

STANDARDIZED ROLL CALL TRAINING ONLINE

DP ____2018

Production Outline

TOPIC: Driving
SUBJECT: Code-3 Response: Clearing Intersections
PREPARED BY: Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC),
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REFERENCES: California Vehicle Code (CVC) Sections 21055, 21056, 21806,
21807, 17004.7
Special Order No. 17, Sept 2018

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Officers will understand how to consistently clear intersections with greater safety.

INTRODUCTION

Many serious accidents have occurred as a result of improperly clearing intersections. When clearing intersections, the urge to respond to the scene as quickly as possible must be tempered by a higher concern for officer and public safety. The most appropriate response is one that is urgent, but controlled, with an emphasis on safely reaching the desired destination.

When approaching intersections, officers should do all of the following:

- Slow and be prepared to stop
- Clear lane by lane
- Only proceed when certain that there are no threats

Due to the unpredictable reactions of other motorists, a deliberately cautious approach should even be used when entering intersections that display a green light.

California Vehicle Code (CVC) Sections that apply to clearing intersections:

- **CVC 21055** authorizes exemption from the “rules of the road” while operating an emergency vehicle Code-3 (lighted red lamp visible from the front, sounding a siren as necessary).
- **CVC 21056** states that a Code-3 response does not exempt emergency personnel from driving with due regard for the safety of all persons using the

- highway.
- **CVC 21806** states that all vehicles and persons on the roadway shall yield to approaching Code-3 response vehicles.
 - **CVC 21807** reiterates that emergency personnel are not exempt from the duty to drive with due regard (concern) for the safety of all persons and property.

SCENARIO

While responding Code-3, officers approach a busy intersection with a solid red traffic signal. Upon entering the intersection, the officers make eye contact with a pedestrian who has entered the cross walk; the officers slow to 20 MPH and proceed through the intersection. Cross traffic narrowly misses colliding with the police vehicle. Did the officers properly clear the intersection?

No. Simply slowing and making eye contact with a pedestrian in the crosswalk does not ensure that the intersection will be cleared properly and safely. Officers should clear the intersection lane by lane. Although this scenario did not involve a collision with the police vehicle, evasive maneuvers by other motorists could have resulted in a 3rd party collision.

SCENARIO TWO

While responding Code-3, officers slow to approximately 5 MPH as they approach a busy, major intersection. The officers proceed through the intersection, stopping to clear lane-by-lane. As they proceed through a cleared lane, a vehicle in cross traffic suddenly changes lanes and enters the intersection. The officers narrowly avoid the other vehicle. Did the officers use safe practices?

Yes. Due to the methodical clearing of each lane, the officers were able to observe and avoid the other vehicle. While safe practices can help officers avoid **most** collisions, it is not a guarantee that **all** traffic collisions will be avoided. It must be remembered that the unsafe actions of another party can still impact officers.

Due to the unpredictable reactions of other motorists, a deliberately cautious approach should even be used when entering intersections that displays a green light.

Pursuit Policy Reminder

In order to obtain immunity for vehicle pursuits, all California law enforcement officers must receive Annual Vehicle Pursuit Policy Training and certify that they have

“received, read, and understand” the pursuit policy on an annual basis. Accordingly, all sworn personnel shall complete the Annual Pursuit Policy Training and SB 719 Pursuit Policy Attestation each year (CVC 17004.7).

Failure to comply these requirements could put you at risk of being liable for civil damages for personal injury to or death of any person or damage to property resulting from the collision of a vehicle being operated by an actual or suspected violator of the law who is being, has been, or believes he or she is being or has been, pursued in a motor vehicle by a peace officer employed by the public entity.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When approaching an intersection Code-3, officers should:
 - A. Proceed through without stopping if they have a green light due to the fact that they have the “right of way.”
 - B. Slow and be prepared to stop, clear lane by lane, and proceed when certain there are no threats.

The answer is B. When approaching intersections Code-3, officers should slow and be prepared to stop, clear lane by lane, and proceed when certain there are no threats. Due to the unpredictable reactions of other motorists, a deliberately cautious approach should even be used when entering intersections that display a green light.

2. Must an officer stop at all red lights when responding Code-3?
 - A. Yes. Officers must obey the “rules of the road” when driving Code-3.
 - B. No. Officers are exempt from the “rules of the road” when driving Code-3.

The answer is B. Officers are exempt from the “rules of the road” when operating an emergency vehicle Code-3. However, by reducing the speed of the patrol unit and clearing lane by lane, officers can minimize the risk of collision and greatly decrease the likelihood of any 3rd party involvement.