


Department of Public Safety
Police Division
Policies and Procedures

<u>Title</u> Vehicular Pursuit	<u>SOP Number</u> 9.2.200
Approval Signature 	
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Vehicular Pursuit

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish clear direction for officers, communications personnel and supervisors involved in the initiation, continuation, and termination of vehicular pursuits.
- II. **Policy:** Vehicular pursuit of fleeing suspects can present a danger to the lives of the public, officers, and suspects involved in the pursuit. Due to these risks, it is the policy of the University of Cincinnati Police Division (UCPD) to regulate the manner in which vehicular pursuits are undertaken and performed. It is the goal of the UCPD to bring every pursuit to a safe conclusion as soon as possible. Officers will be considered in pursuit when, after having activated their emergency lights and sirens and after having exhausted all other appropriate means of communicating their presence and intention, the suspect refuses to stop and the officer makes a deliberate decision to continue to attempt to apprehend.

III. Definitions:

Vehicular Pursuit: A deliberate attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend a fleeing suspect who is actively attempting to elude apprehension.

Authorized Emergency Vehicle: A vehicle of this agency equipped with operable emergency equipment as designated by state law.

Caravanning: Direct participation in, or following of, a pursuit by emergency vehicles other than the primary and authorized secondary units.

Due Regard: The consideration of existing circumstances to determine the reasonableness of one's actions as they relate to existing or potential hazards.

Forcible stopping: A pursuit intervention tactic that uses a police vehicle or other barricade to intentionally stop a fleeing suspect's vehicle by blocking, striking, or any other means. Forcible stopping techniques include the use of roadblocks (stationary or moving) or vehicle contact action (e.g., ramming the suspect vehicle, PIT maneuver).

Primary Unit: The police unit immediately following the suspect vehicle at a reasonable distance and that assumes primary control of the pursuit.

Pursuit-Rated Vehicle: An authorized emergency vehicle that is specially designed and equipped for use during high-speed pursuits.

Roadblock: Any method, restriction or obstruction used or intended for the purpose of stopping a motorist (in motion) attempting to evade apprehension on a roadway in order to effect the apprehension of an actual or suspected violator.

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

Vehicular Pursuit

Terminate or Termination: A conscious decision by pursuing officers or directive issued by a supervisor to disengage from the pursuit.

Termination Point: The location where the pursuit comes to a conclusion.

Trail or Trailing: The unauthorized following of a pursuit at any distance, to include paralleling, intercepting, or tracking.

Vehicle Contact Action: Any action undertaken by the pursuing officer intended to result in contact between the moving police vehicle and the object vehicle (e.g., ramming, PIT maneuver).

IV. Procedure:

A. Initiation of Pursuit

1. Pursuit is authorized only in the case of a known or suspected violent felony and when the officer has a reasonable belief that the suspect, if allowed to flee, would present a danger to human life or cause serious injury. Pursuits for misdemeanor or nonviolent violations are prohibited.
2. The decision to initiate a 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.
3. Unless a greater hazard would result, a pursuit should not be undertaken if the subject(s) can be identified with enough certainty that they can be apprehended at a later time.
4. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a pursuit, the officer shall take the following into consideration:
 - a. The seriousness of the offense
 - b. Known information on the suspect
 - c. Road configuration (e.g. one-way street, divided highway, work zone)
 - d. Physical location and population density (e.g. residential area, school zone, business district)
 - e. Existence of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - f. Lighting and visibility
 - g. Weather and environmental conditions
 - h. The relative performance capabilities of the pursuit vehicle and the vehicle being pursued
 - i. Officer training and experience
 - j. Availability of assistance from another officer
 - k. Available equipment
 - l. Speed and evasive tactics employed by the suspect
 - m. The presence of other persons in the police and/or suspect vehicle
 - n. Any other condition or situation that would create an unreasonable risk

