

Vehicle Pursuits

308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Vehicle pursuits expose innocent citizens, law enforcement officers and fleeing violators to the risk of serious injury or death. The primary purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidance in balancing the safety of the public and themselves against law enforcement's duty to apprehend violators of the law. Another purpose of this policy is to minimize the potential for pursuit-related collisions. Vehicular pursuits require officers to exhibit a high degree of common sense and sound judgment. Officers must not forget that the immediate apprehension of a suspect is generally not more important than the safety of the public and pursuing officers.

Deciding whether to pursue a motor vehicle is a critical decision that must be made quickly and under difficult and unpredictable circumstances. In recognizing the potential risk to public safety created by vehicular pursuits, no officer or supervisor shall be criticized or disciplined for deciding not to engage in a vehicular pursuit because of the risk involved. This includes circumstances where Department policy would permit the initiation or continuation of the pursuit. It is recognized that vehicular pursuit situations are not always predictable and decisions made pursuant to this policy will be evaluated according to the totality of the circumstances reasonably available at the time of the pursuit.

Officers must remember that the most important factors to the successful conclusion of a pursuit are proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment. Officers' conduct during the course of a pursuit must be objectively reasonable; that is, what a reasonable officer would do under the circumstances. An unreasonable individual's desire to apprehend a fleeing suspect at all costs has no place in professional law enforcement.

308.1.1 VEHICLE PURSUIT DEFINED

1. "Pursuit": A pursuit is an active effort by a police officer, operating a police vehicle and utilizing emergency lights and siren, to apprehend the occupant(s) of a fleeing vehicle whose driver is resisting apprehension by increasing speed, maintaining high speeds, or otherwise disobeying traffic laws or attempting to elude the officer.

a. "Marked Police Vehicle": Vehicles bearing indicia of a police department (such as name or logo) and fully equipped with operable roof-mounted emergency lights and a siren.

b. "High Speeds": A speed of 21 or more MPH over the statutory limit.

c. "Unmarked Police Vehicle": Vehicles having no indicia of a police department, but equipped with emergency lights and siren.

308.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the policy of this department that a vehicle pursuit shall be conducted only with emergency lights and siren. The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, exceed the maximum speed limits, and disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions provided the driver slows as

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

may be required and necessary for safe operation and does not endanger life or property (625 ILCS 5/11-205).

The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is not relieved from the duty of driving with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor do such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others (625 ILCS 5/11-205(e)).

To reduce the likelihood of a pursuit occurring, an officer intending to stop a vehicle for any violation of the law, except a traffic law, should, whenever possible and without creating a threat to public safety or officers, close the distance between the two vehicles. In situations where appropriate and prudent, awaiting the arrival of assisting officers, prior to activating emergency lights, an audible device, or otherwise signaling the suspect to stop may be warranted.

Upon approaching an intersection controlled by traffic signals or signs, or any other location at which there is an increased likelihood of a collision, the driver of any pursuit vehicle shall reduce the vehicle's speed so as to avoid a collision with another vehicle or pedestrian.

Officers should make every reasonable effort to ensure that the way is clear before proceeding through an intersection or otherwise increasing speed. Pursuing officers are expected to maintain complete control of their vehicles at all times. Throughout the course of a pursuit, pursuing officers should not attempt to overtake, pull alongside, or pass the suspect's moving vehicle without the specific authorization of a supervisor, if feasible. Officers are discouraged from passing other units involved in a pursuit unless the passing officer receives specific permission from the Primary Unit.

308.2.1 WHEN TO INITIATE A PURSUIT

An officer may not initiate a pursuit unless both of the following conditions are met:

- (a) The suspect is committing or has committed a felony involving the use of physical force or violence against a person.
- (b) The officer must reasonably believe that the suspect, if allowed to escape, would:
 - present an immediate danger to others, or
 - be able to destroy evidence of the crime, or
 - escape prosecution due to lack of identification.

In deciding whether to pursue, the officer must exercise sound judgment and carefully consider the seriousness of the offense, possible consequences of a pursuit, and safety of citizens.

An officer engaged in a pursuit must take into consideration the immediate conditions, including roadway and weather conditions, density/flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, time of day, nature of the location (e.g., school, hospital, residential area, etc.), nature of the offense, speeds involved, likelihood of apprehension, duration of pursuit, performance capabilities of the vehicles involved, the abilities of the drivers involved, and the officer's physical and mental alertness. Even after justifiably initiating, an officer shall terminate a pursuit where a change in such conditions makes the pursuit clearly and unreasonably hazardous.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

Police officers will not become involved in a vehicle pursuit with prisoners or persons who have not signed a patrol observer waiver in the vehicle.

