


HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL		
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Accreditation Index: 2.1.1		Rescinds: Directive 2.1.1 of November 2019
Chapter: Two – Law Enforcement Function		Section: One – Patrol Operations
Chief of Police: <i>John F. Viola</i>		

**SUBJECT: ROUTINE AND EMERGENCY OPERATION OF POLICE
VEHICLES**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to provide officers with guidelines, in conformance with the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, as to when emergency equipment, lights and siren, should be used as well as the method of response to an incident. All personnel operating department vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.

II. POLICY

All department personnel who operate police vehicles shall comply with all applicable laws and safe driving procedures outlined herein.
(PLEAC 2.1.1 a, b)

III. PROCEDURES

A. ROUTINE DRIVING

1. All Haverford Township police vehicles shall be driven safely and properly in full compliance with all traffic laws. Police vehicles are highly visible symbols of authority on the streets and the actions of police vehicle drivers are observed by many. Each police vehicle driver must set an example of good driving behavior.

2. Circumstances permitting, the driver must check the safety features of his/her vehicle before commencing operation. The check shall include, but not be limited to, all lights, siren, horn, brakes and steering. All windows shall be cleared of materials which may obstruct the driver's view. During periods of inclement weather when police vehicles cannot be washed regularly, the driver must assure that headlight and tail-light lenses are kept clean, as circumstances permit.
3. Officers shall immediately report any police vehicle which he/she believes to be unsafe to a supervisor. A repair order shall be completed and the vehicle placed out of service if so needed.
4. No driver shall modify, remove, de-activate, or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts or any part of the vehicle which affects its operation. Seat belts shall be worn by all police personnel and front seat passengers during vehicle operation. Prisoners shall be strapped in with seat belts whenever possible.
5. When transporting small children, child safety seats shall be used in accordance with Title 75 section 4581 - Restraint Systems.
6. The driver must recognize the variable factors of weather, road surface conditions, road contour, and traffic congestion, all of which directly affect the safe operation of any motor vehicle, and govern the operation of the vehicle accordingly.
7. Whenever an operator parks a police vehicle, the vehicle shall be secured by removing the keys from the ignition, rolling up the windows and locking the doors. A police vehicle shall not be left unattended with its engine in operation except for the following:
 - a) Vehicle crash scenes
 - b) The police vehicle is being used for traffic direction with the officer in close proximity.
 - c) Traffic stops
 - d) Adverse conditions

B. EMERGENCY DRIVING

1. Under certain emergencies, the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code authorizes the disregarding of traffic regulations by police personnel. However, both the driver and the Department are not released from civil liability for failure to use reasonable care. Recognizing that protection of human life is paramount, the responding officer must remember that his/her objective is to get to the location of the occurrence as soon as possible, safely, without danger to the officer or to others. Title 75 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 Drivers of emergency vehicles states the following:
 - a) Title 75 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 Drivers of emergency vehicles (a) General rule. – The driver of an emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm or other emergency call, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions stated in this section.
 - b) Title 75 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 (b) Exercise of special privileges - 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, except as provided in subsection (d).
 - (3) Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as the driver does not endanger life or property, except as provided in subsection (d). (*§(d) omitted from directive see Title 75*)
 - (4) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement, overtaking vehicles or turning in specified directions.
 - c) Title 75 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 (c) Audible and visual signals required. - 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 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 (e) Exercise 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.

- e) Title 75 Pa C.S.A. section 3105 (g) Emergency vehicle preemption devices. - The department may promulgate regulations for the operation and use of preemptive traffic devices by emergency vehicles.
2. Officers operating a police vehicle in the emergency response mode shall consider the following:
 - a) Seriousness of the call
 - b) Distance they are from the scene
 - c) Number of closer police units responding
 - d) Vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - e) Weather and roadway conditions
 3. 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 his/her vehicle and control it to avoid collision with another vehicle or pedestrian, stopping completely, if necessary, before entering and traversing the intersection. When faced with a red traffic signal or stop sign, the officer shall stop the vehicle and assure by careful observation that the way is clear before proceeding through the intersection.
 4. Upon approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic signal with a preemption device, the driver shall activate the vehicle's preemptor. A driver shall never assume the preemption device will activate prior to the officer reaching the intersection; therefore, the officer must still use caution.
 5. Officers shall not drive on the wrong side of a divided or controlled access highway.
 6. Drivers 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 driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.
 7. Officers shall look and listen for other emergency lights and sirens, so as not to encroach into the path of another responding emergency vehicle.

8. At the scene of a crime, a motor vehicle crash, or other police incident, a police vehicle shall be parked in such a manner so as not to create a hazard to other traffic. The emergency lights shall always be used to warn other drivers approaching the location.
9. The nature of certain crimes in progress may call for the use of the siren to be discontinued upon close approach to the location of the occurrence. Visual signals may be turned off within visual proximity of the scene. No driver shall violate any laws of the Commonwealth when the emergency lights and siren have been deactivated.
10. Police vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and sirens shall not make an emergency response.
11. Once information is received that the emergency situation has been determined to be under control, all other responding units shall reduce speed and discontinue emergency response mode.

C. USE OF EMERGENCY WARNING DEVICES

1. During an emergency response, emergency lights and/or siren and other emergency signal devices shall be activated as required by law.
2. When expediency is required, officers may activate emergency warning devices to allow safe transit through heavily congested roadways.
3. When emergency signal devices are deactivated, the driver of the emergency vehicle shall comply with posted speed limits, obey all traffic control devices and signals, and proceed in a manner consistent with normal traffic flow.

D. METHODS OF RESPONSE

1. **Routine response mode:** Officers should respond in routine response mode, in a timely manner obeying all traffic laws, to the following types of calls:
 - a) Any reported crime, not in progress, of a non-emergency nature
 - b) Vehicle crashes without injuries that are not creating a hazard
 - c) Disabled vehicles

- d) Suspicious person/vehicle/occurrence with no aggravating circumstances
- e) Reports of reckless driving
- f) Any call for service of a non-urgent nature

2. **Emergency response mode:**

- a) Crimes against person in progress
- b) Serious property crimes in progress
- c) Officer needs assistance
- d) Domestic disputes in progress
- e) Disturbances/fights in progress
- f) Vehicle crashes with injuries or entrapment
- g) Vehicle crashes creating a traffic hazard
- h) Medical emergencies
- i) Suicide attempts/psychiatric emergencies
- j) Hold-up/panic/duress alarms
- k) Vehicle or foot pursuits
- l) Working fires
- m) Attempting to make a vehicle stop

Note: The above response mode lists are meant to be guidelines for responding officers. Due to the diverse nature of police work, no list can cover all situations. Officers must use their discretion each time they respond to a call. Above all, officers shall always give primary consideration to the safety of all people in their respond mode decision.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE