

Bowie Police Department - General Orders



TITLE: OPERATION OF POLICE VEHICLE	NUMBER: 501
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I. PURPOSE

The Bowie Police Department has established the following General Order for the operation of police vehicles, both under emergency conditions and normal patrol.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Bowie Police Department that all Officers will operate emergency vehicles with due regard for the safety of themselves and the public. Whether the situation is routine or emergency, the operator's first concern is the safe operation of the vehicle and preserving operator and citizen safety. In emergency situations, an expedited response may be necessary; however, the need for urgency must always be balanced against the highest concern for vehicle operator and citizen safety. Officers will respond to calls consistent with the response code assigned to the incident by the Police Communications Dispatcher or a supervisor.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Code 1 Response:** (not routinely voiced by dispatcher) Response in obedience to all traffic laws
- B. **Code 3 Response:** Expedited response to a call for service using emergency lights and siren
- C. **Emergency Vehicle:** As defined in the Annotated Code of Maryland, subsection 21-106 of the Transportation Articles:

(a) *Circumstances for which privileges granted* – Subject to the conditions stated in this section, the driver of an emergency vehicle registered in any state may exercise the privileges set forth in this section while:

1. Responding to an emergency call;
2. Pursuing a violator or suspected violator of the law; or
3. Responding to, but not while returning from, a fire alarm.

(b) *Enumeration of privileges* – Under the circumstances stated in subsection (a) of this section, the driver of an emergency vehicle may:

1. Park or stand without regard to the other provisions of this title;
2. Pass a red or stop signal, a stop sign, or a yield sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safety;
3. Exceed any maximum speed limit, but only so long as the driver does not endanger life or property; and
4. Disregard any traffic control device or regulation governing direction of movement or turning in a specified direction.

(c) *Use of audible and visual signals required* –

1. The privileges set forth in this section apply only while the emergency vehicle is using audible and visual signals that meet the requirements of subsection 22-218 of this article, except that an emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display the visual signals.

(d) *Driver not relieved from duty of care* – This section does not relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. (An. Code 1957, art. 66 1/2, s.s. 11-106; 1977, ch. 14, s.s 2; 1982, ch. 815.)

IV. RESPONSE TO CALLS (CALEA 41.2.1)

A. Code 1

1. Code 1 – A non-priority response is designated for most calls for service that do not require an expedited response, unless information is available to either personnel or field Officers that a quicker response is necessary to prevent loss of life or serious injury, and/or to apprehend suspects.

2. Unless advised by police dispatcher or a supervisor otherwise, Officers will respond to all calls for service Code 1.
3. Officers responding Code 1 shall obey all laws and Department regulations.
4. The emergency equipment of a police vehicle responding Code 1 will not be activated for the purpose of responding to the call.

(This does not apply to an Officer who activates his/her vehicle's emergency equipment to make a traffic stop, or to assist a disabled motorist, or for another legitimate reason, while enroute to the Code 1 call.)

5. If Police Communications or an Officer receives additional information indicating the Code 1 situation has escalated into one requiring an expedited Code 3 response, the information will be provided to the responding Officers and the response code will be upgraded.
6. Similarly, if an Officer is responding to an incident with a Code 1 response and has information, based on his/her knowledge of crime problems in a particular area, suspects seen in the area, or familiarity with the suspect's modus operandi, etc., the Officer may request a supervisor to upgrade the response code.
7. In order to avoid redundancy and waste "air-time" supervisors will continuously monitor the calls assigned to Officers so that they can direct operations, modify response codes, if necessary, and make decisions concerning tactics and deployment.
8. Officers not assigned to the Code 1 call should closely monitor the call as it is dispatched to determine if the nature of the call would warrant additional Officers as back-up units (i.e., alarms, domestic disputes, disorderly conduct, 9-1-1 disconnect, etc.)
9. Officers responding as back-up units will not exceed the original Code 1 response, unless
 - a) A police dispatcher or a supervisor upgrades the response code to 3
 - 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/her welfare and the supervisor authorizes a Code 3 response.

B. Code 3

1. A "Code 3" response will be designated for situations that require a quick emergency response to the scene of an incident.