308.2.2 WHEN TO TERMINATE A PURSUIT

Pursuits should be discontinued 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.

The factors listed in this policy are expressly included herein and will apply equally to the decision to discontinue as well as the decision to initiate a pursuit. Officers and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential danger to innocent motorists and themselves when electing to continue a pursuit. In the context of this policy, the term "terminate" shall be construed to mean discontinue or to stop chasing the fleeing vehicle(s).

In addition to the factors listed above the following factors should also be considered in deciding whether to terminate a pursuit:

- (a) Distance between the pursuing officers and the fleeing vehicle(s) is so great that further pursuit would be futile or require the pursuit to continue for an unreasonable time and/or distance.
- (b) Pursuits will also be terminated when the officer loses visual contact with the suspect for an extended time (30 seconds or longer). Officers may continue to look for the suspect, but at reduced speeds.
- (c) Officer's pursuit vehicle sustains any type of damage that renders it unsafe to drive.
- (d) Directed by a supervisor.

308.2.3 SPEED LIMITS

The speed of a pursuit is a factor that should be evaluated on a continuing basis by the officer and supervisor. Evaluation of vehicle speeds shall take into consideration public safety, officer safety and the safety of the occupants of the fleeing vehicle.

Should high vehicle speeds be reached during a pursuit, officers and supervisors shall also consider these factors when determining the reasonableness of the speed of the pursuit:

- (a) Pursuit speeds have become unreasonably unsafe for the surrounding conditions.
- (b) Pursuit speeds have exceeded the driving ability of the officer.
- (c) Pursuit speeds are beyond the capabilities of the pursuit vehicle thus making its operation unsafe.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

308.3 PURSUIT UNITS

Pursuit units should be limited to two vehicles; however, the number of units involved will vary with the circumstances. An officer or supervisor may request additional units to 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 suspect(s). All other officers should stay out of the pursuit, but should remain alert to its progress and location. Any officer who drops out of a pursuit may then, if necessary, proceed to the termination point at legal speeds, following the appropriate rules of the road.

308.3.1 SEMI-MARKED AND UNMARKED VEHICLES

Only marked police vehicles in good mechanical condition, fully equipped with emergency lights and siren, and driven by police officers may participate in a pursuit. The siren and emergency lights of the primary pursuit vehicle shall be used continuously (not intermittently).

The exception to the rule for marked units is that a K-9 unit or a supervisor driving an unmarked vehicle who has begun to stop a vehicle which flees, in cases where this Policy permits marked vehicles to give chase, need not immediately disengage if that police vehicle has lights/siren operable and there is no other police unit nearby. However, all efforts shall be made to safely have a marked police vehicle assume the pursuit in accordance with the rest of this Policy. Then the supervisor or K-9 unit shall withdraw to a posture of support only, with no further direct involvement.

Unmarked or other departmental vehicles, except for marked units, may not initiate a pursuit without the authorization of a supervisor unless there is an imminent threat to life or great bodily harm represented by the continued freedom of the suspect.

308.3.2 PRIMARY UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The decision to initiate and/or continue a pursuit requires weighing the public safety need to immediately apprehend the suspect against the degree of risk to which peace officers and others are exposed as the result of a pursuit. Officers are reminded that they are under no legal obligation to initiate a pursuit, and that in many circumstances the safety of the public will dictate that no pursuit be initiated, and/or it be discontinued.

Upon the initiation of a pursuit, the pursuing officer shall immediately activate the vehicle's emergency warning lights, audible device, and headlights if not already activated.

The Primary Unit will notify METCAD that a vehicle pursuit has been initiated and as soon as practical provide information including, but not limited to:

- (a) Reason for the pursuit.
- (b) Location and direction of travel.
- (c) Speed of the fleeing vehicle.
- (d) Description of the fleeing vehicle and license number, if known.
- (e) Number of known occupants.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

- (f) The identity or description of the known occupants.
- (g) Information concerning the use of firearms, threat of force, injuries, hostages or other unusual hazards.

Unless relieved by a supervisor or secondary unit, the officer in the primary unit shall be responsible for the broadcasting of the progress of the pursuit. Unless practical circumstances indicate otherwise, and in order to concentrate on pursuit driving, the primary officer should relinquish the responsibility of broadcasting the progress of the pursuit to a secondary unit or aircraft joining the pursuit.

