



# DESCHUTES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Policy Title: <b>Emergency Vehicular Warning Devices</b>	Effective Date: June 28, 2016	Policy Number: <b>5.11</b>
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Attachments:	L. Shane Nelson, Sheriff	

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of emergency vehicular warning devices.

## II. POLICY

All employees of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office shall adhere to statutory restrictions on the use of emergency warning devices. Such devices are employed only in prescribed conditions and circumstances, and in ways that will minimize the risk of accidents or injuries to employees or the public.

## III. DEFINITIONS

*Emergency Vehicle* means an authorized law enforcement vehicle equipped with emergency lights, (red/blue/white), siren, and other emergency warning devices required by law and used for emergency response situations.

## IV. PROCEDURES

### A. Assigning/Determining Response Modes to Calls for Assistance

Team supervisors are responsible for monitoring response modes for calls for assistance and shall have the authority to upgrade or downgrade response modes.

In instances where a deputy wishes to initiate an emergency response to an event not known to communications personnel or the team supervisors, or to upgrade a routine response assignment, the deputy shall inform communications personnel as soon as possible of:

1. The nature of the situation.
2. The location and destination of the patrol unit.

### B. Patrol Vehicle Operation Codes

*Code 1:* Code 1 responses are used with calls of a routine nature. Traffic stops for vehicle code violations or other citizen contacts may be made while responding to a Code 1 call. Personal observation of a more serious matter would justify postponement of a Code 1 call but would not relieve the assigned deputy of call responsibility unless he specifically requests the call be reassigned.

The use of emergency lights and siren is not authorized on Code 1 calls.

**Code 3:** Code 3 is defined as driving an emergency vehicle in an emergency situation using emergency lights and siren. Code 3 responses are emergency in nature and require immediate response. Deputies may use emergency lights and siren only when assigned by a supervisor or at the deputy's discretion when:

1. A deputy is in actual "hot pursuit."
2. There is imminent danger to a citizen and the immediate presence of a deputy might save lives or prevent injuries.
3. When a deputy requires immediate assistance to control a volatile situation.
4. In a felony situation where there is reliable, direct information regarding "a crime in progress."
5. In situations where there has been an accident and there are suspected or known injuries.

All Code 3 responses will be within the legal constraints for the operation of emergency vehicles provided for in the Oregon Revised Statutes, ORS 820.300 and ORS 820.320.

The use of emergency lights alone, or the siren alone, is not authorized during a Code 3 response unless it is within the guidelines of ORS 820.320(2).

Note: ORS does not relieve the driver of an emergency police vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all other persons. ORS is not a defense to the driver of an emergency police vehicle in an action brought for criminal negligence or reckless conduct.

### **C. Statutory Requirements**

During an emergency response, emergency lights and siren and other emergency signal devices shall be activated as required by law.

All vehicles shall be operated in accordance to Oregon Statutes, ORS 820.300, ORS 820.320 and ORS 811.155.

### **D. Deactivation of Emergency Signal Devices**

When responding in an emergency response mode, emergency signal devices may be deactivated at a distance from the scene (to be determined by the vehicle operator) so as to not alert suspects to law enforcement proximity. ORS 820.320(2)

When emergency signal devices are deactivated, the operator of the emergency vehicle shall comply with the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all other persons. ORS 820.300(2)(a)

### **E. Use of Warning Devices to Stop a Vehicle**

Audible and/or visible warning devices shall be used to make adequate notice of intent to stop a motor vehicle and to provide a safe environment for the vehicle operator, deputy, and public.

Deputies may activate emergency signal devices when required to assist in handling any perceived emergency situation. The deputy shall advise communications personnel of the nature of the emergency and the emergency response mode that has been taken.

### **F. Use of Warning Devices in Non-Emergency**

In other than emergency situations when expediency is required to effectively eliminate a potential hazard to the public or fellow deputies, deputies may activate emergency warning devices to allow orderly and safe transit through heavily congested roadways. Examples of permissible uses of emergency warning devices during non-emergency response situations include, but are not limited to:

1. Using emergency lights as "beacons" to protect disabled motorists.
2. Using emergency lights when it is necessary to use agency vehicles as protective barriers.

Operators of emergency vehicles shall deactivate emergency warning devices as soon as possible.

### **G. EVOC Training**

Agency personnel who operate patrol vehicles in the performance of patrol or enforcement activities are authorized to do so only after successfully completing Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) training or while under the direction of a Field Training Officer.

Refresher EVOC training is provided to agency personnel by the department and must be successfully completed.