



City of Racine Police Department
Policy and Procedure

Number: 603

Subject: Pursuit Policy		
Date Issued: 10-31-1986	Date Revised: 03-20-18	Revision Number: 9

POLICY

To establish a procedure when pursuit with Department vehicles is necessary in the apprehension of an offender.

DEFINITIONS

Police Pursuit – means an active attempt by an officer in a police vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of a moving motor vehicle, the operator of which is resisting apprehension by disregarding the officer's visual or audible signal to stop his or her vehicle, increasing the speed of the vehicle or extinguishing the lights of the vehicle.

GUIDELINES FOR PURSUITS

1. **Felony Involving the use or threatened Use of Deadly force:**
 - a. Officers shall pursue, attempt to stop and apprehend, as expeditiously and safely as possible, any person in a vehicle whom the officer has reasonable cause to believe has committed, or attempted to commit, a felony involving the use or threatened use of deadly force, when a high probability exists that the suspect, if not immediately apprehended, may cause death or great bodily harm.
 - b. The pursuing officer shall discontinue the pursuit when the act of pursuit, in itself, creates an imminent danger of death or great bodily harm to uninvolved persons, or any officers involved.
2. **Other criminal (Non-Traffic) Violations:**
 - a. Officers shall pursue and attempt to apprehend any person who is eluding apprehension in a vehicle when the officer has reasonable cause to believe the person committed any non-traffic criminal (felony or misdemeanor) violation.
 - b. The pursuing officer shall discontinue pursuit when the act of pursuit, in itself, creates an unreasonable danger of death or great bodily harm to officers, the suspect, or uninvolved persons, or the officers know the identity of, or can obtain sufficient information to identify the suspect for apprehension at a later time.
3. **Traffic and Ordinance Violations:**
 - a. Officers may pursue and attempt to apprehend any person who is eluding apprehension in a vehicle when the officer has reasonable cause to believe the person committed any traffic or ordinance violation.
 - b. The pursuing officer shall discontinue pursuit when the act of pursuit, in itself, creates an unreasonable danger of death or great bodily harm to officers, the suspect, or uninvolved persons, or the officers know the identity of, or can obtain sufficient information to identify the suspect for apprehension at a later time.
4. Pursuits shall be primarily an action of following the fleeing vehicle. Reckless or hazardous driving maneuvers of the fleeing vehicle shall not be duplicated.
 - a. The responsibility for the decision to pursue, the methods to be employed, and the continuation of pursuit rests with the primary officer involved until a supervisor provides direction or otherwise assumes responsibility for the situation.

- b. The pursuit should be terminated if the distance between the officer and the pursued vehicle is so great that further pursuit is futile or when dangerously high speeds would be required to overtake the fleeing vehicle.
 - c. If the primary or secondary pursuit member loses visual contact with the fleeing vehicle for an extended period of time (15 second or more) a normal speed should be maintained while still attempting to relocate the offender.
5. In the course of pursuit, deliberate offensive contact between vehicles or forcing the pursued vehicle off the roadway, into parked cars, ditches, or any other obstacle; boxing in, heading off, ramming; or driving alongside the pursued vehicle, is prohibited unless:
 - a. The officers involved have probable cause to believe that:
 - 1) The person being pursued has committed a violent felony, or
 - 2) There is a substantial risk that the person being pursued will cause death or serious bodily harm if his/her apprehension is delayed.
 - b. Legal Intervention (ramming or roadblocks) shall be considered the use of deadly force; therefore all deadly force limitations apply. Legal intervention should be used only under the expressed permission of the commanding officer, unless conditions require immediate action.
 - c. Any offensive tactics are to be accomplished taking all precautions necessary while ensuring that the action employed creates no substantial risk of injury to innocent persons.
 6. No pursuit should be undertaken by any unit that contains prisoners, suspects, complainants, witnesses or other passengers who are not commissioned law enforcement officers.
 7. If an unmarked squad, empty patrol wagon, or Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) that is not pursuit rated (K-9, ET, and some Sergeant's squads) is being used as the primary or secondary pursuit member, that vehicle should cease actively pursuing the offender once a marked squad is in a position to take over the pursuit.

