

Vehicle Pursuits

307.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for vehicle pursuits in order to protect the safety of involved officers, the public and fleeing suspects.

307.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Motorcycle - Any 2, 3 or 4 wheeled motorized vehicle where the occupants are not protected inside a cab or body structure.

Ramming - The deliberate act of contacting a suspect's vehicle with another law enforcement vehicle to functionally damage or otherwise force the suspect's vehicle to stop.

Roadblocks - A tactic designed to stop a suspect's vehicle by intentionally placing a law enforcement vehicle or other immovable object in the path of the suspect's vehicle.

Terminate - To discontinue a pursuit or stop chasing fleeing vehicles.

Tire deflation device - A device designed to puncture the tires of the pursued vehicle.

Trail - Following the path of the pursuit at a safe speed while obeying all traffic laws and without activating emergency equipment. If the pursuit is at a slow rate of speed, the trailing vehicle will maintain sufficient distance from the pursuit vehicles so as to clearly indicate an absence of participation in the pursuit.

Vehicle pursuit - An event involving one or more law enforcement officers attempting to apprehend a suspect, who is attempting to avoid arrest while operating a vehicle by using high-speed driving or other evasive tactics, such as driving off a highway, turning suddenly or driving in a legal manner but willfully failing to yield to an officer's emergency signal to stop.

307.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to weigh the importance of apprehending suspects who unlawfully flee from law enforcement against the risks associated with vehicle pursuits.

307.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Vehicle pursuits shall only be conducted using authorized police department emergency vehicles that are equipped with emergency lighting and sirens as required by law (I.C. § 9-13-2-6(1)(B)).

Officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property. However, officers may, when in pursuit of a suspect and provided there is no unreasonable risk to persons and property (I.C. § 9-21-1-8):

- (a) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (b) Exceed the speed limit.

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- (c) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- (d) Park or stand in the roadway.

307.3.1 WHEN TO INITIATE A PURSUIT

Officers are authorized to initiate a pursuit when it is reasonable to believe that a suspect, who has been given an appropriate signal to stop by a law enforcement officer, is attempting to evade arrest or detention by fleeing in a vehicle (I.C. § 35-44.1-3-1).

Factors that shall be considered, both individually and collectively, when deciding to initiate or continue a pursuit include, but are not limited to:

- (a) The seriousness of the known or reasonably suspected crime and its relationship to community safety.
- (b) The importance of protecting the public and balancing the known or reasonably suspected offense and the apparent need for immediate capture against the risks to officers, innocent motorists and others.
- (c) The safety of the public in the area of the pursuit, including the type of area, time of day, the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic (e.g., school zones) and the speed of the pursuit relative to these factors.
- (d) The pursuing officers' familiarity with the area of the pursuit, the quality of radio communications between the pursuing vehicles and dispatcher/supervisor, and the driving capabilities of the pursuing officers under the conditions of the pursuit as well as the Officers experience and ability to remain calm and in control to continue with the pursuit
- (e) The weather, traffic and road conditions that unreasonably increase the danger of the pursuit when weighed against the risks resulting from the suspect's escape.
- (f) The identity of the suspect has been verified and there is comparatively minimal risk in allowing the suspect to be apprehended at a later time.
- (g) The performance capabilities of the vehicles used in the pursuit in relation to the speed and other conditions of the pursuit.
- (h) Emergency lighting and siren limitations on unmarked police department vehicles that may reduce visibility of the vehicle, such as visor or dash-mounted lights, concealable or temporary emergency lighting equipment and concealed or obstructed siren positioning.
- (i) Vehicle speeds.
- (j) Other persons in or on the pursued vehicle (e.g., passengers, co-offenders and hostages).
- (k) The availability of other resources, such as K-9 or other assistance.
- (l) Motorcycles with a driver and passenger shall never be pursued for a simple traffic infraction only, the act of fleeing on a motorcycle shall not be used as a crime along with the infraction to justify the pursuit.

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- (m) If the pursuing vehicle is carrying a civilian rider and there is a signed waiver of responsibility, the pursuing vehicle may continue in the pursuit until relieved by a marked unit. Canine units carrying a civilian rider with a signed waiver of responsibility become involved in the pursuit.

307.3.2 WHEN TO TERMINATE A PURSUIT

Pursuits should be terminated whenever the totality of objective circumstances known or which reasonably ought to be known to the officer or supervisor during the pursuit indicates that the present risks of continuing the pursuit reasonably appear to outweigh the risks resulting from the suspect's escape (I.C. § 9-21-1-8(d)).

When a supervisor directs the pursuit to be terminated, officers will immediately terminate the pursuit.

The factors listed in this policy on when to initiate a pursuit will apply equally to the decision to terminate a pursuit. Officers and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential danger to innocent motorists, themselves and the public when electing to continue a pursuit.

In addition to the factors that govern when to initiate a pursuit, other factors should be considered in deciding whether to terminate a pursuit, including:

- (a) The distance between the pursuing vehicle and the fleeing vehicle is so great that further pursuit would be futile or require the pursuit to continue for an unreasonable time or distance.
- (b) The pursued vehicle's location is no longer definitely known.
- (c) The pursuing vehicle sustains damage or a mechanical failure that renders it unsafe to drive.
- (d) The pursuing vehicle's emergency lighting equipment or siren becomes partially or completely inoperable (I.C. § 9-21-1-8(c)).
- (e) Hazards to uninvolved bystanders or motorists.
- (f) The danger that the continued pursuit poses to the public, the officers or the suspect, balanced against the risk of allowing the suspect to remain at large.
- (g) When the identity of the suspect is known and it does not reasonably appear that the need for immediate capture outweighs the risks associated with continuing the pursuit.
- (h)

307.4 PURSUIT VEHICLES

When involved in a pursuit, unmarked police department emergency vehicles should be replaced by marked emergency vehicles whenever practicable.

Vehicle pursuits should be limited to three police department emergency vehicles (two pursuit vehicles and a support vehicle such as K-9 or supervisor. However, the number of vehicles involved will vary with the circumstances.

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An officer or supervisor may request that additional vehicles join a pursuit if, after assessing the factors outlined above, it appears that the number of officers involved would be insufficient to safely arrest the number of suspects. All other officers shall stay out of the pursuit but should remain alert to its progress and location.

307.4.1 MOTORCYCLES

When involved in a pursuit, police department motorcycles should be replaced by marked emergency vehicles as soon as practicable.

307.4.2 VEHICLES WITHOUT EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Officers operating vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and siren are prohibited from initiating or joining in any pursuit (I.C. § 9-19-5-3; I.C. § 9-19-14-5).

Officers in such vehicles may provide support to pursuing vehicles as long as the vehicle is operated in compliance with all traffic laws. Those officers should discontinue such support immediately upon arrival of a sufficient number of authorized emergency police department vehicles.

307.4.3 PRIMARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The initial pursuing officer will be designated as the primary pursuit vehicle and will be responsible for the conduct of the pursuit unless he/she is unable to remain reasonably close to the suspect's vehicle. The primary responsibility of the officer initiating the pursuit is the apprehension of the suspect without unreasonable danger to him/herself or others.

The primary pursuing officer should notify the dispatcher, commencing with a request for priority radio traffic, that a vehicle pursuit has been initiated, and as soon as practicable provide any known information including, but not limited to:

- (a) The location, direction of travel and estimated speed of the suspect's vehicle.
- (b) The description of the suspect's vehicle including the license plate number, if known.
- (c) The reason for the pursuit.
- (d) The use of firearms, threat of force, violence, injuries, hostages or other unusual hazards.
- (e) The number of occupants and identity or description.
- (f) The weather, road and traffic conditions.
- (g) The need for any additional resources or equipment.
- (h) The identity of other law enforcement agencies involved in the pursuit.

