



# Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

GENERAL ORDER

4.33

## FOOT PURSUITS

### POLICY

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) is committed to balancing the protection of lives, safety of officers, and the safety of the public when pursuing on foot any individuals who are attempting to evade arrest or detention. Absent exigent circumstances, the safety of department personnel and the public should be the primary consideration when determining whether a foot pursuit should be initiated or continued.

Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual when there is reasonable suspicion to believe the person has committed or is about to commit a criminal offense, or when the officer reasonably believes that apprehension is necessary for the individual's well-being (e.g., endangered missing person or mental health crisis). Officers must continuously assess and evaluate whether the need of apprehension justifies the risk to the safety of the officer(s), public, and the fleeing suspect(s). If, at any time, the risk of safety outweighs the need for apprehension, the foot pursuit must be terminated.

### DEFINITIONS

Articulate Facts – Specific details that an officer can readily explain which are neither vague or standardized statements.

Exigent circumstances – A compelling urgency or true emergency that would cause a reasonable officer to believe prompt action is necessary to prevent injury to themselves or others.

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

### PROCEDURE

#### I. Pursuit Authority

A. An officer may pursue any person on foot when:

1. There is reasonable suspicion to believe that the person has committed or is about to commit a criminal offense;
2. The officer, based on specific and articulable facts, reasonably believes that the person is experiencing a physical or mental health crisis;
3. The officer, based on the totality of the circumstances, reasonably believes that a foot pursuit is necessary to protect the public. The officer must have specific and articulable facts to justify engaging in a foot pursuit; or
4. The officer, based on specific and articulable facts, reasonably believes the person has committed a serious status offense (e.g., Runaway, Intoxicated Minor).

B. In general, officers should not pursue any person on foot:



1. Based solely on a person's response to the presence of the police. Flight alone, without other articulatable facts or circumstances, does not provide the authority to engage in a foot pursuit.
  2. For an infraction, unless there are specific and articulable facts that the need to pursue outweighs the risk of safety to the officer, suspect, and the public.
- C. The decision to initiate a foot pursuit must be based on the pursuing officer's conclusion that the seriousness of the offense and the danger to public safety by the failure to apprehend the suspect outweighs the risk of danger in pursuing the suspect on foot. Factors to consider include:
1. The number of suspects,
  2. Whether the suspect(s) is armed,
  3. Whether the officer is acting alone and the ability to obtain backup in a timely manner,
  4. Whether the identity of the suspect(s) is known,
  5. If the suspect(s) poses a serious threat to the public if allowed to escape,
  6. The danger of pursuing in inclement weather, darkness, or conditions causing reduced visibility,
  7. The officer's familiarity with the area and the ability to identify the suspect's location with accuracy during the pursuit,
  8. Geographic and physical hazards that could endanger the officer, and
  9. The officer's physical condition.
- D. Officers will not be criticized or disciplined for deciding not to initiate a foot pursuit, or for ordering the termination of an ongoing pursuit, based upon a reasonable assessment of the perceived risk factors to the officer and the community.

## **II. Foot Pursuit Guidelines**

- A. When feasible, officers will take preventative measures when confronting suspects in order to prevent or reduce the opportunity for the suspect to flee on foot, including:
1. Tactically positioning themselves during initial contact to limit or block possible escape routes,
  2. Taking positions of advantage over the suspect (e.g., have the suspect sit down),
  3. Using de-escalation techniques to calm the suspect,
  4. Using command presence to control the suspect and situation, and
  5. Maintaining awareness of the suspect's body language and recognizing signs that may indicate a desire to run (e.g., pulling up pants, scanning for escape routes, etc.).
- B. When feasible, officers will consider alternative measures to a foot pursuit when a suspect flees, including:
1. Containment of the area,
  2. Canine support,
  3. Aerial support, and
  4. Delayed apprehension when the suspect's identity is known.



