Subject: Forceable Stops / Pursuit Intervention Technologies		Policy Number: OPR: 05
Revision Number: 7	Effective Date: 11/05/2025	Original Issue Date: 01/30/1989

1) PURPOSE

a) The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines governing the circumstances under which an officer may employ a vehicle or other authorized intervention tools to forcibly stop or prevent the escape of a fleeing vehicle. The application of these techniques shall be consistent with the provisions outlined in *OPR 01: Use of Force* and *OPR 08: Vehicular Pursuits*.

2) POLICY

a) It is the policy of DPS to establish standardized guidelines for the use of forceable stop tactics and pursuit intervention technology by commissioned personnel. These guidelines aim to ensure that such actions are carried out in a way that prioritizes public safety, officer safety, and adherence to relevant laws and departmental policies.

3) APPLICABILITY

a) This policy is applicable to all commissioned officers and communications specialists of the Department of Public Safety.

4) REFERENCES

a) §29-20-1 to §29-20-4, Law Enforcement Safe Pursuit Act, NMSA 1978
b) §66-7-6, Authorized Emergency Vehicle, NMSA 1978
c) Galas v. McKee, 85-5270 (6th Circuit Court of Appeals, 1986)
d) Brower v. County of Inyo, 489 U.S. 593 (US Supreme Court, 1989)
e) Scott v. Harris, 550 U.S. 372 (US Supreme Court, 2007)
f) United States v. Jones 2012

5) DEFINITIONS

a) **Grappler Police Bumper**—A netting system deployed from the front bumper of a specially equipped patrol vehicle, designed to entangle and seize the wheel, axle, suspension, or any other rear-mounted component of a suspect vehicle to immobilize it.

b) **GPS Tagging Device**—a vehicle or handheld GPS launcher that attaches a tracking tag to a suspect's vehicle. Once the device sticks to a vehicle, it offers remote tracking capabilities.

c) **Hard Physical Barrier**—An object built to resist heavy impacts and safeguard people or property. Examples include roadway guardrails, jersey barriers, concrete bridge supports, etc.

d) **Stop Stick –** Law enforcement tire deflation devices designed to puncture and deflate the tires of fleeing vehicles. They are meant to be deployed across the roadway so that when a vehicle drives over them, the hollow spikes penetrate the tire and detach from the device or the Stop Stick housing, causing a controlled tire deflation.

e) **"High-Speed Pursuit" –** An "attempt by a law enforcement officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend an occupant of a motor vehicle, the driver of which is actively attempting to avoid apprehension by exceeding the speed limit" (quoted in Section 29-20-2 NMSA).

f) **Pursuit -** An active attempt by a law enforcement officer in a motor vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving motor vehicle. The driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the attempt and is actively resisting apprehension by ignoring the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle, and/or displaying driving behavior to indicate knowledge of the apprehension attempt.

g) **Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT Maneuver)** is the controlled use of a law enforcement vehicle to immobilize a fleeing vehicle. It involves a "Forced 180° Non-Compliance Vehicle Stop" designed to give law enforcement an alternative way to end a pursuit safely and in a relatively controlled manner after considering all other options. This is not vehicle ramming. Only trained officers are authorized to perform the PIT Maneuver.

h) **Ramming -** Ramming can be dangerous depending on factors such as vehicle speed, travel direction, impact angle, and size and weight. The more adverse these factors are, the higher the risk of serious injury or death resulting from a ramming maneuver. Caution should be exercised when using this

technique. It should only be employed in exigent circumstances where the officer perceives a significant and immediate threat to human life. Before attempting a ramming maneuver, officers must consider all other reasonable options to disable the pursued vehicle and prevent it from fleeing.

