

Foot Pursuits

429.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

This policy provides guidelines to assist officers in making the decision to initiate or continue a pursuit of suspects on foot. Nothing in this policy is intended to compel an officer to unduly expose themselves to harm.

429.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of this department that officers, when deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, continuously balance the objective of apprehending the suspect with the risk and potential for injury to department members, the public or the suspect.

Officers are expected to act reasonably, based on the totality of the circumstances.

429.3 DECISION TO PURSUE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The safety of department members and the public should be the primary consideration when determining whether a foot pursuit should be initiated or continued. Officers must be mindful that immediate apprehension of a suspect is rarely more important than the safety of the public and department members.

Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual that the officer reasonably believes is about to engage in, is engaging in or has engaged in criminal activity that poses an immediate threat to the public. The decision to initiate or continue such a foot pursuit, however, must be continuously re-evaluated in light of the circumstances present at the time.

Mere flight by a person who is not suspected of criminal activity alone shall not serve as justification for engaging in an extended foot pursuit without the development of reasonable suspicion regarding the individual's involvement in criminal activity or being wanted by law enforcement.

Deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit is a decision that an officer must make quickly and under unpredictable and dynamic circumstances. It is recognized that foot pursuits may place department members and the public at significant risk, thus officers and supervisors shall continually evaluate the perceived risks involved in engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit.

While not intended of being an exhaustive list of risk factors, following factors, individually and collectively shall be considered in deciding whether to initiate a foot pursuit:

- (a) 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.

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- (c) Apparent nature of the fleeing suspect(s) (e.g., whether the suspect(s) represent a serious threat to public safety).
- (d) The identity of the suspect(s) has been verified and there is comparatively minimal risk in allowing the suspect(s) to be apprehended at a later time.
- (e) 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 and the intensity of the pursuit relative to these factors.
- (f) Pursuing officer(s) familiarity with the area of the pursuit, the quality of radio communications between the pursuing units and the telecommunicator/supervisor and the physical capabilities of the pursuing officers under the conditions of the pursuit.
- (g) Availability of other resources (e.g. air support, canine, other agency support).

429.3.1 CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTINUATION OF A FOOT PURSUIT

Agency Content

If circumstances permit, surveillance and containment are generally the safest tactics for apprehending fleeing persons. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, an officer should continuously consider reasonable alternatives to a foot pursuit based upon the circumstances and resources available, such as:

- (a) Containment of the area.
- (b) Saturation of the area with law enforcement personnel, including assistance from other agencies.
- (c) A canine search by a properly trained canine.
- (d) Thermal imaging or other sensing technology.
- (e) Air support.
- (f) Apprehension at another time when the identity of the suspect is known or there is information available that would likely allow for later apprehension, and the need to immediately apprehend the suspect does not reasonably appear to outweigh the risk of continuing the foot pursuit.

429.4 GENERAL GUIDELINES

Best Practice MODIFIED

When reasonably practicable, officers should consider alternatives to engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit when:

- (a) Directed by a supervisor to terminate the foot pursuit; such an order shall be deemed mandatory.
- (b) The officer is acting alone.

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- (c) Two or more officers become separated, lose visual contact with one another or obstacles separate them to the degree that they cannot immediately assist each other should a confrontation take place. In such circumstances, it is generally recommended that a single officer keep the suspect in sight from a safe distance and coordinate the containment effort.
- (d) The officer is unsure of their location and direction of travel.
- (e) The officer is pursuing multiple suspects and it is not reasonable to believe that the officer would be able to control the suspect should a confrontation occur.
- (f) The physical condition of the officer renders them incapable of controlling the suspect if apprehended.
- (g) The officer loses radio contact with the communications officer or with assisting or backup officers.
- (h) The suspect enters a building, structure, confined space, isolated area or dense or difficult terrain, and there are insufficient officers to provide backup and containment. The primary officer should consider discontinuing the foot pursuit and coordinating containment pending the arrival of sufficient resources.
- (i) The officer becomes aware of unanticipated or unforeseen circumstances that unreasonably increase the risk to officers or the public.
- (j) The officer reasonably believes that the danger to the pursuing officers or public outweighs the objective of immediate apprehension.
- (k) The officer loses possession of their firearm, radio, or other essential equipment.
- (l) The officer or a third party is injured during the foot pursuit, requiring immediate assistance, and there are no other emergency personnel available to render assistance.
- (m) The suspect's location is no longer known.
- (n) The identity of the suspect is established or other information exists that will allow for the suspect's apprehension at a later time, and it reasonably appears that there is no immediate threat to department members or the public if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.
- (o) The officer's ability to safely continue the foot pursuit is impaired by inclement weather, darkness or other environmental conditions.

