



Cambridge Police Department

NEW POLICY # 418
Policy and Procedures

Effective Date: December 2, 2004

Policy and Procedure 2004-7

RESPONSE TO CALLS

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the evaluation of the urgency of a police response to a situation. While this policy is designed to guide an officer in the manner in which he/she responds to a call, it also serves as a guide for the dispatcher when assigning calls and response priorities.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to evaluate the urgency of the police response to a situation and assign the appropriate number of officers. The manner of response will vary, depending upon the nature and severity of the call, as well as the external factors such as weather and vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The type of response should be tailored to ensure the safety of the general public and the officers. **A response level is inappropriate when the response itself creates a greater danger to the safety of the community than the situation being responded to.**

III. Procedures

A. Response to Emergency Calls

1. Units responding to emergency calls will notify the dispatcher and indicate their location. Units will continue response at the direction of the dispatcher. All units should monitor the radio in the event that the situation changes. The first unit at the scene will report the current situation and other units will adjust their response accordingly. Any units that are called off by either the dispatcher or a supervisor will immediately discontinue emergency operation.
2. Emergency response is indicated under the following conditions.
 - a. Any apparent threat to life or danger of serious physical injury or major property damage.
 - b. Any on-going felony or misdemeanor that involves violence and may result in injury.
 - c. Any felony or violent misdemeanor that has just occurred, and there is reason to believe the suspect is still in the area.

- d. Any incident that involves exigent or unique circumstances that demand an immediate police response.
 - e. An “Officer in Trouble” call or Officer Requesting Assistance call.
 - f. Exceptions to these procedures may be made when the safety of the officers and public warrants a silent response. Example: To avoid precipitating a hostage situation.
 - g. Examples of emergency calls include shootings, stabbings, personal injury motor vehicle accidents, life threatening need for medical assistance, bank or armed robberies in progress, person with a gun or other deadly weapons, bombings, explosions, major fires, building collapse and hostage situations.
3. In Emergency calls, officers may use both emergency blue lights and siren. The response should be as rapid as possible and should be made by units in an expeditious but safe manner, taking into consideration the traffic conditions, the safety of the general public and the safety of the officers. Units responding to Emergency calls should be attentive to the radio, as the situation may change quickly to a more or less serious incident.
4. **Emergency response with lights and siren does not relieve officers from the responsibility to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor does it protect officers from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.**
5. **M.G.L.A Chapter 89, § 7B. (Operation of emergency vehicles)**

The driver of a vehicle of a fire, police or recognized protective department and the driver of an ambulance shall be subject to the provisions of any statute, rule, regulation, ordinance or by-law relating to the operation or parking of vehicles, except that a driver of fire apparatus while going to a fire or responding to an alarm, or the driver of a vehicle of a police or recognized protective department or the driver of an ambulance, in an emergency and while in performance of a public duty or while transporting a sick or injured person to a hospital or other destination where professional medical services are available, may drive such vehicle at a speed in excess of the applicable speed limit if he exercises caution and due regard under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property, and may drive such vehicle through an intersection of ways contrary to any traffic signs or signals regulating traffic at such intersection if he first brings such vehicle to a full stop and then proceeds with caution and due regard for the safety of persons and property, unless otherwise directed by a police officer regulating traffic at such intersection. The driver of any such approaching emergency vehicle shall comply with the provisions of section fourteen of chapter ninety when approaching a

school bus which has stopped to allow passengers to alight or board from the same, and whose red lamps are flashing.

B. Response to Urgent Calls

1. In urgent response, officers may use emergency lights with or without sirens. The closest units should make response immediately in a quick but safe manner. Units responding to urgent calls should be attentive to the radio, as the situation may change to a more or less serious incident. Units will discontinue the use of emergency equipment when so instructed by the dispatcher or a supervisor.
2. Urgent response is indicated when an officer's presence is needed at the scene but the need is not immediate. Situations that will warrant an urgent response include:
 - a. Any incident that does not represent a significant threat to life and property (such as disorderly groups) or a felony that has occurred without injury and the suspect has fled the area.
 - b. Any in progress incident that could be classified as a possible crime (a suspicious person, vehicle, etc.).
 - c. Any incident that represents a significant obstacle to the flow of traffic.
 - d. Any incident that requires a prompt, non-emergency response.
 - e. Officers calling for non-emergency assistance (a backup unit, potential but not a present problem).
 - f. Examples of urgent calls include domestic disputes, property damage motor vehicle accidents, and non life-threatening medical assistance calls.
3. Supervisor may use emergency lights with our without sirens when responding to request or requirement for a supervisor where there is an exigency or urgency.

C. Response to Routine Calls

1. **Response to routine calls will involve no emergency lights or siren.** The response should be prompt but at a normal traffic speed. Examples of routine response include:
 - a. A call for service
 - b. A call to take a report
 - c. **Transport of prisoners unless exigent circumstances exist.**

Police Commissioner