



Colorado Springs Police Department General Order

904 Vehicle Pursuits

Section 900 – Police Vehicles

Effective Date: 12/10/2024

Supersedes Date: 8/28/2023

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define when officers may engage in pursuits, the conditions governing pursuits, and the safety precautions necessary to reduce the inherent dangers of a pursuit.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 500 Use of Force](#)

[GO 510 Reportable Force](#)

[GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#)

[GO 1106 Deadly Force, Death, or Life-Threatening Incidents](#)

[DL-904-01 Forced Stop Methods in Pursuits](#)

[DL-1000-02 Law Enforcement Decision-Making](#)

[DL-1710-01 Critical Incident Review Committee](#)

.03 Discussion

Vehicle pursuits present hazards and risks that can be life-threatening. While it is the duty and responsibility of department personnel to apprehend suspects, officers must realize that apprehension is seldom more important than the safety of the pursuing officers and the public. Each pursuit will ultimately be judged upon the objective reasonableness of officers' actions.

.04 Policy

It is the policy of the Colorado Springs Police Department to protect the public from unnecessary risk by weighing the need to immediately apprehend a subject who unlawfully flees from law enforcement against the risk the pursuit poses to the public. Regardless of other circumstances,

officers must drive with due regard for the safety of all persons as dictated in C.R.S. § 42-4-108 and [GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#).

The use of a forced stop method is a use of physical force subject to the requirements of [GO 500 Use of Force](#), and requires a use of force report and review as described in [GO 510 Reportable Force](#).

.05 Definitions

Authorized Emergency Vehicle: A **department** vehicle equipped with operable emergency equipment as designated by state law.

Boxing-in Maneuver: Positioning law enforcement vehicle(s) around suspect vehicle in a coordinated attempt to slow the suspect vehicle to a stop.

Deadly Force: Any use of force that creates a substantial risk of causing **life-threatening injury or death**.

Evasive Driving Tactics: Occurs when an operator of a motor vehicle, who has received a visual or audible signal, such as an emergency light or siren, from a police officer driving a police vehicle directing the driver to bring their vehicle to a stop, willfully increases their speed, extinguishes the vehicle's lights, or makes other overt actions designed to avoid apprehension.

Forced Stop Method: In a pursuit, the methods and tactics used to physically stop a moving vehicle evading police. Authorized techniques in a pursuit include: the Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) maneuver, boxing-in maneuver, roadblocks, and ramming.

***Life-Threatening Injury:* Serious bodily injury which, in the opinion of a physician involved in their treatment, is likely to result in the death of the injured person.**

Managing Supervisor: The sergeant who actively monitors and manages a pursuit.

***Motor vehicle:* Has the same meaning as the definition in C.R.S. § 42-6-102.**

Paralleling: Following a pursuit by driving a police vehicle on a nearby street in the same general direction as pursuing vehicles.

Physical Force: The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents, or weapons to another person.

Pursuit: An active attempt by a police officer operating a police vehicle to stop a moving motor vehicle whose driver is:

- a) Attempting to avoid apprehension through evasive driving tactics, or
- b) Taking actions while operating a motor vehicle that present an immediate threat of **life-threatening** injury or death to a person other than the driver, or
- c) Failing to stop after a reasonably short period of time when signaled to do so.

Following a vehicle whose driver is not stopping, after a reasonably short period of time, whether accomplished with or without emergency lights activated and siren sounding, and regardless of the terminology used to describe these acts, is also a pursuit.

Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT): The deliberate act of contacting a suspect vehicle with a law enforcement vehicle in an attempt to cause the suspect vehicle to rotate, lose traction, and bring the vehicle to a stop to end the pursuit.

Ramming: The deliberate act of impacting a suspect's vehicle with a law enforcement vehicle using a tactic other than the Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) to functionally damage or otherwise force the suspect's vehicle to stop.

Roadblock: Placing a barricade or other obstacle across the roadway to stop the suspect vehicle.