i) **Roadblock Class "C" –** A physical blockage of a roadway with material or equipment, which prohibits any avenue of escape upon the roadway. This is done for the purpose of stopping an individual posing an immediate threat of great bodily injury or death to officers, other motorists, or pedestrians. State-owned equipment shall be used for this technique. Privately owned material or equipment may only be used as a last resort in an immediate emergency situation. A Class "C" Roadblock is considered deadly force and is not to be used unless the elements of deadly force are present; specifically, when immediate action is required to stop an individual posing an immediate threat of great bodily injury or death to officers, other motorists, or pedestrians.

j) **Vehicle Blocking Maneuvers (VBM) -** Preplanned containment tactics performed with police vehicles, initiated without the suspect's explicit knowledge that law enforcement intervention is imminent. The main goal is to contain the suspect vehicle using police vehicles. A VBM may involve front and rear containment with police vehicles or just front or rear, depending on the situation. Officers may also contain the sides of the suspect vehicle if needed. Only trained officers are authorized to perform a VBM.

k) **Vehicle Containment Technique (VCT) –** The coordinated use of one or more police vehicles by officers to restrict a suspect vehicle's movement by blocking, containing, or pinning it with a police vehicle's bumper. The goal is to prevent the suspect(s) from escaping in the vehicle and initiating a pursuit or re-initiating a pursuit after stopping.

6) OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

a) Authorized Intervention Methods– General Guidelines

i) Grappler Operators and police vehicles equipped with GPS taggers have a limited allowance to engage in pursuits for lesser offenses, for the exclusive purpose of deploying the grappler to end the pursuit or GPS tag the fleeing vehicle. The goal is to quickly stop dangerous driving by a suspect, thereby reducing risk to the public. If the operator cannot quickly attempt an intervention with the Grappler or GPS within one mile, or if

their attempt is unsuccessful, they must then adhere to the agency's overall pursuit policy.

(1) When pursuing a vehicle, commissioned officers may employ pursuit intervention techniques, tactical vehicle intervention methods, and technology designed to disable the pursued vehicle or track the suspect remotely, based on the available equipment, training, ability, and experience of the officers.

(2) The decision to physically force a vehicle to stop during a pursuit with any type of vehicle-to-vehicle contact, including the PIT Maneuver or Grappler, is a use of force that is broadly covered under the policy and procedures outlined in *OPR: 01 and OPR: 01a (Use of Force Policy* and *Use of Force Procedural Manual)*.

b) **Deadly Force**

(1) Any intentional vehicle contact during a pursuit or high-speed pursuit, including but not limited to the **P.I.T. Maneuver**, **Grappler**, **VCT**, **VBM** and **Class C Roadblocks**, is deadly force when the officer has a reasonable belief that there is a risk of death or great bodily harm to the vehicle occupants, occupants of surrounding vehicles, or bystanders caused by the action that the officer is about to take.

(2) Officers are authorized to use deadly force to stop the action when they have probable cause to:

(a) Protect their own lives and the lives of others from what is reasonably believed to be an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm, or

(b) To prevent the escape of a fleeing felon whom the officer has probable cause to believe poses an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to the officer or others.

(3) Officers will evaluate the risks of injury to themselves, the suspect, any other occupants of the suspect vehicle, bystanders, and others when deciding to use any type of forcible stop.

(4) Officers may not use any forcible stop if a reasonable officer would perceive that it would create an unreasonable risk of death or great bodily harm to any other occupants of the vehicles, or anyone around the location of the anticipated action.

(5) Refer to *OPR: 01 Use of Force* for more information regarding deadly force.

c) **Class "C" Roadblocks**

i) A Class C roadblock is not a use of force under case law; however, DPS views this type of roadblock in the same light as deadly force. Though a seizure requires an intentional act of physical control on someone that would directly stop one's freedom of movement, an officer has a reasonable belief that the suspect's vehicle colliding with a stationary object parked across the roadway would create a significant risk of death or GBH to the occupants of the suspect's vehicle.

(1) State-owned equipment should primarily be used for this technique.