2. When Officers respond to a Code 3 call, they are authorized to activate their vehicles' emergency lights and siren to warn other users of the road of their approach.
3. When responding Code 3, Officers will drive with due care and caution and will not drive their vehicles at speeds that hinder the vehicles' safe operation.
4. In a situation requiring an emergency response by police (and possibly Fire/Rescue), responding Officers will use the safest and most expeditious route to the scene.
5. If a call is dispatched Code 3 and an Officer feels that such a response code is not justified under the circumstances, he/she will make police aware that he/she is responding Code 1 so that other responding Officers can be advised.
6. Likewise, supervisors have the option of reducing a response code if they feel that the Code 3 is not justified.
7. A Code 3 response will be designated for the following situations:
 - a) Signal 13 – Officer in trouble, needs immediate help
 - b) Signal 64 – Homicide
 - c) Signal 65 – Rape/sex crime in progress or just occurred
 - d) Signal 84 – Robbery in progress or just occurred
 - e) Signal 60 – Aggravated assault in progress or just occurred
 - f) Signal 86 – Breaking & Entering in progress
 - g) Signal 15F – Fight in progress (with weapons or large groups involved)
 - h) Felony fugitive/escape, when there is likelihood of apprehension
 - i) Kidnapping in progress or just occurred
 - j) Family fight in progress if battery/weapons are involved
 - k) Signal 9I or 9F – Personal injury traffic accidents (exception – Fire/Rescue personnel or other police agencies on the scene and the situation does not warrant an emergency response, at which time, the response code will be reduced) and
 - l) Any other situation where additional information is available to personnel or Officers that an emergency response would prevent loss of life or serious injury.

V. POLICE VEHICLES

- A. Vehicles used for patrol are conspicuously marked and are readily identified as law enforcement vehicles.
- B. Bowie City marked police vehicles include: (CALEA 41.3.1)
 - 1. Exterior overhead mounted red and blue emergency lights;
 - 2. The words Police and City of Bowie
 - 3. The vehicle number rear bumper
 - 4. Distinctive blue and gold striping down both sides;
 - 5. A siren mounted in the overhead emergency light bar or inside of the front grill;
 - 6. A mobile radio transceiver.
- C. Every patrol vehicle can be used to transport a prisoner. Some of the patrol vehicles are equipped with security cages. These vehicles will be used for the transportation of prisoners when needed for additional security of Officers or prisoners. Rear compartments have been modified to minimize opportunities for exit without the aid of the transporting Officer.
- D. Marked patrol cruisers shall be equipped with the following as follows: (CALEA 41.3.2)
 - 1. Exterior mounted red and/or blue emergency lights (In the case of semi-marked cars the emergency lights will be mounted on the interior of the vehicle).
 - 2. Conspicuous markings that identify the vehicle as a Bowie Police cruiser (which includes reflective material on sides and rear of the vehicle). Markings include agency name;
 - 3. Cruiser numbers;
 - 4. Siren;
 - 5. Radio;
 - 6. Public Address system (PA);
 - 7. Spotlight;
 - 8. One roll of police line tape; and,
 - 9. Gas mask, Gas mask filter;

10. Riot helmet;
11. CPR mask; and,
12. First Aid Kit

- E. Supplies can be obtained to replenish Department vehicles by submitting a Request on a memo to the Administrative Sergeant. (CALEA 41.3.2)

VI. ALTERATIONS TO POLICE VEHICLES

At no time will an officer make any alterations to Department vehicles equipment or install unauthorized equipment, decals and/or insignia. Officers who desire to have additional equipment added to their vehicle will observe the following: (CALEA 41.3.4)

- A. Obtain approval in writing from the Deputy Chief to install after-market equipment.

VII. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. Officers on routine patrol, responding Code 1 to an assigned call, or otherwise operating in a non-emergency or off duty status, will obey all traffic laws.
- B. When operating an emergency vehicle in a pursuit or on an emergency call, the primary concern of the operator of the vehicle must be the safety of other motorists, pedestrians and fellow Officers. Although Officers are given a qualified privilege by state law from observing traffic regulations while operating an emergency vehicle, they are not relieved of the responsibility of driving with due regard for the safety of all persons. Officers are not protected from the consequences of failing to exercise reasonable care under these circumstances despite the operation of emergency equipment. (Refer to Section 21-106 of the Maryland Transportation Article)
- C. Operators of police vehicles, while the vehicle is in motion, shall not use a cellular telephone or similar device except for official use, without the use of a hands free device.
- D. All employees of the Bowie Police Department shall use seat belts at all times when operating or riding in a City of Bowie motor vehicle. Officers will ensure that all passengers in the vehicle have buckled their seatbelts prior to the vehicle being moved. (CALEA 41.3.3)
- E. Prior to driving a City of Bowie vehicle, Officers will check the operation of all safety equipment (lights, seat belts, etc.) and all emergency equipment (siren, emergency lights, etc.). Officers discovering defects which may impair the safe operation of the vehicle shall report the defect immediately to their supervisor.

The vehicle should not be operated until the deficiency has been corrected.

Restrictions

1. Employees operating police vehicles will not permit unauthorized personnel to ride in the vehicle except in the performance of police duties while on duty.

Officers who reside within the City of Bowie may use their assigned vehicles while off duty for personal use within the city limits. These Officers may transport family members within the city limits while off duty.

Officers who reside outside the city limits of the City of Bowie may transport immediate family members in their issued vehicle under limited situations such as dropping off or pick up a child from day care/school prior to or directly after the Officer's shift or transporting a spouse to work. Officers are limited to the locations they may transport a family member to those that are in close proximity to the Officers normal route to and from work.

