



# Corsicana Independent School District Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 6.06

Emergency/Non-Emergency Response -  
Vehicle

## I. POLICY

The CISD Police Department's primary concern with vehicle operations in responding to emergency situations is the protection of the lives and safety of all citizens and officers. During emergency driving situations, officers will comply with the provisions regulating the use of emergency vehicles. Driving under emergency conditions does not relieve the officer from the responsibility to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor will these provisions protect the driver from the consequences of their disregard for the safety of others.

It is the intent of this directive that officers resort to emergency driving only in those cases where there are specific and articulable reasons for believing that a life-threatening situation exists or a violent crime is occurring.

*All other calls for service will be answered with the officer responding promptly obeying all traffic laws and speed limits en route.*

*Any delay in responding to a dispatched call for service will require the officer notifying Communications immediately.*

## II. PURPOSE

- A. This directive provides guidelines that will reduce hazards to officers engaged in emergency driving, and the ensuing public concern that follows when an officer is involved in a traffic collision when so driving. It is not intended to create doubt in an officer's mind at a moment when action is critical, and there is little time for mediation or reflection.
- B. It is not the purpose of this directive to provide CISD Police Department personnel with guidelines regarding the operation of District vehicles while engaged in pursuits. Those are addressed in a policy/directive specific to that circumstance.

### III. LAW

Texas Transportation Code (TTC) Chapter 546 designates police vehicles as emergency vehicles when operated by sworn police personnel. TTC requires roadway traffic and pedestrians to yield to an emergency vehicle, and exempts the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle with emergency equipment in operation from the general rules of the road. However, the driver of an emergency vehicle is never relieved from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and/or property (TTC Ch. 546; Sec.546.005).

### IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Emergency Driving: Emergency driving is defined as the operation of an authorized emergency motor vehicle by a law enforcement officer, in response to a life-threatening situation, or a violent crime in progress, while utilizing the privileges afforded by law, in lawful disregard of traffic law and/or traffic control devices, but complying with CISD Police Department policy to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons on the roadway.
- B. Authorized Emergency Vehicle: A vehicle being driven in response to an emergency call, operating at least one red light or red and blue light.
- C. “No Code:” Shall refer to any routine call to which an officer responds, obeying all traffic laws and speed limits en route.
- D. Code 1: Shall refer to any call that an officer responds to *immediately*. The officer shall temporarily drop whatever activity they are engaged in and respond directly to the call, utilize the most direct route, obeying all traffic and speed laws while en route. Officers responding to a call Code 1, will not be pulled off call for another with a Dispatch Priority less than a priority 1. The use of emergency equipment shall not be used during Code 1.
- E. Code 2: Officers responding to certain emergency calls may respond using emergency lights only. However, the use of emergency lights only does not require other motorists to yield their right of way (TTC 545.156), nor does it exempt the driver from the provisions of TTC. The decision to utilize “Code 2” can only be made by the responding officer, who holds sole responsibility for that decision. The use of “lights only” alerts other motorists that the vehicle is responding to an emergency call and **grants no privileges or immunities**.
- F. Code 3: Shall refer to any call which the officer responds to with lights and siren (as necessary) as an emergency vehicle utilizing the privileges authorized by law, but complying with Department policy to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons on the roadway.

G. Life-Threatening Situations: These include, but are not limited to:

1. Other CISD Police Department officer requests for immediate and urgent help.
2. Other law enforcement agency requests for immediate and urgent help.
3. Response to certain medical emergency follow-up calls with life-threatening implications, i.e., subject not breathing, heart attack, drowning, only when the Emergency Medical Services unit/s being dispatched (both ambulance and Fire Department) are delayed or unavailable for response at that time.
4. Other dispatched life-threatening calls, which by the exigent, unique, and specifically articulable nature of the circumstances require an emergency response.
5. Responses to all traffic collisions shall be Code 1 or Code 2, except when the Emergency Medical Services unit/s being dispatched (both ambulance and Fire Department) are delayed or unavailable for response at that time, or when traffic around the scene is such that it poses an imminent threat of additional injury. Communications shall notify dispatched personnel of the status of Fire/EMS at the time of dispatch.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES (CODE 3 DRIVING PRACTICES)**

A. Decision Responsibility

1. The decision to drive under emergency conditions will be discretionary with each individual officer. However, the unit responding to an emergency must base their decision to operate a vehicle under emergency driving conditions on the totality of the information received, and not solely upon the type of call dispatched, or whatever the emergency tone is utilized to dispatch the call. Officers will take into consideration additional information provided that would make the call a valid life-threatening situation or a valid violent crime in progress.
2. When deciding to initiate or continue driving under emergency conditions, officers will consider such factors as traffic volume, time of day, the type of crime in progress and potential hazard or liability to themselves and the public. Officers will have sufficient information to justify the decision to drive under emergency conditions and will advise Communications of their intent.

