

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**7732**

(May 1988)

## **RESPONSE CODES**

**7732.1**

(May 1988)

Emergency response codes are classified as follows:

Code 2 - Urgent call--proceed immediately without siren and red light.

Code 3 - Emergency call--proceed immediately with siren and red light.

## **USE OF EMERGENCY WARNING DEVICES**

**7732.2**

Fire equipment and personnel often are moved within a unit as well as from one unit, region, or county to another during emergencies. Response is as follows:

- On emergency response within the unit, red lights and siren will be used as necessary or as required by law.
- When responding to emergencies outside the unit, red lights and siren will be used as necessary or when Code 3 response is requested by the emergency command center.
- When responding to emergencies wherein the response is for support of the other county or region forces and not for attack, the red light and siren will not be used while en route unless there are specific instructions to do so.
- Headlights will be on during all emergency response conditions.

At times it may be preferable to use the rear facing amber light in lieu of the rotating or rear facing red light. This would be desirable if there were a slow-moving transport going up a grade on a multiple-lane highway where the driver would want overtaking vehicles to be aware of the emergency vehicle but not necessarily to remain behind or stop as required by law. Parked vehicles working along a roadside may display the amber light as a warning device in lieu of flashing or rotating red light.

## **EXEMPTION OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES**

**7732.3**

(May 1988)

The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is exempt from certain laws relating to speed limits, rights of way, and signs or signals when responding to a fire alarm or other genuine emergency but not when returning from such an emergency. This is true

providing the red lights are turned on and the siren is sounded sufficiently to warn other drivers and pedestrians. A CAL FIRE emergency vehicle will not proceed through a stop sign or signal without first slowing to a maximum of 5 mph.

## **DUTY OF DRIVER**

**7732.4**

(May 1988)

A driver must be aware of the limitations of visual and audible warning devices, i.e., red lights and sirens. The safety of the general public must take precedence in all cases over the response speed of the emergency vehicle.

The law requires that the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle which is responding to an emergency use good judgment. It does not relieve the driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor does it protect the driver from the consequences of an arbitrary and careless exercise of exemption privileges. An employee, however, is not liable for civil damages arising out of proper operation in line of duty of an authorized emergency vehicle when responding to an emergency call.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE GUIDELINES**

**7732.5**

(May 1988)

The following guidelines are established in accordance with the California Vehicle Code:

- The fact that a vehicle is an "authorized emergency vehicle" does not relieve the driver from the duty of compliance with the rules of the road.
- Before a pedestrian or motorist can yield the right-of-way, the opportunity to do so must be afforded.
- In traversing an intersection (Code 3), the speed of the emergency vehicles must not be greater than that enabling the vehicle to stop without collision should the right of way be violated. At times, it may be necessary to come to a complete stop at an intersection and then proceed cautiously after determining that the intersection is clear.
- Do not pull up immediately behind a vehicle and sound the siren suddenly. The vehicle may stop right in front of you.
- Do not pass on the right unless no other course is open, and pass then only at a safe speed and after you are positive that the car you are passing will not drive to the right as you go by.

- Do not sound the siren at its highest pitch continuously. Fluctuate it throughout the tonal range.
- Keep near the center of the roadway so oncoming vehicles can see the red light approaching.
- Do not follow another emergency vehicle too closely. A motorist may yield to the first emergency vehicle and then pull out in front of the following vehicle.
- The best route of travel for an emergency response often entails driving on a freeway. The use of red lights and siren on a freeway is not required or recommended, providing the vehicle is not exceeding the posted speed limit or disregarding other traffic regulations. The unnecessary use of siren and red lights on a freeway may cause confusion on the part of other vehicles which may impede the safe flow of traffic.
- The use of the air horn should be kept to a minimum. Excessive use of the air horn may drown out the siren. During a Code 3 response, the air horn normally should be used only when approaching intersections, and then two or three short blasts should suffice.

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