



Lethbridge County Policy Handbook

EFFECTIVE: October 2, 2014 **SECTION:** 200 NO. 213 Page 1 of 5

APPROVED BY: County Council **SUBJECT:** Emergency Response / Pursuit

REVISED DATE:

Lethbridge County authorizes the use of Emergency Response to calls for service utilizing emergency lights and / or siren. Responding to calls for service in an Emergency Response capacity will only be conducted following the guidelines of this policy. Lethbridge County prohibits the use of motor vehicle pursuits as set out in this policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth a Lethbridge County policy on the use of Emergency Response to certain calls for service, establishing guidelines and proper procedures for responding to emergencies, proper reporting procedures and training guidelines for all officers within the department.

The purpose of Lethbridge County Pursuit Policy is to set out strict guidelines based on the current requirements of the Solicitor General's office.

AUTHORIZATION

Authority for peace officers to respond to calls for service utilizing emergency equipment will be granted once all requirements of this policy have been met. Lethbridge County as an Authorized Employer of Community Peace Officers shall have the authority for Emergency Response added to their Employer Authorization before peace officers may apply for this authority. Individual Peace Officers will ensure all requirements have been met and authority has been added to their Peace Officer Appointment before they respond to any calls for service in an Emergency Response capacity.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All Community Peace Officers wishing to have emergency response authority added to their Peace Officer Appointments must successfully complete a forty (40) hour Emergency Vehicle Operations Course that is based on a police curriculum.

Note: The pursuit driving elements of the EVOC training are for skill development only. In no manner does this training suggest that Peace Officers will engage in motor Vehicle pursuits.

All Peace Officers employed by Lethbridge County will undergo recertification in the EVOC training if directed by the employer.



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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Peace Officers may respond to calls for service utilizing emergency equipment under the following circumstances if they have obtained EVOC certification;

- Injury Collisions,
- Providing backup to Police or Peace Officers where there is a reasonable belief that the Officer is in serious danger and the Peace Officer is or may be the closest assistance available,
- Attending a fire or medical emergency at the specific request of the Fire or EMS department. (It will not be standard practice to provide a co-response to all fire or medical situations),
- Any emergency situation if requested by the Police Service to attend in an emergency response capacity.

Emergency Response will not be conducted for:

- Non-Injury Motor Vehicle collisions,
- Providing backup to Police or Peace Officers where there is a Police Officer closer and already responding to the situation, unless requested by the Police Service to attend,
- Any other non-urgent situation.

* All situations where there is a possibility of an Emergency Response will be evaluated by the Peace Officer to continually assess the risk between providing services on-scene, and the increased risk to the Peace Officer and the Public while responding in an Emergency capacity. Public safety and the safety of the Peace Officer will remain the primary concern in all Emergency Response situations.

Any Peace Officer choosing to respond to a situation in an emergency capacity shall notify the 911 Dispatch Service of jurisdiction by radio of their response to that particular situation. This transmission will include the following;

- ID of unit responding,
- Nature of call for service Unit is responding to,
- Unit's destination,
- Level of Response being utilized.



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All Peace Officers will use the following guideline and response codes for Emergency Response situations:

“ALPHA” Non-Emergency Response, No Lights / No Siren activated, all rules of the road will be followed.

“BRAVO” Emergency Response, Lights activated / No Siren activated, rules of the road may be violated using proper techniques and safety precautions.

“DELTA” Emergency Response, Lights and Siren activated, rules of the road may be violated using proper techniques and safety precautions.

For example:

“Dispatch, this is 26L1. I am responding BRAVO to the MVC at Highway 4 and 845.”

EMERGENCY RESPONSE REPORTING

Any Peace Officer who has responded to a call for service will document all pertinent information about the Emergency Response in an incident report. This report will include the following;

- ID of unit responding
- Unit's departing location,
- Time of Departure,
- Nature of call for service Unit is responding to,
- Unit's destination,
- Time of Arrival,
- Any other information that is pertinent to the situation.

* Any collisions resulting from an Emergency Response by a Peace Officer will be reported to the Director of Law Enforcement as a sensitive / serious occurrence on the approved form.

PURSUIT GUIDELINES

All Peace Officers employed by Lethbridge County will adhere to the current policy set forth by the Solicitor General's Office as defined in the Peace Officer Manual as follows;



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Peace Officer Manual Requirements:

Pursuits

Pursuit definition:

A motor vehicle pursuit occurs when a peace officer follows a vehicle with the intent to stop or identify the vehicle or driver, and the driver, being aware of the peace officer's actions, fails to stop, and the driver initiates evasive action or ignores directions to stop/avoid apprehension.

A motor vehicle pursuit presents an extreme risk to public safety and shall not be conducted by any peace officer appointed under the *Peace Officer Act*. Peace officers, other than those with full policing authority, are prohibited from engaging in pursuits by the Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security Motor Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines (2005) and this policy manual.

Upon encountering an individual who has chosen not to stop their vehicle when directed to do so, a peace officer will immediately cease all efforts to stop the vehicle. This will include turning off all emergency equipment and reducing speed. Contact, on an urgent basis, should be made with the police service of jurisdiction to advise them of the circumstances, providing a description of the vehicle and direction of travel.

A pursuit may involve high or low speeds and vehicles other than automobiles.

Closing the Distance “Closing the distance” or “catch up situations”

In some cases an emergency response vehicle will attempt to close the distance on a suspected violator to further a law enforcement effort. These situations are not considered pursuits unless some overt action by the suspected offender suggests an attempt to avoid apprehension. This practice is commonly referred to as “closing the distance” or “catch up.” In these situations an emergency response vehicle is being operated in a manner that is different from normal traffic patterns.

The *Traffic Safety Act* states: “a siren on an emergency vehicle shall be operated only when the vehicle is being used in response to an emergency.”



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Closing the distance is not normally considered an emergency. A peace officer involved in such a situation must continually evaluate all factors that involve public and officer safety. If the risk assessment indicates a risk to public safety the procedure shall be terminated.

“Closing the distance” or **“catch up”** maneuvers may only be performed when there is a reasonable likelihood for apprehension of the suspected offender.

The paramount purpose behind those policy decisions is public safety. Failure to abide by these policies could expose the public to an unacceptable risk or the peace officer to legal action. Solicitor General and Public Security views the issue of motor vehicle pursuits involving peace officers very seriously and will actively follow up on any pursuits involving peace officers with a view to ensuring that enforcement activities are conducted within legislated constraints and that corrective action is taken where necessary.

Spike Belts/Roadblocks

No peace officer will participate or assist in the deployment of a spike belt or other similar device.

No peace officer will participate or assist in the implementation of a roadblock technique.

Peace Officers, who encounter a vehicle that has initiated evasive action or has fled, shall not continue to follow the offender vehicle regardless of distance. Should an offender choose to flee before identification has been made of the vehicle, driver or license plate, all Peace Officers shall cease any effort to identify the offender vehicle and contact the Police Service of jurisdiction on an urgent basis and advise them of last known direction of travel.