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I. Purpose

This Directive establishes policy and procedural guidelines pertaining to the use of emergency equipment and the emergency operation of police vehicles.

II. Policy

It is the policy of this Division to ensure that officers observe procedures which will permit the most expeditious vehicular response to emergency situations consistent with the safety and welfare of the public and officers.

III. Definition - Police Vehicle: Any vehicle owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission **and** registered with the state of Maryland as an emergency vehicle **and** equipped with a siren **and** revolving or flashing red and/or blue emergency lights.

IV. Maryland Law – *From The Annotated Code of Maryland, Transportation Article 21-106 Emergency Vehicles:*

A. “Subject to the conditions stated in this section, the driver of an emergency vehicle registered in any state may exercise the privileges set forth in this section while:

- 1. Responding to an emergency call;
- 2. Pursuing a violator or suspected violator of the law; or
- 3. Responding to, but not while returning from, a fire alarm.”

B. “Under the circumstances stated in subsection (a) of this section, the driver of an emergency vehicle may:

- 1. Park or stand without regard to the other provisions of this title;
- 2. Pass a red or stop signal, a stop sign, or a yield sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safety;
- 3. Exceed any maximum speed limit, but only so long as the driver does not endanger life or property; and
- 4. Disregard any traffic control device or regulation governing direction of movement or turning in a specified direction.”

C. “Use of audible and visual signals required.”

- 1. “The privileges set forth in this section apply only while the emergency vehicle is using audible and visual signals ... except that an emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display the visual signals.”
- 2. “The driver of an emergency vehicle may not use flashing lights or a bell, siren or exhaust whistle while returning from any emergency call ...”

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- D. " 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."
- V. Emergency Vehicle Operation Procedures
- A. Pursuant to Maryland law, officers will only operate a police vehicle as an emergency vehicle while responding to an emergency call or pursuing a violator or suspected violator of the law.
- B. An emergency/priority response is only warranted for:
1. an in progress call/incident where a life is in danger,
  2. a felony in progress or just occurred (within 5 minutes),
  3. an officer in trouble/needs immediate assistance,
  4. a domestic assault in progress, or
  5. a personal injury accident, **except** when fire/rescue or police personnel are already on the scene and determine that the situation does not require an emergency response.
- C. Pursuit - All provisions of the Division Directive "Pursuit" will be strictly adhered to in all situations.
- D. Response to an Emergency
1. When an officer determines that a situation is an emergency he/she will, as soon as possible, notify Communications of the response and present location. Communications personnel will then establish a response code for additional units.
  2. All responses to emergency situations will be made utilizing the prescribed emergency equipment.
- E. Response to Crimes in Progress - Officers dispatched to crimes in progress and assigned a "priority" response by the dispatcher will respond to the area of the call utilizing the prescribed emergency equipment. This equipment may be turned off prior to getting to the scene when necessary so as not to warn perpetrators of the arrival of the police, however, the officer must then obey all traffic laws.
- F. Stopping Violators
1. When stopping traffic violators with a moving police vehicle, officers will activate that emergency equipment necessary to affect the stop in as timely and safe a manner as possible.
  2. Officers making stops from a stationary position are not required to use any of their vehicle's emergency equipment.

## G. General Rules

1. When approaching an intersection, officers operating a police vehicle under emergency conditions will reduce their vehicle's speed as necessary for safety and will proceed through the intersection with caution.
2. Officers operating emergency vehicles will do so in a reasonable and prudent manner consistent with existing conditions.
3. When stopping behind a violator or other motorist on or adjacent to a roadway, officers will position their vehicle so as to provide the best available safety zone for the officer.

## H. Providing Motorist Assistance

1. When assisting motorists, officers will activate their vehicle's emergency lights.
2. Division vehicles equipped with brush guards may NOT be utilized to move any vehicles. The brush guards are not designed or installed to function as push bumpers. They are exclusively intended to provide a protective mounting for emergency equipment and use as push bumpers could result in damage to both vehicles.

- I. Parking On/Off Roadways - Emergency lights will be utilized whenever a police vehicle is stopped or parked on or adjacent to a roadway in such a manner as to cause a hazard or whenever necessary as a warning.

**Approved Park Police Document  
Signed Original on File**

**End of Directive**