(2) Privately owned material or equipment may only be used as a last resort in an emergency.

ii) **Officer Responsibilities**

(1) Officers shall make reasonable attempts to obtain authorization from a supervisor before deploying Class "C" roadblocks.

(2) The pursuing officer shall provide a thorough description of the suspect(s) and suspect vehicle for proper identification.

(3) Assisting officer(s) shall make reasonable attempts to stop and/or detour traffic from the area of the Class "C" roadblock to ensure the safety of the motoring public.

(4) Officers shall determine as to what type of equipment, material, or physical blockage to use to prohibit any avenue of escape and to stop the individual most effectively.

(5) Officers shall request and coordinate placement of the physical blockage in such a manner as to be most effective with the least potential to affect uninvolved vehicles/persons.

(6) Felony stop procedures shall be followed in all instances where the Class "C" roadblock is successful, and the suspect vehicle is stopped.

(7) If a vehicle impacts the Class "C" roadblock, the officer shall treat the scene as a deadly force scene and follow procedures in *OPR 29: Investigation of Use of Force Incidents Resulting in Death or Great Bodily Harm*.

iii) **Supervisor Responsibilities**

(1) Time permitting, the supervisor will identify and assign available officers to respond and support the officer in setting up the roadblock.

(2) Time permitting, the supervisor shall identify a location that will allow sufficient time for the arrival of support officers.

(3) Time permitting, reasonable attempts shall be made to stage other resources to assist, like medical and fire personnel.
(4) Time permitting, the supervisor shall coordinate the request for additional resources and/or alerts to law enforcement agencies in adjacent jurisdictions.
(5) If the suspect vehicle stops before contacting any equipment, the Class "C" roadblock shall be considered a show of force.

d) **PIT Maneuver**

i) Officers may utilize the PIT Maneuver as an acceptable method for stopping motor vehicle pursuits.
ii) This is achieved by placing the right or left bumper of the officer's car against the suspect's vehicle rear quarter panel, then firmly turning into the quarter panel of the suspect's vehicle and applying a smooth increase in acceleration.
iii) Officers shall determine the necessary amount of force and whether it is objectively reasonable before employing the PIT Maneuver; see *OPR: 01 Use of Force* for more details.
iv) The officer shall evaluate whether the size of his/her patrol vehicle can physically stop the suspect vehicle, and any attempt to stop the vehicle shall be based on the totality of circumstances.
v) **Speed/Risk Standard.** The PIT maneuver is a use of force and shall be employed only when, based on the totality of the circumstances, it is objectively reasonable to do so. As speeds increase, so do vehicle instability, space required, and the risk of serious injury or death. Depending on the circumstances, a PIT at higher speeds may constitute deadly force; officers must be able to articulate why the use (and the speed at which it was applied) was reasonable to stop an imminent threat and why lesser options were not sufficient. When feasible, the primary officer should notify a supervisor before a PIT and coordinate containment/VCT; if not feasible, notification shall occur as soon as practical.
vi) **Articulation Factors.** In assessing objective reasonableness—including whether circumstances rise to deadly force—officers should weigh the following factors:
(1) Speed
(2) Traffic and pedestrian density

(3) Roadway, visibility, and weather conditions
(4) The suspect's driving that presents an immediate and ongoing threat such as wrong-way travel, repeated red-light violations with cross-traffic, or prolonged extreme speed with evasive weaving
(5) Vehicle type and rollover risk
(6) The presence of children or other vulnerable occupants
(7) The availability of units for containment
(8) Proximity to hard barriers
(9) The relative size and weight of patrol and suspect vehicles
(10) Any known hazards such as hazardous materials

vii) Officers should avoid using the PIT Maneuver without at least a second officer present for containment, unless the situation created by the fleeing vehicle poses an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm.

