

14-01 USE OF EMERGENCY LIGHTS AND SIREN IN UNMARKED TASK FORCE VEHICLES



TASKFORCE FOR REGIONAL AUTO THEFT

Unit Order: 14-01

Subject: USE OF EMERGENCY LIGHTS AND SIREN IN UNMARKED TASK FORCE VEHICLES

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OVERVIEW

The Taskforce for Regional Autotheft Prevention presents a unique set of circumstances with respect to the Code-3 emergency situations. All assigned TRAP personnel are in plain, unmarked vehicles which would not be commonly recognized as police vehicles. The use of emergency equipment in the plain, unmarked vehicles will create yet another level of caution necessary to be employed by the utilizing officer or detective. However, there are distinct situations where the use of emergency equipment by TRAP personnel will be not only beneficial, but will warn the public and others of police activity when they might otherwise wander into a police tactical situation. Moreover, the use of emergency equipment by TRAP personnel will also serve as a further notification to suspects that they are being contacted by legitimate law enforcement officers. As such, it will serve as a tool to reduce the chances of armed conflict and also to mitigate potential civil liability.

PURPOSE

This unit order establishes a uniform guideline for all personnel assigned to TRAP regarding the use of emergency equipment in unmarked task force vehicles.

GUIDELINES

General Guidelines - It is the policy of TRAP to perform all enforcement activities in accordance with applicable laws. When utilizing red lights and sounding a siren, as may be reasonably necessary, the due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway shall be paramount. The safety of all persons and the exemption of the task force and its employees from civil and criminal liability are considerations that demand responsible and controlled responses to emergencies at all times. The necessity for self-discipline and

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accountability for decisions is paramount to the safety of the community and all TRAP personnel.

- ***Routine enforcement situations*** – While conducting routine enforcement, TRAP personnel may use their emergency equipment as reasonably necessary to affect traffic stops, pedestrian contacts and other general law enforcement situation not amounting to an impending emergency. When using emergency equipment, all TRAP personnel shall do so in a responsible manner that is consistent with public and officer safety.
- ***Emergency response situations*** – Drivers of vehicles equipped with an authorized red light and siren may initiate Code 3 responses. All persons authorizing, supervising or participating in Code 3 responses must be able to justify their decisions and actions within the guidelines of this section.

Detectives initiating Code 3 responses in non-pursuit emergencies must notify SCC, inform them you are driving an unmarked vehicle, and receive an acknowledgment from SCC of the notification before beginning the response.

In non-pursuit Code 3 operations, vehicle speed should not exceed that which is reasonable and prudent and within the restrictions imposed by section 22350 California Vehicle Code, "Basic Speed Law." Red light and siren must be used to warn other motorists and assist in gaining the right-of-way.

- ***Supervisory responsibilities following emergency response:***

Not every emergent response requires a notification to a TRAP supervisor. However, if notification is necessary the concerned detective's supervisor should be notified as soon as practical. If necessary, the supervisor will notify their area lieutenant and the Project Director as soon as practical.

- ***Vehicle Pursuits:***

Pursuits involving non-pursuit rated police vehicles, and vehicles not equipped with overhead emergency lights, or unmarked police vehicles expose personnel to an increased possibility of injury and are generally prohibited.

Pursuits Involving non-pursuit rated Police Vehicles or Vehicles not equipped with overhead emergency lights, or unmarked police vehicles must adhere with the policy of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Section 5-09/210.04 MMP.

5-09/210.04 - Pursuits Involving Police Motorcycles, Non-Pursuit Rated Police Vehicles or Vehicles Not Equipped with Overhead Emergency Lights, or Unmarked Police Vehicles

Pursuits involving police motorcycles, non-pursuit rated police vehicles, and vehicles not equipped with overhead emergency lights, or unmarked police vehicles expose personnel to an increased possibility of injury and are generally prohibited.

Personnel driving these vehicles shall carefully weigh all options before initiating or entering into a pursuit. Supervisors shall exercise prudent judgment in allowing their involvement to continue, and be prepared to explain why the risks were outweighed by the benefits of such vehicles' involvement.

Manufacturers of police vehicles designate some models as "pursuit rated." Such a rating indicates the

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manufacturer certifies the vehicle to be generally suitable for high-speed police pursuits. Authorized emergency vehicles that are not "pursuit rated," including various SUV's, vans, pick-up trucks and service vehicles shall not be used during a pursuit except under the most compelling circumstances and shall not be driven beyond the vehicle's normal performance capabilities.

Personnel initiating a pursuit using a vehicle that is not pursuit-rated shall immediately advise the Watch Commander so that a pursuit-rated vehicle can be dispatched to replace them. Deputy personnel riding motorcycles or driving vehicles that are not pursuit rated or equipped with overhead emergency lights, or driving unmarked vehicles with lights and siren shall terminate their involvement in a pursuit when a marked black and white unit equipped with overhead emergency lights joins the pursuit unless otherwise directed by a supervisor. They may participate as a secondary unit only after receiving specific approval from a supervisor.

- Vehicles without red lights and siren shall not initiate or join in a pursuit under any circumstances.

MARTIN L. RODRIGUEZ, CAPTAIN

PROJECT DIRECTOR
