



SUBJECT: **Pursuit Operations**  
TECH CHANGE: June 13, 2023  
DATE: January 15, 2021  
SUPERSEDES: GO 4.1.20 dated September 21, 2020

GENERAL  
ORDER  
NUMBER  
**4.1.20**

## I. Policy

Sworn personnel may engage in a pursuit, as defined in GO 1.1.01, *Vocabulary for Department Directives*, when the facts and circumstances, coupled with their training, experience and available equipment justify the pursuit. Sworn personnel shall terminate pursuits when the risk outweighs the justification for immediate apprehension of the suspect.

## II. Pursuit Responsibilities

All personnel involved in a pursuit shall continually evaluate the nature and seriousness of the offense(s) against the risk of initiating and continuing emergency vehicle operations and shall recognize the safety of the public is a primary concern. Concerns regarding an ongoing pursuit shall be immediately communicated to the chain of command and the pursuit commander. Once a pursuit has been declared, a sworn supervisor shall determine if the pursuit should continue and shall broadcast that determination over the radio. If a sworn supervisor does not broadcast the determination to cease or continue the pursuit, **Operational Communications** shall call for any on-duty supervisor to respond. If an on-duty sworn supervisor is not available, **Operational Communications** shall notify an off-duty supervisor. Any pursuit commander or sworn supervisor shall have the authority to terminate the pursuit.

## III. Pursuit Commander Responsibilities

- A. The pursuit commander is responsible for directly ordering or controlling personnel and resources during pursuit operations. The pursuit commander may be the initiating trooper, a secondary unit, or a sworn supervisor/commander. The pursuit commander shall assume and retain pursuit command until relieved, the pursuit is terminated, or the need to transfer pursuit command is necessary to complete the objectives of the pursuit.
- B. The pursuit commander shall:
  1. Verbally declare or acknowledge designation as the pursuit commander.
  2. Designate and direct primary and secondary units and position support units.
  3. Assess the need for air support and request air support if necessary.
  4. When an air unit is in position, determine the need for continued emergency operation by pursuing units and advise involved personnel.

5. Direct all communications with any departmental or other agency air units.
6. Maintain command of the pursuit whether departmental or other agency air units are used.
7. Notify the **Watch Center/Duty Office** of the conclusion or termination of the pursuit.
8. Complete the department *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention* form in TraCS.

#### **IV. Primary Unit Responsibilities**

The primary unit shall:

- A. Verbally declare or acknowledge designation as the primary unit when two or more department units are in pursuit. The primary unit is the lead or first police vehicle in a pursuit, generally the initiating unit.
- B. Notify the respective **Operational Communications Center** a pursuit is underway, and provide updates of the following information:
  1. Location and direction of travel.
  2. Description of the pursued vehicle.
  3. Speed of the pursued vehicle.
  4. Reason for the initial contact.
  5. The number of occupants known to be in the vehicle.
  6. Hazards to sworn personnel.
  7. Traffic conditions.
  8. Criminal/traffic violations.

#### **V. Secondary Unit Responsibilities**

The secondary unit shall:

- A. Verbally declare or acknowledge designation as a secondary unit when two or more department units are in pursuit. The secondary unit is the police vehicle(s) directly behind the primary unit.
- B. Assume primary unit responsibilities when requested to do so by the primary unit,

- pursuit commander, or a sworn supervisor.
- C. Assist with authorized intervention (Section XII) as directed by the pursuit commander.
  - D. Provide backup for the primary unit.

## **VI. Support Unit Responsibilities**

- A. A support unit is a law enforcement unit not directly behind the pursued vehicle which is available to assist or engage as directed by the primary unit, pursuit commander or sworn supervisor.
- B. A support unit shall:
  - 1. Verbally acknowledge assignments given by the pursuit commander.
  - 2. Be available to assume a primary or secondary role as assigned.
  - 3. Assist with the authorized intervention (Section XII) as directed by the pursuit commander.
  - 4. Maintain the assigned position unless otherwise ordered by the pursuit commander.

## **VII. Air Unit Assistance**

- A. When a DPS Air Unit provides assistance, the aircrew shall:
  - 1. Advise the respective **Operational Communications Center** of the aircraft's estimated time of arrival and when in position to monitor the pursuit.
  - 2. Monitor the pursuit and, when requested by the pursuit commander, advise of the pursuit location, direction of travel, any traffic and/or road hazards, and any other condition that may hinder the ability to safely conduct the pursuit.
  - 3. Provide logistical support and emergency medical services at the direction of the pursuit commander.
- B. When assistance is provided by another agency's air unit, **Operational Communications** shall relay communications between the air unit and the pursuit commander while the pursuit commander continues control of the pursuit, unless the involved air unit can communicate directly with the pursuit commander, and **Operational Communications** is able to monitor the communications.

