ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 107.002
PURSUIT DRIVING

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 3, 1977 **REVISION DATE: October 22, 2025**
AFFECTS: All Sworn Personnel

I. PURPOSE

This Administrative Directive outlines the procedures, guidelines, and restrictions related to pursuit driving.

II. POLICY

Operation of a police vehicle as an emergency vehicle, whether in high-speed pursuit or in response to an emergency call, is one of the most dangerous activities that can be engaged in by a police officer. The police vehicle is a potential deadly weapon, and high-speed driving is often a life-or-death situation. Texas State law granting legal authority for emergency vehicle operation is found in Texas Transportation Code Sections 546.001 - 546.005. Officers are to carefully weigh the objectives with the risks to be taken before engaging in any pursuit. **Statements in this directive do not relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall any provisions protect the driver from the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.**

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Actively Involved in the Pursuit – Authorized units in a pursuit actively engaged in attempting to stop a suspect vehicle. Supervisors actively involved in a pursuit shall not be designated as command.

B. Marked Vehicles – For purposes of this policy, marked vehicles are those clearly distinguishable as police vehicles by means of equipment, markings and color, and include designated vehicles that may not be equipped with overhead lights. Marked vehicles are designated as emergency vehicles.

C. Primary Officer – The first officer to initiate the pursuit.

D. Pursuit – An active attempt by a law enforcement officer on duty in a patrol car to apprehend one or more occupants of a moving motor vehicle, providing the driver of such vehicle is aware of the attempt and is resisting apprehension by maintaining or increasing speed or by ignoring the law enforcement officer's attempt to stop their vehicle. Following a vehicle being operated legally but ignoring the law enforcement officer's attempt to stop them, does not constitute a pursuit.

E. Termination of the Pursuit – Termination of the pursuit shall be defined as the total abandonment of the pursuit. Officers, when told to terminate a pursuit, will turn off their emergency lights and siren, reduce speed to legal limits, and return to normal duties.

F. Unmarked Vehicles – For purposes of this directive unmarked vehicles are those vehicles without distinctive markings or colors that identify them as police vehicles and do not have emergency lights and siren installed. Unmarked vehicles are not designated as emergency vehicles. Such vehicles include those assigned to administration, and investigations.

G. Unmarked Patrol Vehicle – For purposes of this directive, unmarked patrol vehicles are vehicles without distinctive markings or colors that identify them as police vehicles or overhead emergency lights but are otherwise equipped as marked vehicles. Unmarked patrol vehicles are designated as emergency vehicles.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. The Decision to Pursue

Every time an offender flees from an officer, the officer is faced with the decision whether to pursue the offender. In making that decision, the officer must consider the following:

1. Nature of the offense committed by the offender:

a. Most pursuits by police officers are initiated because of traffic violations. These violators, if apprehended, often receive minor penalties. There is, therefore, no justification for endangering human life, or even property, merely to apprehend a traffic violator;

b. Officers are prohibited from engaging in pursuits resulting solely from traffic offenses or Class C misdemeanors, with the exception that a person/vehicle suspected of DWI may be pursued consistent with department policy;

2. Extent to which the offender may be identified;

3. Present ability of other officers to apprehend the offender;

4. Knowledge of previous activities of the offender;

5. Traffic conditions existing at the time of the pursuit;

6. Direction of travel, i.e., toward or away from densely populated areas, through school zones, etc;

7. Roadway and weather conditions;

8. Age of the offender, i.e., inexperienced juvenile driver versus adult driver;

9. The condition of the police vehicle;

10. The condition of the offender's vehicle;

11. The driving skills of the officer involved. Officers should know their driving abilities and should not exceed them.

B. Required Notifications

1. The primary officer initiating a pursuit shall broadcast that fact as soon as possible. The officer will state, "I am in pursuit, initiate Incident Command“, and provide the reason for the pursuit. As soon as possible the officer will provide the following information:

a. Location of the pursuit;

b. Direction of travel;

c. Description and license plate of vehicle being pursued;

d. Description of the person(s) in the vehicle;

e. If operating an unmarked vehicle;

f. If the fleeing vehicle is engaging in evasive actions such as running without headlights, intentional collisions with the police unit or other vehicles, or driving on the wrong side of the road, etc.

2. Public Safety Communications (PSC) is responsible for notifying the watch commander who is on duty of the fact that a pursuit is in progress.

C. Control of the Pursuit/ Command

1. Designation of Command

a. On every pursuit, one field supervisor who is not actively involved in the pursuit will assign themselves as command.

b. Command of the pursuit will normally be the immediate supervisor of the primary pursuit unit, however if that supervisor is not available for immediate assignment, the closest supervisor available will designate themselves as command.

c. Designation of command must be announced via the radio.