B. Supervisory Responsibility: The Chief of Police and Lieutenant are responsible to monitor and exercise appropriate management control of Code 3 responses and shall conduct training and handle violations of this policy on a case by case basis.

C. Due Regard: Pursuant to the TTC, all officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of other persons and/or property.

D. Speed: As a general rule, speeds will vary in accordance with road and traffic conditions and any other pertinent factors.

E. Intersections: When responding Code 3, no officer shall enter an intersection until they determine that it is safe to do so. No officer shall enter an intersection against traffic signals until they determine that it is reasonably safe, even if the officer must stop to ensure safety.

F. Passing Emergency Vehicles:

1. No officer who is responding Code 3 to a call shall pass any other officer who is also responding Code 3 to a call unless requested to do so.

G. No officer who is responding Code 3 shall pass any Fire Department vehicles or Alarm Responses: Some situations are normally inappropriate for emergency driving, such as alarm calls. These calls require the officer to handle the situation as if in progress; but an emergency response (rather than urgent) would be inappropriate and unduly dangerous. In calls such as an alarm call, the officer should respond as quickly as possible, but not under emergency driving conditions. *If there were an indication that the situation had escalated to a life-threatening event, an emergency response would be appropriate.* Then, upon arrival at the call, the officer should handle the situation as if it is in progress. Officers should use caution when responding to any alarm since staff, students, business vendors, and innocent civilians may be present upon the officers' arrival at the scene.

1. Robbery alarms/School Intrusion

- a. Officers shall proceed to the location/school as quickly and safely as possible and avoid alerting the suspect(s) by visual or audible means. Units not assigned to the alarm should patrol their area or set up at strategic locations to control possible escape routes.
- b. Upon arrival, officers should position themselves at a strategic location and distance from the scene, using all available cover and concealment.
- c. If unable to visually determine whether a robbery is in progress, the primary officer or supervisor shall advise communications personnel to attempt to make telephone contact with the complainant after officers are deployed and the scene is contained.
- d. If communications personnel verify by phone that the alarm is false, they shall request that an employee exit the facility to meet the responding officers. Communications personnel shall provide a clothing description of the employee.
- e. If no employee approaches in a reasonable time and communications personnel have telephone contact with the facility, then officers should consider the alarm to be a robbery in progress. In this event, the on-duty supervisor or primary officer should consider the possibility of a hostage situation within the business.
- f. If the call is unanswered or a questionable response is provided, officers shall assume that a possible robbery is in progress.
- g. If telephone contact cannot be made, officers should maintain positions and if it becomes necessary to approach the building, approach shall be

made cautiously, utilizing available cover. A supervisor or primary officer will determine when and if to enter the building.

- h. If an officer at the scene or communications personnel determine that a robbery is still in progress, officers should maintain containment and confront suspects after they leave the premises. Make use of all available cover, keeping in mind the possibility of multiple suspects. If the suspect(s) exits the building, make every effort to position the necessary number of officers between the building and the suspect(s) in order to prevent re-entry into the building.
- i. Immediately after it has been determined that a robbery has occurred and the scene is secured, the primary officer or supervisor shall direct available personnel to begin searching the area and obtain pertinent information from witnesses and, as soon as possible, broadcast it to area units and surrounding law enforcement agencies.

2. If an offense did occur, a preliminary investigation will be conducted in accordance with Departmental procedures.
  - a. Officers responding to alarm calls are responsible for classifying the alarm notification as valid, trouble, or user caused at the conclusion of the alarm response.
  - b. The officer shall notify communications personnel of the alarm classification so that the information can be entered into the CAD.
3. Supervisors may use their discretion regarding response to a location where there have been multiple alarms and it is apparent that the alarm is malfunctioning resulting in numerous false alarms in a short period of time and prompting numerous police responses which taxes shift resources.

#### H. Number of Units

1. Except in a dire emergency, only the primary dispatched officer, and their immediate assigned back-up officer, should respond to a call Code 3.
2. In the event that the primary dispatched officer, the back-up officer, or the on-duty supervisor believes that a third unit, or additional Code 3 responses are needed, approval shall be obtained from a supervisor prior to initiating the additional Code 3 response.
3. If an CISD Police Officer calls out for all available officers, they may choose to respond Code 3, following the notification requirement listed above.
4. If a law enforcement officer from an outside agency calls for all officers, the level of Code 3 responses will be determined by the on-duty Supervisor.

**CISD Police Department**

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**Original Issue Date: 04/01/2019**

**Last Revision Date: 02/02/2021**

**Next Review Date: 11/01/2025**

**Editor: TT**

**Reviewed By: SS**

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