

Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Chapter 4 — Operations

Section Number: 4-2-1
Section Title: Vehicle Pursuit
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I. Policy

- A. Vehicle pursuit is one of the most dangerous duties a police officer must perform. When a decision to pursue is made, the safety of all concerned must be considered. The seriousness of the offense must be weighed against the hazards of the health and welfare of citizens who might be affected by the pursuit. During the pursuit, continuous balancing of the seriousness versus safety is mandatory.
- B. The Department expects an officer, or his/her supervisor, to terminate a pursuit whenever the risks to the safety of the officers or citizens outweigh the danger to the community if the offender is not caught.
- C. No task is of such importance as to justify the reckless disregard of the safety of innocent persons. The principles of safety shall not become secondary.
- D. The responsibility for the decision to overtake or pursue another vehicle rests on the individual officer. In arriving at that decision the officer must carefully consider all factors involved and the possible consequences. To diminish the likelihood of a pursuit, officers intending to stop a vehicle should, when possible, be within close proximity to the vehicle before activating emergency lights and siren.

II. Definitions

A. Vehicle Pursuit

- 1. An attempt by a police officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving vehicle when the driver of the fleeing vehicle is attempting to avoid apprehension by maintaining or increasing speed, maneuvering in an evasive manner, or by ignoring the police officer's attempt to stop the vehicle.

B. Authorized Emergency Vehicle

1. A vehicle of this police department equipped with either audible and/or visual emergency warning devices as required by the Code of Iowa for the purpose of being exempted from certain traffic regulations during emergencies or pursuits. (Iowa Code sections 321.231, 321.423, 321.433).

C. Primary Pursuing Unit

1. The police unit that initiates a pursuit or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit.

D. Secondary Unit

1. Any police vehicle which becomes involved as a backup to the primary unit and follows the primary unit at a safe distance.

E. Pursuit Intervention Technique (P.I.T.)

1. P.I.T. is a controlled maneuver used by a law enforcement vehicle to physically force a fleeing vehicle from a course of travel by inducing an over-steer condition in the fleeing vehicle to safely end a pursuit with minimal risk of injury to the public, the officer, and the suspect.

F. Roadblock

1. As a pursuit tactic means the establishment of a barrier across a part of the traveled portion of a roadway. This barrier may be moving, as in the case of vehicles placed in front of a fleeing vehicle, or stationary. Roadblocks are frequently established using police vehicles as blocking devices, but may consist of other devices such as “spike strips.”

G. Supervisor

1. The on-duty patrol shift watch commander or other ranking officer on duty.

H. Blocking in or Pinning (added definition)

1. A technique used by patrol officers and/or plainclothes officers in unmarked cars, where bumpers are aligned between police and offender vehicles, in a manner that will prevent an offender from attempting to flee, while lessening the likelihood of damage to vehicles.

I. Rolling Roadblock (added definition)

1. A technique of pursuit management that is used by two or more cars to attempt to slow an offender vehicle, that is trying to flee from officers. Involved officers will

disengage audible warning devices and will communicate via radio to coordinate the effect of the technique.

J. Terminate Pursuit

1. A technique of pursuit management means the discontinuance of active pursuit by police vehicles. Involved officers will deactivate audible and visual emergency warning equipment (emergency lights and siren) and return to the posted speed limit and adherence of all traffic laws.

K. Tire Deflation Devices “Stop Sticks” (added definition)

1. An approved device, specifically designed for the controlled release of air from a vehicle tire. Once deployed, a striking vehicle will run over the device, running a hollow tube into the tire, which causes deflation and slows the vehicle.

III. Procedures

A. Initiation of Pursuit:

1. The decision to initiate pursuit must be based on the pursuing officer’s conclusion that the immediate danger to the officer and the public created by the pursuit is less than the immediate or potential danger to the public should the suspect remain at large.
2. Any law enforcement officer in an authorized emergency vehicle may initiate a vehicular pursuit when the suspect exhibits the intention to avoid apprehension by refusing to stop when properly directed to do so. Pursuit may also be justified if the officer reasonably believes that the suspect, if allowed to flee, would present a danger to human life or cause serious injury.
3. In deciding whether to initiate pursuit, the officer shall take into consideration:
 - a. Nature of offense
 - b. Time of day
 - c. Weather conditions (snow or ice)

- d. Road conditions (gravel, secondary roads)
- e. Identity of the driver
- f. Volume of traffic (rush hour)
- g. Location of pursuit (residential, mall parking lot)
- h. Speed of vehicle
- i. Relative performance capabilities of both the emergency vehicle and suspect's vehicle
- j. Presence of other persons in the emergency vehicle and suspect's vehicle
- k. Radio communications inter-operability between agencies
- l. Radio coverage

B. Primary Unit Responsibilities

1. The responsibility for the decision to initiate pursuit rests with the individual officer.
2. The officer shall, in all cases, notify the communications center when a pursuit is underway and provide the following information:
 - a. Police unit identification;
 - b. Location, speed and direction of travel, with continuous updates;
 - c. Vehicle description including license number, if known;
 - d. The specific reason for the pursuit, including known laws violated;
 - e. Number and description of occupants;
 - f. When, or if, the pursuit leaves the Clive city limits; and,
 - g. When switching to another radio frequency.
3. Failure to provide sufficient information will be cause for the supervisor to order termination of the pursuit.

