Deputy Response to Calls

309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The State of Minnesota finds that emergency vehicle operations are an integral part of law enforcement's commitment to public safety. This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458, Subd. 1).

309.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this office to appropriately respond to emergency and nonemergency calls for service or requests for assistance, whether these are dispatched or self-initiated.

309.3 RESPONSE TO CALLS

309.3.1 RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY CALLS

Deputies responding to an emergency call shall proceed immediately as appropriate. Deputies responding to an emergency call shall sound the siren or display at least one lighted red light to the front of the vehicle. Whenever practicable, during an emergency call response the deputy should continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and sound the siren (Minn. Stat. § 169.03 et seq.; Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

Responding with a red light, emergency lighting and/or siren does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle or a law enforcement vehicle of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and does not protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others. The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not provide an exemption under Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

Deputies should only respond with a red light, emergency lights and/or siren when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is appropriate. Deputies not responding with a red light, emergency lights and/or siren shall observe all traffic laws.

309.3.2 LIGHTING EXEMPTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES

A deputy may operate a vehicle without lights as otherwise required while performing law enforcement duties when the deputy reasonably believes that operating the vehicle without lights is necessary to investigate a criminal violation or suspected criminal violation of state laws, rules or orders, or local laws, ordinances or regulations. The operation of a vehicle without lights must be consistent with the standards adopted by Minnesota Peace officer Standards and Training Board (POST) (Minn. Stat. § 169.541).

309.4 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Requests for emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of deputies, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen. Where a situation has

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stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting deputy shall promptly notify Dispatch.

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

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

309.4.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary should respond to an emergency as an emergency call response. The Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or the field supervisor should monitor all emergency responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

309.5 INITIATING EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE

If a deputy believes an emergency call response to any call is appropriate, the deputy shall immediately notify Dispatch. Emergency responses of more than one unit should include, if circumstances reasonably permit, coordination of the response of the second responding unit by Dispatch to avoid unanticipated intersecting of response routes.

An emergency call response of more than one unit should initiate notification by Dispatch to the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or field supervisor of the response. The Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or field supervisor will make a determination regarding the appropriateness of the response and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

309.6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING DEPUTIES

Deputies shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. During a response to an emergency call deputies may (Minn. Stat. § 169.03; Minn. Stat. § 169.17):

(a) Proceed cautiously past a red or stop signal or stop sign but only after slowing down and utilizing a red light or siren as may be necessary for safe operation.

(b) Exceed any speed limits, provided this does not endanger life or property.

(c) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions as authorized by law.

(d) Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.

The decision to continue an emergency call response is at the discretion of the deputy. If, in the deputy's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the deputy 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 deputy should immediately notify Dispatch.

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A deputy shall also discontinue an emergency call response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

Upon determining that an emergency call response is appropriate, a deputy shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

When emergency vehicles are on the scene of an emergency and pose any hazard, or when the vehicle operators seek exemption to park, stop or stand contrary to any law or ordinance pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 169.541, adequate warning lights shall be operated whenever practicable.

309.7 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

A dispatcher shall ensure acknowledgment and response of assisting units when a deputy requests emergency assistance or when the available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and an immediate law enforcement response is needed. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or a field supervisor prior to assigning an emergency response. The dispatcher shall:

(a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance.

(b) Immediately notify the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant.

(c) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding.

(d) Notify and coordinate outside emergency services (e.g., fire and ambulance).

(e) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response, and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated.

(f) Control all radio communications during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or field supervisor.

309.8 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant 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.

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It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in his/her judgment, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize an emergency call response, the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant or the field supervisor should consider the following:

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

309.9 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the deputy must terminate the emergency call response and respond accordingly. The deputy shall notify the Chief Deputy and/or Lieutenant, field supervisor or Dispatch of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

309.10 TRAINING

The Sheriff and/or Chief Deputy shall ensure the frequency and content of emergency vehicle operations training meets or exceeds that required by law (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458).

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