viii) There is no required minimum number of officers, but at least two additional officers should be present for VCT and a felony stop, aside from the officer performing the PIT Maneuver.
(1) The primary officer should notify the secondary officer(s), the pursuit supervisor, and other supporting officers that the PIT Maneuver will be used, so they can prepare for a felony stop and VCT.
(2) Supporting officers shall make reasonable attempts to stop or detour traffic from the area of the PIT Maneuver to ensure the safety of the motoring public.
(3) Felony stop procedures must be followed whenever the PIT Maneuver is successful, and the suspect vehicle is stopped.

ix) **Supervisor Responsibilities**
(1) If available, the supervisor will identify and assign officers to respond and provide support.
(2) The supervisor shall coordinate requests for additional resources and/or alerts to law enforcement agencies in neighboring jurisdictions.
(3) The supervisor shall remind officers to conduct VCT to contain the suspect vehicle after a PIT or other forcible stop.
(4) Intentionally colliding with a suspect's vehicle in a manner not consistent with the section and department-approved training is considered ramming. Ramming is prohibited unless exigent circumstances warrant the use of deadly force.

(5) The Investigations Bureau will be responsible for coordinating the investigation as outlined in DPS policy *OPR: 29 Investigation of Use of Force Incidents Resulting in Death or Great Bodily Harm.*

e) **Stop Stick**

i) **Stop Stick is not considered a use of force.**

(1) Stop Stick may be used on any road surface, but they are most effective on paved surfaces.

(2) Stop Stick may be positioned in front of or behind a stationary vehicle to disable the vehicle's tires if the driver tries to flee.

ii) **General Procedures for Implementation during a pursuit**

(1) Stop Stick shall be positioned in a location that allows a clear view of approaching traffic and will include hard physical barriers such as bridges or guard rails.

(2) If possible, establish a one-mile line of sight in both directions, which should give enough time to observe the suspect vehicle.

(3) Position the officer(s) and unit(s) at the roadblock location following the attached diagram.

(4) If hard physical barriers are not present, officers shall not deploy Stop Stick. Patrol units are not suitable barriers, and officer safety is paramount.

(5) On a 2-lane road, the officer shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that oncoming traffic has been stopped at a safe distance from the deployment site before deploying Stop Stick.

(6) Officers shall not deploy Stop Stick from within any police vehicle.

iii) **General Officer Responsibilities**

(1) The Stop Stick officer will notify the Pursuing Officer(s) of the location where the Stop Stick device has been positioned.

(2) The Stop Stick officer will make a reasonable effort to avoid deploying the Stop Stick in a way that could damage the tires of an uninvolved vehicle.

(3) The pursuit officers will slow down or stop before reaching the deployment location to allow the Stop Stick Officer to safely remove the Stop Stick from the roadway.

(4) Officers should deploy an additional unit, when available, approximately one (1) mile down the road to intercept oncoming traffic and serve as the apprehending unit.

(5) The Apprehending Officer(s) will then perform a felony stop on the disabled suspect vehicle.

iv) **Stop Stick Only**

(1) The officer may deploy the Stop Stick in front of the fleeing suspect vehicle or pull the Stop Stick across the road using the pull cord.
   (a) The pull cord reel shall be used.
   (b) Do not wrap the cord around any part of the body when deploying the Stop Stick.
   (c) The three-foot Stop Stick may be placed into the fabric sleeve or connected with the interlocking joints (9 feet total) and used to cover a lane of traffic.
   (d) The 3-foot Stop Stick sections may be used individually when time does not permit an officer to join the Stop Stick together.

(2) Stop Stick shall not be used on anything with fewer than four (4) wheels, unless the application of deadly force is authorized pursuant to *OPR: 01 Use of Force*.

v) **Grappler Police Bumper**

(1) The deployment of a Grappler is considered an intermediate use of force; see *OPR: 01 Use of Force*.

(2) Deploying a Grappler also constitutes a seizure; see *OPR: 42 Search and Seizure*.

(3) Any use of force or seizure must be objectively reasonable based on the information available to the officer at that time.

