

WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

III-23 USE OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005

CALEA Standards: 41.2.1

CFA Standards: 22.04

I. POLICY: The proper use of emergency equipment is essential to the safety of the officer and other motorists when unusual conditions exist. Emergency equipment is used to call attention to an unusual act or condition which presents a hazard to the safe operation and flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Nothing in this policy will prevent the use or demonstration of emergency equipment for training purposes, public education, or public presentations when authorized by the Chief of Police or a designee.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. Pursuit - An active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend the occupant(s) of a motor vehicle whose driver is attempting to avoid apprehension by using high speed driving or other evasive maneuvers.

III. EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT:

A. Emergency equipment for the purpose of this procedure will include, but not be limited to:

1. Emergency blue lights,
2. Siren,
3. Horn,
4. Hazard warning lights,
5. Spotlight,
6. Public Address System (P.A.), and
7. Other installed equipment, such as take down lights.

IV. USE OF LIGHTS & SIREN:

A. Police Officers may operate emergency equipment when responding to an existing emergency or when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

1. During emergency operations, continuous use of emergency lights to warn vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the emergency route is required.
2. The siren may be used to signal violators to drive to the right of the road when other means of attracting the violator's attention have failed.
 - a. Officers should use the siren based on existing traffic, roadway conditions, and the urgency of their arrival.
 - b. The siren is required in areas of congested traffic and at intersections to warn other traffic to clear the roadway.
 - c. The siren should not be used without the blue lights. Once the violator is stopped and both the officer and violator are in a safe position, the siren will be deactivated while the blue lights remain in service until termination of the traffic stop.
3. Emergency lights will be used whenever necessary to warn traffic of the presence of the police vehicle. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, assisting disabled vehicles, assisting motorists parked or stopped in hazardous locations, or when the patrol vehicle is parked or stopped on the road or other hazardous location.
4. If the patrol vehicle is not stopped or parked on a road or hazardous location, the use of emergency lights is optional.

V. HAZARD WARNING LIGHTS:

- A. The four-way flashers may best be utilized when the police vehicle must be parked to protect fire scenes (hoses, trucks), injured persons, or officers directing traffic.
- B. In those circumstances where a police vehicle is parked on or off the roadway to protect scenes or when assisting stranded motorists, the vehicles blue lights will also be activated to warn other traffic of a potential danger.

VI. SPOTLIGHT:

- A. The spotlight may be used to illuminate the interior of the violator's vehicle so that all occupants are kept within view.
- B. An officer should remain positioned behind the spotlight so he or she does not become visible to the violator or occupants of the vehicle.
- C. A spotlight should not be used to signal violators to stop. Such use could cause temporary blindness to the driver.

VII. PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM:

- A. When making a felony traffic stop, an officer may, from a safe distance, utilize the public address system to direct the actions of the violator, thereby minimizing the hazard to the officer.
- B. The public address system may be used to alert motorists or pedestrians of hazardous conditions.
- C. The public address system will not be used for personal greetings or any other non-public safety reasons.

VIII. REFERENCE:

- F.S.S. 901.25- Fresh Pursuit; arrest outside jurisdiction.
- F.S.S. 316.072 (5)- Obedience to and effect of traffic laws.
- F.S.S. 316.126- Operation of vehicles and actions of pedestrians on approach of authorized emergency vehicle.
- SOP # III-4 Law Enforcement Response.
- SOP # III-25 Vehicle Pursuit Policy.

Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police

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Job Title Task Files: Patrol Division Supervisors