2. Responsibilities

a. Command shall intervene and terminate any pursuit where the risks of continuing the pursuit outweigh the nature of the violation. Command is in an excellent position to judge the overall situation impartially since they are not actively involved in the pursuit themself.

b. Command is individually responsible for ordering termination of any pursuit which they feel does not meet the criteria for continuing. Officers and supervisors have considerable discretion on whether to continue or terminate a pursuit.

c. Command shall respond to the termination point of all Plano Police Department initiated pursuits. Command will be responsible for controlling police actions at the scene and ensuring all reports are completed accurately.

D. Continuation/Termination of the Pursuit

1. A decision to continue or terminate the pursuit must be based on all available known facts and must be constantly reevaluated as conditions or circumstances change.

2. An officer's decision not to pursue or to terminate a pursuit that has been started will not be subject to review or discipline.

3. Police officers are accountable for their actions and individually bear the responsibility to terminate a pursuit at any time it becomes excessively dangerous to the officers or innocent citizens.

4. If at any time the pursuing police units encounter hazardous traffic or other conditions which substantially increase the risk of death or serious injury to innocent citizens, the pursuit must be terminated unless the known violations are of sufficient gravity to outweigh the risks involved in continuing the pursuit.

E. Safety Guidelines

1. A pursuit will be terminated any time excessively high speed is reached, taking into consideration traffic, weather, and all other pertinent conditions.

2. No more than two police units will be actively involved in the pursuit unless authorized by command. Too many units are a hazard in a pursuit. Command will specify, over the radio, any additional unit(s) that may be required.

a. Only the primary (first) pursuing police officer will attempt to keep the fleeing vehicle in sight. The primary pursuing officer will continue to follow the fleeing vehicle at their discretion but must maintain sufficient space between the police vehicle and the pursued vehicle to give the officer an opportunity to avoid a traffic crash if the pursued vehicle suddenly stops or performs an unexpected maneuver.

b. If another Plano police officer is authorized to participate, that officer will remain at least four (4) seconds behind the primary police vehicle. The assisting unit should, whenever possible, take over radio communications.

c. If additional Plano officers are authorized to be involved, each officer will maintain at least four (4) seconds time/distance between their vehicle and the nearest other pursuing vehicle.

3. When a vehicle being pursued by Plano officers goes through red lights, stop signs or major intersections, the pursuing police vehicles are to slow down or stop before going through the intersections as may be necessary for safe operation.

4. Use of emergency lights and siren in vehicle pursuits is mandatory.

5. All officers should consider the seriousness of the offense committed when deciding as to whether to pursue the violator.

F. Equipment Failures

1. In any event, an officer should terminate a pursuit if any emergency equipment on the unit stops working, especially if an officer is operating an unmarked unit.

2. A pursuit will also be terminated at any time it appears that a defect has developed in the police vehicle which would in any way affect the safe operation of that vehicle, including loss of any emergency equipment.

3. A pursuit will be terminated at any time brake fade is sufficient to create a hazard. It must be recognized that all vehicle brakes are subject to serious brake fade when the brakes are applied at high speeds. It is probable that even one severe application of the brakes at high speed will cause sufficient brake fade to make it impossible to make a normal stop for some time thereafter.

G. Tire Deflation Equipment and Deployment

The purpose of deploying tire deflation equipment is to safely and quickly end pursuits or to stop vehicles posing a significant hazard to the public. The Plano Police Department has provided Stop Sticks tire deflation devices for officer use.

1. Circumstances warranting the use of the Stop Sticks would include the desire to terminate a pursuit with minimal risk of injury or damage, with the approval of command, in a safe manner consistent with guidance provided in this directive.

2. Tire deflation equipment will be available in selected patrol vehicles and made available to first responders on a daily basis. Only those officers who have received training in the use of Stop Sticks tire deflation devices will deploy them.

3. Only department provided and authorized equipment will be used. This equipment will be mounted in the patrol vehicle. Officers will be responsible for checking and maintaining the equipment in their vehicles. The equipment officer will be responsible for quarterly inspections of Stop Sticks for sector patrol vehicles assigned to their respective command areas. Stop sticks mounted in vehicles assigned to specialized units will be inspected quarterly by the sergeants that supervise the specialized units. During the inspections, the sergeants will ensure the Stops Sticks are properly maintained and mounted in the vehicles.

a. After each use, the equipment will be turned in to the Quartermaster Unit for replacement.

b. The Quartermaster Unit will inventory the spare/replacement sticks and issue them to replace used sticks. Once the vendor has replaced the used stick, the Quartermaster Unit will inventory it in the place of the issued stick.

