



SOUTH COAST BRITISH COLUMBIA  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
POLICE SERVICE

## RADIO RESPONSE CODES

Effective Date: September 12, 2005

---

### POLICY

1. The South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service (SCBCTAPS) adheres to a standardized system of radio response codes.
2. Members will respond to calls for service in a manner consistent with the prescribed response code unless directed otherwise by the Operations Communication Center (OCC) personnel or a Supervisor.

### REASON FOR POLICY

3. To assist SCBCTAPS personnel in determining the appropriate response to a given situation while ensuring both officer safety and prompt service to the public.

### PROCEDURES

#### Codes Used

4. The following radio response codes will be used:
  1. **Code 1** - Routine (all transmissions are considered Code 1 unless otherwise classified).
  2. **Code 2** - Respond as quickly as possible with limited use, as necessary, of emergency equipment, but complying with the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act of British Columbia.
  3. **Code 3** - Respond immediately using emergency equipment.
  4. **Code 4** - Emergency operation or situation giving the calling unit or the OCC control of the radio channel in use.
  5. **Code 5** - Use Caution: The situation or operation may be dangerous. This will be used to indicate suspicion or reason to suspect there may be danger. Used in conjunction with "10-30" indicates a person or persons known to be dangerous. Use extreme caution.
  6. **Code 6** - A hostage situation may exist. Early containment of the scene is required and extreme caution must be exercised.
  7. **Code 12 – Unauthorized Listener(s) Present.** A code used in British Columbia to mean Standard Ten Code 10-67.

#### Operations Communication Centre

5. In situations requiring urgent or emergency response, the Dispatcher will direct the field unit to respond "**Code 2**" or "**Code 3**" as appropriate.
  1. Calls dispatched without a response code are to be regarded as "**Code 1**" (routine).
6. In all situations, it is the responsibility of the Dispatcher to provide responding units with all available information as promptly as possible. This includes any information to suggest the situation may be dangerous. ("**Code 5**" or "**Code 6**").
7. The decision of the field unit or the direction of the Dispatcher relative to response codes may be countermanded by a Supervisor.

### **CODE 1**

8. Code 1 indicates calls of routine nature; all other transmissions are classified as Codes 2 through 6.
9. The Dispatcher may exclude indicating a call is Code 1 unless countermanded by a Supervisor.

### **CODE 2 AND CODE 3**

10. Code 2 and Code 3 are used by the Dispatcher to indicate to a field unit the degree of urgency required during the response.
11. **Emergency Situation** - Any Member, upon encountering an emergency situation in the field, will advise the Dispatcher as to what response code has been selected.
12. **Code 2 Situations** - When a call is dispatched as Code 2, Members will respond as quickly as possible with limited use of emergency equipment and will comply with the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act of British Columbia and Emergency Vehicle Driving Regulation.
13. **Code 3 Situations** - A Code 3 response in the field is permitted only in the following situations:
  1. **Dispatched call** - The Dispatcher broadcasts a call that the assigned Member recognizes is of an emergency nature,
  2. **On View situations** - A Member encounters an emergency situation in the field and advises the Dispatcher of the circumstances, or
  3. **Code 3 designated** - The Dispatcher, or a Supervisor recognizes that an emergency exists and directs the Member to respond Code 3.
  4. **Responding Police Unit Procedure** - The Member responding to an emergency Code 3 situation will:
    - a. immediately advise the Dispatcher they are responding Code 3,
    - b. utilize both emergency lights and siren; emergency lights without siren may only be used if the use of the siren would unduly hamper the performance of the duty, (see s.118. Motor Vehicle Act),
    - c. employ extreme caution at all times,

- d. not normally exceed 25 KMH over the legal speed limit, unless exigent circumstances exist,
  - e. when proceeding against a traffic control device at an intersection, stop the police unit on the approach side of the intersection and then proceed at a speed of less than 10 KMH through the intersection, and
  - f. follow all provisions of the Emergency Vehicle Operation legislation.
5. **Dispatcher Procedure** - The Dispatcher will immediately notify the Watch Commander whenever a Member is responding to a Code 3 situation.
  6. **Discontinue Code 3 – Responsibility** - It is the responsibility of the Watch Commander to monitor all Code 3 responses and to discontinue them if circumstances so require.
  7. **Unmarked and Special Use Police Vehicles – Procedure** - Unmarked and Special Use police vehicles, such as police vans, not equipped with a red light and siren will NOT be utilized in a Code 3 response. This includes any leased vehicles and personal use vehicles/motorcycles.