- C. Officers should recognize the increased risks of pursuing multiple suspects simultaneously without adequate back up. Officers should only initiate or continue these types of foot pursuits when responding units are in the immediate vicinity, or under exigent circumstances (e.g., suspect poses a significant public safety threat).
- D. Officers should recognize the increased risks of separating from each other to pursue multiple fleeing suspects. Officers should only separate when pursuing suspects when additional responding units are in the immediate vicinity or under exigent circumstances (e.g., suspects pose a significant public safety threat).
- E. When two or more officers have multiple people detained and one suspect flees, officers will not pursue the fleeing suspect if that leaves the remaining officers in a situation where they cannot adequately control the detained individuals and scene.
- F. Officers will not initiate or continue a foot pursuit if the officer:
  - 1. Knowingly loses possession of their firearm,
  - 2. Knowingly loses the ability to communicate via radio to Communications and responding officers,
  - 3. Loses more than momentary visual contact with the suspect and is unsure of the suspect's location or direction of travel, or
  - 4. Becomes unsure of their own location or direction of travel.
- G. Officers should consider not initiating or continuing a foot pursuit when the following risk factors are present:
  - 1. The officer becomes too tired or otherwise believes they may not be able to physically make an arrest at the end of the pursuit,
  - 2. Environmental hazards increase the dangers of running (e.g., slick grounds, low visibility, etc.),
  - 3. The suspect is believed to be armed, or
  - 4. The officer is acting alone without back-up officers in the vicinity.

### **III. Foot Pursuit Procedures**

- A. If a department-issued body worn camera (BWC) is being worn, it should automatically activate upon initiating a foot pursuit.
  - 1. If the BWC fails to automatically activate, officers must manually activate the BWC as soon as reasonably possible.
  - 2. In accordance with General Order 4.32 - *Body Worn Cameras*, officers must notify their supervisor of the BWC malfunction and submit a Blue Team within one working day of the incident.
- B. An officer involved in a foot pursuit will, as soon as practical, request Canine support through Communications and advise the following:
  - 1. The officer's unit number,
  - 2. Current location and direction of travel,
  - 3. Description and number of the suspects, and
  - 4. Whether the suspect(s) is armed.



- C. The use of a canine in the pursuit or apprehension of a suspect in a foot pursuit will be determined by the Canine supervisor in accordance with the *Canine Unit SOP*.
- D. When appropriate, officers should maintain a safe distance from the suspect to allow time to obtain cover and accommodate the arrival of assisting officers.
- E. Officers will use caution when pursuing suspects around corners and other obstacles. Officers should maintain a distance from the corner and sweep out in a wide arc to get a view around the apex of the corner (i.e., “slicing the pie”).
- F. Available officers should immediately respond to any officer involved in a foot pursuit for assistance in containment and apprehension of the suspect, when necessary.
- G. In the event the suspect enters a vacant and confined space or otherwise isolated area, officers will discontinue the pursuit and coordinate with assisting officers and a supervisor to establish a perimeter and contain the suspect.
- H. In accordance with IMPD General Order 1.30 - *Use of Force- Principles*, officers will attempt to de-escalate and resolve foot pursuits without the use of force, when feasible.
  - 1. If force is necessary to take a suspect into custody, officers will only use force that is objectively reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances.
  - 2. Force used to retaliate or punish a person for a foot pursuit is strictly prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action if proven or sustained during a criminal or administrative investigation.
- I. Once a suspect is taken into custody, officers must advise of apprehension to Communications and responding units must slow down.
- J. As soon as reasonably possible, officers will evaluate the subject for injuries, request Emergency Medical Services (EMS), as needed or requested, and render appropriate aid according to their training and experience. Officers will not restrain subjects who are in custody and under control in a manner that restricts their ability to breathe, and will reposition the subject into a recovery position as soon as practical.
- K. If the pursuit is terminated or ends without the capture of the suspect, the initiating officer will:
  - 1. Advise Communications of the suspect’s last location, and
  - 2. Coordinate with responding officers to establish a perimeter to contain and apprehend the suspect.

#### **IV. Supervisor Responsibilities**

- A. Communications will assign an uninvolved supervisor from the District in which the foot pursuit began to coordinate and manage the incident.
- B. Another supervisor may take over responsibility for the pursuit if they are better positioned to monitor the incident.
- C. The assigned supervisor will:
  - 1. Acknowledge responsibility of the incident, as soon as reasonably possible.
  - 2. Request Canine support, if necessary, through Communications.