Serious Bodily Injury (SBI): "Serious bodily injury," as defined in C.R.S. § 18-1-901 (3) (p), means bodily injury that, either at the time of the actual injury or at a later time, involves a substantial risk of death; a substantial risk of serious permanent disfigurement; a substantial risk of protracted loss or impairment of the function of any part or organ of the body; or breaks, fractures, a penetrating knife or penetrating gunshot wound or burns of second or third degree.

Trailing: Following the path of a pursuit at any distance.

Violent Felony: For this policy, means a felony against a person in which a perpetrator uses physical force which may cause serious bodily injury or death. Also, means a felony involving the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon. Some examples include murder, kidnapping, assault in the first or second degree, aggravated robbery, felony sexual assault, arson in the first degree, or hit and run crash involving death or serious bodily injury.

.10 When Pursuits are Allowed

Officers are authorized to engage in vehicle pursuits only when the officer:

- 1) **Reasonably** believes the need to immediately apprehend the driver outweighs the risk the pursuit poses to the public and the officers; **and**
- 2) **Determines** it is necessary to effect the arrest or to prevent the escape of a person whom the officer reasonably believes has committed or is committing a **violent felony** against a person; or

Has reasonable belief that a driver, who is not involved in a violent felony, presents an immediate risk of causing a person, other than the driver, life-threatening injury or death if not immediately apprehended.

It is important to note that vehicular eluding is not a violent felony for the purposes of this policy. If a driver commits a violent felony during the act of eluding an officer, this may be considered a violent felony for the purposes of this policy.

If an individual is wanted on an active warrant for a violent felony, the requirements for this section are met. A pursuit is not authorized to apprehend the suspect for Failure to Appear or Failure to Comply warrants.

The initiation of a pursuit must only be based on what the officer reasonably believes at the time the officer initiates the pursuit. Information learned after the pursuit cannot be used to justify the decision to pursue.

If the same suspect or suspect vehicle is encountered again after a pursuit is terminated, any subsequent pursuit is considered new and separate from the original pursuit.

.15 Factors to Consider in Initiating or Continuing a Pursuit

Officers and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense and need to immediately apprehend the subject against the potential danger when choosing to initiate or continue a pursuit.

Factors that will be considered, both individually and collectively, when deciding to initiate or continue a pursuit, include the list below:

- Whether there is sufficient information to reasonably believe the driver of the vehicle is the wanted individual
- The danger presented to the community and the officers
- The seriousness of the offense

- Whether identification of the offender makes apprehension at a later time likely
- The location of the pursuit and the nature of the area; residential, commercial, school zone, open highway, etc., as it relates to volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- The type of terrain
- Traffic conditions including volume, type, speed and direction of vehicular traffic and direction of pursuit
- Weather conditions such as rain, fog, snow, wind, etc.
- Road conditions such as ice, construction, poor repair, weather and visibility, etc.
- The performance capabilities of the vehicle being pursued
- The ability of the pursuing officer(s) to keep the patrol vehicle under control, including the condition and capability of involved police vehicles
- The mental and physical condition of the pursuing officer(s)
- The speed of the pursuing officer(s) patrol vehicles and that of the suspect vehicle
- Whether the officer(s) have visual contact with the suspect vehicle
- The occupants of a vehicle (other passengers with unknown involvement, children, hostages, etc.)
- If radio communication is lost

This list is not inclusive of all factors that must be considered in every situation. Other factors relevant to assessing the risk of a pursuit should be considered, as needed.

.20 Termination of Pursuits

Pursuits must be terminated whenever the officer and/or supervisor reasonably believe the risks associated with continuing the pursuit are greater than the public safety benefit of making an immediate apprehension.

When the balancing test is based on the risk posed by the suspect's driving behavior, officers should consider if the most practical choice to eliminate the danger to the public is to terminate the pursuit.

The pursuit may be terminated by a pursuing unit at any time. Any sworn supervisor may order the termination of a pursuit at any time.

