

8. RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR SERVICE & ESCORTS

(May 2007)

I. POLICY

The Department's goal is to respond quickly and safely to all calls for service. Employees shall drive with due care, exhibit exemplary driving behavior, and wear their seatbelts while operating Departmental vehicles. Employees shall respond to calls consistent with the provisions of this directive. Only vehicles equipped with emergency equipment shall operate priority.

II. CHECKLIST (N/A) III. DEFINITIONS

Priority Response: When the driver of an emergency vehicle operates the vehicle with its emergency equipment (lights and siren) activated to respond to an emergency or pursue a violator/suspected violator of law; when operating priority, the driver of an emergency vehicle is authorized to disregard certain provisions of the Vehicle Law (pursuant to Section 21-106 of the Maryland Transportation Article)

Routine Response: A non-emergency response in which the operation of the police vehicle is in conformance with all traffic laws

IV. FORMS (N/A) V. PROCEDURES

Responses to calls for service are classified as priority or routine. The first officer on the scene of an incident will notify the

dispatcher if a change in response classification is appropriate.

Employees who are advised to cancel their response shall do so immediately. Any employee unable to immediately notify the dispatcher of his or her presence on an incident scene shall do so as soon as practical.

1. Classifications & Dispatch Status

All life-threatening calls will receive a priority response classification and a primary dispatch status.

The following shall receive a priority response:

- Major incidents in-progress or that have just occurred
- Incidents when a suspect may be on the scene

Examples are: officer-in-trouble calls, homicides, robberies, sex offenses, suicides, and hit-and-run accidents with injuries.

Calls should not be held more than 30 minutes except in cases of operational necessity. The PSC supervisor may assign a unit from an adjacent Sector or District to handle a call for service when delays exceed 30 minutes.

Employees receiving calls for service at a District Station will prioritize the call based on the conversation with the complainant. If the employee has any doubt concerning the exigent nature of the incident, the doubt will be resolved in favor of the higher priority.

Initial Response to Priority Incidents

Primary units are those officers assigned to the call; their response shall be directed by PSC. Other employees will respond routine as backup, unless directed otherwise.

The first officer to arrive on scene shall immediately notify the dispatcher if changes in response classification or additional units are necessary. The dispatcher will determine which units will respond and their response classification.

When an on-scene officer advises that additional officers are not required, those officers shall not respond to the scene and will go in service.

Incidents Assigned Priority Response

Primary units assigned to the following incidents are authorized priority response, subject to the noted restrictions:

- ❑ **Signal 7A (Armed subject):** When a subject is threatening people with a weapon
- ❑ **Signal 9I (Traffic accident with injury):** To render emergency care
- ❑ **Signal 9F (Fatal accident):** To protect the scene and assist other victims
- ❑ **Signal 11I/11F (Hit and run traffic accidents with injury or fatality)**
- ❑ **Signal 13 (Officer in trouble):** Two primary units, and other nearby units within the sector, will be assigned
- ❑ **Signal 15 (Fights):** When weapons are involved

- ❑ **Signal 22 (Unknown trouble):** When information indicates a life-threatening incident may be occurring
- ❑ **Signal 64 (Homicide) □ Signal 65 (Sex Offenses):** When the incident is in progress or has recently occurred
- ❑ **Signal 66 (Suicide or Attempt):** When lifesaving techniques may be applied
- ❑ **Signal 71 (Domestic violence):** When weapons are involved or the offender is attempting entry by breaking and entering
- ❑ **Signal 78 (Burglar alarms):** When information indicates that a suspect is present
- ❑ **Signal 78 (Robbery/Hold-up alarms) □ Signal 84 (Robbery):** When the incident is in progress, has recently occurred, or when the suspects may be in the immediate vicinity
- ❑ **Signal 85 (Kidnapping):** When the incident is in progress or when directed by investigators
- ❑ **Signal 86 (Breaking and Entering):** When the incident is in progress, has recently occurred, or when the suspects may be in the immediate vicinity
- ❑ **Signal 90 (An individual possibly suffering from cocaine/drug-induced psychosis or excited delirium):** A supervisor will respond to the scene of a Signal 90 to determine whether the WRAP™ will be deployed

2. Priority Response

(Transportation Article, Sections 21-106 & 21-405)

Although the Department does not place a speed restriction on employees when they are responding priority, it is vital that they arrive safely at the scene of an incident in order to render assistance. As a result,

VOLUME II, CHAPTER 8. RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR SERVICE & ESCORTS

employees shall exercise due care and operate their vehicles in a reasonable manner.

Employees responding priority to an incident shall activate their emergency lights and siren, and ensure that the mobile video recording equipment is activated.

Employees operating priority shall consider the following when deciding whether or not certain police privileges allowed during a priority response are applicable:

- ❑ The urgency of the incident
- ❑ Public and employee safety
- ❑ Environmental factors

Officers shall not deviate from provisions of the vehicle law beyond the extent necessary to respond safely to an incident, and are responsible for their actions.

Whenever any employee operates priority, he or she shall inform the dispatcher as soon as possible. Priority response may be initiated prior to notification if justified by the circumstances.

Employees responding priority shall not proceed through any intersection or against the direction of traffic signals or traffic control devices without first slowing or stopping. Employees shall ensure that they do not drive with reckless disregard for the safety of other road users. Employees shall ensure that they are in a clear position to see that no other vehicles or pedestrians will be encountered. Employees shall not enter any controlled intersection at a high rate of speed.

Under no circumstances shall an employee operate his or her vehicle at a speed so great as to render the vehicle uncontrollable, thereby endangering his or her life or the lives of others.

3. Escorts

SOD is responsible for escorting funeral processions; dignitaries, VIPs, public officials; and oversized or HAZMAT carriers. The Commander of SOD may approve other escorts.

The Motors Unit is available to provide guidance to commercial escort companies.

Officers shall notify the dispatcher prior to commencing any escort.

Routine Response Escorts

Requests for escorts shall be referred to SOD.

A command officer of the rank of Lieutenant or above may authorize an escort by district officers if circumstances preclude referral, provided that the escort does not interfere with Departmental operations.

Priority Response Escorts

Priority escorts of non-emergency vehicles are prohibited.

Shift commanders may authorize a priority escort of emergency vehicles described in the Maryland Vehicle Law Section 11-118 or other vehicles actively transporting lifesaving materials in emergencies.

VI. GOVERNING LEGISLATION & REFERENCE

This General Order addresses:

VOLUME II, CHAPTER 8. RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR SERVICE & ESCORTS

- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Standards 41.2.1, 41.2.2, 61.3.3, 81.2.5, 81.2.7

Governing Legislation:

- Transportation Article, Sections 11-118,
- Public Safety Communications SOP □ Operations Division, Motor Unit SOP

19-103, 21-106 & 21-405 □ Courts & Judicial Proceedings Article 5639

Reference:

- Court of Special Appeals ruling in the case of *Mayor and City Council of Baltimore v. Michael Lee Hart* (September 2005)

Patrol Services Bureau, Special

VOLUME II, CHAPTER 8. RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR SERVICE & ESCORTS