



Colorado Springs Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure

DL-902-01 Vehicle Blocks

Section 900 – Vehicle Procedures

Effective Date: 9/25/2024

Supersedes Date: 10/6/2023

.01 Purpose

The purpose of the procedure is to describe the circumstances in which an officer's vehicle can be used to block a non-law enforcement vehicle.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#)

.03 Definitions

Contact Block: The deliberate use of a police vehicle to make and keep positive contact with the front and/or rear of a stationary suspect vehicle for the purpose of restricting its movement to prevent escape or a vehicle pursuit.

Non-Contact Block: The positioning of a police vehicle as close as possible to the front and/or rear of a stationary suspect vehicle without contacting the vehicle, for the purpose of restricting its movement to prevent escape or a vehicle pursuit.

.04 Procedure

Vehicle blocking techniques may be a viable option for safely preventing the escape of an individual in a vehicle when conducted as described in this directive and in a manner consistent with CSPD training. Vehicle blocks are used to restrict a vehicle's movement to prevent escape or a vehicle pursuit.

Considerations Before Using Vehicle Block

- The use of any vehicle block is a detention, and officers must have the legal authority to do so. Legal authority is based on information known to the officer at the time the vehicle block is conducted.

- Prior to using or attempting to use a vehicle block, officers must evaluate the need for an immediate apprehension, along with weighing the risks a vehicle block poses to themselves, other officers, the community, and the offender. Officers should then decide the best course of action, which may include choosing not to use the technique.
- Officers should consider whether the use of a mechanical tire deflator is appropriate in the situation in lieu of or in conjunction with a vehicle block as described in DL-1501-20 Mechanical Tire Deflator.

Identification as Law Enforcement

Officers will ensure they are readily identifiable as law enforcement prior to attempting any type of vehicle block. Unless otherwise noted in this procedure, officers will give advance notice of their presence. This may be accomplished by any of the following with a preference for incorporating as many from this list as reasonably possible:

- Operating a marked police vehicle
- Wearing a uniform that readily identifies the officer
- Activating the vehicle's emergency lights just prior to executing the block
- Verbally identifying themselves, with preference being given to use of an amplified public address system

Officers are not required to give advance notice of their presence (e.g., verbal notification, use of emergency lights/sirens) when doing so would unduly place officers at risk of injury and/or would create a risk of injury or death to other persons. When advance notice cannot be given in a situation where a vehicle block is used, the officer will document the reasons why in the case report.

Non-Contact Blocks

A non-contact block is intended to be used only for low-risk suspects (e.g., driver passed out behind the wheel of a car with a reason to detain).

Officers who use a non-contact block may need to immediately transition to a contact block to limit damage and potential injury caused by a driver taking overt actions to defeat the technique (e.g., engages the transmission and accelerates). An officer does not need supervisory approval to transition to a contact block in this circumstance.

Contact Blocks

Authorized Personnel

Contact blocks are intended to be used by officers assigned to identified specialized units (Tactical Enforcement Unit (TEU), Motor Vehicle Theft, Fugitive) who have successfully completed the contact block training provided by specially trained members of the TEU.

Authorized Use

Contact blocks will only be employed during a planned operation and require authorization by a lieutenant who has been briefed on the suspect's risk factors.

Contact blocks will be used in appropriate situations by authorized personnel to apprehend *felony suspects* deemed to be high risk who have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Believed to be armed
- Violence committed during current or past actions, including threatened use of violence against police and threats to the public based on past behavior
- Suspect has a known history of or makes substantial steps to use a vehicle to escape (e.g., intentionally ramming police vehicles.)

Exigent Circumstances

Exigent circumstances may dictate that officers take immediate action to execute a contact block without having received prior approval. Exigent circumstances may include transitioning from a non-contact block to a contact block when the driver takes overt actions attempting defeat the technique. In such a situation, the officer applying the technique will be required to justify the exigency that led to their actions.

Training Records

The TEU instructor responsible for providing contact block training will provide the names of those who successfully completed the training to the department's in-service sergeant or officer so that information can be included in the officer's training files.

Reporting Requirements

Officers must describe vehicle blocks in an official police report detailing the manner and reasons for the use of the technique.