



**Las Cruces Police Department**  
**GENERAL ORDERS**  
**ADMINISTRATION VOLUME 1**  
**GO-119 VEHICLE OPERATIONS (Most Critical)**  
**Revised 12/07/2015**

**119 VEHICLE OPERATIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and procedures for operating any department-operated vehicle.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) to respond to non-emergency and emergency incidents in a manner that is safe for the officer, other motorists, and pedestrians.

**APPLICABILITY**

This General Order applies to all employees. This General Order supersedes all previous versions.

**REFERENCES**

- CALEA 41.2.1
- NMML OPR.01.01, OPR.01.02
- 66-7-6 NMSA 1978, Authorized Emergency Vehicles

**DEFINITIONS**

**Department-operated vehicles** – any motor vehicle operated by an employee in the course of his/her official duties, regardless of ownership (e.g. rental vehicles, vehicles owned by another City department, vehicles loaned to the department for an investigation, etc.).

**119.01 OPERATION OF DEPARTMENT-OPERATED VEHICLES**

All employees shall exercise due care in the course of operating any department-operated vehicle. Employees shall exercise defensive driving skills to prevent vehicle accidents. Employees shall obey all local and state traffic laws while operating department-operated vehicles unless an emergency response is necessary. In emergency response situations employees shall follow the guidelines outlined in this general order and the criteria described in 66-7-6 NMSA 1978.

**119.02 VEHICLE EQUIPMENT**



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All department vehicles used for police response (whether marked or unmarked) shall be equipped with emergency lights and sirens. This equipment shall be maintained in operational condition at all times. Any vehicle, such as an undercover vehicle, not equipped with lights and sirens is not authorized for emergency responses.

**119.03 RESPONDING TO NON-EMERGENCY INCIDENTS**

- A. Officers shall always exercise due care when responding to any type of call.
- B. Non-emergency response is appropriate when an incident does not present a life-threatening situation but meets criteria for some level of response. The incident does not justify the use of lights and sirens. Units shall respond observing all applicable traffic regulations and traffic control devices.

**119.04 RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY INCIDENTS**

- A. An emergency response is appropriate when the incident presents criteria which includes a life threatening situation where failure to respond on an emergency basis could jeopardize life and property. This response requires lights and sirens.
  - 1. Officers shall respond to emergency calls pursuant to the criteria described in State law, 66-7-6, NMSA 1978. This section does not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor does it protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others.
- B. An emergency response shall be downgraded to a non-emergency response whenever it has been determined to be unnecessary by a supervisor, another responding officer, or dispatcher.

**119.05 USE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT**

- A. The proper use of emergency equipment is essential to the safety of the officer, motorists, and pedestrians. Officers have broad discretion in the use of emergency equipment and shall be prepared to articulate the reasons warranting an emergency response if called upon to do so. The following procedures should be followed unless unusual conditions exist:



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1. Officers shall utilize emergency equipment when authorized to do so given the nature of the incident (non-emergency, emergency) or while conducting traffic enforcement.
  2. When a situation is encountered, which in the officer's best judgment indicates the need for emergency equipment, the officer is authorized to do so.
- B. Officers shall take into account that the law does not exempt police officers or any driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from liability should the driver fail to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons even though the emergency equipment may be in operation.