



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 2-01**

**Policy Title:** Routine & Emergency Call Response

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines, in conformance with the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, as to when emergency lights and siren should be used and the method of response to an incident.

**II. Policy**

All department personnel who operate police vehicles shall comply with all laws and safe driving procedures.

**III. Routine Driving**

- A. All Springfield Township police vehicles shall be driven safely and properly in full compliance with all traffic laws. Each police driver must set an example of good driving behavior.
- B. Circumstances permitting, the driver of a department vehicle should check the safety features of the vehicle before commencing operation. This check shall include, but is not limited to, all lights, siren, horn, brakes, tires, and steering. All windows shall be clear of obstruction.
- C. When an officer believes that a vehicle is unsafe, the officer shall immediately report it to a supervisor and submit an entry on the daily report sheet (DRS).
- D. Department personnel operating or occupying a department vehicle, or one used for department business, shall wear seat belts in accordance with the provisions of Title 75, Section 4581. Persons in custody, when transported in department vehicles, shall be restrained in accordance with department policies.

- E. When transporting small children, child safety seats and booster seats shall be used in accordance with Title 75, Section 4581.
- F. Parked police vehicles shall be secured by removing the keys, rolling up all windows, and locking the doors. A police vehicle shall not be left unattended and running except for the following:
  - 1. Accident scenes.
  - 2. When the vehicle is being used for traffic direction or warning and the officer is in close proximity.
  - 3. Traffic stops and / or pedestrian stops.
  - 4. Adverse conditions.
- G. In the event of an accident involving a Springfield Township Police Department vehicle, the driver shall immediately notify the Sergeant who will direct the investigation.
- H. Unless an emergency exists, all police department vehicles when parked at the police station, shall be backed in, making use of the police parking area.

#### **IV. Emergency Driving**

- A. Under certain circumstances, the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code authorizes police personnel to disobey traffic regulations. However, this does not relieve the operator from the duty to drive responsibly and with reasonable care.
- B. Title 75, Section 3105(b) (Drivers of Emergency Vehicles, Exercise of Special Privileges) states that the driver of an emergency vehicle may:
  - 1. Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this part.
  - 2. Proceed past a red signal indication or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
  - 3. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as the driver does not endanger life or property.
  - 4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement, overtaking vehicles or turning in specified directions.
- C. Title 75, Section 3105(c) (Drivers of Emergency Vehicles – Audible and Visual Signals Required) states: “The privileges granted in this section to an emergency vehicle shall apply only when the vehicle is making use of an audible signal and visual signals meeting the requirements and standards set forth in regulations adopted by the department.”

- D. Title 75, Section 3105(e) (Drivers of Emergency Vehicles – Exercise of Care) states, “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.”
- E. Officers operating a police vehicle in the emergency response mode shall consider the following:
  - 1. Seriousness of the call.
  - 2. Distance they are from the scene.
  - 3. Number of police units responding and their proximity to the call.
  - 4. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
  - 5. Weather and roadway conditions.
- F. Upon approaching a controlled intersection or other location where there is greater possibility of collision, the driver who is responding under emergency conditions shall reduce the speed of the vehicle and control it to avoid collision, stopping completely if necessary, before entering the intersection.
- G. Officers shall not drive on the wrong side of a divided or controlled access highway.
- H. Operators of police vehicles must bear in mind that traffic regulations requiring other vehicles to yield the right-of-way to any emergency vehicle do not relieve the emergency vehicle operator from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highways.
- I. At the scene of an incident, a police vehicle shall be parked in such a manner so as not to create an obstacle or hazard to other traffic. The emergency lights shall be used to warn other drivers approaching the location.
- J. The siren and visual signal may be discontinued for certain in-progress calls when within audible or visual proximity of the scene. The driver shall obey all traffic laws when the siren and visual signal have been discontinued.
- K. Police vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and siren shall not be used for an emergency response.
- L. Once information is received indicating that the emergency is under control, all other responding units shall reduce speed and discontinue emergency response mode.

**V. Use of Emergency Warning Devices While in Emergency Response Mode**

- A. During an emergency response, emergency lights and / or siren and other emergency warning devices shall be activated, as required by law.
- B. When emergency warning devices are deactivated, the operator of the emergency vehicle shall comply with all traffic laws.

**VI. Method of Response**

- A. Officers should respond in routine response mode, obeying all traffic laws but in a timely manner, to the following type of calls:
  - 1. Any reported crime, not in progress, of a non-emergency nature.
  - 2. Vehicle accident without injuries that is not creating a hazard.
  - 3. Disabled vehicle.
  - 4. Suspicious person / vehicle / activity with no aggravating circumstances.
  - 5. Reckless driving.
  - 6. Any call for service of a non-urgent nature.
- B. Officers shall respond in emergency mode, utilizing emergency lights and siren, when tactically prudent, to the following type of calls, unless serious exigent circumstances exist:
  - 1. Personal crimes in progress.
  - 2. Serious property crimes in progress.
  - 3. Officer needs assistance.
  - 4. Domestic disputes in progress.
  - 5. Disturbances / fights in progress.
  - 6. Vehicle accidents with injury or entrapment.
  - 7. Vehicle accidents creating a traffic hazard.
  - 8. Medical emergencies.
  - 9. Suicide attempts / psychiatric emergencies.
  - 10. Hold-Up / panic / duress / burglar alarms.

11. Vehicle or foot pursuit.

12. Working fires.

- C. The response mode lists are meant to be guidelines. Due to the diverse nature of police work, no list can exclusively cover all situations. Officers must use their discretion and professional judgment each time they respond to a call. Above all, officers shall always first consider the safety of all people in their response mode decision.

