



LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE OPERATIONS

This tip sheet is provided to KLC members to emphasize safe emergency vehicle operation and better protect police officers and citizens. This is not an all-inclusive vehicle operations training program, but it is appropriate for “roll call,” remedial, or individual officer training.

1. **Pre-shift inspection** — Check tire pressure and tread wear, fluids, lights, emergency equipment, clean windows, and properly set the mirrors and seat. Be aware of blind spots. Weather changes impact many of these items.
2. **Proper mindset** — Be aware of your surroundings and drive defensively. Be mindful of upcoming intersections.
3. **Distracted driving** — Don't text or operate mobile data terminals. Limit cell phone calls to emergency calls when the vehicle is in operation. Cell phone usage while driving is four times more likely to result in a vehicle collision. Texting can increase your perception-response time by as much as three seconds.
4. **Parking** — Back into parking spaces when tactically acceptable. Backing in greatly reduces vehicle collisions. Park in a position to avoid backing when leaving.
5. **Seatbelts** — Always wear your seatbelt. Practice quickly exiting the vehicle from a seatbelted position.
6. **Be alert** — Beware of driver fatigue or the effects of prescription drugs, as both can impair a driver's ability to operate a vehicle safely. Read the label on your prescription medications and consult with a pharmacist before taking them.
7. **Nonemergency runs** — operate the vehicle within posted speed limits. Avoid improper lane changes and improper passing. Always use turn signals to indicate vehicle movement.
8. **Emergency runs** — operate with due regard for other motorists.
9. **Keep your distance** — Avoid following too closely. Drive tactically sound and don't put yourself in an unsafe position. Give yourself time and distance to maneuver.
10. **Weather** — Rain, sleet, ice, snow, and fog all impact safe driving.
11. **Visibility** — Nighttime driving reduces visibility; slow down. Don't overdrive your headlights.
12. **Traffic stops** — Ensure your vehicle is pulled off the road during traffic stops. Utilize all emergency and hazard lights. Wear your body armor; it has been shown to protect officers in traffic accidents. Wear your retro reflective vest for increased visibility.
13. **Loose items** — Secure items in your vehicle. Unsecured items can become a projectile and injure occupants.
14. **Pursuits** — Know your department's pursuit policy. Review the policy at least annually. Be aware of pursuit liabilities and current case law.
15. **Ongoing training** — Departments should conduct annual vehicle operation training. This can include vehicle operations, policy reviews, and/or educational materials.

For more information,
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