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL PURSUITS

1. **If a pursuit is initiated by our agency**, officers may continue the pursuit into another jurisdiction. Racine officers will continue to comply with all applicable state statutes and Department policies. If other jurisdictions become involved in our pursuit, our dispatchers and supervisors will make every reasonable attempt to coordinate the actions of all units involved.
2. **If a pursuit is initiated by another jurisdiction and enters our city**, Racine officers shall not become directly involved unless directed to do so by a supervisor or a dispatcher. Dispatchers shall not direct an officer to become involved unless mutual aid has been requested by the pursuing jurisdiction and it has been authorized by the Racine supervisor in charge, following the guidelines of this policy. The supervisor in charge shall monitor and coordinate the assignments of our units while providing the assistance.
3. **If a pursuit which was initiated by another agency enters our city, then begins to leave our city**, Racine officers should generally not continue in the pursuit. The exceptions to this would be if the initiating agency is no longer able to continue the pursuit (not including termination by the other agency), or the initiating agency requests further assistance. Exceptions require both mutual aid request and approval by the supervisor in charge or the Shift Commander from our Department.
4. **If the Racine supervisor evaluates the circumstances and determines that a pursuit into the City of Racine initiated by another agency is a detriment to public safety or is in violation of this policy**, no direct pursuit will be conducted by City of Racine officers. Backup will be provided at the point where the pursuit has been discontinued or successfully terminated. In the interest of public safety, road spikes may be deployed even when Racine officers are not actively involved in a pursuit. Racine officers deploying Spike Strips shall make every attempt to coordinate with the other agencies and the Racine supervisors.

PROCEDURE

When members engage in pursuit under authority of the "Emergency Operation of Department Vehicles" (Procedure #812), the following steps shall be taken, regardless if the target vehicle is aware of the pursuit:

PRIMARY UNIT

1. Immediately inform Communications of the following:
 - a. Unit number engaged in the pursuit
 - b. Location and direction of pursuit
 - c. Description of vehicle being pursued, license number, number of occupants and/or their description
 - d. Reason for pursuit (traffic, armed felon, etc.)
 - e. Estimated speed of the vehicle being pursued.
2. Until relieved by the secondary pursuit unit, maintain radio contact with Communications informing them of:
 - a. Changes in pursuit direction
 - b. Speed of vehicles involved
 - c. Eluding actions of the vehicle being pursued (driving recklessly, no light, throwing objects, etc.)
 - d. Locations of traffic violations or reckless acts.
3. Immediately inform Communications of the location of the pursuit's termination or apprehension.
4. Ensure that all apprehensions as a result of a pursuit shall be conducted using proper high risk vehicle contact techniques.
5. Complete any appropriate arrest reports & citations, as well as:
 - a. An Incident Report detailing the pursuit.
 - b. Complete the electronic State of Wisconsin Pursuit Form located in TRACS.
6. Forward all reports to your supervisor for review.
7. Should a commander, supervisor, or Communications terminate the pursuit, the key word "Terminate" will be used in the directive.
 - a. When the unit has been ordered to terminate, the operator will immediately deactivate all emergency equipment and shall immediately and safely pull over and stop the vehicle.
 - b. Acknowledge the termination order and inform Communications where you pulled over.
 - c. The pursuing officer shall remain stopped until the fleeing vehicle is no longer visible to the officer.
8. Should a supervisor issue an order to "Canvass", the officer should follow the fleeing vehicle's path (in a nonemergency mode), for a reasonable distance to check for crashes or other problems caused by the fleeing vehicle.
 - a. The purpose of the "Canvass" is not to relocate or catch up to the fleeing vehicle but to check the welfare of citizens that may have crossed the path of the fleeing vehicle.
 - b. It is not to find additional evidence of a traffic violation.

SECONDARY UNIT

1. Respond to assist the primary pursuit member as directed by Communications.
2. Once behind the primary unit, relieve the primary unit of radio transmission duties as described in "Primary Pursuit Unit Steps 1 & 2", ensuring that Communications is aware of your involvement. The transmission should include "assignment #" is secondary and will call out the pursuit.
3. Continue the pursuit in the event the primary pursuit unit would become disabled.
4. As soon as practical, take over the primary pursuit unit position if that unit is prohibited (by Procedure #812) from participating or continuing in the pursuit.
5. Do not pass the primary pursuit unit, but rather remain behind it to assist.
6. Maintain a safe stopping distance behind the primary pursuit unit and your vehicle during the pursuit.
7. Should a commander, supervisor, or Communications terminate the pursuit, the key word "Terminate" will be used in the directive.