When a pursuing officer and/or a supervisor directs the pursuit to be terminated, officers must immediately terminate the pursuit. Officers must take measures that clearly indicate to the driver of the pursued vehicle that the pursuit has been discontinued. Turning off lights and sirens, but continuing to follow the vehicle, is not adequate to indicate the pursuit has ended.

. 30 Pursuit Vehicle Requirements

Only sworn officers are authorized to engage in any pursuit. Officers are prohibited from engaging in a pursuit with a person in their vehicle who is not a sworn officer acting in an official law enforcement capacity.

To be used in a pursuit, a department vehicle must have at least an audible siren and emergency lighting in the front and rear. Officers operating an unmarked or undercover vehicle that do not meet these minimum requirements are prohibited from engaging in a vehicle pursuit.

If a pursuit is initiated by a motorcycle unit, a semi-marked unit, or an unmarked unit that meets the minimum emergency equipment criteria, that unit must relinquish the primary pursuit vehicle position once a fully marked police vehicle with overhead emergency lights is in position to assume primary pursuit responsibilities. The vehicle may remain as the secondary pursuit vehicle until a fully marked police vehicle with overhead emergency lights is in position to assume secondary pursuit vehicle responsibilities.

.35 Inter-Jurisdictional Considerations

Officers will not become involved in pursuits originated by another agency unless that jurisdiction specifically requests assistance through the Communications Center, a supervisor reasonably determines the necessity to do so **and approves officers to engage in the pursuit**, and the pursuit would otherwise be authorized under this policy.

Nothing prohibits a supervisor from directing officers into an area to assist at the conclusion of a pursuit.

As specified in [GO 1020 Routine Patrol Functions – Leaving the City](#), an active pursuit is authorized to leave the city limits in cases of fresh pursuit.

In an inter-jurisdictional pursuit, officers must otherwise follow the same policies and procedures as they do for a pursuit within City limits.

.40 Officer Responsibilities

Vehicle Operation

Police vehicles actively engaged in a vehicular pursuit must have visual and audible emergency warning devices activated. Regardless of other circumstances, officers must drive with due regard for the safety of all persons as dictated in C.R.S. § 42-4-108 and [GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#).

Radio Communication

The initiating officer must immediately notify dispatch they are engaged in a pursuit. Due to the dynamic nature of vehicle pursuits, it is imperative that other officers and managing supervisors exercise good radio discipline, with priority given to the units directly involved in the pursuit and the managing supervisor.

The initiating officer will provide the following information, as soon as possible:

- Unit identification
- Location and direction of travel
- Vehicle description and if available, license plate information
- Number of occupants in the vehicle
- Reasons for the pursuit, including known laws violated

If not communicated by the officers, the following information will be asked by a supervisor or the Communications Center, if appropriate:

- Clarify the criminal violation
- Driving actions, driver behavior, and traffic violations occurring
- Description of driver and identity, if known
- Approximate speed of the suspect
- Traffic conditions
- If known, whether there are other occupants in the vehicle
- If a hostage is involved

The secondary pursuit officer is responsible for maintaining radio communications and transmitting locations and direction of travel to communications. If the secondary pursuit officer cannot fulfill this responsibility, the primary officer actively engaged in the pursuit will assume this role.

Each pursuing unit and any unit that is responding to engage in the pursuit must immediately use the radio to announce their involvement and location. Additionally, any other officer responding Code 3 because of the pursuit must also immediately use the radio to announce their intention to respond Code 3 as required by [GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#), as this is the only way others, including the managing supervisor, the Communications Center, and other officers, are able to determine the total number of officers in a Code 3 response.

The maximum number of officers that may respond Code 3 absent supervisory approval or exigent circumstances as described in [GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operations](#) is:

- Up to four officers engaged in the pursuit; and
- Up to three officers responding to the incident.

.45 Supervisory Responsibilities

Division supervisors are required to continually monitor radio traffic within their division. Upon hearing that a pursuit has been initiated, at the first opportunity, an available supervisor will announce via the radio that they are managing the pursuit. If no supervisor announces they are managing in a timely manner, the Communication Center will designate a supervisor to manage the pursuit.

