

208. VEHICLE OPERATION: GENERAL AND EMERGENCY



RICHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

Effective Date:	04/14/89
No. of Pages:	5
Serial Number:	10-108
Authority:	Chief Jay Henthorne

NOTE: This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for general vehicle use and emergency operation of departmental vehicles.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this Department that every employee operates department vehicles in the following manner:

- 1) Every employee **shall** operate the vehicle in a safe and courteous manner, in conformance with safe driving practices, and all traffic laws.
- 2) All emergency vehicle operations should be conducted in strict accordance with existing statutes. Officers engaged in emergency vehicle operations should utilize both audible (siren) and visual (emergency lights) emergency warning equipment in response to calls for assistance.
- 3) All personnel operating Departmental vehicles should exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.
- 4) No assignment will be of such importance, and no task should be expedited with such emphasis, that the principles of safety become secondary. There are no tasks in the department of such importance that they justify the reckless disregard for the safety of innocent persons including the officers.
- 5) Department personnel will be held accountable for the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.
- 6) The nature of an emergency call may not be used to justify operating a Department vehicle in violation of Department policies.

III. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose expressed in this Policy:

EMERGENCY RESPONSE: A response which may be required in a situation in which the physical safety and well being of an individual is directly jeopardized; a "life and death" situation.

URGENT RESPONSE: A response which may be required in a situation in which personal injury is likely to occur if assistance is withheld or response is unnecessarily delayed. Included are those instances when a potentially dangerous assignment necessitates additional officers at the scene.

ROUTINE RESPONSE: A response to a situation which an emergency response or an urgent response is not appropriate.

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL: Any person, other than sworn departmental personnel, approved non-sworn departmental personnel, police interns, or approved civilian ride alongs.

III. PROCEDURE

General Vehicle Operation

Employees **shall** not use any Department vehicle without proper authorization. Departmental vehicles **shall** not be used for personal business or pleasure, or for transporting individuals not on Department business except with permission of command staff.

No employee **shall** operate a Departmental vehicle unless the employee has a valid operator's license.

Officers on duty shall not leave the city except when:

- Related to necessary performance of official police duty.
- Authorized/directed by their supervisor (they will advise their supervisor or commanding officer as to the time of departure and return, and the nature of the business).
- Officers in Special Assignments (traffic officers, DWI officers, K-9 etc.) shall seek approval from their immediate supervisor to participate in activities outside the city.
- Officers shall not self-deploy to critical incidents outside the city unless mutual aid has been requested by another agency and a Richfield Supervisor has approved it.
- Officers are encouraged to assist other agencies that are operating inside Richfield.

Employees of the Department assigned to operate a departmental vehicle **shall** be held accountable for the proper use of the vehicle.

Drivers **shall** observe all traffic regulations in respect to parking. If an emergency requires occupation of a restricted or prohibited area, vehicles should be parked in such a manner so as not to unnecessarily interfere with the movement of traffic. When the emergency has ceased to exist, the area **shall** be vacated immediately.

All employees' personal vehicles and all Department vehicles, marked and unmarked, while at City Hall should park in accordance with Department policies.

Except in the case of an emergency when it is necessary to leave the vehicle unattended and unoccupied, the operator should lock the ignition by removing the key, lock all doors, and close all windows.

Operators of Department vehicles should give the right-of-way to fire division apparatus, ambulances and other lifesaving equipment on emergency runs.

The following guidelines are consistent with POST standards, which permit officers to operate in exception to M.S.S. 169.48 to 169.65:

- 1) An officer may operate a squad without lights if the officer reasonably believes that doing so is necessary to investigate a suspected criminal situation and if existing traffic, road, and weather conditions are such that it can be done safely.
- 2) Operating without headlights is not permitted in the following situations:
 - a) On interstate highways.
 - b) At speeds greater than what is reasonable and prudent under existing weather, road, and traffic conditions.
 - c) Faster than the posted speed limit.
 - d) In situations where the officer is actively participating in a pursuit.
- 3) At the beginning of each tour of duty, officers assigned to marked Department vehicles **shall** carefully inspect the vehicle and its equipment to insure it is in serviceable condition and is not damaged.
- 4) If any defect or damage is discovered, the officer(s) **shall** report it verbally to their immediate supervisor who will then forward it to the section lieutenant. Any defect, damage, or loss reported after the vehicle has been inspected and placed into service shall be prima facie evidence that it

occurred during the tour of duty of the officer reporting same and said officer **shall** be held responsible.

