



# Clayton County Police Department

# PROCEDURES

Subject <b>FOOT PURSUITS</b>		Procedure # <b>D21</b>	
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## I. PURPOSE

To provide procedures and guidelines for personnel, specifically police officers, E911/Communications dispatchers and their supervisors, as to when a foot pursuit (bush bond) is initiated, continued or terminated.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) to engage, participate in or manage foot pursuits in a tactical and efficient manner, and in accordance with applicable law and departmental procedures. These procedures will be utilized, regardless of the involvement of any other resources, such as the Aviation Unit (helicopter, drone) or the Canine Unit (Canine Team).

## III. DEFINITIONS

Apprehension Mode: The pursuit of person(s) wherein the intent of the pursuing officer(s) is to detain or take the person(s) into custody.

Containment Mode: The isolation of a person within a confined/controlled area, large or small, with the intent of preventing the person's escape.

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

## IV. PROCEDURES

### A. Prevention of Foot Pursuits

1. While officers cannot prevent suspects from choosing to flee, they can make it more difficult or reduce the likelihood of flight by taking simple preventive measures. This includes maintaining awareness that a suspect may consider escaping and looking for early signs of escape, to include changes in body language (e.g., glancing at a potential escape route, moving a foot in one direction, or shifting their weight when deciding whether or not to flee).
2. Officers should also consider how they can diminish the options for flight. This may include approaching a suspect when they are situated in front of a barrier such as a building, fence, hill, or similar location. Approaching a suspect standing in an open area, such as an alley or field, may provide them with an unnecessary flight advantage.

3. When conducting traffic stops, officers often have discretion selecting a site for the pullover location. Stopping the vehicle next to a natural or man-made barrier may reduce the potential avenues for flight.

#### B. Legal Basis to Pursue

An officer has the authority to stop an individual when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the person has committed, or is about to commit, a criminal offense or the officer otherwise has lawful grounds to detain or arrest the subject. However, flight alone does not constitute sufficient legal justification to detain or arrest an individual. Flight must be coupled with one (1) or more other factors that together provide sufficient justification to support reasonable suspicion to support an investigatory detention. The existence of probable cause supports engaging or continuing foot pursuit to a greater degree than the existence of reasonable suspicion alone.

#### C. Decision to Pursue

1. Foot pursuits are inherently dangerous and require good judgment, sound tactics, and heightened safety awareness. The safety of the pursuing officer(s), fellow officers who may respond, and the public is the primary concern.
2. Officers initiating a foot pursuit or implementing containment procedures, shall act reasonably and continue to assess and re-evaluate whether the need for apprehension justifies the safety risk based upon the evolving circumstances of the foot pursuit. Officers shall weigh the necessity of immediate apprehension (including, but not limited to, the severity of the crime) against the danger to the pursuing officer(s), the fleeing person and the public.
3. When deciding to engage, not to engage, or discontinue a foot pursuit, the officer's decision must be evaluated based on the facts and totality of the circumstances known to the officer at the time the decision was made rather than evaluated using the benefit of hindsight.
4. Even though the decision to pursue must normally be made quickly under unpredictable and dynamic circumstances, officers shall consider a number of factors, such as alternatives to foot pursuit and safety concerns before a foot pursuit is initiated and/or continued.
5. Reasonable Alternatives to Foot Pursuit

Officers shall take into consideration whether reasonable alternatives to foot pursuit exist, based upon the circumstances (e.g., location, surroundings, seriousness, and urgency of the situation) and resources available, such as:

- a. Containment of the Area: The use of area containment may be advisable in situations where the suspect flees into a building. In these situations, securing the building with backup officers followed by a systematic search is generally preferable.
- b. Saturation of the Area: Saturating the area with officers provides the opportunity to contain the suspect, block the suspect's paths of escape, and intercept the suspect through coordination of officer movements.
- c. Canine Search: A Canine Team may be used to search buildings, open fields, contained areas, and locations that provide cover and concealment options for suspects.
- d. Aerial Support: The Aviation Unit (helicopter or drone), if available, may be used to pursue the suspect in and around neighborhoods, in wooded areas, when dark, and in related situations where cover is readily available and the chances of ambush are more likely.
- e. Thermal Imaging or other Sensing Technology: Infrared cameras can be used when in pursuit of a suspect on foot, to better track them in the dark. The suspect's body heat is easily seen from a helicopter or drone, which can guide officers to the suspect's location.