Vehicular Pursuit

5. A pursuit should not be initiated or engaged in while providing transportation for any person, other than law enforcement officers.
- B. Pursuit Operations
1. All emergency vehicle operations shall be conducted following jurisdictional laws and related regulations and with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.
 - a. Pursuing officers shall wear a seat belt.
 - b. Pursuing officers shall come to a complete stop at stop signs and red traffic signals, prior to proceeding through a stop sign or red traffic signal with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.
 - c. Pursuing officers must maintain a vehicle speed which is reasonable for the conditions, including but not limited to: time of day, road conditions, pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and weather. However if the responding officers believes there is a necessity to exceed the posted speed limit by more than 15 miles per hour, the officer will obtain approval from the on-duty patrol supervisor.
 2. No pursuit shall be conducted in a direction against the lawful flow of traffic on a one-way street or lane of a divided highway.
 3. Upon undertaking a pursuit, the pursuing vehicle shall activate emergency lights, sirens, and in car vehicle recording cameras, and they shall remain activated for the duration of the pursuit and any relevant activity thereafter.
 4. Upon undertaking a pursuit, the officer shall notify UC Communications Center of the:
 - a. initial purpose of the attempted stop;
 - b. any information concerning the use of firearms, threat of force, or other unusual hazard;
 - c. location, direction and speed of the pursuit;
 - d. description of the pursued vehicle, including license plate number, if known;
 - e. number, identity, and description of any known occupants.
 5. The officer shall continuously update the UC Communications Center on the pursuit conditions such as speed, location, and presence of other traffic.
 6. In determining whether to continue the pursuit, officers and supervisors should reevaluate the risks to safety based on the evolving factors involved in the pursuit (detailed in Section III.A.4).
 7. The responsibilities of Communications personnel during pursuit operations include:
 - a. Notifying an available supervisor of the pursuit,
 - b. Clearing the radio channel of non-emergency traffic
 - c. Relaying necessary information to other officers and jurisdictions including:
 - (1) The unit/units in pursuit
 - (2) A description of the vehicle being pursued
 - (3) The location of the pursuit
 - (4) The direction of travel and approximate speed
 - (5) The reason for the pursuit, and any other pertinent information
 - d. Responding to requests from involved units or supervisor

Vehicular Pursuit

8. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, a pursuit shall consist of no more than two police vehicles: a primary and a secondary unit.
 - a. The primary unit will:
 - (1) Be responsible for keeping the suspect's vehicle in sight.
 - (2) Advise the supervisor if more than two police units are needed for the pursuit.
 - (3) Have the authority and duty to terminate the pursuit should conditions warrant.
 - b. The secondary unit (when available) will:
 - (1) Immediately notify communications that they are joining the pursuit.
 - (2) Assume responsibility for relaying information to communications.
 - (3) Provide backup for the primary unit if an arrest results from the pursuit.
 - c. All other personnel shall stay clear of the pursuit unless instructed to participate by a supervisor.
 - d. Caravanning and trailing is prohibited. However, officers should monitor the progress of the pursuit and be prepared to assist if directed by a supervisor.
 - e. The number of vehicles engaged in a pursuit may be adjusted to fit the situation with supervisory approval.
 - f. A supervisor who determines the need to join in the pursuit is authorized to be a third unit. If a supervisor joins a pursuit, they may consider relieving the secondary unit.
 - g. In considering the number of UCPD vehicles directly involved in a pursuit, the supervisor shall consider the availability of units from other jurisdictions as relayed by communications personnel.
 9. Whenever possible, available pursuit-rated patrol units having the most prominent markings and emergency lights should be utilized to pursue, particularly as the primary unit. Officers operating marked police vehicles which are not pursuit-rated (including motorcycles, sport utility vehicles, utility trucks, and mobile command vehicles) may only pursue a motor vehicle under the same circumstances set forth in this policy.
 10. If an officer operating a marked vehicle that is not pursuit-rated becomes involved in a motor vehicle pursuit, he/she shall relinquish all involvement in the pursuit as soon as a total of two marked pursuit-rated police vehicles become involved. A listing of pursuit-rated vehicles will be maintained by the Support Services Bureau Commander and made available to all employees.
 11. Unmarked Public Safety vehicles are prohibited from engaging in vehicular pursuits.
 12. The primary unit shall become secondary if the fleeing vehicle comes under aerial surveillance or when another unit has been assigned as the primary unit.
- C. Supervisory Responsibilities
1. When made aware of a vehicular pursuit, the appropriate supervisor shall notify communications that he or she is monitoring the pursuit and accepting supervisory responsibility.
 2. Supervisors are responsible for managing all vehicular pursuits to include determining whether the pursuit should continue or be terminated.

