

BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

RESPONSE CODE AND VEHICLE USE

Reviewed by: Asst. Chief Gregory Scott	Effective Date: December 19, 1991
Authorized by: Chief Clay Wheeler	Revision Date: June 10, 2019

PURPOSE

The purpose of this SOP is to give the responding officer the responsibility of choosing the proper code for responding to a call when operating a marked patrol vehicle. Officers are expected to be familiar with and operate the patrol vehicle in accordance with the Illinois Vehicle Code. Officers will operate police vehicles in such a way as to reflect positively on the City of Bloomington and the Bloomington Police Department.

DEFINITIONS

MARKED PATROL VEHICLE: A police vehicle painted and marked in a paint scheme authorized by the Chief of Police. At a minimum the marked patrol vehicle will be equipped with the following:

- Overhead light-bar
- Siren
- Electronic Air Horn
- Hazard Flashers
- Spot Light
- Mobile Video Recorder
- First Aid Kit
- Fire Extinguisher
- Mobile Radio

UN-MARKED POLICE VEHICLE: A police vehicle not specifically marked as a police vehicle. Un-marked vehicles will be used primarily for Criminal Investigations, Administration and covert operations. At a minimum the un-marked car will be equipped with the following:

- Covert emergency lights
- Siren
- Electronic Air Horn

CODE ONE: This code will be used if no emergency exists. The red lights and/or the siren will not be activated, and all traffic laws will be obeyed.

CODE TWO: While responding code two, only the emergency lights will be activated. Speed limits should not be broken. The driver may proceed past a red light or stop sign but only after slowing down or stopping as may be required and necessary for safe operation.

This code is to be used for calls with lesser priority than code three calls, but with more priority than code one calls. The intent of using code two is to approach a designated area silently and to inform motorists of your presence.

CODE THREE: Code three will be used for calls of highest priority (i.e., threats to human safety). This response will be with the emergency lights and the siren activated and functioning properly.

The driver may proceed past a red light or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping as may be required and necessary for safe operation of the police vehicle.

The maximum speed limit may be exceeded if it is safe to do so.

PROCEDURE

VEHICLE INSPECTION:

Officers will inspect their assigned patrol vehicle at the beginning of their shift and complete the vehicle inspection sheet. In the event an officer is needed to respond to a call before the inspection is completed, the officer will conduct the vehicle inspection and complete the inspection sheet as soon as practical. The inspection sheet will be turned in to the on-duty shift supervisor at the command tower.

Officers will inspect the following but not limited to:

1. Exterior of the vehicle for unreported damage.
2. General operability of the vehicle.
3. Fluid levels (oil, coolant, windshield cleaner)
4. Search interior of the vehicle for contraband or other property
5. Tires to have sufficient tread for safe operation and free from an odd wear pattern

Officers will ensure safety equipment, lights, air horn and mobile video recorder (MVR) are functioning properly. A patrol vehicle with a non-functioning MVR will not be driven. A patrol vehicle with non-functioning lights or siren will not be driven. Officers shall not modify, remove, de-activate, or otherwise tamper with any part of the vehicle. The vehicle will be marked as down on the vehicle board and the reason listed. The officer will also complete the necessary work order and place it in the work order tray. The officer will then be assigned another patrol vehicle by a shift supervisor. MVR equipment will be tested and operated in accordance with SOP 1.24.

A shift supervisor may authorize a patrol vehicle to be used which does not have a functioning MVR in extenuating circumstances. The shift supervisor should clearly explain the circumstances justifying this decision in an email to the Assistant Chief of Operations and the Assistant Chief of Professional Standards.

SEATBELTS, CELL PHONES and TOBACCO

Properly adjusted and fitted seatbelts will be worn by all occupants while the vehicle is in motion. Cell phones may only be used in hands-free mode and in accordance with General Order 2010-02 (revised). Officers should use care and good judgment when using the mobile data terminal/computer while the vehicle is in motion. Pursuant to Rule 18-3 the use of tobacco or smokeless tobacco is prohibited.

Plain clothes officers operating an unmarked police car will not, as a matter of general practice conduct vehicle stops as the primary car. Officers in unmarked police cars may respond code 2 or 3 to emergency calls but shall exercise extra care and caution due to their reduced visibility to other motorists.

When responding to or dispatched to a call for service, each driver of a police vehicle shall make a determination as to which code to use before responding. Furthermore, the officer will continually reevaluate the appropriateness of the response while en-route to the scene based upon emerging information and changing conditions.

Each officer shall be responsible for the manner in which they drive regardless of the code being used. The officer shall consider the following at a minimum: the driving conditions, the presence of other vehicular and pedestrian traffic, his/her own driving ability, severity of the call, and the number of other units responding and their locations.

It shall be the responsibility of all officers to inform the shift commander and dispatch of their use of code two or three and their location prior to responding to the call.

The shift commander or other on duty supervisor will determine the necessity of the number of units responding and their codes. The driver may also disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions but only with due caution. The hand controlled spotlight can be used to attract the attention of other drivers, when possible.

Each driver of a police car shall operate such vehicle in accordance with Illinois Vehicle Code, 625 ILCS 5/11-205 which reads:

Sec. 11-205. Public officers and employees to obey Act-Exceptions.

- (a) The provisions of this Chapter applicable to the drivers of vehicles upon the highways shall apply to the drivers of all vehicles owned or operated by the United States, this State or any county, city, town, district or any other political subdivision of the State, except as provided in this Section and subject to such specific exceptions as set forth in this Chapter with reference to authorized emergency vehicles.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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 required and necessary for safe operation;

3. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property;
 4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- (d) The exceptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle, other than a police vehicle, shall apply only when the vehicle is making use of either an audible signal when in motion or visual signals meeting the requirements of Section 12-215 of this Act.
- (e) The foregoing provisions do not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty of driving with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor do such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of others.
- (f) Unless specifically made applicable, the provisions of this Chapter, except those contained in Section 11-204 and Articles IV and V of this Chapter, shall not apply to persons, motor vehicles and equipment while actually engaged in work upon a highway but shall apply to such persons and vehicles when traveling to or from such work. (Source: P.A. 89-710, eff. 2-14-97; 90-257, eff. 7-30-97.)