

#### **4.00.010    EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR SERVICE    (CALEA 41.2.1)**

The speed and equipment used in an emergency response will be determined by the officer(s) involved, within the guidelines of this procedure, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor. Officers are expected to use good judgment when responding to any calls for service. Speeds will be limited unless a life-threatening situation exists, and traffic conditions permit a higher speed.

##### **State Statute**

RCW 46.61.035 addresses emergency driving and states:

- ❖ The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or when in the pursuit of an actual or 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 herein stated.
- ❖ The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:
  1. Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions 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 limits so long as he/she does not endanger life or property;
  4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions
- ❖ The exceptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle will apply only when such vehicle is making use of visual signals meeting the requirements of RCW 46.37.190. (For practical purposes use of audible signals will also be required.)
- ❖ The foregoing provisions will not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor will such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others.

##### **Code 1 Response**

Where no emergency exists (i.e., routine calls for service), officers will proceed without the use of emergency equipment and in compliance with all traffic regulations.

##### **Code 2 Response**

For a crime or situation in progress, which is not life threatening or injury threatening, or in response to injury traffic accidents, the officer will proceed using emergency lights and siren when exercising the privileges set forth in RCW 46.61.035.

The officer will not exceed the posted speed limit by more than ten (10) miles per hour, nor proceed through intersections against traffic control devices without first activating emergency lights and siren and coming to a complete stop until all other traffic has yielded to the emergency equipment.

##### **Code 3 Response**

For a life threatening situation, or an officer's call for help, the officer will proceed as quickly and safely as possible using emergency lights and siren, while remaining within the statutory requirements for operation of an emergency vehicle.

Officers are expected to use good judgment when responding to any incident. A decision to respond "Code 3" must immediately be reported to the Communications Center by the responding officer(s). The decision to escalate any response to "Code 3" must also be based upon sound reasoning and will be subject to review.

##### **Use of Emergency Equipment**

There may be circumstances where the utilization of emergency equipment may not be desirable. An example of this would be when a patrol vehicle is in the immediate area of an in-progress call and the officers' use of the emergency equipment may alert the suspect to the approaching police. **If an officer chooses not to use the police vehicle's emergency equipment, the officer will obey all traffic regulations.**

The ***Opticom*** system will be used to assist officers while operating a police vehicle, equipped with emergency lights and siren, to safely clear intersections during code 2 and code 3 responses to emergency calls for service. The use of the *Opticom* is restricted to emergency responses in accordance with RCW 46.61.035 and all other provisions of this policy.

The use of the *Opticom* system does not release the officer of the responsibility for the safe operation of a police vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons. Police officers will first successfully complete training prior to being allowed to use the *Opticom* system.

### **Supervisor Responsibility**

Supervisors are expected to monitor Police Radio activity and when necessary, upgrade or downgrade the response to a call based on available information.

### **NORCOM Responsibility**

NORCOM personnel are expected to relay all pertinent information to responding units so responding officers and supervisors may exercise good judgment in their decision as to the level of emergency, or lack thereof, in a call for service.