The managing supervisor's responsibility includes taking an active role in decision-making and directing resources. The managing supervisor must continually monitor the pursuit and must actively manage the event. [The managing supervisor must be stationary and able to exclusively act in their role](#). Maintaining a disciplined approach to these high-risk events is essential to the safety of the public and officers.

If a supervisor is involved in the pursuit, another supervisor will be assigned to monitor the pursuit as the managing supervisor, as the primary role of the managing supervisor is to actively manage the pursuit based on information from the pursuing units and not to respond to engage in the pursuit or arrive while it is still active.

Active management of the pursuit includes but is not limited to, the following:

- Determining whether to allow the pursuit to proceed.

- Authorizing or requesting additional units to become involved in the pursuit and requesting backup units to be dispatched to assist.
 - The supervisor must be clear in communicating the need for additional units to be actively engaged in the pursuit.
 - The supervisor must also be clear in communicating the need for additional non-emergency units to be involved in an ancillary capacity.
 - A dispatch supervisor may also approve the dispatch of non-emergency units to aid in ancillary duties which arise during the pursuit (traffic control, traffic accidents, etc.).
 - The supervisor may consider requesting the assistance of non-patrol units via the Communications Center including:
 - The Colorado State Patrol Aircraft Unit, if they are up and immediately available.
 - Drone operator from Drone as First Responder Program (“Drone1”)
 - Real Time Crime Center
- Directing secondary units into the area as necessary.
- Authorizing the use of a forced stop method, if appropriate.

A supervisor must go to the location where the pursuit ended and immediately assume command.

The supervisor will debrief pursuits with officers as soon as practical, preferably during the same shift in which the pursuit occurred. Supervisors should use the decision-making models (critical decision-making model and safety priorities) as described in [DL-1000-02 Law Enforcement Decision-Making](#) to debrief the pursuit.

The responding supervisor should ensure the appropriate follow-up is conducted for making a timely arrest whenever possible. The supervisor will ensure all reporting requirements are met as detailed in section .70 of this policy.

The supervisor will notify the Communications Center to contact the on-call Homicide Unit supervisor and the on-call Internal Affairs supervisor, following the requirements of [GO 1106 Deadly Force, Death, or Life-Threatening Incidents](#) if a pursuit meets any of the following criteria:

- Included a forced stop method on a vehicle with fewer than four wheels (deadly force); or
- Included the forced stop method of either ramming or roadblocks (deadly force); or

- Included a forced stop method that created a substantial risk of or caused life-threatening injury or death based on the totality of circumstances (deadly force); or
- Included life-threatening injury or death of any person.

.50 Responsibilities of Communications Center

Radio transmissions from in-progress pursuits take priority over all other radio traffic. The Communications Center will declare a Code One status on the primary talkgroup assigned to the patrol division in which the pursuit originates.

The Communications Center will broadcast that a pursuit is in progress **on all primary talkgroups**.

The Communications Center will immediately notify a sworn supervisor from the appropriate patrol division to monitor the pursuit. If a supervisor does not respond, the Communications Center will immediately notify a supervisor from another patrol division. If unable to assign a supervisor by this means, the Communications Center will notify the appropriate shift lieutenant, duty lieutenant, or staff duty officer that a pursuit is in progress for the purpose of managing the pursuit.

Should the pursuit appear likely to enter a different division's area of responsibility, the appropriate supervisor in that division will be notified. The Communications Center will also notify neighboring jurisdictions if a pursuit could leave the city of Colorado Springs.

Talkgroup

If the pursuit crosses divisional lines, officers involved in the pursuit should continue operating on the original radio talkgroup throughout the pursuit.

Units assisting from other divisions will switch their radio to the talk group that initiated the pursuit.

.55 Number of Units to Pursue

No more than four department vehicles are allowed to actively engage in a pursuit. The four vehicles actively engaged in the pursuit will be designated as primary, secondary, third, and fourth.

