
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT			
	Response to Calls and Response Codes			
	GENERAL ORDER	603.1		Related CALEA Standards:
	Effective Date	06/06/2016		41.2.1, 41.3.3, 81.2.4
Authorized by: Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE		SIGNATURE <i>Mark Sroka</i>	DATE 06/06/2016	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedure for responding to routine and emergency calls, the use of police vehicle emergency equipment during such response and related communications with the PSCC.

II. POLICY

The Department's policy regarding the response by officers to emergency and non-emergency calls for service is geared toward achieving a safe and expeditious response. At all times when operating an emergency vehicle, officers will drive with due care, exhibit exemplary driving behavior, and wear their seatbelt/shoulder harness combination. Officers will respond to calls consistent with the response protocol assigned to the incident by the PSCC or a supervisor.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Emergency Equipment

Within the context of this directive, the term “emergency equipment” refers to auxiliary lighting, such as red/blue/white flashing LEDs, strobes or other lamps and audible siren. When emergency equipment is required, both lighting and audible siren are necessary.

B. Supervisor

Within the context of this directive, the term “supervisor” refers to sworn personnel, the rank of corporal and above, employed by the Department or, for the purposes of radio protocol, a supervisor from an allied law enforcement agency with concurrent jurisdiction.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. General Provisions

1. Officers have an affirmative duty to reduce priority response to incidents at the earliest opportunity, consistent with their training, good judgment and knowledge of the circumstances that exists at the time.

2. An officer who is reducing his or her response to an incident will clearly communicate direction to other officers still enroute, such as to disregard, respond routine, only one other officer needed, etc.
3. Although officer safety is paramount, officers who have been told to disregard shall promptly return to service or reroute to another call.
4. Whenever possible, at least two (2) officers will respond to situations that involve any crime in progress, the possibility of an on scene arrest or a fleeing suspect, domestic disputes, alarms and 911 disconnects.
5. Additional officers will respond to assist with any other situation not noted, in which a prudent officer should reasonably believe it necessary, to preserve the peace and to protect each other.
6. Personnel will wear their seatbelts while responding to all calls, in accordance with law and Department policy.

B. Routine Response

1. A routine response is typically designated for most calls for service, unless information is available to PSCC personnel or officers in the field that indicates a quicker response is necessary to prevent loss of life, serious injury or to apprehend suspects.
2. Routine response applies to all calls for service, unless advised otherwise by the PSCC or a supervisor.
3. During routine response to calls, officers shall obey all laws and Department regulations.
4. The police vehicle's emergency equipment will not be activated during routine response to calls.
5. If the PSCC or an officer receives additional information indicating that a priority response is warranted, the information will be provided to responding officers and the response code will be upgraded.
6. Similarly, if an officer responding to an incident has information, based on his or her specific knowledge of the area, suspects seen in the vicinity or familiarity with the suspect's modus operandi, etc., the officer may request supervisory approval to upgrade to a priority response.

7. To avoid redundancy, supervisors will continuously monitor calls assigned to officers (via radio and/or mobile data terminal) so they can direct operations, modify response codes if necessary, and make decisions concerning tactics and deployment.
8. Officers not assigned to active calls should closely monitor the call as it is dispatched to determine if the nature of the call warrants additional officers or resources (i.e., alarms, domestic disputes, disorderly conduct, 911 disconnect, etc.).
9. Officers responding to assist will not exceed the designated response code unless:
 - a. PSCC or a supervisor upgrades the response code to priority;
 - b. A higher response code is requested by an officer on the scene; or
 - c. The officer does not respond to a check of his or her welfare and the supervisor authorizes a priority response.

C. Priority Response

1. Priority response is designated for situations that require an emergency response to the scene of an incident. The PSCC utilizes an “alert tone” to precede the dispatch of calls that warrant a priority response.
2. When responding to a priority call, officers are authorized to activate police vehicle emergency lights and siren to warn others of their approach.
3. When responding priority, officers will exercise due care and caution and not drive at speeds that hinder safe vehicle operation.
4. Situations requiring a priority response often involve the response of numerous police units and possibly Fire/Rescue. Responding officers will utilize their judgment to determine the safest and most expeditious route to the scene.
5. If a call is initially dispatched as a priority response and an officer reasonably believes, because of information known or that has become known, that such a response is not justified under the circumstances, he or she will advise the PSCC of the information. A supervisor will advise to either maintain priority response or

reduce it to routine.

6. Supervisors have the option of reducing a response code if they reasonably believe that a priority response is not justified.
7. A priority response is designated for emergencies, such as the following situations:
 - a. Signal 13 - Officer in trouble, needs immediate help;
 - b. Violent crimes that are in progress or have just occurred;
 - c. Burglary in progress;
 - d. Arson in progress;
 - e. Suicide attempt in progress;
 - f. Felony fugitive or escapee, when there is likelihood of apprehension;
 - g. Kidnapping in progress or just occurred;
 - h. Pediatric Injury just occurred;
 - i. Personal Injury Collision; and
 - j. Any other situation where an emergency response would prevent loss of life or serious injury.