### **VIII. Operational Communications Responsibilities**

- A. If a unit broadcasts an attempt to stop a vehicle that fails to yield and the trooper has not declared pursuit, the dispatcher shall ask if the trooper is in pursuit.
- B. Once a pursuit is initiated, **Operational Communications** personnel shall:
  - 1. Clear the district radio frequency.
  - 2. Monitor the pursuit and broadcast information to all participating units and notify affected agencies.
  - 3. Inform the appropriate **Operational Communications Center**, sworn supervisors and the **Watch Center/Duty Office** of the pursuit.
  - 4. Confirm the need for an air support unit with the pursuit commander.
  - 5. Follow directives and requests of the pursuit commander.
  - 6. When a pursuit enters one district from another, ensure all pursuit communications are transferred to the receiving district and information regarding the reason for the pursuit and any driving or criminal behavior is relayed to the receiving district.
  - 7. Obtain an incident/Department Report (DR) number and assign it to the pursuit, if one has not already been generated by a trooper for the pursuit in the Flex Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

### **IX. Pursuit Procedures**

- A. Sworn personnel shall terminate pursuits when the risks outweigh the need for immediate apprehension of the suspect. The following factors shall be considered when assessing conditions during a pursuit:
  - 1. Danger to life and property.
  - 2. The necessity to immediately apprehend the suspect.
  - 3. Whether the identity of the suspect is known or unknown.
  - 4. The nature of the crime or infraction prior to the initiation of the pursuit.
  - 5. The trooper's training, abilities and experience.
  - 6. The suspect's and trooper's vehicle capabilities.

7. The location, terrain, population, traffic congestion, weather and the presence of intersections.
  8. The trooper's familiarity with the area.
  9. The presence of law enforcement aircraft to assist with the pursuit.
  10. The presence of unmarked, canine or tactical units to assist in the apprehension.
  11. The availability of law enforcement personnel to provide assistance.
- B. Sworn personnel driving department units in pursuit operations shall have activated red or red and blue emergency lights and sirens during the entire pursuit.
- C. Either the primary unit or pursuit commander may assign a secondary unit to broadcast updated pursuit information.
- D. All radio traffic shall be on the involved district's frequency. All units involved in the pursuit shall provide necessary and urgent information to **Operational Communications** and other involved units. Unnecessary communications and communications on car-to-car frequencies are prohibited during pursuit operations.
- E. Sworn personnel should not drive the wrong direction on a controlled access highway or one-way road during a pursuit unless the perceived danger to the public justifies the necessity to stop the threat or the trooper is attempting to use a PIT maneuver to stop a vehicle which is a threat to other drivers.
- F. Sworn personnel operating department vehicles involved in a pursuit shall not pass other pursuit units without clear acknowledgment from other units of the intent to pass.
- G. The number of secondary and support units involved in a pursuit shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the pursuit commander or a sworn supervisor.
- H. When ordered to terminate a pursuit, all involved personnel shall immediately:
1. Deactivate all emergency lights and sirens and obey all traffic control devices.
  2. Discontinue actively following the suspect vehicle.
    - a. Sworn personnel are prohibited from continuing to follow or parallel, or actively intercept a suspect vehicle once the order to terminate has been given.
    - b. This does not prohibit a follow-up investigation to apprehend the suspect without a vehicular pursuit.

3. Notify **Operational Communications** they have terminated their involvement and identify their location.

I. Sworn personnel operating department vehicles equipped with mobile video equipment in pursuit operations shall, at the first opportunity, ensure that both the equipment's audio and video capabilities are activated and recording during the entire event.

#### **X. Crossing District Borders**

When a pursuit enters one district from another, the district receiving the pursuit shall assume pursuit command when sufficient units are in place in the receiving district for efforts to safeguard public safety. A supervisor shall determine how many units from the initiating district will continue to follow to conclusion.

#### **XI. Additional Safety Considerations**

A. Unmarked units and motorcycles shall be replaced by appropriately marked units as soon as practical.

B. Units containing non-sworn occupants shall avoid participating in pursuits. As soon as practical, any such units shall be replaced by units with sworn occupants only.

#### **XII. Authorized Intervention**

A. When pursuing a vehicle, troopers may use intervention techniques designed to direct a pursued vehicle's direction, forcibly stop and immobilize the pursued vehicle's ability to continue, or to remotely track the suspect vehicle, based upon the trooper's available equipment, training, ability and experience.

