

Published April 12th, 2023

Many drivers have forgotten the Rules of the Road

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Police driving on Rheem Boulevard.
Photo Lamo archive

This reporter was involved in a rather disconcerting situation along Moraga Road near Ascot Drive in Moraga at around 4 p.m. March 23. There were approximately 10 or more vehicles traveling south along with mine. All were traveling at the posted speed limit of 35 mph.

I looked in the rearview mirror only to find that a Moraga Police Department vehicle was behind me with lights flashing, but no siren. I wondered what I was guilty of as I pulled over to the right shoulder, along with another driver who correctly did the same for an emergency vehicle. I was surprised to find that MPD kept on driving past me, so I wound up back on Moraga Road, this time directly behind the officer's vehicle.

the location to avoid having a suspect hear us coming," explained Chief Jon King. "Additionally, it is also possible that when the officer finished a traffic stop, they forgot to turn the lights off, which does happen occasionally."

The officer was traveling at the same speed as the rest of the cars along Moraga Road, and apparently not giving chase to anyone. "There are calls we may respond to with lights, but not use the siren as we get closer to

However, the point of this article is to note that barely any cars pulled over between Ascot Drive and the eventual stopping for the red light at the intersection of Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road (about a mile).

Vehicle code section 21806 states that when an authorized emergency vehicle which is sounding a siren and which has at least one lighted lamp exhibiting red light that is visible, drivers should immediately pull to the right-hand edge or curb of the highway, clear of any intersection.

Once the light turned green, the same group of cars either eventually turned right onto Moraga Way or drove merrily along continuing south until a few, including MPD (with lights still flashing), made a left-hand turn onto Sanders Drive.

"Unfortunately, there are many times when drivers fail to yield to emergency vehicles that are being driven with the lights and siren activated," stated King. "Drivers are distracted, may not see the emergency vehicle, or may panic and not know what to do . or there may be other reasons. Regardless, this slows the response, which may not seem like a big deal, unless we are responding to your house for an emergency. It is also very important for officers, firefighters and EMS personnel to drive defensively when responding to an emergency as while we hope drivers will yield -- and many do -- but there are some who do not or make an abrupt movement that we have to avoid. If we get in an accident, we cannot get to the emergency and help whoever is in trouble or worse."

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