308.3.3 SECONDARY UNIT(S) RESPONSIBILITIES

The second officer in the pursuit is responsible for the following:

- (a) The officer in the secondary unit should immediately notify the telecommunicator and supervisor, if feasible, of entry into the pursuit. Until such time that a supervisor assumes responsibility, only one Secondary Unit shall become involved in an ongoing pursuit.
- (b) Remain a safe distance behind the primary unit unless directed to assume the role of primary officer, or if the primary unit is unable to continue the pursuit.
- (c) The secondary officer should be responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit unless the situation indicates otherwise.
- (d) Upon joining the pursuit or being assigned Secondary Unit responsibilities, the vehicle's emergency warning lights, audible device, and headlights shall be activated.
- (e) If so requested by the Primary Unit or if directed by a supervisor to do so, the Secondary Unit may assume Primary Unit responsibilities. Otherwise, the Secondary Unit may not attempt to overtake or pull alongside the Primary Unit.
- (f) Secondary Unit personnel are responsible for serving as a backup to the Primary Unit. As such, they will respond to directions from the Primary Unit personnel unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or circumstances do not allow.

308.3.4 PURSUIT DRIVING TACTICS

The decision to use specific driving tactics requires the same assessment of considerations outlined in the factors to be considered concerning pursuit initiation and termination. The following are tactics for units involved in the pursuit:

- (a) Officers, considering their driving skills and vehicle performance capabilities, will space themselves from other involved vehicles so they are able to see and avoid hazards or react safely to maneuvers by the fleeing vehicle.
- (b) Because intersections can present increased risks, the following tactics should be considered:

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

1. Available units 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 units should exercise due caution when proceeding through controlled intersections.
- (c) Police officers involved in a pursuit shall not proceed in a direction opposite to the flow of traffic on a divided highway without the specific authorization of a supervisor, if feasible. In the event the pursued vehicle does so, the following tactics should be considered:
1. Requesting assistance from an air unit.
 2. Maintaining visual contact with the pursued vehicle by paralleling it on the correct side of the roadway.
 3. Requesting other units to observe exits available to the suspect(s).
- (d) Notifying the Illinois State Police and/or other agency if it appears that the pursuit may enter their jurisdiction.
- (e) Officers involved in a pursuit should not attempt to pass other units unless the situation indicates otherwise or they are requested to do so by the primary unit.

308.3.5 TACTICS/PROCEDURES FOR UNITS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT

There should be no paralleling of the pursuit route. 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. Officers should remain in their assigned area and should not become involved with the pursuit unless directed otherwise by a supervisor.

Non-pursuing personnel needed at the termination of the pursuit should respond in a non-emergency manner, observing the rules of the road.

The primary and secondary units should be the only units operating with lights and siren unless other units are assigned to the pursuit.

308.3.6 PURSUIT TRAILING

In the event the initiating unit from this agency either relinquishes control of the pursuit to another unit or jurisdiction, that initiating unit may, with permission of a supervisor, trail the pursuit to the termination point in order to provide necessary information and assistance for the arrest of the suspect(s).

The term trail means to follow 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 unit will maintain sufficient distance from the pursuit units so as to clearly indicate an absence of participation in the pursuit.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

308.4 SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY

It is the policy of this department that 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 the following:

- (a) Upon notification that a pursuit is in progress, the supervisor shall assume responsibility for the monitoring and control of the pursuit as it progresses.
- (b) The supervisor shall immediately determine whether the pursuit was initiated in accordance with the provisions of this guideline and shall permit the pursuit to be continued only if said guideline has been fully complied with to the best of the supervisor's knowledge.
- (c) Upon being notified of a pursuit, the supervisor shall verify the following:
 1. That no more than the required or necessary number of units are involved in the pursuit.
 2. That the proper radio frequency is being used.
 3. That other agencies are notified as necessary and appropriate.
- (d) The supervisor shall continuously review the incoming information to determine whether the pursuit should be continued or terminated.
- (e) The supervisor shall order a pursuit terminated after concluding danger to the pursuing peace officers or the public outweighs the need for the immediate apprehension of the suspect.
- (f) The supervisor may order a pursuit terminated if the suspect's identity is established to the point where later apprehension is likely and there is no immediate threat to public safety.
- (g) The supervisor should order a pursuit terminated whenever the weather, road, or traffic conditions substantially increase the danger to the public posed by the pursuit beyond the need for immediate apprehension.
- (h) The supervisor should order a pursuit terminated whenever the distance between the pursuing and fleeing vehicles is so great that further pursuit is futile.
- (i) In controlling the pursuit, the supervisor shall be responsible for the coordination of the pursuit as follows:
 1. Directing pursuit or support units into or out of the pursuit.
 2. The assignment of a Secondary Unit to the pursuit.
 3. The re-designation of Primary, Secondary, or other support units as necessary.
 4. The approval, disapproval, and coordination of pursuit tactics.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

