

PINEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

SECTION 6: ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS

SUBJECT: 604 PURSUIT POLICY

EFFECTIVE: 04/09/2024

1. Introduction

Police pursuits are necessary for apprehending individuals who pose a threat to public safety. However, they also present significant risks to officers, suspects, and members of the public. This policy aims to balance the legitimate need to apprehend suspects with the paramount importance of safeguarding human life.

2. General Principles

- **Public safety:** The safety of the public, officers, and suspects is paramount in all police actions.
- **Reasonable justification:** Initiating or continuing a pursuit must be based on a reasonable belief that the benefits outweigh the risks.
- **Sound judgment:** Officers are expected to exercise sound judgment and discretion throughout a pursuit.
- **Communication and coordination:** Effective communication and coordination are essential between pursuing officers and supervisors.
- **Accountability and transparency:** The agency is committed to accountability and transparency in its pursuit practices.

3. Pursuit Initiation

- **Offense severity:** Officers should generally initiate pursuits only for serious offenses, where the suspect poses a significant threat to public safety.
- **Factors to consider:** Prior to initiating a pursuit, officers should carefully assess the following factors:
 - Nature and severity of the offense
 - Suspect's driving behavior and potential danger
 - Weather and road conditions
 - Traffic density and potential for bystander injury
 - Availability of alternative apprehension strategies
 - Officer's training and experience in pursuit driving
- **Supervisory approval:** Whenever feasible, officers should obtain approval from a supervisor before initiating a pursuit.

4. Pursuit Conduct

- **Risk assessment:** Officers must continuously assess the risks and benefits of the pursuit and terminate it if the risks become excessive.
- **Safe driving:** Officers are obligated to drive safely and lawfully, maintaining a safe distance from the suspect vehicle.

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- Traffic laws: While public safety takes precedence, officers should adhere to traffic laws whenever possible.
- Communication: Pursuing officers and other units must maintain effective communication throughout the pursuit.
- Supervisory oversight: Supervisors have the authority to terminate pursuits at any time, based on their assessment of the situation.

5. Pursuit Termination

- Termination criteria: A pursuit should be terminated when any of the following conditions occur:
 - Risks to public safety outweigh the potential benefits of apprehension.
 - Suspect vehicle stops or becomes disabled.
 - Pursuit becomes unsafe or impractical due to external factors.
 - Supervisor instructs the officer to terminate.
 - Alternative apprehension methods become available.
- Post-pursuit procedures: Following a pursuit, officers must:
 - Complete a comprehensive incident report.
 - Participate in mandatory post-pursuit reviews.
 - Cooperate with any investigations or inquiries.

6. Training and Development

- Regular training: All officers should receive regular training on pursuit policies, procedures, and safe driving techniques.
- Training focus: Training should emphasize decision-making, risk assessment, communication, and de-escalation techniques.
- Supervisory training: Supervisors should be trained to effectively monitor and manage pursuits.

7. Data Collection and Analysis

- Data collection: The agency will collect and analyze data on all police pursuits to identify trends and inform policy development.
- Data utilization: This data will be used to improve policies, procedures, and training programs.

8. Community Engagement

- Community outreach: The agency is committed to engaging with the community to discuss police pursuit policies and procedures.
- Public awareness: Public education will be conducted to inform the community about the risks of pursuits and the agency's commitment to public safety.

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9. Review and Revision

- Periodic review: This policy will be reviewed and revised regularly to reflect best practices and changes in law or policy.

Supervisor Role

A police supervisor plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety of officers, suspects, and the public during a pursuit. Here are the key factors a supervisor should consider when deciding to terminate a pursuit:

Public Safety:

- Risk to the public: This is the paramount concern. If the pursuit continues, there is a significant risk of harm to innocent bystanders, pedestrians, or other drivers. This includes factors like:
 - Traffic density and type of road (highway, residential area)
 - Weather conditions and visibility
 - Time of day and presence of pedestrians
 - Likelihood of the suspect causing an accident
- Nature and severity of the offense: The severity of the crime should be weighed against the risks involved in continuing the pursuit. For minor offenses, the potential harm caused by the pursuit may outweigh the benefits of apprehension.
- Suspect behavior: Is the suspect driving erratically or recklessly, posing an immediate threat? Are they likely to escalate the situation and endanger others?

