



Tulsa Police Department

This policy statement and the procedures thereunder are intended for Police Department use only. The policies, procedures, and regulations are for internal Police Department administrative purposes and are not intended to create any higher legal standard of care or liability in an evidentiary sense than is created by law. Violations of internal Police Department policies, procedures, regulations, or rules form the basis for disciplinary action by the Police Department. Violations of law form the basis for civil and/or criminal sanctions to be determined in a proper judicial setting, not through the administrative procedures of the Police Department.

Policy # 102A

Effective Date 02/29/2024

Policy Name Vehicle Operations/Response Codes

Approved Date 02/29/2024

Approved by *Wendell Franklin, Chief of Police*

Previous Date 06/25/2009

PURPOSE OF CHANGE:

Remove Class A uniform language.

POLICY:

Officers will respond to calls for police service by observing the traffic laws of the city and state. Marked, low-profile, and unmarked police units will be equipped with both emergency lights and siren, which must be in operation before violating the "rules of the road." This provision does not relieve drivers of authorized emergency vehicles from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor will such provisions protect drivers from the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Officers may violate the "rules of the road" only if there is an emergency call or they are pursuing an actual or suspected violator of the law. Driving with emergency lights alone does not exempt an officer from obeying the "rules of the road" as provided by state statutes and city ordinances. Therefore, officers will not violate city or state traffic laws while driving a police vehicle with emergency lights only.

Unmarked and undercover vehicles are not readily identifiable as police vehicles to the public. Undercover vehicles shall not be used for routine traffic enforcement and unmarked vehicles must meet state lighting requirements. Traffic stops without a marked, unmarked, or low-profile unit and uniformed officer should only be done under exigent circumstances. If an undercover officer needs to affect a traffic stop, a marked unit will be requested to assist.

SUMMARY: Procedures for determining emergency response and police vehicle operations.

APPLIES TO: All police personnel

DEFINITIONS:

CODE 1 – operating a police vehicle with emergency lights and siren engaged.

LOW-PROFILE POLICE UNIT – a police vehicle with the standard decals, striping, and emergency equipment used by the Tulsa Police Department with the exception of the overhead emergency lighting equipment. A low-profile unit has emergency lighting equipment installed in the front, rear, and the four corners of the vehicle. Example: Traffic unit vehicles with decals but no overhead lights.

MARKED POLICE UNIT – a police vehicle with the standard decals, striping, and emergency equipment including overhead emergency lighting equipment used by the Tulsa Police Department.

UNDERCOVER POLICE UNIT – a police vehicle without the standard decals, striping, emergency equipment, or overhead emergency lighting equipment used by the Tulsa Police Department. Example: Detective and Headquarters vehicles with no decals or lights.

UNMARKED POLICE UNIT – a police vehicle without the standard decals, striping, emergency equipment, or overhead emergency lighting equipment used by the Tulsa Police Department. An unmarked police unit has emergency lighting equipment installed in the front, rear, and the four corners of the vehicle, pursuant to state law. Example: Traffic Unit vehicles with no decals or overhead lights; plain white vehicles.

PROCEDURES:

1. Officers will determine the appropriate response based on policies of the Tulsa Police Department and the information available to the officer at that particular time.
2. Officers may activate either emergency lights or siren in the following situations:
 - a. Routine traffic stops.
 - b. When a police vehicle is used to warn of a traffic hazard.
 - c. Incidents where sirens are used to warn of approaching severe weather.
3. Marked, low profile, and unmarked police units that comply with Regulation 3 and 4 may be used for routine traffic enforcement.
4. Undercover police units shall not be used for routine traffic enforcement. Undercover officers who need to conduct a traffic stop will request that a marked police unit be dispatched.
5. Trucks and vans will not initiate or participate in pursuits.

REGULATIONS:

1. Unless radio traffic is being held for an emergency (10-63) or when momentarily using emergency equipment during traffic stops, officers shall notify the dispatcher as soon as possible when operating a police vehicle in code 1 status.
2. Officers shall comply with the “rules of the road” when operating a police vehicle in other than code 1 status.
3. Unmarked police units used for routine traffic enforcement must comply with the lighting guidelines set forth in 47 O.S. 12-218:
 - a. Three flashing red, blue, or a combination of red and blue to the front of the vehicle;
 - b. Two flashing white lights to the front of the vehicle;
 - c. Flashing red, blue, white, or any combination of red, blue, or white placed at the four corners of the vehicle so that they are visible for 360 degrees; and
 - d. One flashing red, blue, amber, or any combination of red, blue, or amber lights to the rear of the vehicle.
4. Pursuant to 11 O.S. 34-106, “peace officer operating the law enforcement vehicle for routine traffic stops shall be dressed in the official uniform including shoulder patches, badge, and any other identifying insignias normally used by the employing law enforcement agency.” See the *Uniform Specifications Manual*.

REFERENCES:

47 O.S. 12-218
11 O.S. 34-106
31-102B, *Vehicle Pursuits*
Uniform Specifications Manual