5. The approval or disapproval to cross jurisdictional boundaries in the continuation of the pursuit.
 6. Ensure compliance with inter-jurisdictional pursuit agreements.
- (j) The supervisor may approve and assign additional backup or support units to assist the Primary and Secondary Units based upon their analysis of:
1. The nature of the offense for which the pursuit was initiated.
 2. The number of suspects and any known propensity for violence.
 3. The number of peace officers in the pursuit vehicles.
 4. Any damage or injuries to the assigned Primary or Secondary Units or peace officers.
 5. The number of peace officers necessary to safely make an arrest at the conclusion of the pursuit.
 6. Any other clear and articulable facts that would justify the increased hazards caused by adding more than the Primary and Secondary Units to a pursuit.
- (k) When the pursuit is terminated, the supervisor shall require that all participating agencies are notified, and identify an on scene supervisor or designee to monitor the arrest and transportation procedures.
- (l) The supervisor shall require throughout the duration of the pursuit that this guideline is followed by all peace officers.

308.5 COMMUNICATIONS

If the pursuit is confined within the City limits, radio communications will be conducted on the primary channel unless instructed otherwise by a supervisor or telecommunicator.

308.5.1 METCAD RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Upon notification that a pursuit has been initiated, METCAD will:
1. Give priority to the Primary Unit.
 2. Notify other units of pursuit, including location, direction of travel, and vehicle description.
 3. Keep the channel clear.
 4. Notify the Shift Supervisor and/or patrol supervisor if feasible.
 5. Receive and records all incoming information on pursuit.
 6. Keep Shift Supervisor and/or the patrol supervisor apprised of progress of pursuit.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

7. Request status when the pursuing peace officer fails to make frequent contact.
 8. Notify neighboring jurisdictions of the pursuit approaching their boundaries.
 9. Perform relevant records and motor vehicle checks.
 10. Coordinate and dispatch backup assistance and air support units under the direction of the supervisor.
- (b) Radio frequency management:
1. Pursuit communication will be handled on the frequency designated by the pursuing agency unless one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - (a) The pursuit has or may extend into other jurisdictions.
 - (b) The supervisor directs a switch to ISPERN.
 2. Upon using the ISPERN frequency, the Primary Unit shall conform to ISPERN guidelines.

308.5.2 LOSS OF PURSUED VEHICLE

When the pursued vehicle is lost, the primary unit should broadcast pertinent information to assist other units in locating suspect(s). The primary unit will be responsible for coordinating any further search for either the pursued vehicle or suspects fleeing on foot.

308.6 INTER-JURISDICTIONAL PURSUITS

Officers involved in inter-jurisdictional pursuits are required to comply with their department's guidelines and inter-jurisdictional agreements. Only pursuit tactics permitted by this policy may be utilized by Urbana Police Department officers, irrespective of what is requested by the other agency.

When a pursuit enters another agency's jurisdiction:

- (a) The primary unit will advise METCAD that the pursuit is leaving this jurisdiction.
- (b) The controlling supervisor will decide whether to continue the pursuit based upon the totality of circumstances known.
- (c) As soon as practicable METCAD will notify the involved jurisdiction.
- (d) If two units from the other agency are actively involved in the pursuit, the officers will not engage in the pursuit unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

308.6.1 ASSUMPTION OF PURSUIT BY ANOTHER AGENCY

Units originally involved will discontinue the pursuit when advised that another agency has assumed the pursuit and assistance of the Urbana Police Department is no longer needed. Upon discontinuing the pursuit, the primary unit may proceed upon request, with or at the direction of a supervisor, to the termination point to assist in the investigation.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

The role and responsibilities of officers at the termination of a pursuit initiated by this department shall be coordinated with appropriate consideration of the units from the agency assuming the pursuit.