4. The initiating/primary unit shall be in field command and bears operational responsibility for the pursuit unless relieved by a supervisor. The authority of this unit pertains to the immediate field operation and is, always, subordinate to the shift supervisor or commanding officer.
5. The primary unit may maintain pursuit as long as it is safe to do so; until directed to terminate the pursuit by a supervisor; the suspect is stopped; or a reasonable distance has been covered which may indicate the futility of continued pursuit.
6. The decision to abandon pursuit may be the most intelligent course of action. A pursuing officer must constantly question whether the seriousness of the offense justifies continued pursuit. In any case, a pursuit shall terminate under any of the following circumstances:
 - a. If, in the opinion of the pursuing officer or supervisor, there is a clear and unreasonable danger to the officer or others created by the pursuit which outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension.
 - b. The suspect's identity has been established so that later apprehension can be accomplished and there is no longer a need for immediate apprehension.
 - c. The prevailing traffic, roadway and/or environmental conditions dictate the futility of continued pursuit.
 - d. The pursued vehicle's location is no longer known; or,
 - e. The pursuing officer knows or is reasonably certain that the offender is a juvenile, the offense is a misdemeanor or non-serious felony, and the safety factors involved are obviously greater than those with which a juvenile can cope.
 - f. If an officer decides at any time to terminate the pursuit for any of these reasons he or she will not face any disciplinary action.
 - g. When an officer is ordered to terminate a pursuit by a supervisor, he/she will comply as soon as it is safe to do so. All emergency equipment will be deactivated and the communications center will be notified of the location.
 - h. Termination of a pursuit does not necessarily prohibit the following of a vehicle at a safe speed or remaining in an area to re-initiate pursuit if the opportunity and conditions permit. These units will not be operated in emergency mode and will obey all traffic laws.

C. Assisting Unit Responsibilities

1. Assistance will be coordinated by the communications center under the direction of the watch supervisor. The supervisor and primary unit will be advised of the identity and locations of units who can assist.
2. An active pursuit will normally involve no more than two units (the primary unit and one backup unit). If more assistance is specifically requested the amount will be determined by: the nature of the offense; the number of suspects; whether the participating units are single or two officer cars; and other clear and articulated facts that would warrant the increased hazards.
3. Only the supervisor may authorize more than two units to be in active pursuit. All other units will remain aware of the direction and progress of the pursuit but shall not actively participate unless specifically authorized to do so.
4. An authorized assisting unit shall immediately notify the communications center of its identity upon joining the pursuit.
5. If the primary unit is a one man car, the assisting unit may assume radio communications responsibility allowing the primary to devote full attention to driving.
6. The assisting unit will maintain a safe distance behind the primary unit.
7. Assisting units shall avoid intersecting the path of an oncoming high speed vehicle.
8. If the primary unit becomes disabled, the assisting unit will become the primary unit. A new backup unit may be authorized by the supervisor.

D. Communication Center Responsibility

1. Receive, repeat, and properly record all incoming information on the pursuit, the pursued vehicles and occupants.
2. Immediately notify the supervisor when a pursuit is initiated.
3. Clear the radio channel of unnecessary traffic, advise other units that a pursuit is in progress and broadcast relevant information.
4. Perform relevant records and motor vehicle checks.
5. Control all radio communications during the pursuit and continue to monitor radio traffic until pursuit is terminated.
6. Coordinate assistance under the direction of the supervisor.
7. Notify, as soon as practical, outside agencies if the pursuit enters their jurisdiction.