Officer Safety:

- Officer experience and training: Supervisors should consider the experience and training level of the pursuing officer. Inexperienced officers may not have the skills necessary to handle a high-speed pursuit safely.
- Availability of backup: Are sufficient backup units available to assist with the pursuit and apprehend the suspect safely?
- Officer fatigue and stress: Prolonged pursuits can cause fatigue and impaired judgment, impacting the officer's ability to make safe decisions.

Pursuit Duration and Effectiveness:

- Length of the pursuit: Has the pursuit been ongoing for a significant period without a clear resolution? Is there a reasonable chance of apprehending the suspect soon?

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- Distance covered: How far has the pursuit extended? Is it feasible and safe to continue, considering the distance traveled and potential for fatigue?
- Alternative apprehension strategies: Are there alternative methods available to apprehend the suspect without the risks associated with a continued pursuit? This could include deploying roadblocks, utilizing technology like aerial surveillance, or waiting for the suspect to return to a known location.
- Likelihood of successful termination: Is it likely that the pursuit can be terminated safely and effectively without further risk to the public or officers?

Legal considerations:

- Compliance with pursuit policies: Supervisors must ensure the pursuit complies with agency policies and procedures. This includes adherence to legal limitations on speed, use of emergency equipment, and pursuit initiation criteria.
- Documentation and reporting: Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and documenting the pursuit after its termination, ensuring adherence to legal requirements and identifying areas for improvement.

Ultimately, the decision to terminate a pursuit requires careful consideration of all relevant factors. By prioritizing public safety, officer well-being, and sound judgment, supervisors can make informed decisions that minimize risks and ensure the best possible outcome.

After Action Review

After a police pursuit concludes, regardless of its outcome, a thorough review and analysis are crucial for learning and improving future practices. Here are some key after-action criteria that should be considered:

1. Evaluation of Pursuit Initiation:

- Was the pursuit initiated based on a reasonable justification and within agency policy?
- Were all factors considered before initiating the pursuit, including the offense severity, risks involved, and alternative options?
- When feasible, did the officer receive necessary approval from a supervisor before initiating the pursuit?

2. Pursuit Conduct and Decision-Making:

- Did the officer maintain safe driving practices and comply with relevant traffic laws?

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- Was communication clear and effective between pursuing officers and other units?
- Were supervisory monitoring and oversight adequate throughout the pursuit?
- Did the officer demonstrate sound judgment and decision-making during the pursuit?
- Were there any opportunities to terminate the pursuit safely and effectively?

3. Pursuit Outcome and Consequences:

- Was the suspect apprehended? If not, were alternative apprehension strategies implemented?
- Were there any injuries or property damage resulting from the pursuit?
- What was the overall impact of the pursuit on the community?

4. Data Collection and Analysis:

- Was all necessary information documented accurately and comprehensively?
- Will data from the pursuit be used to analyze trends and inform policy development?
- Will the pursuit be reviewed by a dedicated committee or internal affairs department?

5. Training and Development:

- Did the pursuit highlight any training deficiencies or areas for improvement?
- Are there opportunities to enhance officer training in pursuit tactics, risk assessment, and decision-making?
- Should additional training be provided on specific aspects of pursuit policy and procedures?

6. Public Communication and Transparency:

- How will the agency communicate with the public about the pursuit?
- Will information be released transparently and accurately?
- Will the agency address any public concerns or questions about the pursuit?

7. Policy Review and Revision:

- Did the pursuit reveal any shortcomings or areas for improvement in the agency's pursuit policy?
- Should the policy be reviewed and revised to reflect best practices and lessons learned?

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- Are there opportunities to improve policy clarity, training, or technology utilization?

By carefully analyzing these after-action criteria, law enforcement agencies can gain valuable insights from each pursuit, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately enhance public safety and officer well-being.

By order of

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