Notification of a pursuit in progress should not be construed as a request to join the pursuit. Requests to or from another agency to assume a pursuit should be specific. Because of communication limitations between local agencies and ISP units, a request for ISP assistance will mean that they will assume responsibilities for the pursuit. For the same reasons, a request for assistance from the ISP should include confirmation that the ISP will relinquish control.

308.6.2 PURSUITS EXTENDING INTO THIS JURISDICTION

The agency that initiates a pursuit shall be responsible for conducting the pursuit. Units from this department should not join a pursuit unless specifically requested to do so by the agency whose peace officers are in pursuit. The exception to this is when a single unit from the initiating agency is in pursuit. Under this circumstance, a unit from this department may join the pursuit until sufficient units from the initiating agency join the pursuit.

When a request is made for this department to assist or take over a pursuit from another agency that has entered this jurisdiction, the supervisor should consider these additional following factors:

- (a) Ability to maintain the pursuit.
- (b) Circumstances serious enough to continue the pursuit.
- (c) Adequate staffing to continue the pursuit.
- (d) The public's safety within this jurisdiction.
- (e) Safety of the pursuing peace officers.

As soon as practical, a supervisor or the Shift Supervisor should review a request for assistance from another agency. The Shift Supervisor or supervisor, after consideration of the above factors, may decline to assist in, or assume the other agency's pursuit.

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

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

308.7 PURSUIT INTERVENTION

Use of pursuit intervention tactics should be employed only after approval of a supervisor. In deciding whether to use intervention tactics, officers/supervisors should balance the risks 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 these risks in mind, the decision

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

to use any intervention tactic should be reasonable in light of the circumstances confronting the officer at the time of the decision. It is imperative that officers act within the bounds of legality, good judgment and accepted practices.

308.7.1 DEFINITIONS

Spikes or Tack Strips - A device that extends across the roadway designed to puncture the tires of the pursued vehicle. Only officers who have received proper training may be authorized by a supervisor to use spike strips.

Spacing - The pursuing officers will maintain reasonably safe distances among vehicles, so as to duplicate turns and lessen the possibility of a collision in the event of a sudden stop.

308.7.2 FORMS OF INTERVENTION

Officers involved in a pursuit shall not discharge any firearm from or at a moving vehicle except as a last resort in which it reasonably appears necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to a peace officer or another person where deadly force would otherwise be legally justified.

The pursuit vehicle shall not be driven such that deliberate contact is made with the fleeing vehicle except as a last resort in which it reasonably appears necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to a peace officer or another person where deadly force would otherwise be legally justified.

Tire Deflation Devices shall only be used by those that have been trained in their use. See Tire Deflation Devices policy for specifics on deployment.

Police Immobilization Technique (PIT) - The Urbana Police Department does not train officers on this technique. Officers shall not use this technique.

Boxing-in/Rolling Roadblock/Roadblocks - The use of roadblocks is prohibited. Officers shall not knowingly travel into the path of a fleeing vehicle.

308.7.3 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, which reasonably appears necessary under the circumstances, to properly perform their lawful duties.

Unless relieved by a supervisor the primary officer should coordinate efforts to apprehend the suspect(s) following the pursuit. Officers should consider safety of the public and the involved officers when formulating plans to contain and capture the suspect.

308.8 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Officers shall complete an appropriate report of the pursuit incident and assign a case reporting number to each pursuit incident. If involved in inter-jurisdictional pursuit, obtain an Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network (ISPERN) number in addition to their own case reporting number.

Urbana Police Department

Urbana PD Policy Manual

Vehicle Pursuits

- (a) Pursuit incidents will be investigated thoroughly. The acquisition of statements, photographs, drawings, preliminary medical reports and any other evidentiary items that are or could be relevant to the conduct of the pursuit incident should be completed.
- (b) A memorandum shall be completed briefly summarizing the pursuit to his/her department manager. This memo should minimally contain the following information:
 - 1. Date and time of pursuit.
 - 2. Length of pursuit.
 - 3. Involved units and officers.
 - 4. Initial reason for pursuit.
 - 5. Starting and termination points.
 - 6. Disposition: arrest, citation, etc. Arrestee information should be provided if applicable.
 - 7. Injuries and/or property damage.
 - 8. Medical treatment.
 - 9. Name of supervisor at scene.
 - 10. A preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or additional review and/or follow up is warranted.

308.9 APPLICATION OF VEHICLE PURSUIT POLICY

This policy has been created with input from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board; Police Pursuit Guidelines (revised March, 2004), in accordance with 50 ILCS 705/7.5.