E. Supervisor Responsibilities:

1. Upon being notified of a pursuit, the supervisor will verify the following
 - a. That no more than the necessary units are involved; that the proper radio frequency and procedures are being utilized; and, affected allied agencies are being notified.
2. The supervisor will direct the pursuit, approve or order alternative tactics, and maintain control until the pursuit is terminated.
3. When a pursuing officer reasonably believe that the P.I.T. maneuver or roadblock is needed to end the pursuit, the supervisor will be informed before any action is taken. The supervisor will ascertain the current status of the pursuit, be given the reasons why the action is requested and obtain a vehicle description of the pursuit vehicle.
4. The supervisor shall review the information and either authorize or deny the request. If the request is approved, the supervisor may change his/her decision at any time.
5. When the supervisor feels it is necessary to safely end the pursuit, they may authorize the P.I.T. or roadblock prior to a request from the pursuing officer.
6. In the absence of adequate information from the primary or backup units, the supervisor will terminate the pursuit.
7. Where possible, the supervisor shall respond to the location where a vehicle has been stopped following a pursuit.
8. The supervisor shall ensure proper completion of required reports by officers involved in the pursuit and shall request an audio copy of radio traffic recorded during the pursuit through the communications center.

F. Pursuit Tactics, Limitations and Prohibitions

1. Traffic Violations: Pursuits for minor traffic violations are prohibited unless the officer has reason to believe that the vehicle is fleeing for a more serious offense.
2. Property Crimes: Pursuits for property crimes will be based on the seriousness of the crime weighed against the danger to life posed by the offender and the danger posed by the pursuit itself.
3. Police Sport Utility Vehicles: Police Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) may pursue fleeing vehicles at moderate speeds. High speed pursuit in excess of 70 mph is prohibited for SUVs due to their handling restrictions, unless that vehicle is pursuit rated by the manufacturer.

4. Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT): Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) is the use of a Patrol unit as a “use of force option”. The objective of the PIT maneuver is to safely end a pursuit and, in doing so, minimizes the risk of injury to the public, the officer and the suspect.
 - a. PIT can only be used by officers who have been trained and certified by the department in its proper use
 - b. When performed in accordance with training standards, the PIT maneuver can be safely used at speeds, 35 mph or less.
5. Offensive Tactics: (Rolling roadblocks and blocking/pinning)
 - a. Deliberate physical contact other than blocking in, pinning or executing a PIT maneuver is generally prohibited. The deliberate forcing of the offender into parked cars, ditches, or any other obstacle can only be used when it’s the last resort where the offender poses an imminent risk of death or serious injury to the public. These actions shall only be used where deadly force would be authorized.
 - b. Rolling roadblocks may be performed with the approval of a supervisor. Generally, this would occur during a pursuit where factors such as time of day, traffic patterns, speeds, and known information on the suspect have already been obtained (nature of crime, age, use of weapons, etc...) and there are sufficient police units to surround and control the offender vehicle by forcing it to safely slow down.
 - (a) Officers should ensure a minimum of three cars are available at the time this tactic is used.
 - (b) Siren should be deactivated.
 - c. Pinning of offender vehicles may be performed with the approval of a supervisor. This tactic will generally be employed when there is sufficient time to plan for its use and when there are adequate patrol cars to prevent a vehicle from fleeing.
 - (a) Depending on circumstances, this tactic may be employed at an intersection to pin a stopped vehicle or in a parking lot, to prevent escape.
 - d. Only those officers of the department, who have successfully passed a course of instruction, provided by a certified Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) Precision Driving Instructor, and are compliant with Iowa Code 321.231, shall be authorized to employ a PIT Maneuver or engage in a Rolling Roadblock or pinning of offender vehicles.

6. Civilian Ride-Along/Prisoner Transportation: No unit will engage in a pursuit when accompanied by a civilian rider or while transporting a prisoner.
7. Unmarked Police Vehicles: Officers operating unmarked vehicles (provided the vehicle is equipped with emergency lights and siren) may engage in a pursuit only when the offender presents an immediate and direct threat to life. The unmarked car will withdraw from active pursuit when a marked unit becomes available to take over the pursuit.
8. Caravanning: There shall be no caravanning by field units not directly involved in the immediate active pursuit.
9. Passing: Passing another pursuing police vehicle in a pursuit is prohibited.
10. Spacing: All units in a pursuit shall space themselves at a distance that will ensure proper braking and reaction time for any sudden or unexpected maneuvers.
11. Controlled Access Highway: Units shall not pursue offenders the wrong way on the interstate or other controlled access highways, divided highways or ramps.
12. Traffic Control Devices: Extreme caution must be used whenever pursuing units disregard traffic signs or signals.
13. Emergency Equipment: No officer will continue a pursuit if the emergency equipment on the unit ceases to function properly.
14. Collisions: An officer should not continue a pursuit if his/her unit becomes involved in a traffic collision unless the collision is with the pursued vehicle or no other police unit is available to assume control.
15. Roadblocks: The use of roadblocks must be authorized by a supervisor. Generally, a roadblock will be employed only as a last resort. The use of a roadblock must be directly associated with the seriousness of the offense. The roadblock must be clearly visible and provide adequate warning to allow vehicles to come to a safe stop. The roadway shall not be completely blocked unless the use of deadly force would be authorized.
16. Tire Deflation Devices "Stop Sticks" or tire deflation road spikes may be deployed if authorized by a supervisor.
 - a. Once permission is granted, the deploying officer will inform pursuing units of the location of the road spikes over the police radio
 - b. The deploying officer will also activate all overhead emergency lights to visually designate the area in which the road spikes are located