B. During pursuit operations, troopers should consider initiating a traffic break prior to implementing PIT/VIP maneuvers and/or pursuit intervention devices.

C. When circumstances permit, troopers shall notify **Operational Communications** prior to and immediately following the deployment of authorized intervention techniques and/or devices.

D. Sworn personnel shall use intervention techniques and devices consistent with department policy, procedure, and training, even when another law enforcement agency requests that we use other intervention techniques or devices.

E. In any pursuit where deadly physical force is justified, the trooper may use the degree of force which is necessary to stop the vehicle.

- F. Refer to GO 4.1.10, *Use of Force*; GO 4.1.21, *Pursuit Intervention Devices*; GO 4.1.110, *Roadblocks and Travel Restrictions*; HPD Order 2.56, *Use of Tire Deflation Devices*; and ARS §§ 13-409 and 13-410.

### **XIII. Interaction with Other Jurisdictions**

- A. If responsibility for continuing a pursuit is assumed by another law enforcement agency, only the initiating trooper or their designee may proceed to the termination point to provide information which may be required for the arrest. A sworn supervisor may allow for additional units to continue with the pursuit when deemed appropriate and feasible.
- B. Sworn personnel shall not participate in other agency pursuits unless specifically requested to do so by that agency, and their participation is approved by a supervisor.
- C. Sworn personnel shall not participate in other agency pursuits when the basis for the pursuit or related circumstances are prohibited by or are inconsistent with this order. Involved personnel shall continually evaluate the changing circumstances to determine if the risks encountered during the other agency pursuit warrant continued involvement by department personnel.

### **XIV. Reporting and Review**

- A. Pursuits shall be documented under an incident number obtained by **Operational Communications**, or an involved trooper in the Flex CAD.
- B. All sworn personnel and aircrew in a pursuit shall, within two working days, provide a report of their participation to the pursuit commander by completing a supplemental report in the Flex Records Management System (RMS) and completing their portion of the *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* in TraCS.
- C. The pursuit commander shall, within 7 days from the date of the pursuit, complete a *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* in TraCS and complete an incident report in Flex RMS. The pursuit commander's *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* shall be submitted for chain of command review and comment.
- D. A copy of the CAD history and any related **Operational Communications** recordings can be accessed by the involved employee's sworn supervisor in Flex following the pursuit.
- E. Supervisors and captains in the pursuit commander's chain of command shall review the **Operational Communications** recording, CAD history, Radio Log, any available video of the pursuit, and the *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* for accuracy and completeness and determine if the pursuit was conducted within department guidelines. Should the communications recording need to be retained longer than six months, the individual retaining the recording shall document the extended retention

- in a supplemental report to the original DR and place the recording in **Property and Evidence** for storage. Tactical, procedural, training, equipment, or policy concerns shall be noted and recommendations made on the *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report*.
- F. Any level in the pursuit commander's chain of command may, at their discretion, conduct an after-action debriefing of the pursuit with the involved personnel. This debriefing shall be noted in the *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* review section.
  - G. If no concerns are apparent and no further actions are required, the bureau commander is the final reviewer.
  - H. *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Reports* expressing concerns or comments as outlined above shall be forwarded through the pursuit commander's chain of command to the appropriate division.
  - I. Following chain of command review, and no longer than 30 days from the date of the pursuit, *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* forms shall be accessible in TraCS by **Research and Planning** for data collection via a WebFOCUS report.
  - J. Completed *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report* forms shall be accessible by the Tactical Driving Coordinator for use in assessing existing training and the development of new training programs.
  - K. **Research and Planning** shall provide trend analysis to executive staff on a quarterly basis. After executive review of the trend analysis, the information should be disseminated down the chain-of-command.

## **XV. Critical Incidents Involving Pursuits**

- A. Pursuits identified as meeting the criteria of a critical incident shall be investigated, reported, and reviewed in accordance with the *Critical Incident Manual* (DPS 932-00235).
- B. Only statistical data and general information shall be completed on the *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Report*. The narrative, supervisory, and command reviews shall not be completed due to the "review" portions of the report being disabled when a pursuit is deemed a critical incident.
- C. The **Major Crimes** district commander shall, within 14 days from the date of the pursuit, verify the TraCS *Pursuit Vehicle Intervention Reports* have been completed by all involved sworn personnel. These reports shall be accessible in TraCS within 30 days from the date of the pursuit by **Research and Planning** for data collection.