- f. Apprehension at Another Time: The suspect's identity is known or there is information available that would likely allow for later apprehension, and the need for immediate apprehension does not appear to outweigh the risk of continuing the foot pursuit.

## 6. Safety Concerns

There are a number of safety issues that officers should consider before they initiate and/or continue a foot pursuit. These safety issues shall include but are not limited to the following:

- a. The officer is acting alone and/or backup is not available in a timely manner.
- b. The officer is unfamiliar with the area (e.g., obstacles, hiding places, terrain, other factors that are disadvantageous), or the area is hostile towards law enforcement personnel.
- c. The suspect is known or believed to be armed with a weapon.
- d. An officer pursuing multiple suspects does not reasonably believe they would be able to control the suspects should a confrontation occur.
- e. The officer is unsure of their location, or the suspect's location and/or direction of travel.
- f. The officer loses radio contact with the dispatcher and backup officers.
- g. The officer loses possession of their firearm and/or other essential equipment.
- h. The officer becomes aware of circumstances that increases the risk to officers or the public (e.g., baiting to ambush).
- i. The officer or a third party is injured during the foot pursuit, requiring immediate assistance and there are no other emergency personnel able to render assistance.
- j. The officer's physical capability to safely control the suspect once apprehended (e.g., out of shape, injury, fatigue).
- k. The officer's ability to safely continue the pursuit is impaired by inclement weather, darkness, or other conditions.
- l. When two (2) or more officers become separated, lose visual contact with one another or obstacles separate them to the degree that they cannot immediately assist each other, the officers should consider transitioning from apprehension mode to containment mode.
- m. When the suspect enters a building, structure, confined space or a wooded or otherwise isolated area and there are insufficient officers to provide backup and containment. The officer should consider discontinuing the pursuit and coordinating containment pending the arrival of sufficient officers.

## D. Apprehension Mode versus Containment Mode

1. Depending on the circumstances and the rapidly changing nature of any given foot pursuit, officers must quickly assess and then decide a reasonable course of action. This may include transitioning from apprehension mode to containment mode or vice versa.

For instance, when an officer loses sight of the suspect, the danger increases significantly, and the threat of ambush becomes greater. When this occurs, the officer should consider transitioning from "pursuit to apprehend" to "pursuit to contain".

2. In the transition to containment mode, officers shall perform the following tasks, when feasible:
  - a. Use protective cover or a position of advantage near where the suspect was last seen;
  - b. Broadcast the suspect's description and last direction of travel or current location;
  - c. Establish a perimeter;
  - d. Evaluate and request additional resources; and
  - e. Perform any other tasks to maximize efficiency and ensure officer safety.

## E. Initiating Officer Responsibilities

1. Early information and communication by officers is essential so that adequate resources can be effectively deployed. Officers initiating a foot pursuit will immediately notify the dispatcher via radio, and broadcast the following information as soon as practicable:
  - a. Officer's assigned radio number and notification that a foot pursuit has been initiated;
  - b. Location and the suspect's direction of travel and updates as the foot pursuit continues;
  - c. The specific reason for the foot pursuit (e.g., probable cause for a known criminal charge or articulated reasonable suspicion for the current circumstances);
  - d. The number and detailed descriptions of the suspect(s) (identity, if known); and
  - e. Any known hazards, such as if the suspect(s) is/are known or believed to be armed.
2. Unless relieved by another officer or a supervisor, the initiating officer shall be responsible for requesting resources and coordinating the progress of the foot pursuit.
3. Officers should be mindful that radio transmissions made while running may be difficult to understand and may need to be repeated.
4. Absent extenuating circumstances, any officer unable to promptly and effectively broadcast this information should consider transitioning to containment mode. If the foot pursuit is discontinued for any reason, immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.
5. **The pursuing officer(s) shall terminate a foot pursuit if directed to so by a supervisor.** When a foot pursuit terminates, the officer will notify the dispatcher of their location and the status of the pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody or lost sight of suspect), and will direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for officers, the suspect or other persons.

## F. Dispatcher Responsibilities

Upon being notified or becoming aware that a foot pursuit is in progress, the dispatcher shall, as soon as practicable:

1. Clear the affected radio channel of non-emergency traffic;
2. Receive, record, and immediately broadcast incoming information regarding the foot pursuit, involved officers, and the suspect;
3. Ensure that a supervisor is aware of the foot pursuit;
4. Relay all pertinent information to responding personnel;
5. Contact additional resources as indicated or requested;
6. Coordinate response of additional resources to assist with the foot pursuit; and
7. Record relevant information in CAD and assign an incident case number, when requested.

