

VEHICLE PURSUITS**Original Issue:** 09/01/1994**Effective:** 09/07/2023**Revision Number:** 13**Distribution:** Sworn/Communications/Community Service Officers**CFA Standards:** 14.05M

I. POLICY

The nature of police enforcement operations occasionally will result in pursuit situations. Vehicle pursuits are potentially dangerous to the violator, the officer, and the general public. Actions taken when in pursuit should be based upon the various factors, which will affect the probability of safely and successfully ending the pursuit. All decisions will be made in accordance with the Delray Beach Police Department's belief that the sanctity of life and the safety of the public are of paramount importance.

Officers engaged in vehicle pursuits will comply with [Florida State Statute 316.072](#) governing the operation of emergency vehicles, and will exercise all reasonable care to prevent injury to lives and property of the public and personnel involved. The statute does contain a warning that endangering life and property by reckless disregard for the safety of others is not protected under the provisions of the statutes even if the officer is responding to an emergency or is involved in a pursuit.

II. DEFINITIONS

Blue Team – A web-based program utilized in the field to upload complaints, use of force reports, tire deflations, firearm discharges, department vehicle accidents, or any other violation. Additionally, supervisors will be able to initiate, track, and manage the complaint process.

Boxing-In – The surrounding of a suspect vehicle with pursuit vehicles which, when slowed to a stop, forces the violator's vehicle to stop.

Channelization – The deliberate directing of a vehicle into a given path or area by the use of stationary objects (pylons, barricades, vehicles) placed in its current path of travel. A vehicle's route is never totally obstructed when utilizing this process.

Class "A" Roadblock – A blockage of the road accomplished with materials or equipment (i.e., lightweight road barricades, flares, etc.) causing little or no damage to any vehicle that strikes them.

Class "B" Roadblock – A physical blockage of a roadway with heavy material or equipment designed to collide with the offender's vehicle for the purpose of stopping, detouring, or disabling an approaching vehicle.

IA Pro – Software used to store, manage and track complaints, tire deflations, department vehicle accidents, use of force and firearm discharges and perform investigations in Internal Affairs.

Marked Vehicles – Vehicles that are clearly marked on the exterior with our Police Department logo and equipped with a light and siren package. All other vehicles are considered unmarked for the purpose of this Order.

Pursuit – An active and continuing effort by an Officer to apprehend or follow a moving vehicle, provided the driver of such vehicle is aware or should be aware of the attempt being made to stop the driver; and, said driver fails to stop after a reasonable time or reasonable distance or increases speed or takes other evasive action.

Pursuit Rated Vehicle – Vehicles that are equipped with enhanced and boosted features that make it durable enough to withstand the systems pressure a pursuit can have on a vehicle and make it safer for all involved.

Ramming – The deliberate act of impacting a moving violator's vehicle with another vehicle for the purpose of functionally damaging or forcing it off the roadway.

Stop Sticks – A device used to slow down or stop a pursuit of a vehicle by puncturing the tires of the offender vehicle.

Violent Felony – A crime against a person such as, the act of murder, armed robbery, sexual battery, arson or use of explosive devices to a structure occupied or presumed to be occupied, kidnapping (excluding parental or custodial kidnapping), armed burglary with a dangerous weapon, or any other felony which involves the use of deadly force against an individual.

III. THE ORDER

1.0 Decision to pursue

1.1 Officers may engage in a vehicle pursuit with the intention of apprehending a suspect(s) if:

a. Probable cause exists to believe a violent felony has been committed, and

1. There is reason to believe that there is imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death to any person(s); or

2. The failure to pursue the suspect may result in serious injury or death to an individual.

1.2 All other pursuits are prohibited

1.3 Pursuits shall normally be limited to no more than three (3) police vehicles

a. The number of units involved may be adjusted, with supervisory approval, to fit the situation.

b. The initiating unit will activate and continuously employ emergency lights and siren throughout the pursuit and until the pursuit has been terminated.

- 1.4 Pursuits shall not be permitted by sworn employees operating motorcycles, and sport utility vehicles (S.U.V.'s) that are not pursuit rated. Employees operating such vehicles shall:
 - a. Operate their units in accordance with traffic and roadway conditions and may, within those restrictions, attempt to maintain discreet contact, and
 - b. After a marked patrol unit has moved into position follow the pursuit to the point of termination.
 - c. Currently the only pursuit rated sport utility vehicles will be the Marked 2WD Chevy Tahoe and/or Ford Explorers Police Pursuit Vehicles (PPV). These vehicles have been specifically built for improved handling especially at high speeds which is sometimes required for pursuits.
- 1.5 Units in the general area of the pursuit will remain in their assigned area.
- 1.6 Sworn employees operating unmarked vehicles properly equipped with blue lights and sirens, and are pursuit rated are permitted to engage in a vehicle pursuit until relieved by the first available marked vehicle. Unmarked vehicles may then act as secondary units until a second marked vehicle is present, at which time the unmarked vehicle will terminate the vehicle pursuit and continue safely if additional units are required.
- 1.7 Stop Sticks will only be authorized for use in vehicle pursuits that meet the Department's pursuit policy.
 - a. Stop Sticks are designed to slow down an authorized pursuit.
 - b. Stop Sticks will not be deployed on stolen vehicles, or for traffic offenses.
- 2.0. Pursuit procedures
 - 2.1 Pursuits are to be conducted under the discretion of the initiating officer until superseded by a supervisory authority.
 - a. The officer initiating a pursuit shall immediately notify Communications of the:
 1. Location and direction of travel
 2. Description and speed of the suspect vehicle
 3. The violation/reason for the pursuit
 4. Number and description of occupants
 5. Approximate age of the occupants when possible
 - b. If no supervisor is present during the pursuit, the senior officer in the pursuit is responsible for:

