

#### **41.2.5.2 Vehicle Pursuit Policy**

All vehicle pursuits shall be conducted in strict accordance with existing Statutes. Deputies engaged in vehicle pursuits shall utilize both their audible siren and visual emergency light equipment. All personnel operating Office vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons. NO assignment shall have such importance and NO task shall be expedited with such emphasis that the principles of safety become secondary. There are NO tasks in this Office of such importance that they should justify the reckless disregard for the safety of innocent persons. Office personnel will be held strictly accountable for the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.

#### **41.2.5.3 Vehicle Pursuit Procedures**

Pursuits are justified ONLY when the deputy knows, or has reasonable belief, the suspect presents a clear and immediate threat to the safety of other motorists, has committed or is attempting to commit a violent felony, or when the necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the pursuit.

##### 1. (41.2.2-b) Initiating or Primary Unit's Responsibilities.

A. The responsibility for the decision to initiate "a pursuit" rests with the individual deputy.

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B. The deputy initiating the pursuit shall, in all cases, notify Communications as soon as they are reasonably sure that a pursuit is underway, and provide the following information:

- 1) His/Her identification number.
- 2) Location, speed, and direction of travel.
- 3) Suspect's vehicle description, including the license number, if known.
- 4) Specific reason for the pursuit, including the known laws violated.
- 5) Number of occupants, if known.
- 6) Traffic and weather conditions, if possible.

C. Failure to provide the above information will be a cause for the Commanding Officer, Watch Commander or Field Supervisor to terminate the pursuit.

D. The primary unit shall be in command and bears ALL operational responsibility for the pursuit, unless relieved by a supervisor.

E. The primary unit may maintain pursuit as long as it is safe to do so, or until directed to terminate the pursuit by a supervisor, or until the suspect is stopped.

F. The decision to abandon a pursuit may be the most intelligent course of action. Deputies MUST continually question whether the seriousness of the crime justifies continuing the pursuit.

G. A "pursuit" shall be terminated under any of the following circumstances:

1) That in the opinion of the pursuing deputy, the Watch Commander or the Field Supervisor, there is a clear and present, and unreasonable danger to the deputy and other users of the roadway created by the pursuit that outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension.

2) The suspect's identity has been established to the point that later apprehension can be accomplished, and there is no longer any need for immediate apprehension.

3) Traffic, roadway, and weather conditions indicate the futility of a continued pursuit.

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4) The pursued vehicle's location is no longer known.

## **2. (41.2.2-c) Assisting Unit Responsibility**

A. Assistance will be coordinated by either the Communications Supervisor, Desk Officer, Field Supervisor, or Watch Commander.

B. Under most circumstances, a pursuit will not involve more than two (2) units - the primary unit and one (1) back-up unit. If more assistance is

requested or needed, it will be at the discretion of the supervisor in charge.

C. All other units will remain aware of the direction and progress of the pursuit, but SHALL NOT actively participate unless specifically authorized to do so.

D. The assisting unit, upon joining the pursuit, shall immediately notify Communications of its identification number.

E. The assisting unit will maintain a safe distance behind the primary unit, but remain close enough to render back- up assistance, if and when required.

F. If the primary unit becomes disabled, the assisting unit will become the primary unit. Communications will advise the supervisor and, if feasible, another unit will be utilized as the assisting unit.

### **3. (41.2.2-d) Communications Responsibilities**

A. Receive and record all incoming information on the pursuit and the pursued vehicle.

B. Immediately notify the District Supervisor and the Watch Commander when the pursuit is initiated.

C. Clear radio channel of any unnecessary traffic and advise all other units on that channel that a pursuit is in progress, providing the relevant information necessary. All units not involved in the pursuit will be advised what radio channel to switch to.

D. Continue to monitor the pursuit until it has been terminated.

E. Communications Supervisor will notify Aviation when a pursuit is initiated.

### **4. (41.2.2-e) Supervisory Responsibilities**

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A. A Commanding Officer, whether it be a Watch Commander, District Commander, or Field Supervisor that has either been assigned to monitor

the pursuit or who hears of the pursuit, shall assume the overall command of the pursuit and exercise the necessary control.

B. Upon becoming aware of a pursuit, the supervisor shall determine the following:

- 1) The exact reason(s), nature of the pursuit, including the known laws violated.
- 2) No more than the required number of units are involved in the pursuit.
- 3) If other assistance is required that it is requested.
- 4) Proper radio procedures are utilized.
- 5) All affected local agencies are notified by Communications personnel as soon as possible.
- 6) (41.2.2-g) Whether the pursuit should continue or be terminated.
- 7) Conditions for pursuits to be terminated are minor violations, adverse weather conditions, traffic concerns, safety of the Community, or any other reason deemed detrimental to the safety of the public and Officer.

