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Effective Date	January 1, 2010		



Wilkesboro Police Department

Electronic Written Directives Document

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines for responding to emergency situations.

The Wilkesboro Police Department is committed to promoting public safety. Officers responding to an emergency must continually balance the need to remain engaged in an emergency response against all known risks posed to the general public and the officer.

II. POLICY

Under proper circumstances, officers are authorized to engage in an emergency response, but must always drive with due regard for the safety of the public, and will use the skills, principles and concepts of their training. Officers operating any Town Vehicle will wear the vehicles equipped seat belt properly fastened around their body.

Officers operating vehicles equipped with Mobile Video Recording systems (video and audio) will be required to have them on and recording while engaged in an emergency response.

III. DEFINITION

Emergency Response: Operating a police vehicle in response to either an emergency call received from a dispatcher or to any situation where the officer can articulate a threat of serious injury to an officer or a citizen; also includes whenever an officer attempts to catch up to another vehicle that would require the officer to either drive while exceeding the posted speed limit or drive in a manner not normally permitted by law.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Only those officers dispatched in response to an emergency call for service by communications personnel, a supervisor, or the officer on the scene requesting assistance, may respond with activated blue lights and siren.
- B. An officer, while operating a vehicle in emergency response, will do so with due regard to the safety of others. The speed of an officer engaging in

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emergency response will be reasonable and prudent and take into consideration the following factors:

1. The need for the emergency response versus the risk to the public and officers.
 2. Seriousness of the call for service (severity of the offense or violation) and officer's knowledge of previous incidents.
 3. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
 4. Proximity to the officer to the actual location of the emergency call for service.
 5. Time of day, road conditions and environmental concerns such as weather and visibility.
 6. Type and condition of police vehicles involved.
- D. An officer must operate both blue lights and siren when engaged in an emergency response in order to be exempt from traffic laws. Whenever blue lights and siren are deactivated, the officer will comply with the posted speed limit and all traffic laws.
- E. Vehicles not equipped with a blue light and siren will not be operated as an emergency vehicle. Operators of vehicles not equipped with both blue lights and siren must always obey all traffic laws.
- F. Upon approaching a controlled intersection or confronted with traffic congestion, the officer will reduce the speed of the police vehicle. Police vehicles using blue lights and siren will not proceed through an intersection until the officer is sure that all traffic has yielded the right of way to the police vehicle.
- G. Officers will always operate blue lights and siren under the following circumstances:
1. At anytime the emergency response requires the officer to travel into opposing traffic. Officers required to travel into opposing traffic will do so in a safe and prudent manner with due regard for the safety of the public.
 2. When attempting to catch up to another vehicle that would require the officer to exceed the posted speed limits or drive in a manner not normally permitted by law.

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3. While attempting a u-turn in traffic for the purpose of attempting to catch up to another vehicle or to respond to any emergency call for service.

H. Upon arrival at the scene of a call, the responding officer will rapidly evaluate the situation and determine whether additional units are needed or whether other units responding can cancel their emergency response or cancel their response to the call for service.

I. The only exception to this policy is a silent run when the nature of the emergency, possible taking of hostages or danger to life, requires arriving at the scene unannounced. On a silent run, the officer should operate with blue lights, headlights, and emergency flashers on, and not exceed the speed that is greater than would be reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions.

V. NON-EMERGENCY CALLS FOR SERVICE

A. Officers shall not engage in an emergency response for the following calls for service:

1. Property crimes that have already occurred.
2. Vehicle collisions with property damage only.
3. Service calls to assist citizens or motorists.
4. Any other situation that does not require an emergency response to prevent injury or death or alleviate the threat of injury or death.

VI. REFERENCES

Pursuit Driving
N.C.G.S. 20-145
N.C.G.S. 20-156
CALEA 41.2.1, 41.3.3, 41.3.8(a)