Unless relieved by a supervisor or a secondary pursuing officer, the officer in the primary pursuit vehicle shall be responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit. Unless circumstances reasonably indicate otherwise, the primary pursuing officer should relinquish the responsibility of broadcasting the progress of the pursuit to an officer in a secondary pursuit vehicle joining the

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pursuit to minimize distractions and allow the primary pursuing officer to concentrate foremost on safe pursuit tactics.

307.4.4 SECONDARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The second officer in the pursuit will be designated as the secondary pursuit vehicle and is responsible for:

- (a) Immediately notifying the dispatcher of his/her entry into the pursuit.
- (b) Remaining a safe distance behind the primary pursuit vehicle unless directed to assume the role of primary pursuit vehicle or if the primary pursuit vehicle is unable to continue the pursuit.
- (c) Take over all radio broadcasts from primary pursuit vehicle.
- (d) Broadcasting the progress of the pursuit, updating known or critical information and providing changes in the pursuit, unless the situation indicates otherwise.
- (e) Identifying the need for additional resources or equipment as appropriate.
- (f) Serving as backup to the primary pursuing officer once the suspect has been stopped.

307.5 PURSUIT DRIVING

The decision to use specific driving tactics requires the same assessment of the factors the officer considered when determining whether to initiate and/or terminate a pursuit. The following are tactics for officers who are involved in the pursuit:

- (a) Officers, considering their driving skills and vehicle performance capabilities, will space themselves from other involved vehicles such that they are able to see and avoid hazards or react safely to unusual maneuvers by the fleeing vehicle.
- (b) Because intersections can present increased risks, the following tactics should be considered:
 - 1. Available officers not directly involved in the pursuit may proceed safely to controlled intersections ahead of the pursuit in an effort to warn cross traffic.
 - 2. Pursuing officers should exercise due caution and slow down as may be necessary when proceeding through controlled intersections.
- (c) As a general rule, officers should not pursue a vehicle driving the wrong direction on a roadway, highway or freeway. In the event the pursued vehicle does so, the following tactics should be considered
 - 1. Maintain visual contact with the pursued vehicle by paralleling the vehicle while driving on the correct side of the roadway.
 - 2. Request other officers to observe exits available to the suspect.
- (d) Notify other law enforcement agency if it appears that the pursuit may enter its jurisdiction.
- (e) Officers involved in a pursuit should not attempt to pass other pursuing vehicles unless the situation indicates otherwise or they are requested to do so by the pursuing officer and with a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the involved officers.

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- (f) Officers shall obtain supervisor permission prior to leaving his/her jurisdiction, absent exigent circumstances.

307.5.1 PURSUIT TRAILING

In the event that initial pursuing officers relinquish control of the pursuit to another agency, the on-duty supervisor will determine how many units will be allowed to continue in the pursuit.

307.5.2 OFFICERS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT

Uninvolved officers are authorized to use emergency equipment at intersections along the pursuit path to clear intersections of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to protect the public and deploy tire deflating devices. Those officers should attempt to place their vehicles in locations that provide some safety or an escape route in the event of an unintended collision or if the suspect intentionally tries to ram the police department vehicle.

307.6 SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Available supervisory and management control will be exercised over all vehicle pursuits involving officers from this department.

The field supervisor of the officer initiating the pursuit, or if unavailable, the nearest field supervisor, will be responsible for:

- (a) Immediately notifying involved officers and the dispatcher of supervisory presence and ascertaining all reasonably available information to continuously assess the situation and risk factors associated with the pursuit. This is to ensure that the pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.
- (b) Engaging in the pursuit, when appropriate, to provide on-scene supervision.
- (c) Exercising management and control of the pursuit even if not engaged in it.
- (d) Ensuring that no more than the required law enforcement vehicles are involved in the pursuit under the guidelines set forth in this policy.
- (e) Directing that the pursuit be terminated if, in his/her judgment, it is not justified to continue the pursuit under the guidelines of this policy.
- (f) Ensuring that assistance from, canines or additional resources is requested, if available and appropriate.
- (g) Ensuring that the proper radio channel is being used.
- (h) Ensuring the notification and/or coordination of outside agencies if the pursuit either leaves or is likely to leave the jurisdiction of this department.
- (i) Controlling and managing Elkhart Police Department officers when a pursuit enters another jurisdiction.
- (j) Preparing a post-pursuit review and documentation of the pursuit as required.