- a. When the unit has been ordered to terminate, the operator will immediately deactivate all emergency equipment and shall immediately and safely pull over and stop the vehicle.
- b. The pursuing officer shall remain stopped until the fleeing vehicle is no longer visible to the officer.
8. Should a supervisor issue an order to “Canvass”, the officer should follow the fleeing vehicle’s path (in a nonemergency mode), for a reasonable distance to check for crashes or other problems caused by the fleeing vehicle.
 - a. The purpose of the “Canvass” is not to relocate or catch up to the fleeing vehicle but to check the welfare of citizens that may have crossed the path of the fleeing vehicle.
 - b. The purpose is not to find additional evidence of a traffic violation.
9. Upon completion of your part in the pursuit, complete a Supplementary Report and forward to your supervisor for review.

SUPPORT UNITS

1. Attempt to determine an appropriate location and timing for the application of the Spike Strips.
 - a. Notify Communications of your intent to deploy the Spike Strips and potential location of deployment.
 - 1) Consider locations for deployment that:
 - a) Are not intersection-related
 - b) Are not part of a curve or steep grade
 - c) Have minimal vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - d) Has a minimal chance of endangering uninvolved citizens
 - e) Place your squad in a manner that does not block the path of the vehicle being pursued.
 - f) Whenever possible, park your vehicle off the roadway and/or in a position that offers protection for yourself and uninvolved citizens.
 - 2) If necessary to operate as an emergency vehicle to reach the deployment location notify Communications. (Procedure #812 applies)
 - b. Deploy the Spike Strips from a position of cover and one from which you can quickly remove the Strip from the roadway before the pursuing squads can strike it.
 - c. Do not deploy Spike Strips until the visible approach of the fleeing vehicle so as not to damage the tires of uninvolved motorists.
 - d. After the pursuit has been ended and the scene(s) have been stabilized, recover the Spike Strips and complete an inspection to determine how many (if any) spikes will need to be replaced.
 - e. Complete a Supplementary Report reviewing the use or attempted use of the Spike Strips.
 - f. Complete a Lost or Damage City Equipment Form (PP44) indicating any damage to the Spike Strips as well as an accurate count of replacement spikes needed.
2. While not becoming actively involved in the pursuit, attempt to cover any escape routes of the fleeing operator.
3. Do not caravan with the pursuing units unless directed to do so by a supervisor or Communications.
4. Assume a primary or secondary pursuit role, should one of those vehicles become unable to continue the pursuit, or if directed to do so by a supervisor.
5. If you inadvertently intercept the fleeing vehicle with the primary and secondary pursuit vehicles in tow, you should not attempt to intervene.
6. Attempt to obtain the fleeing vehicle’s license number if unknown, and observe the occupants for identification purposes.
7. Forward all reports to a supervisor for review.

NOTE

“Not actively involved” means that the conditions present do not require the emergency operation of a Department vehicle. If conditions require emergency operation, Procedure #812 applies.

SUPERVISOR

1. Assert control by monitoring the pursuit.
2. Respond to the area of the pursuit using emergency lights and siren if necessary, and to the location where the pursuit terminates.
3. Direct and coordinate specific units into or out of the pursuit.
4. Approve or order alternate tactics to be used, and order the termination of any pursuit that is not in accordance with Department procedure.
 - a. Ensure that any order to end a pursuit, includes the key word "Terminate".
 - b. Ensure that any follow up of the route that may be ordered by you is done on a case by case basis, again using the key word "Canvass".
5. Check all reports for completeness and accuracy and forward to the Shift/Unit Commander.
6. Review the details of the pursuit, all written reports, the audiotape from Communications and the MVRE video (if applicable), and determine if the pursuit was in accordance with Department procedure and guidelines.
 - a. Forward your findings, including errors, areas needing training, report of damages as well as injuries to the Shift/Unit Commander via memorandum (Form PP27).
 - b. Ensure the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Pursuit Report has been electronically completed.
 - 1) Forward a printed copy to Records.
 - 2) Forward a printed copy to the Shift/Unit Commander along with the pursuit review memorandum.

SHIFT/UNIT COMMANDER

1. Review the supervisor's memorandum and the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Pursuit Report for completeness and accuracy. Forward both to the Chief of Police via the chain of command.
2. Assign any further investigation of the incident as necessary.
3. Prepare Shift/Unit Commander's Daily Report (Form PP73) for any pursuit.

RELATED PROCEDURES

[Table of Contents](#)

[601 – Use of Deadly Force](#)

[602 – Use of Non-Lethal Force](#)

[810 – Use of Safety Belts in Department Vehicles](#)

[812 – Emergency Operation of Department Vehicles](#)

RELATED STATUTE

§346.03 – Applicability of Rules of the Road to Authorized Emergency Vehicles