4. The safety of officers, citizens, and violators should be of the utmost concern, and careful planning is essential before deploying this equipment.
    a. The tire deflation equipment shall not be deployed on the following vehicles: Vehicles with less than four wheels (motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, etc.) and vehicles transporting hazardous materials.
    b. Tire deflation equipment should not be deployed on vehicles with more than two axles (semi-trucks, trailers, etc.) or public transportation vehicles (buses, motor coaches, vans, etc), without approval from the on-duty watch commander.
5. The deployment location should allow for proper deployment and provide as high a degree of safety as possible.
    a. Natural barriers that can provide protection for the officers should be utilized if possible.
    b. An adequate line of sight to the approaching pursuit must be available.
    c. Patrol vehicles will be parked in such a manner to provide additional warning and protection without blocking the pursuit. Patrol vehicles will have all emergency lighting activated.
    d. Deployment should be set far enough ahead of the pursuit to allow for adequate setup time. A rushed deployment is ineffective and dangerous.
    e. The deploying officer(s) will provide information on location and readiness to the pursuing officers and pursuing officers shall acknowledge receipt.
    f. Target vehicle information must be sent from the pursuing units to the deploying officer(s). A visual confirmation by the deploying officer(s) should be made to reduce the possibility of error.
6. The deploying officer(s) shall deploy the equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
    a. The deploying officer(s) shall not wrap the cord around any part of their body at any time during deployment.
    b. During deployment, officer(s) should seek and maintain cover and protection.
    c. The deploying officer(s) are responsible for securing the equipment immediately after use.
    d. See Administrative Directive 112.041 Traffic Enforcement for the deployment of tire deflation devices in non-pursuit circumstances.

H. **Prohibited Practices**

1. These practices are **prohibited** in any vehicle pursuit, unless specifically noted:
    a. Members will not become involved in an ongoing pursuit unless so assigned by proper authority;
    b. Roadblocks;
    c. Attempting to pass or pull beside the fleeing vehicle;
    d. Ramming or forcing the pursued vehicle off roadway; an exception to this prohibition may be authorized when an officer is permitted to use deadly force as defined by department

policy. Officers shall consider all risks when making the decision to collide or pull in front of pursued vehicles.

e. Shooting at Vehicles

1) Officers shall not shoot at moving vehicles except as a last resort and when deadly force is justified by department policy.

2) Officers shall consider all risks when making the decision to shoot at a vehicle.

3) The assumption that a fleeing vehicle is a deadly weapon and may cause injury to an officer or citizen is NOT in itself justification to use deadly force, whether the deadly use of force is directed toward the vehicle or occupants.

f. Officers shall not drive the wrong way on a divided street or highway, or any other roadway designated for one way traffic. In some cases, the driver may not be aware they are going the wrong way. If safe to do so, an officer may parallel the vehicle in the correct lane of traffic to alert the driver that they are going the wrong way. When a vehicle is going the wrong way against traffic, the pursuing officer(s) shall:

1) Notify PSC of the wrong way driver;

2) Provide location, direction, and approximate speed for deployment of tire deflation equipment when possible;

3) Request assistance from adjacent agencies to shut down traffic on the roadway coming in the fleeing vehicle's direction; and

4) Request PSC notify the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) or the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) to activate reader boards to advise motorists of the wrong way driver if traveling on TXDOT or NTTA roadways.

2. Marked and Unmarked Units

a. Unmarked vehicles are prohibited from engaging in pursuits.

b. Unmarked patrol vehicles and marked units without overhead lights shall not engage in pursuits unless there is a compelling and articulable reason why a violator must be apprehended, and a fully marked and equipped unit is not close enough to initiate the traffic stop.

1) Unmarked patrol units and marked units without overhead lights shall notify command their vehicle is unmarked and/or not equipped with overhead lights.

2) Unmarked patrol units and marked units without overhead lights shall cease pursuit whenever marked and fully equipped primary and back-up units join the pursuit.

3. In pursuing motorcycles, safety of the pursuing vehicle as well as the pursued is paramount. We will not attempt to pursue motorcycles off the streets, alleys, or highways. Officers must always be aware that the rider of a pursued motorcycle may fall from the motorcycle.

I. Post Pursuit Reporting

1. Required Reports

a. An Incident Report will be created to document each pursuit not resulting in another report such as arrest or offense report. It will be the responsibility of the primary pursuit unit to complete this report.

b. A Vehicle-Pursuit Report shall be completed by designated command and reported via chain of command to the division commander.

1) One Vehicle-Pursuit Report shall be completed per pursuit.

2) If more than one officer is involved in a pursuit, each officer's name shall appear in the report.

Note: The Vehicle-Pursuit Report is located in Blue Team and is designed to be completed electronically.

