

Officer Response to Calls

307.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Plymouth Police Department receives thousands of requests for police service each year. The vast majority of these requests are handled via the Hennepin County Sheriff's Dispatch Center. Normally, when a call is dispatched, an officer should respond promptly. However, there will be times when an officer has several calls queued. In those instances, the response must be prioritized by the officer depending on the seriousness of the call.

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458, Subd. 1).

307.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to appropriately respond to emergency and nonemergency calls for service or requests for assistance, whether these are dispatched or self-initiated.

This Department will prioritize police response according to the following rank order:

- (a) Priority 1: Life threatening (medical, personal injury accident, fire, violent crime in progress, etc)
- (b) Priority 2: Crime in progress (felony, misdemeanor, alarm, prowler, etc.)
- (c) Priority 3: Investigation / report (burglary, theft, ordinance, traffic related, etc.)
- (d) Priority 4: General assistance (recovered property, nuisance complaints, assist the public, etc.)

The proper use of officer discretion in determining the priority and nature of a call is necessary.

307.3 RESPONSE GUIDELINES

Officers assigned to patrol districts have the primary responsibility for calls in their district. Officers in an adjoining district, or close to the scene of the call, may assume the primary responsibility or assist if the need should arise.

On all alarm calls, if a cursory inspection by the officer(s) indicates no intrusion or fire problem, one officer should remain at the scene. This is necessary only when the dispatcher notifies the officer that an employee or representative of the alarm user is responding. The overriding factor that the officer must consider when no crime or emergency problem is evident is the category of calls being dispatched during the waiting period. (A waiting period of approximately thirty minutes is reasonable).

307.3.1 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Pursuant to Minnesota law there are only two classifications of response to calls for service: emergency and non-emergency.

- (a) **Routine or non-emergency calls:** A routine or non-emergency response is appropriate to those calls for service where there is no indication that a crime is in

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progress nor any impending threat exists to the life or safety of a person. A non-emergency response mandates adherence to all traffic laws applicable to the general public.

- (b) **Emergency calls:** An emergency call for service requires the indication that the commission of a crime is in progress, the life or safety of a person is in jeopardy, or an indication that an immediate threat or impending threat exists to the life or safety of a person. Officers responding to an emergency call shall proceed immediately as appropriate. Officers responding to an emergency call shall sound the siren or display at least one lighted red light to the front of the vehicle. Whenever practicable, during an emergency call response the officer should continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and sound the siren (Minn. Stat. § 169.03 et seq.; Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

Responding with a red light, emergency lighting and/or siren does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle or a law enforcement vehicle of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and does not protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others. The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and/or siren does not provide an exemption under Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. § 169.17).

307.3.2 LIGHTING EXEMPTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES

An officer may operate a vehicle without lights as otherwise required while performing law enforcement duties when the officer reasonably believes that operating the vehicle without lights is necessary to investigate a criminal violation or suspected criminal violation of state laws, rules or orders, or local laws, ordinances or regulations. The operation of a vehicle without lights must be consistent with the standards adopted by Minnesota Peace officer Standards and Training Board (POST) (Minn. Stat. § 169.541).

An officer may not operate without lights:

- (a) On inter-state highways.
- (b) At speeds greater than what is reasonable under existing weather, road, and traffic condition.
- (c) Faster than the posted speed limit.
- (d) In situations where the peace officer is an active participant in the pursuit of a motor vehicle fleeing from a peace officer.

307.3.3 SEAT BELTS AND RESTRAINING DEVICES

Seat belts and/or restraining devices will be used by all department personnel and passengers when operating or riding in a City owned vehicle. The only exceptions to this will be:

- (a) When the officer is about to engage in a foot pursuit.
- (b) When the officer is about to execute a high risk stop (felony stop).

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- (c) When the officer is about to arrive on the scene of a life threatening situation; or, mobility is essential for the protection of life.
- (d) When involved in a special operation and this requirement is waived by a supervisor.

307.4 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Officers or other personnel requesting emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen. Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify Hennepin County Dispatch and other responding officers.

If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

307.4.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary should respond to an emergency as an emergency call response. All calls except the following may be answered by one officer:

- (a) Calls that present a likelihood of an assault on an officer.
- (b) Calls that will likely result in the arrest for a felony or a violent misdemeanor.
- (c) Calls where resistance to an arrest may be encountered.
- (d) Calls in which a Conducted Energy Device is activated.
- (e) Calls for a crime in progress.
- (f) Calls involving a fleeing suspect.
- (g) Calls where additional officers are required to control or protect a scene.
- (h) Calls fo medical assistance where more than one rescuer is needed.
- (i) Calls of personal injury accidents.

In these cases listed above, two or more officers will be assigned to the call depending on the circumstances. The shift supervisor should, when possible, monitor responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

307.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICERS

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. During a response to an emergency call officers may (Minn. Stat. § 169.03; Minn. Stat. § 169.17):

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- (a) Proceed cautiously past a red or stop signal or stop sign but only after slowing down and utilizing a red light or siren as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (b) Exceed any speed limits but shall drive with due regard for the safety of persons using the street.
- (c) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions as authorized by law.
- (d) Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.

Emergency responses of more than one unit should include, if circumstances reasonably permit, coordination of the responses to avoid unanticipated intersecting of response routes.

The decision to continue an emergency call response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit.. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency call response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

When emergency vehicles are on the scene of an emergency and pose any hazard, or when the vehicle operators seek exemption to park, stop or stand contrary to any law or ordinance pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 169.541, adequate warning lights shall be operated whenever practicable.

307.6 SUPERVISOR RESPONSE TO CALLS

The shift supervisor will respond to the scene of the following incidents:

- (a) All major crimes.
- (b) Incidents involving life threatening personal injury, or death, as the result of a criminal act or an accident.
- (c) All incidents where a citizen is injured by a police officer.
- (d) All incidents where an officer is injured in the line of duty.
- (e) All incidents where an officer discharges a firearm in the line of duty, other than training or for the purpose of the destruction of an animal.
- (f) All incidents involving injury to a prisoner.
- (g) All incidents resulting in damage to a City owned vehicle.
- (h) All Pursuits.
- (i) When a police officer requests it.
- (j) All other incidents that by their complexity require the resources and decision making authority of a supervisor.

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307.7 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency call response and respond accordingly. The officer shall notify the shift supervisor or Hennepin County Dispatch of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

307.8 TRAINING

The Department shall ensure the frequency and content of emergency vehicle operation training meets or exceeds that required by law (Minn. Stat. § 626.8458).