## G. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor involved will immediately acknowledge, via radio, that they are aware of the active foot pursuit and decide as soon as possible whether the foot pursuit should continue, and make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information necessary to direct responding resources (e.g., Canine Team, helicopter, drone) and to take command, control and coordination of the foot pursuit.
2. The supervisor will continuously assess the situation in order to ensure the foot pursuit is conducted in accordance with departmental procedures.

3. The supervisor shall respond to the area whenever possible; however, the supervisor does not need to be physically present to exercise control over the foot pursuit.
4. A supervisor shall respond to a foot pursuit whenever the following occurs:
  - a. Injury to an officer, bystander, or suspect;
  - b. Suspect enters a residence, building or structure, or dwelling;
  - c. Any use of force;
  - d. When the suspect is armed with a weapon;
  - e. When the suspect is apprehended; or
  - f. When any other exigent or unusual circumstances exist.
5. The supervisor shall terminate a foot pursuit when the danger to pursuing officers or the public appears to unreasonably outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect.

#### H. Assisting Officer Responsibilities

1. Whenever any officer announces that they are engaged in a foot pursuit, all other officers should minimize non-essential radio traffic to permit the involved officers maximum access to the radio frequency.
2. Any officer who is in a position to intercept a fleeing suspect, or who can assist the pursuing officer with the apprehension of the suspect, shall act reasonably and in accordance with departmental procedures, based upon available information and their own observations.

#### I. Foot Pursuit Coordination

1. The supervisor, should as soon as practical, coordinate with the involved officers and the dispatcher to establish a perimeter around the area of the suspect's last known location, and request additional resources and/or assistance from the Aviation or Canine Unit, if necessary.
2. Assisting officers should respond to the appropriate locations of the incident based on the information provided and attempt to contain the pursued suspect.
3. Upon arrival to the foot pursuit area or to a directed perimeter position, assisting officers shall:
  - a. Notify the Dispatcher of their exact location;
  - b. Park, shut off and secure their patrol vehicle to minimize scent contamination by engine exhaust and to prevent unauthorized access into their patrol vehicle;
  - c. Exit their patrol vehicles to establish and maintain 360-degree awareness, both visually and audibly, for unknown threats that may come from other directions; and
  - d. Limit their movement around the area, preferably remaining in place, in order to preserve the scent for potential canine tracking. Do not walk or drive through the perimeter or canine track path.
  - e. Maintain perimeter position, unless specifically directed to relocate by a supervisor, the Aviation Unit, etc., or when they become actively involved in the foot pursuit. **Note:** Failure to maintain perimeter positioning will compromise the integrity of the perimeter.
  - f. Keep all radio traffic to a minimum unless they are actively involved in the foot pursuit, or providing up-to-date information that is related to the foot pursuit.
4. When two (2) or more officers are in foot pursuit, they should:
  - a. Maintain communication with one another; and
  - b. Work as a team to safely contain, locate, and apprehend the suspect within the perimeter.

## 5. Aviation Unit Tactical Deployment

See CCPD SOP: *D22: Aviation Unit* and *D33: Unmanned Aircraft Systems/Vehicles/Drones*.

### a. Aviation Unit Request and/or Response

- 1) A supervisor may request the Aviation Unit to assist with the foot pursuit for aerial support via helicopter or drone, when available; or
- 2) The Aviation Unit may respond via helicopter without notification.

### b. Responsibilities of the Aviation Unit

Upon arriving in the area of an active foot pursuit, the Aviation Unit shall perform via helicopter or drone, any or all of the following:

- 1) Evaluate the positioning of officers on the perimeter;
- 2) Direct officers to locations to establish the perimeter or to maintain the integrity of the perimeter, as needed;
- 3) Provide updates related to the suspect's direction of travel and/or active canine tracking; and
- 4) Assist in locating and/or reacquiring a visual of the suspect and relaying this information to officers on the perimeter.

## 6. Canine Team Tactical Deployment

A Canine Team will consist of a Canine Handler and a Police Service Dog (PSD).

See also CCPD SOP: *D34: Canine Operations*.

### a. Requesting a Canine Team

- 1) An on-duty Canine Team may be requested by a supervisor to assist with the foot pursuit for canine tracking; or
- 2) When an on-duty Canine Team is unavailable, an off-duty Canine Team may be requested by a supervisor involved in the foot pursuit, dependent upon the totality of the circumstances.