- c. When the pursued vehicle approaches and the spike system is in place, the officer will position himself/herself in a safe location away from the point of contact between the pursued vehicle and the deployed spike system
 - d. After the pursued vehicle has passed over the road spikes, the deploying officer will retract the spikes as soon as it is safe to do so
 - e. Tire deflation road spikes will only be deployed on vehicles with a minimum of four wheels. The spikes will only be used on concrete or blacktop surfaces. Spikes will not be used on curbs, near river banks or embankments where there is an increased risk of injury.
 - f. Deployment of road spikes can only be used by officers who have been trained by the department in their proper use.
17. Firearms: Decisions to discharge firearms at or from a moving vehicle shall be governed by this department's use of force policy, and are prohibited if they present an unreasonable risk to others. They should be authorized, whenever possible, by a supervisor.
18. Custody of Pursued Vehicle Occupants: Once the pursued vehicle is stopped, officers shall utilize appropriate officer safety tactics and shall be aware of the necessity to utilize only reasonable and necessary force to take suspects into custody.

G. Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits

- 1. Once a pursuit is initiated and the initial pursuing agency anticipates it will lead into another jurisdiction, the initial pursuing agency's supervisor will have dispatch move radio communications to a common channel such as "Mics" as the primary channel for the pursuit.
- 2. If a pursuit continues beyond an agency's jurisdiction, the presumption is that the command and control will remain with the initial pursuing agency. However, the initial pursuing agency may request the jurisdictional agency to assume command and control. If that is accepted, once there are an adequate number of units from the jurisdictional agency present to safely assume the pursuit, the initial pursuing agency becomes a supporting agency to the pursuit and safely continues until the pursuit is terminated and offenders are in custody. If the jurisdictional agency declines to assume command and control of the pursuit, it should provide reasonable support to the initial pursuing agency. The initial pursuing agency will normally be responsible for all criminal charges unless the situation requires otherwise.
- 3. The pursuing officers or their supervisors have the primary responsibility of determining whether to continue or terminate the pursuit. The individual agencies and/or officers may end their direct involvement in a pursuit if their continued

involvement is believed to be contrary to their specific pursuit policies. This information must be promptly conveyed to the involved units and supervisors of the other agencies in the pursuit.

4. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, no more than three (3) vehicles shall be actively engaged with emergency lights and siren in a pursuit within the jurisdiction of the initial pursuing agency and no more than four (4) vehicles in a multi-agency pursuit.

H. Initial training

1. During the probationary officer's field training period, he/she will review the pursuit policy with their field training officer and sign off on the field training task.
2. The probationary officer will also sign off on the pursuit policy within PowerDMS.

I. Policy review

1. All sworn personnel will review the pursuit policy annually. This review shall be documented.

J. Reporting Critique

1. At the conclusion of a pursuit, the primary unit officer(s) will complete a post-pursuit report on the appropriate form and forward it through the chain of command to the Patrol Commander.
2. The Patrol Division Commander and appropriate supervisor will review the post pursuit report and review any videos. They will critique the pursuit. He/she will review the circumstances surrounding the incident as it relates to adherence to department policy and procedure. If necessary, corrective action and/or training may be taken if deficiencies or violations of policy are noted.
3. If the pursuit is terminated by the officer taking an action such as the P.I.T. maneuver or a roadblock, careful consideration shall be taken during the review to ensure such tactics were used as a last resort when the officer believed the offender posed an imminent risk of death or serious injury
4. The Patrol Division Commander will conduct a documented annual analysis of the pursuits, to include a review of the policy and reporting procedures.

K. Training

1. Prior to being authorized to be on solo patrol, all officers will be trained on the agency's pursuit policy.

2. All officers of the Clive Police Department will be trained in accordance with the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) training guidelines for the operation of emergency vehicles and will remain compliant with Iowa Code 321.231.
 - a. Prior to engaging in any of these tactics, officers must have undergone training through an Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, Precision Driving Instructor, and be certified in accordance with Iowa code 321.231, in Pursuit Intervention Techniques (PIT), and Rolling Roadblocks.
 - b. Prior to deploying any Tire Deflation Device, officers must have undergone training in the use and deployment of the deflation system fielded by the Clive Police Department.
 - c. Prior to engaging in pinning or blocking, an officer must have undergone training in proper vehicle placement, bumper-to-bumper contact, and tactics that must be employed when attempting this procedure.



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