



Policy Manual Standard Operating Procedure	
SOP Number: 13-01f	Subject: Motor Vehicle Pursuits
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Effective Date: August 15, 2019	
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Date signed: 08/15/2019	

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1. PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure establishes guidelines for making decisions with regard to vehicular pursuit.

2. POLICY

2.1 Vehicular pursuit of fleeing suspects can present a danger to the lives of the public, officers, and suspects involved in the pursuit. The Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) will assist officers in the safe performance of their duties. To fulfill these obligations, it will be the policy of the GTPD to regulate the manner in which vehicular pursuits are undertaken and performed.

2.2 GTPD officers are authorized to pursue a vehicle of fleeing suspect(s) of a forcible felony, in accordance with this directive.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Division commanders are responsible for ensuring that all employees within their chain of command comply with the requirements of this directive.
- 3.2 Watch commanders and supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this directive, monitoring and controlling pursuits, and submitting the proper documentation when required.
- 3.3 Department employees will comply with this directive.

4. ACTION

4.1 Initiation of Pursuit:

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 a, b

4.1.1 A GTPD officer in an authorized emergency vehicle may initiate a vehicular pursuit of the suspect in a forcible felony when:

1. The suspect exhibits the intention to avoid apprehension by refusing to stop when properly directed to do so, and
2. If the officer reasonably believes 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.

4.1.2 In deciding whether to initiate pursuit, the officer will take into consideration:

1. The risk of the subject's conduct to innocent third parties.
2. Road, weather, and environmental conditions.
3. Population density and vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
4. The relative performance capabilities of the pursuit vehicle and the vehicle being pursued.
5. The seriousness of the offense.
6. The presence of other persons in the police vehicle.

7. The presence of innocent persons in the suspect's vehicle, if known.
8. If the identity of the suspect is known and there is no likelihood of further risk to public safety, the officer should obtain a warrant and apprehend the driver later.

4.1.3 If an officer decides not to initiate a pursuit, he or she should obtain as much information as possible about the vehicle (tag number, make, model, color, other distinguishing characteristics, etc.) and the driver (description, age, size, etc.) and alert radio to BOLO the information to surrounding jurisdictions.

4.2 Pursuit Operations:

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 c

4.2.1 All emergency vehicle operations will be conducted in strict conformity with applicable traffic laws and regulations. Applicable O.C.G.A. codes include, but are not limited to:

1. 40-8-91 (Marking and flashing/revolving blue light of law enforcement vehicles),
2. 40-8-94 (Sirens, whistles, and bells),
3. 40-6-6 (Driver of an authorized emergency vehicle must drive with due regard for the safety of all persons).

4.2.2 All officers engaging in a pursuit of the pursuing vehicle will activate blue lights and siren. Vehicles not equipped with blue lights and a siren will not engage in vehicle pursuits. An officer in an unmarked vehicle or on a motorcycle may initiate a pursuit, provided that he or she yields the primary role to a four-wheeled marked vehicle as soon as practicable. An officer in an unmarked vehicle or on a motorcycle may continue as a secondary pursuing vehicle until a marked vehicle assumes this position. CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 e

4.2.3 When engaged in pursuit, officers will not drive with reckless disregard for the safety of other road users.

4.2.4 Upon engaging in pursuit, the initiating officer will:

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 c

1. Notify Communications of the location, direction, and speed of the pursuit, the description of the pursued vehicle, and the initial purpose of the stop

2. Provide his or her immediate supervisor with the totality of circumstances regarding the pursuit of a suspected felon in a vehicle in order for the immediate supervisor to make an informed decision. Failure to provide this information may cause the supervisor to order the termination of the pursuit
3. Provide Communications with updates on the pursuit until a secondary unit assumes this task

4.2.5 It is the responsibility of the secondary unit to provide immediate and close support to the primary unit. Due to the high likelihood of a foot pursuit and/or fight at the termination point, it is important for a secondary officer to join the pursuit as quickly and safely as possible. CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 d

4.2.6 The secondary unit will assume the radio communications task once engaged in the pursuit. This will allow the primary unit to focus on driving. The secondary unit will give the direction and location of the vehicle pursuit.