### b. Canine Team Arrival at Scene

- 1) The initiating officer, or designee, will indicate and explain to the arriving Canine Team, where responding officers have physically been, specifically if officers have been within the immediate area of the canine track path and/or start location.
- 2) The supervisor may direct a physically-capable backup officer to assist the Canine Team throughout the canine track. The initiating officer may or may not be this officer.
  - (a) The backup officer must be able to physically keep up with the Canine Team's movements and speed throughout the canine track.
  - (b) If for any reason the initiating officer cannot function as the backup officer, another officer will be summoned to be the backup officer for the Canine Team.

### c. Backup Officer Responsibilities for the Canine Team

During and throughout an active canine track the backup officer assigned to the Canine Team will follow the directions of the Canine Handler and perform the following:

- 1) Handle all communications between the Canine Team, on-scene supervisor, Aviation Unit personnel and the perimeter officers; advise the dispatcher, via radio, of all updates on the canine track location and direction of travel.

- 2) Keep up with the Canine Team, as the Canine Team will not slow down and cannot afford to wait for the backup officer to catch up.
  - (a) The backup officer will remain close to the Canine Handler in a position determined by the Canine Handler.
  - (b) The backup officer shall not move ahead of the Canine Team unless directed to do so by the Canine Handler.
- 3) Ensure the safety of the Canine Team by being observant of all surroundings.
  - (a) Do not watch the Canine Team and/or track, scan to prevent tunnel vision.
  - (b) Maintain a tactical perspective of the environment; watch and listen for any movements or suspect(s) hiding in the area.
  - (c) Do not backlight the Canine Handler or the PSD.
- 4) Do not get between the Canine Handler and the PSD, or the suspect, including when the suspect takes flight.
- 5) In case of injury to the Canine Handler, the backup officer is responsible for obtaining help, and being aware of the PSD. The backup officer should not attempt to render aid, unless requested to do so by the Canine Handler, or when it is apparent that the failure to respond to the Canine Handler would result in death or serious bodily injury. The backup officer shall:
  - (a) Follow the Canine Handler instructions regarding ways to render aid, if possible;
  - (b) Allow the Canine Handler to secure the PSD, if possible;
  - (c) Make contact with another Canine Handler to remove the PSD or control its actions, if feasible;
  - (d) Lure the PSD into the canine transport vehicle or other police vehicle using snares or other safety equipment if possible; or
  - (e) Perform other reasonable actions which allow aid to the injured Canine Handler while minimizing injury to the PSD, if possible.
- 6) Do not get involved in the canine apprehension unless directed or requested to do so by the Canine Handler.
  - (a) Failure to do so may result in injury to the backup officer.
  - (b) Once directed or requested to do so by the Canine Handler, the backup officer will handcuff and search the suspect, then move the suspect out of range from the PSD.
- 7) Tactical canine deployment may result in a use of force. Officers will use only that force that is reasonably necessary to effectively bring an incident under control while protecting their lives and others. See also CCPD SOP: *A5: Use of Force*.
- 8) When the foot pursuit terminates, the backup officer will:
  - (a) Notify the dispatcher of their location and the status of the foot pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect); and
  - (b) Direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for officers, the suspect or other persons.
- 9) Immediately upon conclusion of the canine track, the dispatcher shall inform involved personnel to standby for a roll call. The dispatcher shall conduct the roll call, prior to any involved personnel return to their duty assignments and other radio channels.

- 10) Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor should promptly proceed to the termination point to conduct a debriefing with the involved officer(s), when feasible.

J. Documentation Reporting Requirements

1. At the conclusion of a foot pursuit as described by this procedure, the initiating officer, or assigned primary officer, shall document and articulate in the corresponding *Incident Report* in the Department's Record Management System (RMS) their reason(s) for engaging in a foot pursuit, as well as the outcome of the foot pursuit, and any injuries sustained by officer(s) and/or suspect(s).
2. Assisting officers taking an active role in the apprehension of the suspect shall complete *Supplemental Reports* in RMS as necessary or directed.
3. The supervisor reviewing the report(s) will make a determination that the foot pursuit appears to be in compliance with departmental procedures or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.
4. Any *Use of Force Report* shall be reported and documented in compliance with CCPD SOP: *A5: Use of Force*.

V. CANCELLATION

This procedure amends and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: *D21: Foot Pursuits*, dated June 25, 2019.