



ANDERSON COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 202

## GENERAL ORDERS

## EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

### PURPOSE:

Emergency response is defined as the operation of an emergency vehicle in an emergency mode. This policy identifies the statutory requirements for operation of emergency vehicles and this agency's procedures to comply with statutory mandates.

### STATE STATUTE MANDATES:

South Carolina Code of Laws § 56-5-760 - Operation of Authorized Emergency Vehicles:

*(A) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual suspected violator of the law or when responding to, but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions of this section.*

*(B) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:*

- 1. Park or stand, notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter.*
- 2. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.*
- 3. Exceed the maximum speed limit so long as he does not endanger life or property.*
- 4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.*

*(C) The exemptions in this section granted to an authorized emergency vehicle apply only when the vehicle is making use of an audible signal meeting the requirements of Section 56-5-4970 and visual signals meeting the requirements of Section 56-5-4700 of this chapter, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not use an audible signal nor display a visual signal when the vehicle is being used to:*

- 1. Obtain evidence of a speeding violation.*
- 2. Respond to a suspected crime in progress when use of an audible or visual signal, or both, could reasonably result in the destruction of evidence or escape of a suspect.*
- 3. Surveil another vehicle or its occupants who are suspected in involvement in a crime.*

*(D) The provisions of this section **do not** relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with **due regard** for the safety of all persons.*

*(E) The Criminal Justice Academy shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act so as to provide uniform guidelines and training programs for law enforcement agencies, which use emergency*

*vehicles. Law enforcement agencies authorized to use emergency vehicles shall use the regulations developed by the Criminal Justice Academy to provide written guidelines and to provide training programs for its officers and employees regarding the operation of emergency vehicles.*

**DUE REGARD  
DEFINED:**

Black's Law Dictionary defines "due regard" as **consideration in a degree appropriate to the demands of a particular case**. Essentially, due regard places a higher burden of responsibility on the driver of an emergency vehicle to consider the safety and well being of others.

**VEHICLE OPERATION  
RISK MANAGEMENT:**

Whenever a vehicle is operated in normal driving conditions, a certain degree of risk is apparent. In the operation of emergency vehicles risks are multiplied many times over. An acceptable risk is one in which the operator of an emergency vehicle has control of himself, his vehicle, and his surroundings to a degree of certainty. An unacceptable risk is when certainty does not exist. Definitive guidelines to specifically address all emergency situations are impossible. Therefore, the decision to operate in an emergency mode is a question of risk management. **The risk to the general public must be weighed against the need to apprehend.** In all cases involving emergency response sound judgment is paramount.

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
EMERGENCY VEHICLE  
OPERATION:**

All Sheriff's Office emergency vehicle operations are to be conducted in strict accordance with existing statutes. Personnel operating agency vehicles are to exercise **due regard** for the safety of all persons. No assignment is of such importance and no task will be expedited with such emphasis that the principles of safety become secondary. There are no tasks so important to justify the reckless disregard of the safety of innocent persons.

**EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE TO A  
CALL FOR SERVICE:**

All responses (dispatched calls) shall be classified as routine, priority, or emergency:

1. **Routine** - Response may be delayed with a deputy responding as he/she becomes available. All traffic regulations are obeyed.
2. **Priority** - Respond without delay, all traffic regulations are obeyed.
3. **Emergency** - Respond with all emergency equipment (lights, siren) activated. **When approaching traffic control lights and stop signs at intersections stop and clear the intersection before proceeding. Do not assume you will be given the right-of-way.** Emergency response is limited to those situations in which the physical safety and well being of an individual is directly jeopardized.

All emergency vehicle operations are coded as Emergency Response Code and cleared aired via radio as such. Responsibility for airing the code words Emergency Response Code rests with individual deputies and shift

supervisors. Under no circumstances will a dispatcher initiate an Emergency Response Code response.

The gravity of each emergency situation is to be carefully weighed by each deputy and his supervisor. A decision to run Emergency Response Code is to be followed by the deputy's radio transmission identifying his unit and his clearly stating, "I'll be Emergency Response Code to \_\_\_\_\_." If approved, the on-duty supervisor is to transmit approval. For example: "Alpha 24, you are clear for Emergency Response Code. Proceed with caution."

If an emergency response is not approved, the on-duty supervisor will transmit his refusal to approve. For example: "Alpha 24, cancel Emergency Response Code, proceed as priority or routine. Keep me advised." **Silence by a supervisor does not indicate tacit approval for emergency response. In such instances, the responding deputy is to use his best discretion and be prepared to justify his decision.**

Depending upon the seriousness and the immediacy of the situation, the deputy may attempt to raise his supervisor on the radio, advise Communications he will continue Emergency Response Code, or make the decision to abort emergency operations and proceed in a routine manner. However, in all cases a supervisor is to be contacted as soon as possible.

**An emergency response is normally authorized when human life is threatened or serious personal injury appears imminent.** In that regard supervisors may authorize, but are not exclusively limited to, the following emergency runs:

Armed Robbery	Murder
Burglary/Occupied Building	Request Special Teams
Civil Disturbance	Trouble with Prisoner
Deputy Needs Help	

In general, emergency response will not be made to the following call types unless information furnished would warrant waiver of this order by the on-duty supervisor. The exception to this item is for an authorized Emergency Services Bureau response at which time authorized units will respond according to how the call was dispatched to the support agency.

Activated Burglar Alarm	Domestic Trouble
Ambulance	Fight
Back-Up	Fire Call
Breaking & Entering Structure	Rape Case
Collision	Suicide Case
Deceased Person	

**NON-EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE EMERGENCY  
LIGHTS USE:**

When making a car-stop, assisting with a car-stop, providing assistance at a collision scene or providing assistance to a stranded motorist on the roadside, blue lights and flashers, in addition to headlights, are to be activated on patrol vehicles.

Deputies driving unmarked vehicles in the same circumstances are to activate a flashing blue light in a position visible to highway traffic after pulling to the roadside. Unmarked vehicles are to also activate emergency flashers.

**NOTE:** *Extreme caution is to be used in circumstances disrupting the normal flow of traffic.*

Approved by:  
John S. Skipper, Jr., Sheriff