(4) The Grappler should not be deployed at speeds exceeding 45 miles per hour unless such force is objectively reasonable considering the totality of the circumstances. Deploying at speeds higher than 45 mph increases risks such as longer stopping distances, decreased vehicle stability, and closer proximity to the suspect's vehicle.

(5) Unless officers can articulate a compelling need or the use of deadly force, they will not deploy a Grappler on:
   (a) Any vehicle with fewer than four wheels
   (b) Any CMV carrying potentially dangerous HAZMAT.

(6) If possible, the officer should deploy the Grappler on a roadway with physical barriers to prevent the target vehicle from leaving.

(7) Before deploying the Grappler, officers should consider which side to deploy on (preferably the driver's side), the ability of other units to

assist with a felony stop or VCT, whether the suspect is armed, and the traffic density around the suspect vehicle.

(8) **Officer Responsibilities**

Apprehension/intervention methods may be used to assist in stopping a pursuit. Prior to deployment, officers should continuously evaluate all available factors, refer to *OPR: 08 Vehicular Pursuits*.

(a) Officers should **not** deploy the Grappler on:

(i) Any type of vehicle more than 1.5 times the weight of the Grappler vehicle

(ii) Any type of vehicle with dual rear wheels

(iii) Any type of vehicle which has been modified to an excessive ride height

(iv) Any type of trailer

(9) **Supervisor Responsibilities**

(a) Time permitting, the supervisor will identify and assign available officers to respond to and support the officer attempting to use the Grappler.

(b) Time permitting the supervisor shall coordinate the request for additional resources and/or alerts to law enforcement agencies in adjacent jurisdictions.

(10) If the use of the Grappler results in death or great bodily harm, officers shall treat the location of the incident as a deadly force scene in accordance with appropriate department policies *OPR: 29 Investigation of Use of Force Incidents Resulting in Death or Great Bodily Harm*.

(11) **Training**

(a) Once initial certification is obtained, officers shall be re-certified each year.

(12) **Maintenance and Deployment**

(a) Officers will complete a function check as soon as practical on the first day of each work week. If damage is notated during the weekly inspection, the officer will report it as soon as practical to their immediate supervisor.

(13) **Pre-emptive Use**

(a) Grappler may be used pre-emptively to prevent a pursuit from occurring to reduce the overall risk a pursuit could add to the public, suspect, and officer. Examples of these situations may

include, but are not limited to, a suspect involved in a felony involving the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon, a violent felony against a person, or hit-and-run traffic collisions resulting in life-threatening, serious bodily injury or death.

(b) Grappler may also be used by specialized units to pre-emptively stop known and confirmed felonious suspects and stolen vehicles. This may only be done after a positive identification, and confirmation has been received and with supervisory authorization.

f) **GPS Tagging**

i) **Officer responsibilities**

(1) GPS tracking methods may be used to assist in ending a pursuit even if officers are not actively involved in the chase. When properly used, the suspect vehicle can be tracked remotely by pursuing officers with minimal risk to the public and other officers involved. Before deploying, officers should evaluate and remain attentive to all relevant factors as circumstances evolve, refer to *OPR: 08 Vehicular Pursuits*.

(a) A GPS Tracker should only be deployed from a position behind the targeted vehicle.

(b) Deployments perpendicular to the side of a pursued vehicle are only permitted at speeds below five (5) miles per hour when using vehicle-mounted launchers.

(c) Handheld launchers may be deployed on stationary vehicles or while using proper cover with hard physical barriers such as bridges or guard rails.

(d) A GPS Tracker shall not be deployed on motorcycles.

(e) Once the GPS tracker is successfully deployed on a pursued vehicle, the officer should cease the pursuit and fall back substantially from the suspect vehicle. The officer should try to remotely track the vehicle with assistance from dispatch.

(f) Officers shall not log in to the GPS tracking software to monitor the suspect vehicle while operating a moving patrol vehicle.