Vehicle equipment **shall** not be changed, interchanged, altered or removed unless authorized by a division commander.

Except when required by standard police procedure, all persons **shall** wear occupant safety restraining devices while operating or riding in the front seat of a police vehicle in accordance with Minnesota State Statute 169.686 and Richfield City Policy.

Unmarked vehicles will not be used as emergency vehicles unless they are equipped with emergency lights and siren.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION

When responding to an emergency assignment, the officer will not operate the vehicle at a speed or in a manner that interferes with the complete control of it at all times.

The officer will not proceed through intersections or traffic signals until the officer is sure that all other traffic has yielded the right-of-way. The basic rules of traffic safety will be adhered to at all times regardless of the nature of the assignment.

Civilian personnel, as defined in section III, should not accompany the officer to any call except if the civilian is a participant in the call being responded to.

1) Call Response Codes

Officers should use emergency warning equipment in accordance with applicable statutes and/or when specifically authorized to do so by a duty supervisor. Duty supervisors and/or communications personnel assigning officers to respond to calls for assistance should provide enough pertinent information so the officer can determine the seriousness of the situation and respond accordingly.

An officer should be prepared, at a later time, to articulate to a supervisor the reason for responding by a chosen code.

If the unit is unable to respond for any reason, the communications center should be immediately notified and the officer should be prepared to articulate to the commanding officer/duty supervisor the reason for the inability to respond to the call.

Response codes should be designated as follows:

- a) Code One - [Routine Response]: Officer is to respond to call as soon as reasonably possible. Reasonable delays would include enforcement action for serious traffic violations, hazardous vehicle stalls in the roadway or intervening assigned activities.
- b) Code Two - [Urgent Response]: Officer is to respond to call without delay, proceeding directly to the location while operating the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons. Officers should be aware of Minnesota Statute 169.03 on the operation of emergency vehicles.
- c) Code Three - [Emergency Response]: Officer is to respond to call immediately, proceeding directly to the location as quickly as reasonably possible, while operating the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons, utilizing emergency equipment.

Response Codes Two and Three should be used for the following types of calls:

- Officer in trouble;
- Felony in progress;
- Assaults in progress;
- Accidents, fires, or injuries where human life may be in jeopardy;
- Alarm calls;
- Medical emergencies;
- Others as the department may provide.

The commanding officer or duty supervisor may order an officer to use a different response code if deemed to be necessary under the circumstances.

2) Response Procedures

The following procedures should be followed in responding to calls for assistance.

a) Communications Center Responsibilities

- Receive and record all incoming information on the call for assistance.
- Dispatch field personnel and when appropriate immediately notify the commanding officer and/or duty supervisor of action taken.
- Perform relevant record and motor vehicle checks, if appropriate.
- Control all radio communications during the incident.
- Coordinate assistance under the direction of the duty supervisor.
- Continue to monitor the situation until it has stabilized or terminated.

b) Initiating/Primary Response Unit Responsibilities

Initiating requests for assistance. When an officer in the field is involved in a situation where help is needed, the officer must be aware that a nonspecific request will result in an uncoordinated response. This may be a greater hazard to life and property than the originating incident. Whenever possible the officer must minimize this hazard by giving the following information:

- Unit number;
- Exact location;
- Reason for the request;
- Specify the response code for the assisting units;
- Number of units required to handle situation.

The officer making the request should, to the extent practicable, insure that the call has been received by the communications center. Additionally, the officer should provide status reports, coordinate the efforts of arriving units, and confirm that adequate assistance actually arrives.

Primary response units should identify themselves and if any units are responding Code 3, they should state their location. Primary response units should proceed to the specified location in accordance with the response code. Primary response units should immediately notify the communications center upon arrival at the scene and provide a status report as soon as possible.

Upon receipt of a termination notice, responding units should discontinue emergency operation and return to their assigned area unless specifically requested to continue to the location under normal driving conditions.

c) Supervisory Responsibilities

The duty supervisor, if notified or learns of a request for emergency assistance, should monitor officer responses and if it is appropriate, reclassify the response if a different response code is called for.

The duty supervisor should monitor the response until it has stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing specific units into or out of the response if necessary.

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the duty supervisor should verify the following:

- Officers are responding according to the proper response classification.
- No more than the required or necessary units are involved in the response.
- Affected allied agencies are being notified.

By Order Of:



Chief of Police