1. Deciding when the pursuit should be cancelled
 2. Assuming command at the terminal point of the pursuit
- 2.2 Secondary units joining a pursuit shall, as soon as practical, notify Communications and/or the supervisor of their involvement.
- a. The secondary unit will become responsible for updating Communications, the supervisor, and other responding officers throughout the pursuit.
- 2.3 Concluding the pursuit – Pursuit Roadblocks
- a. Roadblocks used in pursuit situations are permitted when circumstances dictate a roadblock as the only alternative for apprehending a subject who is believed to have committed a violent felony as defined by this order and when the violator presents an imminent threat to the life of an officer or citizen.
 - b. A roadblock may be implemented and/or cancelled only with the authorization of the Watch Commander or above.
 - c. It will be at the discretion of the on-scene supervisor to decide which type of roadblock will be best utilized.
 1. Channelization
 2. "Boxing-in"
 3. Class "A" roadblock
 - d. Pursued vehicles shall not, at any time, be forced to stop by ramming.
 - e. Class "B" roadblocks are prohibited.
- 2.4 Communications Section Responsibility
- a. The Communications Section dispatcher shall:
 1. Immediately initiate the alert tone, declare limited traffic, and notify the Watch Commander, or designee, of a pursuit
 2. Prepare to initiate, when possible, direct radio communication with affected jurisdictions and County or State Agencies on order of the Watch Commander, or designee.
 3. Maintain phone listings and documentation relating to requesting emergency assistance.
 4. Ensure that available vehicle information is checked through F.C.I.C, N.C.I.C. and Palms.
 5. Ensure a copy of all radio and phone communications regarding the pursuit is made.

2.5 Line supervisory responsibility

- a. When notification of a pursuit in progress is given, the Watch Commander or, when not available, a road supervisor shall determine the justification for the pursuit and:
 1. Make the determination to cancel or continue the pursuit,
 2. Allow only the involvement of those units necessary and equipped to accomplish the mission,
 3. When required, order the Communications Section to initiate the notification of other jurisdictions and agencies for assistance,
 4. Collect all available information for a review of the incident to include:
 - a) All phone and radio communications.
 - b) All police reports, including any outside jurisdictions when they are involved.
- b. Respond to the location of the pursuit termination to evaluate needed resources and to conduct an assessment of the incident for Blue Team entries.

3.0 Pursuit cancellation

- 3.1 Pursuits shall be cancelled when one or more of the following circumstances exist:
 - a. The vehicle being pursued enters an area where an unreasonable hazard to the public exists.
 - b. The visibility and/or road conditions lower the officer's safety factors.
 - c. The subject(s) has been identified to the point where later apprehension can be accomplished.
 - d. When ordered by the supervisor.
- 3.2 When a pursuit is cancelled or terminates, the supervisor or senior officer involved will notify Communications of the location where the pursuit was terminated and provide a final BOLO and direction of travel.
 - a. Officers will not continue to follow, parallel, or monitor the vehicle once the pursuit has been terminated.
 - b. Reinstatement of any previously terminated pursuit shall be consistent with the authorization criteria for originally initiating the pursuit.
- 3.3 No officer will be held accountable if, upon weighing the risks, the choice not to pursue or discontinue pursuit of a fleeing vehicle is made.

4.0 Pursuit into adjacent jurisdictions

- 4.1 When a pursuit extends into another jurisdiction the supervisor (or ranking officer) involved shall determine whether to request that the other jurisdiction assume the responsibility for the pursuit based on the following factors:
 - a. The distance involved, and
 - b. The officer's familiarity with the adjacent jurisdiction.
- 4.2 When the adjacent jurisdiction assumes the pursuit, the initiating officer may proceed to the culmination point, if the location is within a reasonable distance and is authorized by the supervisor, in order to provide information which may be required for the arrest.
- 4.3 Department units will not become involved in pursuits initiated by another agency that enters this city until:
 - a. The exact reason for the pursuit is known,
 - b. The reason given is a justification for pursuit under this department's policy, and
 - c. Permission is given by a Watch Commander or immediate supervisor.

5.0 Incident review and retention

- 5.1 All pursuits will be documented via Blue Team in a Vehicle Pursuit Report regardless of apprehension or cancellation.
 - a. The Division Commander shall review all pursuits and forward findings through the chain of command to the Chief of Police via Blue Team.
 - b. By the end of their shift on which the vehicle pursuit occurred, the Watch Commander or designee will request the dispatch tape and submit a copy of the Incident Report, supplements, and photos to the Division Commander for submittal to Blue Team.
- 5.2 The Vehicle Pursuit Report shall be forwarded to Internal Affairs where it will be logged into IAPro with a Vehicle Pursuit number and retained in accordance with Florida Records Retention Schedules.



RUSS MAGER
CHIEF OF POLICE

Replaces: G.O. 2210 dated 05/25/2021
Copies to: Sergeant's Training Manual and FTO Trainee Manual