429.5 RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOT PURSUITS

Best Practice

429.5.1 INITIATING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Unless relieved by another officer or a supervisor, the initiating officer shall be responsible for coordinating the progress of the pursuit and containment. When acting alone and when practicable, the initiating officer should not attempt to overtake and confront the suspect but should

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attempt to keep the suspect in sight until sufficient officers are present to safely apprehend the suspect.

Early communication of available information from the involved officers is essential so that adequate resources can be coordinated and deployed to bring a foot pursuit to a safe conclusion. Officers initiating a foot pursuit should, at a minimum, broadcast the following information as soon as it becomes practicable and available:

- (a) Location and direction of travel
- (b) Call sign identifier
- (c) Reason for the foot pursuit, such as the crime classification
- (d) Number of suspects and description, to include name if known
- (e) Whether the suspect is known or believed to be armed with a dangerous weapon

Officers should be mindful that radio transmissions made while running may be difficult to understand and may need to be repeated.

Absent extenuating circumstances, any officer unable to promptly and effectively broadcast this information should terminate the foot pursuit. If the foot pursuit is discontinued for any reason, immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.

When a foot pursuit terminates, the officer will notify the communications officer of their location and the status of the foot pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect), and will direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for officers, suspects or members of the public.

429.5.2 ASSISTING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Whenever any officer announces that they are engaged in a foot pursuit, all other officers should minimize non-essential radio traffic to permit the involved officers maximum access to the radio frequency.

429.5.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information to direct responding resources and to take command, control and coordination of the foot pursuit. The supervisor should respond to the area whenever possible; the supervisor does not, however, need not be physically present to exercise control over the foot pursuit. The supervisor shall continuously assess the situation in order to ensure the foot pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.

The supervisor shall terminate the foot pursuit when the danger to pursuing officers or the public appears to unreasonably outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect.

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Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor shall promptly proceed to the termination point to direct the post-foot pursuit activity.

The supervisor shall also direct that the proper reports be authored and all pertinent body-worn camera footage is properly categorized.

429.5.4 THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

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Upon notification or becoming aware that a foot pursuit is in progress, the communications officer is responsible for:

- (a) Clearing the radio channel of non-emergency traffic.
- (b) Coordinating pursuit communications of the involved officers.
- (c) Broadcasting pursuit updates as well as other pertinent information as necessary.
- (d) Ensuring that a field supervisor is notified of the foot pursuit.
- (e) Notifying and coordinating with other involved or affected agencies as practicable.
- (f) Notifying the appropriate Commander as soon as practicable.
- (g) Assigning an incident number and logging all pursuit activities.

429.6 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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A written report shall be authored by the initiating officer regardless of whether the suspect was apprehended or not.

The initiating officer shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports documenting, at a minimum:

- (a) Date and time of the foot pursuit.
- (b) Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the foot pursuit.
- (c) Course and approximate distance of the foot pursuit.
- (d) Alleged offenses.
- (e) Involved vehicles and officers.
- (f) Whether a suspect was apprehended as well as the means and methods used.
- (g) Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
- (h) Arrestee information, if applicable.
- (i) Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
- (j) Any property or equipment damage.
- (k) Name of the supervisor at the scene or who handled the incident.
- (l) Properly categorize the body-worn camera footage of the incident.

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Assisting officers taking an active role in the apprehension of the suspect shall complete supplemental reports as necessary or as directed.

The supervisor reviewing the report will make a preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted, and report these findings to the appropriate Commander.