

Model Policy

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<i>Subject</i> Foot Pursuit			
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a balance between protecting the safety of the public and police officers during police pursuits on foot and law enforcement's duty to enforce the law and apprehend suspects.

II. POLICY

Foot pursuits are inherently dangerous police actions. It is the policy of this department that officer and public safety shall be the overriding consideration in determining whether a foot pursuit will be initiated or continued. Foot pursuits occur in a wide variety of circumstances. Therefore, this policy is intended to provide overall direction and guidance to officers when deciding if such pursuits are warranted and how they should be conducted.

III. DEFINITIONS

Foot Pursuit: An incident where an officer chases (on foot) a person who is evading detention or arrest.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Deciding Whether to Pursue

Although it is an officer's decision to initiate a stop, it is the suspect or violator who decides to precipitate a foot pursuit by fleeing. An officer's decision to pursue on foot shall be made with an awareness of and appreciation for the risk to which the officer and others will be exposed. No officer or supervisor shall be criticized or disciplined for a decision not to engage in a foot pursuit if, in the officer's assessment, the risk exceeds that reasonably acceptable under the provisions of this and related department policy and training.

1. Where necessary, an officer may pursue persons who he or she reasonably believes have committed an act that would warrant a stop, investigative detention, or arrest.
2. In deciding whether or not to initiate a pursuit, an officer shall consider the following alternatives to foot pursuit:
 - Aerial support
 - Containment of the area
 - Canine search
 - Saturation of the area with patrol personnel
 - Apprehension at another time and place when the officer knows the identity of the subject or has other information that would likely allow for later apprehension
3. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, officers shall also consider risk factors whenever officers are acting alone, in an unfamiliar area, in an area that is hostile, such as a notorious drug trafficking location, pursuing suspects who are known to be or suspected of being armed, pursuing more than one person, unable to obtain backup in a timely manner, not in adequate physical condition to conduct a foot pursuit, unable to establish and maintain contact with the communications center (EOC), or pursuing in inclement weather, darkness, or reduced visibility conditions.

B. Initiating Officer's Responsibilities

1. Officers initiating foot pursuits shall be in field command and shall bear operational responsibility for the foot pursuit unless circumstances dictate otherwise or until relieved by a supervisor. Pursuing officers are reminded that voice transmissions while running and in other field tactical situations may be

difficult to understand and may have to be repeated.

2. The officer initiating a foot pursuit shall, as soon as practical, provide the following information to EOC:
 - Unit identifier
 - Reason for the foot pursuit
 - Officer location and direction of pursuit
 - Number of suspects and description
 - Whether or not the suspect(s) is armed

C. Foot Pursuit Coordination

1. The primary (initiating) officer shall immediately coordinate—directly or indirectly through the EOC—with secondary officers to establish a perimeter in the area to contain the suspect(s).
2. Generally, the primary officer shall not try to overtake the fleeing suspect but shall keep him in sight until sufficient manpower is available to take him into custody.
3. Assisting officers shall immediately attempt to contain the pursued suspect. Such officers shall not respond to the primary officer's location unless the suspect has been stopped and the primary officer requests assistance to take the suspect into custody.
4. When two or more officers are in pursuit, they shall not separate unless they remain in sight of each other and maintain communication, but they shall allow the lead officer to concentrate on the suspect's actions while the second officer provides backup and maintains communications with dispatch and other assisting officers.

D. Guidelines and Restrictions

1. The pursuing officer shall terminate a pursuit if so instructed by a supervisor.
2. Unless there are exigent circumstances such as an immediate threat to the safety of other officers or civilians, officers shall not engage in or continue a foot pursuit under the following conditions:
 - a. If the officer believes the danger to pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension.
 - b. If the officer becomes aware of any unanticipated circumstances that substantially increases the risk to public safety inherent in the pursuit.
 - c. While acting alone. If exigent circumstances warrant, the lone officer shall keep the suspect in sight from a safe distance and coordinating containment.
 - d. Into buildings, structures, confined spaces, or into wooded or otherwise isolated areas without sufficient backup and containment of the area. The primary officer shall stand by, radio his or her location, and await the

arrival of officers to establish a containment perimeter. At this point, the incident shall be considered a barricaded or otherwise noncompliant suspect, and officers shall consider using specialized units such as SWAT, crisis response team, aerial support, or police canines.

- e. If the officer loses possession of his firearm.
 - f. If the suspect's identity is established or other information exists that allows for the suspect's probable apprehension at a later time and there is no immediate threat to the public or police officers.
 - g. If the suspect's location is no longer known.
 - h. If primary officers lose communications with EOC or communication with backup officers is interrupted.
 - i. If an officer or third party is injured during the pursuit who requires immediate assistance and there are no other police or medical personnel able to render assistance.
 - j. If the officer loses visual contact with the suspect.
 - k. If the officer is unsure of his or her own location or direction of travel.
3. When the pursuing officer terminates the pursuit he or she shall notify EOC with his or her location and request any assistance deemed necessary.
 4. Supervisor's Responsibilities

Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor shall decide as soon as possible whether pursuit should continue.

 - a. The supervisor should allow the foot pursuit to continue if:
 - there at least two officers working in tandem and there is a reasonable belief that the suspect has committed an act that would permit the officer to detain the suspect, or
 - there is a reasonable belief that the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the public or other police officers, or
 - the pursuit does not violate provisions of this or related department policy, procedures, or training.
 - b. The supervisor shall terminate a foot pursuit at any time he or she concludes that the danger to pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the suspect.
 - c. The supervisor shall take command, control, and coordinate the foot pursuit as soon as possible.
 - As in any tactical incident, the supervisor does not have to be physically present to

assert control over the situation.

- Once the foot pursuit has concluded, the supervisor shall proceed to the terminus of the pursuit to assert post-pursuit discipline and control as needed.

E. EOC Responsibilities

1. Upon being notified that a foot pursuit is in progress, communications personnel shall immediately notify the field supervisor and provide all available information.
2. Communications personnel shall carry out the following responsibilities during a foot pursuit:
 - a. Receive, record, and immediately report incoming information on the pursuit, the officers involved and the suspect.
 - b. Control all radio communications and clear the radio channels of all nonemergency traffic.
 - c. Coordinate and dispatch backup assistance and air support units under the direction of the field supervisor.

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