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THURMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT			
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This Directive is for internal use only, and other than as contraindicated here this Directive does not create or enlarge this Department's, governmental entity's, any of this Department's officers, and/or any other entities' civil, criminal, and/or other accountability in any way. This Directive is not to be construed as the creation of a standard of safety or care in any sense, with respect to any complaint, demand for settlement, or any other form of grievance, litigation, and/or other action. Deviations from this Directive, if substantiated, can only form the basis for intra-Departmental administrative action(s) (including discipline and/or termination).

I. PURPOSE:

To provide for the safe operation of Department vehicles in routine, emergency and urgent situations.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Thurmont Police Department that all calls for service shall be responded to by Officers of the Thurmont Police Department. The operation of authorized emergency vehicles responding to calls for service shall be done in a safe professional manner with attention to the safety of life and property. Sound judgment of the Officer is necessary in all aspects of emergency driving.

III. DEFINITIONS:

AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLE: emergency vehicle of municipal departments or public service corporations as are designated or authorized by proper local authorities; police vehicles; vehicles of the fire department and ambulances.

ROUTINE CALL FOR SERVICE: no emergency lights or siren.

URGENT CALL FOR SERVICE: emergency lights and siren needed.

EMERGENCY CALL FOR SERVICE: emergency lights and siren activated.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Routine, Urgent, and Emergency Calls:

1. Routine Calls for service are to be handled as quickly as possible and in most cases without the use of emergency lights or siren, using due regard for traffic, speed limits, road conditions and without abusing the unit (Appendix B).
2. Urgent calls for service are to be handled with deliberate care, being aware of all the previous listed conditions, using the emergency lights and siren with discretion. (Appendix B).
3. Emergency calls for service are to be handled with extreme care, being aware of all previous conditions and using both emergency lights and siren. (Appendix B).
4. Only a life-threatening situation would dictate a high-speed response.
5. High speed and carelessness will not save enough time to justify the risk. Arriving quickly without incident is the ultimate goal, in responding to calls for service.

B. Emergency Driving

1. These factors and survival during emergency driving situations:
 - a. Condition of Equipment: You should be aware of the following items before driving the assigned unit:
 - (1) Lights and Emergency Equipment
 - (2) Brakes and Steering
 - (3) Tire Wear
 - (4) Shock Absorber Action
 - (5) Engine and Transmission Oil Levels, and

(6) Body condition

- b. Vehicles not meeting these basic standards should be reported and/or put out of service with the use of Daily Vehicle Equipment Checklist (Appendix A).

2. Prudent operation under high speed or hazardous conditions.

- a. The seat belt should be worn and properly adjusted. A correctly worn seat belt will keep you from being thrown around during cornering and braking.
- b. Adjust seat for easy reach of pedals; adjust inside and outside mirrors.
- c. On approach to any controlled intersection or whenever a special hazard exists, remove the right foot from the accelerator and position it over the brake pedal, slowing down or nearly stopping as may be necessary until it is clear and the way is open.
- d. Reduce speed as necessary to maintain proper traction.
- e. Know how your vehicle handles under all road and weather conditions.
- f. Lock Unit doors in emergency situations.
- g. Never assume your vehicle can be seen or heard. Take **no chances** on what other vehicles or pedestrians will do.
- h. Pass only on the Left when possible; avoid the right whenever possible. Generally, drivers will automatically go to the right upon seeing or hearing an emergency vehicle.

3. Guidelines for Accident Avoidance:

- a. Never get into a situation where you can be surprised by the actions of a driver or pedestrian.
- b. Aim high in steering; give frequent glances well ahead at the center of your driving path.
- c. Get the overall Picture; this is the area you are moving into. Don't let it contain a surprise for you, avoid blind spots; front, back, and side.
- d. Keep your eyes moving; this means checking to your left and right and

both mirrors constantly. Being alert for drivers who are inattentive to signals, occupied parked cars that may pull out into your path, and children playing on the curb.

- e. Leave Yourself a Way-Out; by leaving a cushion of space front, back, and both sides, you have a space to maneuver in an emergency.
4. Responding to an Urgent or Emergency call, Officers may under certain circumstances:
 - a. Park or stand the vehicle irrespective of the provisions of the law.
 - b. Proceed past a red traffic signal or stop sign, in all cases, decreasing speed to a point where it will be possible to stop or take evasive measures to avoid an accident.
 - c. Exceed speed limits so long as he/she does not endanger life or property. Factors such as type of call being responded to, traffic conditions, and road conditions will govern the speed at which an emergency vehicle is driven.
 - d. Emergency vehicles may be driven against traffic on one way streets only when there is not a clear and present danger to life, and then only with extreme caution.
 5. When responding to an urgent call, Officers will activate the vehicle's flashing and emergency lights and, if necessary, the siren. When responding to an emergency call, Officers will activate both emergency lights and siren.
 - a. The siren is reserved for emergency operations where speed is utilized, and where the element of surprise must be sacrificed for expediency. The indiscriminate use of sirens in residential areas during night and early morning hours should be kept to a minimum.
 - b. The use of flashing emergency lights and sirens does not guarantee safe use of the right-of-way.
 - c. Unmarked police vehicles will not operate as emergency vehicles unless emergency lights and sirens are in operation.
 - (1) Officers operating unmarked police vehicles as emergency vehicles will use extra caution in view of the fact that unmarked cars are more difficult than marked vehicles for other drivers to identify as

Police Vehicles.

- (2) Officers in unmarked police vehicles will place the magnetic red light on the inside windshield mount.
 - (3) Self-preservation and consideration for the safety of others are the most important factors to consider in any emergency driving.
6. Officers will not escort other emergency vehicles. Officers will not follow ambulances, fire apparatus or other emergency vehicles so closely as to constitute a hazard.
 7. Officers will not use emergency lights and/or sirens to escort non-emergency vehicles. This is an extremely dangerous practice which could expose the Officer and the Department to civil liability if an accident should result. A driver en-route to a hospital will not be escorted. If a passenger is seriously injured or sick, request an ambulance.
 8. If it is necessary to escort funeral processions or slow moving vehicles with oversize loads, emergency lights may be used. Extreme caution should be exercised while the escort is in progress. This type of escort assignment should be kept to an absolute minimum.

ATTACHMENTS :

Appendix A - TPD Form 2.1A - Daily Vehicle Check Sheet
Appendix B - TPD Form 2.4B - Guideline Table

DOCUMENT DATES :

Amended Date:

Review Date:

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Rescinds:

Order Written By: Lieutenant Shawn R. Tyler
Order Edited and Approved By: Chief Gregory L. Eyler

Accreditation Standards Included in this Order
CHAPTER 41.2 PATROL OPERATIONS
41.2.9 Emergency Driving