Vehicular Pursuit

3. The supervisor is responsible for
 - a. monitoring incoming information;
 - b. coordinating and directing activities as needed to ensure that proper procedures are used, to include ensuring that
 - (1) no more than the necessary number of units are involved,
 - (2) where available, aircraft has been requested by UCPD Communications,
 - (3) the appropriate radio channel is being utilized, and
 - (4) surrounding jurisdictions have been notified.
 - c. terminating the pursuit when necessary
4. A supervisor shall respond to the termination point following a pursuit.

D. Intervention Tactics

1. The use of forcible stopping techniques is prohibited, including any type of roadblock or vehicle contact action.
2. Firearms shall not be discharged from a moving vehicle unless the officers are being fired upon due to the elevated risk of death or serious injury to innocent persons due to the rapidly changing background (SOP 7.1.100, Section D.6.G).
3. Firearms shall not be discharged at a moving vehicle or its occupants unless a person in the vehicle is threatening the officer or another person with deadly force by means other than the vehicle (e.g., officers or civilians being fired upon) (SOP 7.1.100, Section D.6.H).
4. Once the pursued vehicle is stopped, officers shall utilize appropriate officer safety tactics. The suspect(s) shall be taken into custody in accordance with law and UCPD policy, using only the amount of force reasonably necessary to affect an arrest.

E. Termination of the Pursuit

1. The primary unit and supervisor shall continually reevaluate and assess the pursuit situation including all of the initiating factors and terminate the pursuit whenever it is reasonable to believe the risks associated with continued pursuit are greater than the public safety benefit of making an immediate apprehension.
2. The pursuit may be terminated by the primary unit at any time.
3. A supervisor may order the termination of a pursuit at any time.
4. A pursuit should be terminated if the suspect's identity has been determined, immediate apprehension is not necessary to protect the public or officers, and apprehension at a later time is feasible.
5. The pursuit should be terminated if the pursued vehicle's location is no longer definitively known.
6. The pursuit should be terminated when approaching an area congested with vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
7. Once a pursuit is terminated, officers directly involved shall:
 - a. If applicable, reduce speed to the posted speed limit
 - b. Turn off all emergency lights and sirens
 - c. Report the last known location and direction of the suspect(s)
 - d. Park their vehicle at a location near the termination point to meet with the supervisor.

Vehicular Pursuit

8. This does not preclude an officer who had terminated a pursuit from reinitiating a pursuit if conditions change where a pursuit would be authorized provided this policy is being followed and the supervisor is immediately notified the pursuit has resumed.