- The primary pursuit vehicle is the vehicle that is directly behind the suspect vehicle.
- The secondary pursuit vehicle is the vehicle that is behind the primary pursuit vehicle.

- The third and fourth vehicles will be responsible for assisting in managing for public safety concerns, to assist with apprehension of the suspect/s, and to provide additional officers for officer safety.

This limitation on the number of units does not preclude the managing supervisor, or other sworn member of the rank of lieutenant or higher, from authorizing additional vehicles to respond to the area or to take part directly in the pursuit. The decision to allow more than four vehicles to be actively engaged in the pursuit must be justified in the written reports required under section .70 of this policy.

.57 Trailing or Paralleling a Pursuit

Unless directed by the managing supervisor, officers are prohibited from trailing or paralleling a pursuit. A supervisor may decide additional officers would be helpful in a pursuit incident for traffic control, to aid in apprehension of the suspect(s) after the pursuit ends, and other public safety efforts. If a supervisor authorizes ancillary officers to assist in the pursuit, they must operate their vehicles following conventional traffic regulations unless authorized by that supervisor to respond utilizing lights and siren (Code 3).

These officers must approach in a controlled manner consistent with training. Officers should place themselves in an advantageous position enabling them to respond quickly to the area where a pursuit ends to assist with apprehension of the suspect(s) or to perform other ancillary tasks (containment, traffic control, etc.).

.60 Forced Stop Methods in Pursuits

Forced stop methods used in pursuits must be conducted in compliance with [DL-904-01 Forced Stop Methods in Pursuits](#). Because they are a use of physical force, their use must also conform to Colorado Revised Statutes and [GO 500 Use of Force](#).

.65 Condition of Vehicle

If the primary or secondary pursuit officer discovers any malfunction limiting their vehicle's ability to continue the pursuit, that officer will communicate the perceived issue as soon as possible and allow another unit to take over the pursuit as soon as practical. If the vehicle has become unsafe to drive, the pursuing officer must immediately terminate their involvement in the pursuit.

.70 Offense Reporting Requirements and Follow Up

All vehicular pursuits are required to be documented in an offense report titled vehicular eluding or within an offense report for a criminal act committed immediately before, during, or at the conclusion of the pursuit. Pursuits involving a traffic accident require the completion of a traffic accident report and an offense report.

The officer who initiated the pursuit will document the pursuit in the appropriate offense report. The submitted report must contain all pertinent information concerning the pursuit, including:

- Initiating information
- Call sign
- Vehicle number
- All criminal and traffic offenses committed by suspect
- Location of the attempted traffic stop
- Location where the pursuit began if different than the location of the attempted traffic stop
- Detailed route of pursuit
- Duration in seconds
- Weather conditions
- Traffic conditions
- Approximate speeds (of the officer)
- Approximate speeds (of the suspect) as they relate to the speed of the officer (e.g., the officer was traveling 60 mph and the suspect was pulling away from the officer.)
- Full description of any forced stop method attempted or used
- Conclusion of pursuit (terminated, stopped, forced stop method, accident, etc)
- Suspect/arrestee information
- Follow-up conducted
- Any unusual occurrence or circumstance

Any officer that responded Code 3 during the pursuit for any reason will complete a supplemental report which will include the following information:

- Call sign
- Location – when they initiated lights and sirens
- Location – when they actively engaged in the pursuit if different than when they initiated their lights and sirens
- Detailed route of their Code 3 response and/or pursuit
- Traffic conditions
- Approximate speeds (of the officer)

- Conclusion of their Code 3 response (terminated their response before becoming actively engaged in the pursuit, actively engaged in the pursuit and pursuit terminated, forced stop method, accident, etc.)
- Any other information officer deems appropriate to document their actions

Officers will vigorously pursue eluding charges against suspects, including appropriate investigative follow up. Incidents meeting the elements set forth in C.R.S. §18-9-116.5 Vehicular eluding should be charged using this felony. Offenses not meeting these elements will be evaluated for state misdemeanor or city ordinance charges.