4.2.7 Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, a pursuit will consist of no more than two police vehicles, a primary and a secondary unit. All other officers will stay clear of the pursuit unless instructed to participate by a supervisor. The secondary pursuit unit designated by the communications officer or the immediate supervisor will be the only other police unit to engage in the vehicle pursuit, unless one of the following conditions exists: CALEA 5th ed. standard 41.2.2 d

1. The primary or secondary pursuit unit does not believe that two units will be able to safely arrest the suspect(s). The immediate supervisor or watch commander must approve this request for an additional pursuit unit.
2. The primary pursuit unit is unable to continue and has informed the communications officer, and the secondary pursuit unit has assumed the role of the primary pursuit unit.
3. The controlling supervisor has authorized additional police vehicles to join the vehicle pursuit.

4.3 Communications
CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 f

4.3.1 Communications officers will:

1. Clear the radio channel of non-emergency traffic
2. Immediately notify the watch commander or immediate supervisor of the pursuit
3. Obtain and record all pertinent information that is available
4. Perform relevant record checks and motor vehicle checks
4. Notify and provide information to the Atlanta Police Department

4.4 Supervisors

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 g

4.4.1 Once a pursuit is initiated, a watch commander or supervisor will take command control of the pursuit. Watch commanders and supervisors **will not** take command control of a pursuit he or she is involved in unless there is no other supervisor available. The following responsibilities are required of the controlling supervisor:

1. Acknowledge the location and the direction of travel
2. Request the reason for the vehicle pursuit
3. Monitor radio transmissions regarding the vehicle pursuit and proceed in the direction of its progress in a non-emergency mode
4. Ensure that only the necessary units are involved in the vehicle pursuit
5. When appropriate, ensure that other law enforcement agencies are being notified if the vehicle pursuit is entering other jurisdictions
6. Ensure that the vehicle pursuit is terminated if the pursuing units do not provide adequate information
7. Ensure that the vehicle pursuit is terminated if the risk to public safety is too great

4.4.2 The immediate supervisor or watch commander taking command control of the pursuit must acknowledge that he or she has received all pertinent information. He or she must give permission to continue the vehicle pursuit or terminate it.

1. Failure of the pursuing officer(s) to provide the required information is cause enough for the watch commander or supervisor to order the termination of the vehicle pursuit., or

2. Failure of the watch commander or immediate supervisor to acknowledge and respond will cause the pursuing officer(s) to terminate the pursuit.

4.4.3 The controlling supervisor will go to the scene of a concluded vehicle pursuit whenever a suspect is apprehended or when injury, death, or property damage has occurred.

4.5 Pursuit Tactics

4.5.1 Officers will not pursue a vehicle the wrong way on a freeway or Interstate highway.

4.5.2 Officers will never attempt to pass the primary pursuit unit, unless an officer receives specific permission from the primary pursuit unit or immediate supervisor.

4.5.3 The following practices are prohibited during a vehicle pursuit:
CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.3

1. Fixed roadblocks: officers will not purposely position their vehicle or other objects in the path of a fleeing vehicle.
2. Moving or rolling roadblocks.
3. Ramming: officers will not bump, ram, or box-in a fleeing vehicle.
4. Forcing fleeing vehicles off the roadway: officers will not force the fleeing vehicle from the roadway by driving in front of it or alongside of it.
5. Tire deflation devices.
6. Discharging a firearm in an effort to stop a fleeing vehicle. (This does not prohibit an officer from using his or her firearm as a lethal force option when it is reasonable and necessary.)

4.5.4 Field units that are not in the vehicle pursuit are to monitor the location and the direction of travel of the primary and secondary pursuit units. Field units may position themselves at strategic sites along the probable pursuit route or on parallel roadways, for response to any emergency that may develop. These field units will not engage in the vehicle pursuit, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

4.5.5 Field units not directly involved in a vehicle pursuit are not authorized to proceed to strategic sites or parallel roadways in emergency mode (blue lights and siren).