3. Monitor and continually evaluate the pursuit to ensure the risk to the public or officer(s) does not outweigh the governmental interest in apprehending the suspect(s).
4. Respond to the apprehension or termination point of the foot pursuit to take control of the scene and conduct a preliminary investigation to determine compliance with department policies.
5. Take appropriate actions (e.g. coaching, formal discipline, etc.) when a foot pursuit is determined to be not in compliance with department policy.

## **V. Foot Pursuit Termination**

- A. Any supervisor or pursuing officers should terminate a foot pursuit if it is determined the risk to public or officers' safety outweighs the government's interest in apprehending the suspect.
- B. The supervisor assigned to manage the incident will have final authority to terminate a foot pursuit, even if a pursuing officer is of equal or higher rank.
- C. Officers ordered to terminate a foot pursuit must immediately acknowledge the order over the radio. The involved officer(s) will announce their location and remain at or near the termination point, when feasible and safe, until the assigned supervisor arrives for a debriefing.
- D. Officers will not reinitiate a terminated foot pursuit unless the circumstances have changed and there are specific and articulable facts that causes the government's interest in apprehending the suspect to outweigh the safety risks to the public, officers, and suspect.

## **VI. Reporting, Training, and Review Requirements**

- A. The initiating officer will complete an incident report when an arrest is made or when the suspect's identity is known.
- B. A Foot Pursuit Blue Team report must be completed by a pursuing officer within three working days documenting the details of the foot pursuit. The Blue Team entry must contain:
  1. Date and time of the foot pursuit,
  2. Course and approximate distance of the foot pursuit,
  3. Alleged offenses,
  4. Involved officers,
  5. Whether the suspect was apprehended, and the means and methods used to facilitate the arrest,
  6. Arrestee or suspect information, if applicable, and
  7. Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
- C. Additional actions taken (e.g., uses of force, vehicle pursuits, etc.) must be completed according to policy in additional Blue Team entries.
- D. Assisting officers taking an active role in the apprehension of the suspect will complete supplemental reports as necessary or directed.
- E. Upon receiving the Blue Team entry from the officer, the assigned supervisor will review the entry for accuracy and completeness. If additional information is required, the entry will be disapproved and routed back to the officer for correction.



1. Once the supervisor is satisfied with the officer's entry, it will be approved and the following information, at a minimum, will be documented in the Blue Team:
    - a. A finding of "In Compliance" or "Not In Compliance" and justification for the disposition,
    - b. A justification detailing all applicable considerations for why the pursuit was either allowed to continue or ordered to be terminated,
    - c. A summary of the supervisor's investigation, including information provided by the involved officer(s), suspect(s), and witnesses, or any other relevant evidence, and
    - d. Any further actions taken and/or recommendations for further action.
  2. The responding supervisor will forward the Blue Team to IAPro within three working days of receiving it, unless additional review by the chain of command is necessary.
    - a. The responding supervisor must forward any Foot Pursuit Blue Team that is deemed not in compliance up the chain of command for further review.
    - b. Each additional reviewing supervisor, including the Captain and/or Commander, will forward the Blue Team entry within three working days of receipt.
- F. When an officer is restricted from pursuing an individual due to the provisions in this general order, they will complete a "Person Fled – No Pursuit" Blue Team entry.
1. The officer must notify a supervisor when these incidents occur.
    - a. The Blue Team should briefly describe the incident and why a foot pursuit was prohibited.
    - b. The officer will forward the Blue Team to the notified supervisor within three working days.
  2. The supervisor is not required to respond to the scene.
    - a. The supervisor will review the Blue Team, provide a finding of "in compliance" or "not in compliance."
    - b. The Blue Team can be forwarded directly to IAPro, unless the supervisor determines additional chain of command review is necessary.
- G. IMPD will provide, when feasible, regular training regarding foot pursuits. This training will address:
1. Foot pursuit tactics,
  2. Supervisory responsibilities,
  3. Communication responsibilities, and
  4. Policy requirements.
- H. The Training, Policy, and Oversight Division will review all foot pursuit reports to ensure compliance with this policy and to help identify improvements regarding the department's foot pursuit policies, procedures, and training.