**[See also: OA130 – Pursuit]**

8. **Non-Emergency Use of Emergency Lights** - The emergency lights alone on a police vehicle may be used:
  - a. as a means of identifying the police vehicle to traffic violators or suspects, or
  - b. on stopped police vehicles to minimize possible traffic hazards.
9. **Non-Emergency Use of the Siren** - The use of a short burst of the siren to warn a traffic violator to pull to the curb is NOT included in emergency operations; this method should only be used when absolutely necessary.

#### **CODE 4**

14. The use of Code 4 gives the requesting Member, or the Dispatcher, control over the radio channel in use. It should be used only when a serious situation is known to exist or is about to take place.
15. Although any given situation has the potential for danger, Members must realize that by initiating a Code 4, they are potentially denying other Members access to the radio. It is essential that all Code 4 situations be conducted as quickly as possible and that the code is cancelled promptly when the situation has been diffused.
  1. **Originating Member's Duties** - The Member initiating a Code 4 will be given communication control over the radio channel until such time as the Code 4 is cancelled, or the Field Supervisor assumes control of the situation. All other Members will take direction from the originating Member.
  2. **Patrol Supervisor's Duties** - During Code 4 situations, particularly those of a very serious or prolonged nature or which involve multiple-Member response, the Patrol Supervisor will attend the scene and take control as required. Should this occur, the Patrol Supervisor will announce their arrival on the scene and

that they are now in control of the Code 4. At this time, all other Members will take direction from the Patrol Supervisor.

- a. There may be some occasions where the Patrol Supervisor attends, but does not take control. In such circumstances, the originating Member will retain control of the Code 4 until such time as it is cancelled, or the Patrol Supervisor takes control.
3. **Supervisor Taking Control** - Anytime a Patrol Supervisor, or other Supervisor, takes control of a Code 4 situation, they should announce this fact on the radio as soon as is practical to do so.
  4. **Other Members' Duties** - Other Members who are involved in the situation must refrain from communicating with anyone other than the originating Member or, if control has been relinquished, with the Patrol Supervisor or other Supervisor in control of the situation unless it is absolutely necessary.
    - a. Members who are not involved in the Code 4 situation must refrain from using the radio on any channel unless absolutely necessary. Members must also closely monitor the Code 4 situation on the radio.
    - b. **IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY, MEMBERS MUST AVOID ANY NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ON ANY CHANNEL DURING A CODE 4 SITUATION, INCLUDING ROUTINE QUERIES.**
  5. **Dispatcher's Duties** - The Dispatcher will not normally initiate a Code 4 unless it is immediately apparent that a Code 4 situation does in fact exist and that a field unit has not initiated it. In such a case, the Dispatcher will detail which Member is to assume control of the Code 4 and all other units will then take direction from that unit. Code 4 air will be broadcasted once it is initiated and, once again, once terminated.
  6. **Police Pursuits** –In accordance with SCBCTAPS policy, Members will not engage in vehicular pursuit.

[See also: OA130 – Pursuit]

## CODE 5

16. The use of Code 5 will normally be limited to situations where a high level of caution should be used as the situation or operation may be dangerous. It should be used in conjunction with a Code 4 and the Member or the Dispatcher should cite the reason and provide the details for the suspicion that a dangerous situation may exist.
  1. **Take Downs and Vehicle Stops** - Should be used where reasonable and probable grounds exist to believe that a person or persons to be dealt with pose an immediate threat to the Member or to the public. This will include situations where the deadly force option may potentially be utilized.
  2. **Justifications** - Members will consider the level of potential threat and all force options prior to initiating a Code 5.

**CODE 6**

17. The use of Code 6 is limited to situations where a hostage situation exists or may exist. During such situations Members must respond using extreme caution and must not jeopardize their safety or that of the public by forcing a confrontation.
18. During a hostage-taking situation, early containment of the scene and of all subjects involved is vital. In confirmed hostage situations, the SCBCTAPS will request the attendance of the Jurisdictional Police Department (JPD) and the JPD will assume command of the incident. SCBCTAPS plays a support role to the JPD.

**[See also: OA020 – Hostages and Barricaded Persons]**

1. **Police Dispatcher** - The Police Dispatcher, upon becoming aware of a Code 6 situation will:
  - a. sound the Alert Tone,
  - b. advise the Patrol Supervisor and the Watch Commander,
  - c. assist in the set-up of a containment perimeter as required,
  - d. contact outside resources as required, including: ambulance, fire, or other police agencies,
  - e. contact victim assistance resources, if their services may be required.

**Multiple Priority Calls**

19. If two situations of a Priority 1 level exist, units of one situation will be transferred to a TAC channel.