(g) Used GPS trackers shall be recovered whenever possible and handed over to Fleet Operations for proper disposal and replacement.

ii) **Supervisor Responsibilities**

(1) Time permitting, the supervisor will identify and assign available officers to respond and support the officer attempting the use of the GPS Tracker.
(2) Time permitting, reasonable attempts shall be made to provide other resources to assist, like Aircraft or other agencies.
(3) The supervisor shall coordinate the request for additional resources and/or alerts to law enforcement agencies in adjacent jurisdictions.

g) **VEHICLE BLOCKING MANEUVER "VBM"**
i) Any Vehicle Blocking Maneuver or Vehicle Containment Technique is considered a seizure under the 4th Amendment and is governed by *OPR 01: Use of Force*.
ii) Any VBM technique where contact is made between a police vehicle and a suspect vehicle is considered a use of force.
iii) Officers are often tasked with handling a variety of unknown situations and arresting a wide range of offenders, some of whom pose unique dangers to the community and officers. To resolve these situations safely, VBM may be a viable option.
iv) A Vehicle Blocking Maneuver is intended to contain the suspect vehicle and suspect(s) with the goal of making an arrest.
v) The Vehicle Blocking Maneuver should be performed at slow speeds to reduce the risk of injuries.
vi) The method of containment, vehicle positioning, and approaches can differ depending on the totality of the circumstances.
vii) Officers may only use VBM tactics and techniques if they are certified and trained through a department-approved curriculum.

h) **Vehicle Containment Technique "VCT"**
i) VCT is not vehicle ramming or intended to disable the vehicle. Because the technique is applied when a suspect vehicle is stationary, it is not intended to cause damage**.**
ii) VCT is a maneuver conducted by police personnel during which police vehicle(s) are positioned around a stationary vehicle to prevent movement or avenues of escape. I shall be used immediately following a PIT maneuver to deter or prevent the suspect from continuing to use their vehicle to evade apprehension.

iii) VCT does not require pre-authorization. Officers should remember that deploying this technique calls for tactics, planning, coordination, and communication to achieve successful containment and suspect apprehension.

iv) Police vehicles conducting a VCT must have emergency lights turned on and visible from the front, rear, and sides.

v) Safety must always be prioritized when using this technique.

i) **Administrative Procedures / Review**

i) **Reporting Requirements**

(1) All forcible stops where the officer's vehicle initiates contact with another vehicle shall follow Use of Force reporting requirements outlined in *OPR 01a: Use of Force Manual.*

(2) Any deliberate use of a law enforcement vehicle to make physical contact with a suspect's vehicle is considered a form of vehicle-to-vehicle contact and will require a use-of-force review. This will be examined by a force investigator to determine and categorize the appropriate level of force applied.

(3) Forcible stops where no contact is made between vehicles shall follow the Show of Force reporting requirements outlined in *OPR 01a: Use of Force Procedural Manual*.

(4) Any New Mexico State Police Stop Stick deployment in a New Mexico State Police pursuit shall be documented in the pursuit Blue Team and must attach an OI report.

(5) Any agency assist Stop Stick deployment shall be documented in an OI report and be reviewed in district.

(6) Any unsuccessful agency assist Stop Stick deployment will be documented in CAD with the location of attempt.

(7) Any PIT maneuver or forcible stop that leads to an unintended outcome, is performed outside of policy parameters, or otherwise does not conform to approved training standards shall require administrative review by the Standards Bureau.

ii) **Training**

(1) Forcible stop techniques and pursuit intervention technology shall only be used by officers trained in those methods.

(2) Once trained, officers should also receive documented annual refresher training on these techniques.

(3) District/Section/Bureau Commander shall conduct a documented administrative review of each such incident for purposes of identifying patterns or trends that could indicate training needs; need for equipment upgrades; and/or need for policy modifications.

7) ATTACHMENTS

b) OPR: 05a – Stop Stick Diagrams

8) APPROVAL

APPROVED BY: s/Jason R. Bowie DATE: November 5, 2025
DPS Cabinet Secretary