



# SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



## 521.02 CODE 3 DRIVING 12-13-2024

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish emergency response codes and procedures for emergency driving.

### POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department to respond to emergency calls as quickly and safely as possible, while protecting the safety of the officer and the public.

### PROCEDURE

#### A. EMERGENCY RESPONSE CODES DEFINED

1. BACKUP – An urgent call that shall be answered without delay. Unlike emergency response, red lights and siren shall not be used, and all traffic laws shall be observed.
2. CODE 3 – A radio code designating an emergency that shall be answered immediately.
  - a. Pursuit – Refer to General Order 521.01 (Pursuit of Vehicles).
  - b. Emergency Response – Types of calls that may justify a Code 3 response. In accordance with Vehicle Code § 21055, while responding to an emergency, peace officers shall use their vehicle's red emergency lights and shall sound a siren as may be reasonably necessary.
    - (1) This provision does not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor does it protect the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of the provision (Vehicle Code § 21056).
3. CODE 900 – A dire emergency. A critical situation involving life or death circumstances to a peace officer (e.g., officer being fired upon or officer down).
4. COVER – A request for immediate assistance. A Code 3 response shall be assumed unless otherwise noted.

#### B. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

1. The driver of an emergency vehicle is not relieved from the following responsibilities (Vehicle Code § 21056 CVC):
  - a. Driving with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.
  - b. Recognizing the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of the privileges granted under Vehicle Code § 21055.
2. In accordance with General Order 525.03 (In-Car Camera), officers shall ensure their in-car camera records all Code 3 driving.

#### C. CODE 3 DRIVING AUTHORIZED

1. Only sworn peace officers are authorized to drive Code 3.
2. Non-sworn personnel (including Community Service Officers) who drive a police vehicle are not authorized to drive Code 3.
3. Types of calls that may justify a Code 3 response include, but are not limited to:
  - a. A violent crime in progress.
  - b. The preservation of life.
  - c. The prevention of a crime of violence.
  - d. Assistance to conduct a felony stop.
  - e. A serious public hazard.
  - f. A public safety unit request for Code 3 cover or a notification of a dire emergency.
  - g. Any circumstance explicitly authorized by the district sergeant or above.



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### D. CODE 3 RESPONSE

1. The minimum number of units required by the type of incident shall be dispatched in the initial Code 3 response. Any additional units shall be dispatched as backup.
2. Officers receiving a dispatched Code 3 assignment may elect not to respond Code 3 based on field information. Officers shall inform the dispatcher of the code change and provide rationale at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. The final decision for responding to a Code 3 request shall be made by the officer receiving the call. When more than one unit is assigned a Code 3 response in the general location, the Communications Division shall broadcast that units are responding to the Code 3 request in the area.
4. Officers dispatched as backup may upgrade and respond Code 3 as cover when reasonable based on the totality of the circumstances.
5. Upon broadcast of a Code 4 by units on the scene or by a supervisor, en route units shall immediately discontinue the Code 3 response. Officers shall not deactivate emergency equipment (i.e., red lights and sirens) until they have resumed compliance with the rules of the road.