The managing supervisor will ensure the appropriate offense reports and supplements are completed by all involved officers and the appropriate charges are brought against the suspect(s).

.75 Post-Pursuit Administrative Review

The Post Pursuit Administrative Review will involve two parts:

First Level Analysis: The managing supervisor will use the Post Pursuit Form to document the factual details of the pursuit. The managing supervisor will also conduct an analysis of the performance of the officers involved in the pursuit. They will document, but not analyze, their own supervisory decisions during the pursuit.

Second Level Analysis: The next level of supervision (typically a lieutenant) will review the first level analysis and will conduct an analysis of the performance of the involved officers, and the supervisory decisions made during the pursuit. The analysis will then continue through the Deputy Chief level as part of the Blue Team administrative review.

Any completed forms will be attached to the Blue Team entry, along with all relevant reports, recordings, and/or additional documents.

The Blue Team entry with associated reports will be completed and reviewed through the chain of command up to and including the Deputy Chief of the involved bureau within 75 days of the pursuit occurrence date. The managing supervisor will have 45 days to complete the first level pursuit analysis and forward it to the lieutenant. The chain of command in the second level analysis (lieutenant, commander, deputy chief) will have a total of 30 days to complete the second level analysis and review and send it to Internal Affairs for completion.

If a forced stop method is used or attempted, the officer must also report it in a Use of Force report in Blue Team, as required in [GO 510 Reporting Use of Force](#). If the forced stop method results in damage to a police vehicle, the supervisor will document it in a Damage to a Police Vehicle report in Blue Team.

After review of the reports associated with a pursuit, the lieutenant, commander, or deputy chief may refer it to the Pursuit Committee via the chair for consideration of changes in policy, training, or equipment.

.78 Internal Investigations for Potential Policy Violations

Supervisors at any level will initiate an appropriate level of internal investigation without delay at any time they have reason to believe the pursuit may have violated policy or procedure. Supervisors will not wait to initiate an investigation until the pursuit analysis is completed if they have information that a policy may have been violated. If an internal investigation is initiated, the pursuit analysis will happen in parallel within the timelines established for the internal investigation. If it is a Level 2 investigation, the managing supervisor will still document the factual details using the Post Pursuit Form, working in conjunction with Internal Affairs.

Any officer with a sustained violation of GO 904 Pursuits or DL-904-01 Forced Stop Methods in Pursuits will complete mandatory training at the Training Division.

.80 Analysis of Pursuit Reports

A written report analyzing vehicle pursuits may be conducted quarterly or semi-annually to identify issues that warrant consideration prior to the annual review. An annual written report will include analyses of three years of data, a review of policy and procedures, a review of reporting procedures, and recommendations for improvements in policy, training, and equipment if warranted. The reports will be completed by the Strategic Initiatives Section and will be submitted to the Chief of Police and the Patrol Bureau Deputy Chief.

.85 Post-Incident Review

All pursuits that are considered deadly force and/or result in life-threatening injury or death will be referred to the Critical Incident Review Committee (CIRC) for review. See [DL-1710-01 Critical Incident Review Committee](#). When a pursuit is reviewed by the CIRC, the chair of the Pursuit Committee will select two members to attend the review on behalf of the committee and notify the CIRC chair of the selection.

A deputy chief has the discretion to send any pursuit to the Pursuit Committee for review. The purpose of the review is not investigatory. The purpose of the review is to suggest improvements in training, policy, and equipment, as warranted.

.90 Pursuit Training

1. Recruit officers will receive initial training regarding vehicle pursuits as part of the CSPD Basic Academy.
2. All officers must review the CSPD's pursuit policy annually. This may happen through the policy management system, in-service training, or roll call video.
3. All officers will be trained and certified on the Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT).
4. All pursuit training will be documented and maintained by the Training Division.

Attachment

[Post Pursuit Analysis Form](#)