Officers shall not operate police vehicles (on or off duty), after having consumed any alcoholic beverages within the previous six (6) hours.

VIII. VEHICLE ESCORTS (CALEA 61.3.3)

- A. Ambulances and other emergency vehicles

Police Officers will escort ambulances and/or other emergency vehicles in emergency situations under the following circumstances:

- When an operator of an ambulance or fire apparatus is unfamiliar with the route to the destination;
- When the emergency equipment of an ambulance or fire apparatus is inoperative.
- Privately owned/operated ambulances operating as part of an emergency organ donor program.

- B. Privately owned non-emergency vehicles

Officers **shall not** escort privately owned non-emergency vehicles under emergency circumstances.

Due to the extreme danger that this type of escort would pose not only to the escorting Officer, but also to the occupants of the vehicle being escorted and other motorists, an Officer confronting a situation in which an occupant in a privately owned non-emergency vehicle needs emergency medical assistance, will follow the following procedures:

- C. The Officer will notify police to have an ambulance respond to the Officer's location and specify the nature of the illness so that a Basic Life Support Unit or an Advanced Life Support Unit can respond.
- D. The Officer will then provide emergency care as appropriate, which may include monitoring breathing, controlling bleeding, etc. until the arrival of rescue personnel.
- E. If an Officer needs to perform CPR, this information must be communicated to so that an appropriate level of Fire/Rescue apparatus can be dispatched.
- F. The Officer encountering this particular situation should advise that he/she has a "working code," and specify whether the patient is an infant, child, or an adult.
- G. An Officer is permitted to transfer the ill/injured occupant to the Officer's vehicle and transport the ill/injured person to the hospital themselves if the Officer is in close proximity to the hospital or medical care facility.
- H. During this emergency situation, the police vehicle's emergency equipment shall be activated.
- I. The Officer will notify the on-duty supervisor and of the beginning and end of this type of transport.
- J. The Officer will drive with due care, and follow the appropriate traffic laws and Department policies and procedures.

Emergency deliveries

Emergency deliveries of blood, critically needed medication or other items may be made only with the authorization of a supervisor.

Routine Escorts

Routine escorts, funerals, dignitaries, e.g., must be approved in advance by the on-duty supervisor or the Chief of Police. Escorts for oversize vehicles, hazardous or unusual cargo, when prior approval is not possible will be handled by the senior Officer depending on circumstances.

Notifications

In all incidents involving emergency escorts or deliveries, the Officer will notify police upon starting and completing the escort.

When conducting official police department business in neighboring jurisdictions, Officers must first request and obtain authorization from a supervisor.

IX. ASSISTING A PRIMARY UNIT

- A. Units responding to an incident as a backup unit shall not exceed the response code designated for the primary unit, unless authorized by a supervisor. If the response code is reduced by the primary unit, the backup or secondary unit shall also reduce its response to a Code 1. Backup units should also advise of their location prior to responding to ensure that the nearest units are the appropriate responders.
- B. Whenever possible, at least two Officers should respond to the following types of situations:
 - 1. The potential for, or actual assault on an Officer
 - 2. The possibility of an on scene arrest being made
 - 3. Any crime in progress
 - 4. A situation involving a fleeing suspect
 - 5. Domestic disputes
 - 6. Alarms
 - 7. 9-1-1 disconnects

X. EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Operation of police vehicles under emergency circumstances requires the consideration of two basic issues.

- 1. A procedure must be developed to provide a quick response to emergency calls where lives are endangered or a serious crime is in progress.
- 2. Consideration must be given to the hazards involved in speedy response. Responding to an emergency call for service does not justify endangering motorists, pedestrians, or fellow Officers.

Maryland law does not relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle from driving with due regard for the safety of all persons. Operators of emergency vehicles may be held liable for negligence.

The supervisor or senior Officer on duty will be held responsible for the urgency of response and thus have the authority to modify the response code on their own initiative or at the request of an Officer. This permits the flexibility necessary to meet a variety of circumstances and designates authority and responsibility over police personnel.

XI. CIVILIAN OPERATION OF DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

Department vehicles may be operated by civilian employees subject to the following conditions:

- A. Marked patrol vehicles will not be used.
- B. Civilian employees may not respond to calls or operate emergency equipment.
- C. Civilians may use the police radio to notify Communications of emergency conditions.
- D. Civilians operating Department vehicles are subject to all other provisions of Department Rules concerning the use of such vehicle

XII. ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES

Vehicles assigned to all Divisions within the Department will be assigned by the Administrative Sergeant.

XIII. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Vehicles used in everyday patrol shall have preventive maintenance performed every 5000 miles. Non-line vehicles shall have preventive maintenance performed every 5000 miles.