4.6 Termination of the Pursuit

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 h, i

4.6.1 The primary pursuing unit and the supervisor in charge will continually re-evaluate and assess the pursuit situation including all of the initiating factors and terminate the pursuit whenever he or she reasonably believes the risks associated with continued pursuit are greater than the public safety benefit of making an immediate apprehension.

4.6.2 Vehicle pursuits will be terminated:

1. When the watch commander or supervisor orders the vehicle pursuit terminated, or
2. When there is an unreasonable danger to police officers or citizens, or
3. When the suspect's identity has been established to the point that later apprehension can be accomplished, or
4. When the primary pursuit unit loses visual contact with the pursued vehicle for more than fifteen seconds, or
5. When it is apparent the primary pursuit unit is not familiar with the area, or
6. When there is an equipment failure involving an emergency signal device, a radio, brakes, steering, or other essential mechanical equipment, or
7. When the primary pursuit unit is of the opinion that it is not safe to continue the vehicle pursuit.

4.6.3 The controlling supervisor will order the termination of a vehicle pursuit when any of the above conditions exists and the pursuing officer fails to terminate the pursuit.

4.7 Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits

CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 j

4.7.1 The GTPD has joined other law enforcement agencies in the Atlanta metropolitan area in adopting the Metropolitan Atlanta Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuit Policy. The policy provides guidelines for police

officers in vehicle pursuits when entering other jurisdictions. GTPD officers will adhere to this policy when pursuing a vehicle off campus, and/or when other agencies pursue a vehicle on campus.

- 4.7.2 When entering another jurisdiction, the pursuing agency's radio dispatch will notify the other agency with the following information:
1. A vehicle pursuit is about to enter its jurisdiction.
 2. The reason for the vehicle pursuit and the nature of the crime.
 3. The location and the direction of travel.
 4. A complete description of the vehicle and occupants.
 5. The number of units involved in the vehicle pursuit.
 6. Whether or not assistance is needed.
 7. Notify the agency when the vehicle pursuit is leaving their jurisdiction or the location of termination.
- 4.7.3 When available, law enforcement agencies that maintain an aircraft unit will agree to provide assistance to all signatories upon a direct request. Any signatory obtaining aviation support in the future will provide this assistance. The following agencies will provide this assistance: DeKalb County, Clayton County, Fulton County, Gwinnett County, and Atlanta.
- 4.7.4 The initiating law enforcement agency will have the control and be responsible for the vehicle pursuit. Other law enforcement agencies will not participate, unless requested to assist.
- 4.7.5 No more than three vehicles from the combined jurisdictions will be involved in any vehicle pursuit. Typically, there will be two pursuit units from the initiating agency and one additional pursuit unit from the assisting agency.
- 4.7.6 If there are three or more pursuit units from other law enforcement agencies entering the campus limits, no GTPD officer will become directly involved in the vehicle pursuit, unless requested to do so. GTPD officers will monitor the location and direction of travel of the fleeing vehicle. Field units may position themselves at strategic sites along the probable pursuit route or on parallel roadways, for response to any emergency that may develop. These field units will not engage in the vehicle pursuit, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