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307.6.1 WATCH COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon becoming aware that a pursuit has been initiated, the Watch Commander should monitor and continually assess the situation and ensure the pursuit is conducted within the guidelines and requirements of this policy. The Watch Commander has the final responsibility for the coordination, control and termination of a vehicle pursuit and shall be in overall command.

The Watch Commander shall review all pertinent reports for content and forward them to the Captain.

307.7 LOSS OF PURSUED VEHICLE

When the pursued vehicle is lost, the involved officers should broadcast any additional pertinent information to assist other officers in locating the vehicle. The primary pursuing officer or supervisor will be responsible for coordinating any further search for either the pursued vehicle or suspects fleeing on foot.

307.8 INTERJURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When a pursuit enters another agency's jurisdiction, the primary pursuing officer or supervisor, taking into consideration the distance traveled, unfamiliarity with the area and other pertinent facts, should determine whether to request the other agency to assume the pursuit.

Unless entry into another jurisdiction is expected to be brief, it is generally recommended that the primary pursuing officer or supervisor ensure that notification is provided to each outside jurisdiction into which the pursuit is reasonably expected to enter, regardless of whether the jurisdiction is expected to assist.

307.8.1 ASSUMPTION OF PURSUIT BY ANOTHER AGENCY

Officers will relinquish control of the pursuit when another agency has assumed the pursuit, unless the continued assistance of the Elkhart Police Department is requested by the agency assuming the pursuit. Upon relinquishing control of the pursuit, the involved officers may proceed, with supervisory approval, to the termination point of the pursuit to assist in the investigation. The supervisor should coordinate such assistance with the assuming agency and obtain any information that is necessary for any reports.

The roles and responsibilities of officers at the termination point of a pursuit initiated by this department shall be coordinated with appropriate consideration of the needs of the agency assuming the pursuit.

307.8.2 PURSUITS EXTENDING INTO THIS JURISDICTION

The agency that initiates a pursuit shall be responsible for conducting the pursuit. Officers from this department may join a pursuit in their jurisdiction; however contact with a supervisor should be made as soon as practical.

When a request is made for this department to assist or take over a pursuit that has entered the jurisdiction of the Elkhart Police Department, the supervisor should consider:

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- (a) The public's safety within this jurisdiction.
- (b) The safety of the pursuing officers.
- (c) Whether the circumstances are serious enough to continue the pursuit.
- (d) Whether there is adequate staffing to continue the pursuit.
- (e) The ability to maintain the pursuit.

As soon as practicable, a supervisor or the Watch Commander should consider a request for assistance from another agency. The Watch Commander or supervisor, after considering the above factors, may decline to assist in or assume the other agency's pursuit.

Assistance to a pursuing agency by officers of this department will conclude at the City limits, provided that the pursuing agency has sufficient assistance from other sources. Ongoing participation from this department may continue only until sufficient assistance is present.

In the event that the termination point of a pursuit from another agency is within this jurisdiction, officers shall provide appropriate assistance including, but not limited to, scene control, coordination and completion of supplemental reports and any other assistance requested or needed.

307.9 PURSUIT INTERVENTION

Pursuit intervention is an attempt to stop the suspect's ability to continue to flee in a vehicle through tactical application of technology, tire deflation devices,, ramming or roadblock procedures (I.C. § 9-21-1-0.5).

307.9.1 WHEN USE IS AUTHORIZED

In deciding whether to use intervention tactics, officers/supervisors should balance the risk of allowing the pursuit to continue with the potential hazards arising from the use of each tactic to the public, the officers and persons in or on the pursued vehicle. With this in mind, the decision to use any intervention tactic should be reasonable in light of the circumstances apparent to the officer at the time of the decision.