2. Required Information

Information required in the appropriate reports include, but is not limited to, the following:

a. Incident characteristics:

1) Date and day of week;

2) Time of day; degree of daylight;

3) Location initiated and terminated;

4) Nature of the area (i.e. residential, commercial, highway);

5) Duration of pursuit;

6) Travel/road conditions;

7) Speed(s)/speed limit(s);

b. Outcomes of a pursuit:

1) Terminating event (arrest, escape, traffic crash):

a) If tire deflation equipment was deployed, this must be documented in the post pursuit report.

b) The effectiveness of the equipment, deployment locations and deploying officer information must be included.

2) Charges filed: traffic and criminal;

3) Traffic crash results, if applicable (vehicle/property damage, personal injuries, fatalities);

4) Third parties affected and how.

3. Review and Submission of Reports

a. Pursuit Review cover reports shall be reviewed by each member of the chain of command and forwarded, with recommendations regarding the appropriateness of the pursuit, to the division commander of the affected employee. Each member of the chain of command should review official reports and recordings related to the incident to facilitate their review of the incident.

b. The division commander will determine whether the pursuit occurred in a manner consistent with policy and if disciplinary action is appropriate. Any incident involving death or serious bodily injury to any person will be reviewed by the chief of police who will make final determination.

c. The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) shall maintain a file on completed pursuit reviews. The PSU Lieutenant shall submit quarterly and cumulative statistical reports regarding pursuit incidents to the Office of the Chief of Police for approval. The annual report will include analysis of any problem areas identified, which indicates a need for further training or an adjustment of written directives or procedures.

J. Training Regarding Pursuits

The department will provide training in pursuit driving to all recruit officers during initial field training. Refresher pursuit driving training will be provided to officers during scheduled in-service training every other year. Additional driving training will be provided as needed based on changes in law/policy and/or the need for additional training. On opposite years, a defensive driving or similar driving course will be taught during in-service training. Every year during in-service training or through the department's electronic policies and procedures software system, this Administrative Directive regarding pursuit driving will be thoroughly reviewed by all sworn personnel.

K. Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits

1. Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuit Agreement

The Plano Police Department has entered into an inter-jurisdictional pursuit agreement with several other area law enforcement agencies. This agreement provides regulations and guidelines to be followed when either a pursuit begins in Plano and leaves our city limits, or another agency pursues a violator into Plano.

2. Pursuits Originated by Other Agencies

a. Since it is almost impossible to know all circumstances surrounding another agency's decision to pursue or the charges pending against the pursued driver in the short period of time we are notified of the pursuit, Plano units will assume a backup role in pursuits conducted through our jurisdiction by other law enforcement agencies.

b. Pursuits by other agencies through our jurisdiction terminate for Plano officers at the city limits, unless specifically authorized by a supervisor to proceed outside of our jurisdiction.

c. If another agency specifically requests our assistance in their pursuit, PSC will attempt to get all the known information and charges pending against the driver.

3. Once command is informed of the specific charges by PSC, an immediate decision shall be made by command on the continuation of the pursuit by Plano units outside our jurisdiction. In any event, as other jurisdictions join the pursuit to assist the originating agency, Plano units shall cease their participation and return to the city to resume their normal patrol duties.

4. Notifications

a. Before entering another jurisdiction, or as soon as practical, the pursuing agency will notify the other agency of the following information:

1) A pursuit has entered or is about to enter their jurisdiction;

2) The location and direction of travel;

3) The primary offense for which the vehicle and occupants are wanted;

4) The vehicle license number and complete description of vehicle and occupants;

5) The number and description of pursuing units as well as their relative location to the vehicle being pursued;

6) Whether or not assistance is needed;

7) When applicable, notify agency when:

a) The pursuit is leaving their jurisdiction boundaries,

b) The pursuit has been discontinued, or if the pursuit has ceased, where the pursuit ended.

b. Notification will be made by PSC.

5. Control of the Pursuit

The initiating agency will have control and be responsible for the pursuit. OTHER AGENCIES WILL NOT PARTICIPATE UNLESS REQUESTED TO ASSIST.

6. Number of Units Involved

a. A field supervisor acting as command and no more than two police units from combined jurisdictions will be actively involved in the pursuit. Command can authorize additional units if special circumstances exist that require additional units. Too many units are a hazard in a pursuit. Command will specify, over the radio, any additional unit(s) that may be required.

b. One additional unit from the current respective jurisdiction may trail the pursuit by keeping the pursuit in sight to assist officers if needed.

7. Responsibilities of the Initiating Agency

a. Arrest and custody of the persons charged;

b. Arraignment of arrested persons;

c. Disposition of any passenger;

d. Disposition of arrested person's vehicle; and

e. Coordination of all reports, citations, and criminal charges.

8. Responsibilities of Agency Having Jurisdiction at the Point of Termination

a. Reporting of any traffic collision(s) that occur because of a pursuit.

b. As a matter of professional courtesy, a supervisor from the agency where the pursuit terminated will respond to the location of termination so they may be informed of pertinent information regarding the vehicle pursuit.