- 4.7.7 In the case that a vehicle pursuit enters subsequent jurisdictions, the assisting unit (typically the third pursuit unit) will notify the next jurisdiction through their radio dispatch of a desire for assistance. The assisting unit will remain with the vehicle pursuit until replaced by the next assisting agency.
- 4.7.8 If the suspect is apprehended, all concerned agencies will be notified of the location and supplied pertinent information for the appropriate charges.
- 4.7.9 A supervisor from the law enforcement agency where the vehicle pursuit terminates will respond to the location in order to supervise and assist officers.
- 4.7.10 The following responsibilities of the initiating law enforcement agency are not to be relinquished to another law enforcement agency:
1. Arraignment of arrested persons
 2. Disposition of any passenger(s)
 3. Disposition of the arrested person's vehicle
 4. Coordination of all reports and charges with the exception of accident reports
- 4.7.11 The GTPD's participation in an inter-jurisdictional vehicle pursuit will be terminated if pursuing units from this agency or another law enforcement agency violate the guidelines set forth in the Metropolitan Atlanta Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuit Policy, as reflected herein.
- 4.8 Reporting Requirements
CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 k
- 4.8.1 The GTPD officer initiating a vehicle pursuit will complete a detailed incident report.
- 4.8.2 GTPD officers assisting in the vehicle pursuit will complete supplemental reports.
- 4.8.3 An incident report and Vehicle Pursuit Report is required for:
1. Pursuits involving GTPD officers; or
 2. Pursuits involving GTPD officers and another law enforcement agency.

- 4.8.4 An incident report is not required for a vehicle pursuit involving another law enforcement agency entering GTPD's jurisdiction, not involving GTPD officers in the actual pursuit.
 - 4.8.5 The controlling supervisor will complete a Vehicle Pursuit Report and ensure that the officer initiating the pursuit completes an incident report before the end of the watch.
 - 4.8.6 The controlling supervisor will utilize the Department's internet based reporting program (Blue Team) to complete the Vehicle Pursuit Report and forward it through the chain of command.
 - 4.8.7 The Watch or Patrol Division Commander will either disapprove the report and send it back for correction or approve the report and forward it to the next level in the chain of command. The approval process will continue through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Once approved by the Chief it will be forwarded to the OPS Commander for filing.
- 4.9 Annual Reporting
CALEA 6th ed. standard 41.2.2 1
- 4.9.1 Annually, the Patrol Division Commander will conduct a documented analysis of all vehicle pursuits to examine patterns or trends that identify a need for additional or revised training, equipment, or policy. The analysis report will include a review of pursuit policies and reporting procedures. Upon completion, copies of the annual analysis will be forwarded to the Chief, the Deputy Chief, the Administrative Division commander, and the Accreditation Manager. The Accreditation Manager will retain copies of this report for five years.

5. DEFINITIONS

Authorized emergency vehicle: A GTPD vehicle equipped with operable emergency equipment as designated by state law.

Controlling Supervisor: The ranking officer responsible for monitoring and controlling the pursuit, authorizing back-up units, and ensuring the pursuit complies with policy.

Due Regard: When a reasonable officer, performing similar duties under similar circumstances, would act in the same manner given a fair consideration and sufficient attention to all of the facts.

Forcible felony: Any felony that involves the use or threat of physical force or violence against any person. This includes, without limitation, murder; felony murder; burglary; robbery; armed robbery; kidnapping; hijacking of an aircraft or motor vehicle; aggravated stalking; rape; aggravated child molestation; aggravated sexual battery; arson in the first degree; the manufacturing, transporting, distribution, or possession of explosives with intent to kill, injure, or intimidate individuals or destroy a public building; terroristic threats; or acts of treason or insurrection.

Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuit Agreement: A document signed by the chief executive of each participating law enforcement agency in metropolitan Atlanta which coordinates procedures to be followed during a vehicle pursuit involving two or more law enforcement agencies.

Primary unit: The police unit that initiates a pursuit, or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit.

Secondary unit: Any police vehicle that becomes involved as a backup to the primary unit and follows the primary unit at a safe distance.

Unmarked Vehicle - A police vehicle not displaying the emblem or marking of the police department whether or not having emergency warning devices to include emergency lighting and siren.

Vehicular Pursuit: An active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend a fleeing suspect who is actively attempting to elude the police.

6. CANCELLATION

This directive cancels SOP 13-01e, "Motor Vehicle Pursuits."

7. REFERENCE

O.C.G.A. 40-6-6, 40-8-91, 40-8-94.

The 2003 Metropolitan Atlanta Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuit Policy Memorandum of Understanding and future revisions.

CALEA 6th edition standards 41.2.2, 41.2.3