May be defined as the appropriate number of officers assigned or dispatched to an incident. This number will be based on the totality of the information and circumstances available at the time of the incident.

316.4 RESPONSE TO CALLS (41.2.1 c)

Officers responding to an emergency call or non-emergency call for service shall proceed immediately.

316.4.1 EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE

- a. When responding to an emergency, officers must place the protection and preservation of human life above all other considerations. Operating police vehicles in a manner or at a speed in which the officer does not have sufficient control of the vehicle to insure the safety of the general public is strictly prohibited.
- b. For all other calls for service, police units will respond without the use of emergency lights or siren and with due regard for all traffic regulations.
- c. Under all driving conditions, officers and any passengers shall properly wear safety belts, lap and shoulder, as required by RSMO 307.178.

316.4.2 EMERGENCY OPERATION - NON-PURSUIT (41.2.1 c) (41.2.1 d)

- a. Police vehicles are considered emergency vehicles only when being operated in accordance with RSMO 304.022 by displaying both flashing red lights and audible siren.
- b. Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve an officer of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property and does not protect the officer from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not generally provide an exemption from the vehicle laws (§ 300.100.4, RSMo).
- c. Officers responding to an emergency call shall continuously sound the siren and operate emergency lighting equipment unless doing so would endanger the safety of others.
- d. Any commissioned officer is authorized to activate emergency equipment (lights and siren) to respond only when it is necessary to accomplish one of the following:
 - 1. To prevent the commission of a crime dangerous to life (e.g., robbery in progress, shooting, flourishing a gun, etc.);
 - 2. To provide emergency assistance to “officer in need of aid” calls;
 - 3. To provide emergency assistance to persons exposed to imminent threat of death or serious physical injury (e.g., accident with injuries, haz-mat spills, etc.);
 - 4. To apprehend a felon in the commission of a crime;
 - 5. To avert or minimize the effect of a public catastrophe or emergency involving the threat of major property damage (e.g., fire or explosion);
 - 6. To stop a traffic violator to take enforcement action;
 - 7. To stop a vehicle, based on reasonable suspicion, to conduct further investigation;

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8. To initiate a pursuit that meets the criteria outlined in Policy 314 Vehicle Pursuits.

316.5 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (41.2.1 c)

Officers may request emergency assistance when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent harm to a citizen.

If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- a. The unit number
- b. The location
- c. The reason for the request and type of emergency
- d. The number of units required

Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify Boone County Joint Communications.

316.6 INITIATING EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE (41.2.1 c)

If an officer believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify Boone County Joint Communications of his/her response and current location.

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

- a. The type of call or crime involved
- b. The necessity of a timely response
- c. Traffic and roadway conditions
- d. The location of the responding units

316.7 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary and effectively close to the incident location should respond to a call with an emergency response. The Watch Commander or the field supervisor should monitor all emergency responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

316.8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONDING OFFICER

The decision to continue as an emergency response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify Boone County Joint Communications. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

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The first officer arriving at an emergency response scene should determine whether to increase or reduce the level of the response and notify Boone County Joint Communications of their determination. Any subsequent change in the appropriate response level should be communicated to Boone County Joint Communications.

316.9 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the Watch Commander or the field supervisor shall verify the following:

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

The field supervisor shall, whenever practicable, monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units 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.

316.10 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT (41.2.1 d)

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency response and continue accordingly.

The officer shall notify the Watch Commander, field supervisor or Boone County Joint Communications of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.