307.9.2 USE OF FIREARMS

The use of firearms to disable a pursued vehicle is not generally an effective tactic and involves all the dangers associated with discharging firearms. Officers should not utilize firearms during an ongoing pursuit unless the conditions and circumstances meet the requirements authorizing the use of deadly force. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any officer from using a firearm to stop a suspect from using a vehicle as a deadly weapon.

307.9.3 INTERVENTION STANDARDS

Any intervention tactic, depending upon the conditions and circumstances under which it is used, may present dangers to the officers, the public or anyone in or on the vehicle being pursued. Certain applications of intervention tactics may be construed to be a use of force, including deadly force, and are subject to policies guiding such use. Officers shall consider these facts

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and requirements prior to deciding how, when, where and if an intervention tactic should be employed (I.C. § 35-41-3-3(b)).

- (a) The use of any lawful intervention technique is limited to use by properly trained officers with the approval of a supervisor and upon assessment of the circumstances and conditions presented at the time, including the potential for risk of injury to officers, the public and occupants of the pursued vehicle (I.C. § 9-21-1-8).
- (b) Tire deflation devices should be deployed only after notification of pursuing officers and the supervisor of the intent and location of the intended deployment, and in a manner that:
 - 1. Should reasonably only affect the pursued vehicle.
 - 2. Provides the deploying officer adequate cover and escape from intentional or unintentional exposure to the approaching vehicle.
 - 3. Takes into account the limitations of such devices as well as the potential risk to officers, the public and occupants of the pursued vehicle.
 - 4. Takes into account whether the pursued vehicle is a vehicle transporting hazardous materials or a school bus transporting children.
 - 5. Tire deflation devices shall not be used on motorcycles.
- (c) Because roadblocks involve a potential for serious injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle if the suspect does not stop, the intentional placement of roadblocks in the direct path of a pursued vehicle is generally considered deadly force and should not be deployed without prior approval of a supervisor. If roadblocks are deployed, it should only be done under extraordinary conditions when all other reasonable intervention tactics have failed or reasonably appear ineffective and the need to immediately stop the pursued vehicle substantially outweighs the risks of injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle, officers or the public.

307.10 CAPTURE OF SUSPECTS

Proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment are the keys to a successful conclusion of a pursuit and apprehension of evading suspects. Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Unless relieved by a supervisor, the primary pursuing officer should coordinate efforts to apprehend the suspect following the pursuit. Officers should consider the safety of the public and the involved officers when formulating plans for setting up perimeters or for containing and capturing the suspect.

An Officer should utilize a Felony stop when a pursuit terminates.

307.11 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All appropriate reports shall be completed to comply with appropriate laws and policies or procedures.

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- (a) The primary pursuing officer shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports.
- (b) The primary pursuing officer or supervisor shall complete the appropriate pursuit report.
- (c) After first obtaining the available information, the involved, or if unavailable, on-duty road supervisor shall promptly complete a pursuit review briefly summarizing the pursuit to the Uniform Captain or the authorized designee. This review should include, at a minimum:
 - 1. Date and time of the pursuit.
 - 2. Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the pursuit.
 - 3. Length of pursuit in distance and time, including the starting and termination points.
 - 4. Involved vehicles and officers, use of body cam and/or car camera saved under case number.
 - 5. Alleged offenses.
 - 6. Whether a suspect was apprehended, as well as the means and methods used.
 - (a) Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
 - 7. Arrestee information, if applicable.
 - 8. Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
 - 9. Any property or equipment damage.
 - 10. Name of supervisor at the scene or who handled the incident.
 - 11. A preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.
- (d) After receiving copies of reports, logs and other pertinent information, the Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall conduct or assign the completion of a post-pursuit review, as appropriate.
- (e) Annually, the Chief of Police should direct a documented review and analysis of department vehicle pursuits to minimally include policy suitability, policy compliance and training needs.

307.12 REGULAR AND PERIODIC PURSUIT TRAINING

In addition to initial and supplementary training on pursuits, all officers will participate, no less than annually, in regular and periodic training addressing this policy and the importance of vehicle safety and protecting the public. Training will include recognition of the need to balance the known offense and the need for immediate capture against the risks to officers and others.