F. Interjurisdictional Pursuits

1. The pursuing officer shall notify a supervisor and communications when it is likely that a pursuit will continue into a neighboring jurisdiction or across the county or state line.
2. Communications shall immediately notify law enforcement in the jurisdiction being entered by the pursuit of the reason for the pursuit, the route of travel, speed, etc.
3. Pursuit into a bordering jurisdiction shall conform to the laws of both jurisdictions and any applicable interjurisdictional agreements. The actions of officers shall be governed by the policy of the officers' own agency.
4. When a pursuit extends into another jurisdiction, the responsible supervisor will direct Communications to request the agency of jurisdiction take over the pursuit.
5. If the agency of jurisdiction is willing and capable to assume control of the pursuit, confirmation of their acceptance of control of the pursuit and number of vehicles available should be obtained.
6. Once a pursuit has been taken over by the law enforcement agency of another jurisdiction, UCPD units shall cease emergency driving unless needed as a secondary unit. Once UCPD units cease emergency driving, they should await termination of the pursuit, supervisory directives, or requests for assistance from the primary unit. UCPD units shall proceed to the termination point once the pursuit has concluded.
7. If the agency of jurisdiction is unable to take control of the pursuit, the following should be considered in whether the pursuit shall be continued or terminated:
 - a. The distance between the pursuing and pursued vehicles and the speed involved
 - b. The pursuing officer's level of familiarity with the area
 - c. Communication limitations at longer distances
8. UCPD officers may continue to pursue violent felony suspects across county and state boundaries. However, any new agency of jurisdiction shall be requested to assume control of the pursuit as the primary unit. If control of the pursuit is relinquished, UCPD officers shall then proceed as directed in IV,F.5.

G. Pursuits from Other Jurisdictions

1. Participation in a neighboring jurisdiction's pursuit is appropriate only in response to a specific request for participation. Mere notification of the existence of a pursuit shall not be construed as a request for participation. Upon such notification, the communications center shall clarify whether the UCPD is being requested to assist in the pursuit.
2. Prior to acceptance of a pursuit from another agency, the responsible supervisor shall determine the degree of the UCPD's involvement, if any, and provide the

Vehicular Pursuit

appropriate direction. UCPD personnel will not engage in a pursuit from an outside agency if the pursuit is prohibited by UCPD policy.

3. When the pursuit is assumed by this agency and where appropriate, the supervisor shall attempt to cancel units from the other agency.
4. This does not prohibit officers from taking action such as blocking traffic to protect pursuit intersection routes.

H. Post-Pursuit Procedures

1. Whenever an officer engages in a pursuit, a [Motor Vehicle Pursuit Report Form 16](#) shall be completed by the responding supervisor, detailing the circumstances and actions involved in the pursuit as well as the outcome.
2. The vehicular pursuit will be entered into Guardian Tracking by the responding supervisor with the resolution status as pending until the review of the pursuit is completed.
3. Pursuing officers shall complete an RMS report for the incident.
4. To determine whether the pursuit was conducted in compliance with UCPD policy, the Form 16 and all videos of the pursuit shall be reviewed by the appropriate supervisor(s), who were **not** directly involved in the pursuit.
5. Any final recommendations of the pursuit review (policy changes, employee recognition, discipline, training, etc.) will be approved by the Police Chief through the chain of command prior to execution.
6. The final resolution of the pursuit will be updated in Guardian Tracking by the Standards and Strategic Development Bureau Commander once the final review is completed and approved by the Police Chief.
7. The Field Operations Bureau Commander shall conduct a review and analysis of all police pursuit activity at least annually and identify any additions, deletions, or modifications warranted in departmental pursuit procedures. This review shall:
 - a. be documented on a Form 5 to the Police Chief by the end of February each year
 - b. include the total number of pursuits, any crashes or liability issues that arose, and any recurring errors or problems
 - c. provide consideration of the following:
 - (1) Policy and procedures
 - (2) Equipment
 - (3) Training
 - (4) Philosophical approach
 - (5) Interjurisdictional issues
 - d. include a review of all pursuit investigations and report to verify compliance with this policy, and
 - e. will be conducted even if a pursuit did not occur during the designated time period.

I. Training

1. Officers who drive police vehicles shall be given initial and biennial update training in UCPD's pursuit policy and tactics.

Vehicular Pursuit

2. At least annually, sworn members shall review and complete acknowledgment (Read & Sign) for this policy.