C. The supervisor will continue to direct the pursuit, and approve or order alternative tactics, and maintain control of the pursuit until it is terminated or the y are relieved by a higher ranking supervisor.

D. As with any other tactical problem, it is not necessary that the supervisor be physically present in order to begin the coordination of the pursuit.

E. The on-duty supervisor of the district in which the pursuit commences should proceed to the termination point, as soon as possible, to provide guidance, and necessary supervision.

F. The on-duty Watch Commander will ensure that all necessary reports, statements, photographs, and other types of evidence involving the pursuit are completed before the involved officer(s) terminates his/her shift of duty.

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G. It will also be the responsibility of the Watch Commander to ensure that a copy of the entire package is directed to the **Law Enforcement Bureau Chief**, as soon as possible, for review and evaluation.

H. (41.2.3) Analysis of Pursuits. The Law Enforcement Bureau Chief will conduct a documented analysis of all pursuit reports annually, to record any patterns or trends that indicate a need for policy modification or a need for training.

#### **5. Unmarked Sheriff's Office Vehicles.**

Unmarked Sheriff's Office vehicles SHALL NOT be engaged in high speed pursuits, EXCEPT under extreme and extenuating circumstances which will require a full and complete report justifying the officer's actions.

If and when an unmarked Sheriff's Office vehicle does become involved in a pursuit, the operator will relinquish the pursuit to a marked Sheriff's Office vehicle as soon as practical and possible.

#### **6. Emergency Vehicle Operation and Tactics.**

A. In the course of a pursuit, deliberate contact between vehicles or forcing the pursued vehicle into parked cars, ditches or any other obstacle, closing in, heading off, ramming or driving alongside the pursued vehicle, while it is in motion, shall be prohibited UNLESS these actions are specifically authorized by the Commanding Officer in charge of the pursuit. Such actions may only be approved by the supervisor when the use of deadly force would be authorized. Reckless or hazardous driving maneuvers shall not be duplicated by the pursuing vehicle.

B. Number of Sheriff's vehicles involved

1) No more than two (2) vehicles will become actively involved in a pursuit, unless specifically directed by the Commanding Officer in charge of the pursuit.

C. Motorcycles

1) Officers operating motorcycles may participate in a pursuit ONLY until a marked patrol unit can assume the pursuit.

D. (41.2.2-f) Stop Sticks

The Stop Stick is a bar, three (3) feet in length with thirty-six (36) hardened "quills" in three (3) rows of twelve (12). It has seventy-two (72) steel spike tips inserted into each of the quills. The Stop Stick is designed

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to be placed in the path of a vehicle, puncturing its tires and rendering the vehicle immobile.

The Stop Stick is an instrument designed to assist Sheriff's Office personnel in safely terminating an authorized vehicle pursuit or preventing a vehicle from being used to flee from a scene. The Watch Commander or District Supervisor will determine when the Stop Stick will be deployed. The Stop Stick is NOT to be used in apprehending motorcyclists and is to be used ONLY on paved surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

When deployed to stop an authorized vehicle pursuit, the Road Spikes are placed across the avenue of escape as the target vehicle approaches. All personnel and any civilian bystanders are kept a safe distance away and personnel involved in the pursuit are advised of the deployment location to avoid any unnecessary injury or damage. In determining the deployment location, remember that the subject may still continue to attempt to flee in the partially disabled vehicle; safety remains a primary concern.

Situations where the Stop Stick can be used include, but are not limited to, an authorized pursuit or during the execution of search warrants/arrest warrants where a vehicle is stationary, but could be used for an escape.

#### E. Roadblocks

- 1) The use of roadblocks must be authorized by the Commanding Officer in charge of the pursuit. Generally, a roadblock will be employed only as a last resort.
- 2) The use of a roadblock must be directly associated with the seriousness of the crime for which the suspect is wanted.
- 3) The roadblock must be clearly visible and provide adequate warning to allow vehicles to come to a safe stop.
- 4) The roadway shall not be completely blocked unless the use of deadly force would be authorized.

#### **41.2.5.4 (41.2.2-h) Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits.**

1. Deputies will not become involved in another agency's pursuit unless specifically authorized by our agency's supervisor- in-charge, unless it is clearly demonstrated that extenuating or serious circumstances exist.

2. When a pursuit authorized by this agency appears to be leaving the jurisdictional boundaries of Lee County, the Watch Commander will notify the Commander of the Sheriff's Office in the County of jurisdiction and request their assistance in Supercedes

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continuing the pursuit. The communications division will make all necessary adjustments to monitor the pursuit by radio and to contact the communications division of the other county.

The adjoining county will be requested to take over the lead in the pursuit, governed by their pursuit policies, as they are more familiar with the geographical area and will have significantly better radio communications. Lee County Sheriff's Office vehicles involved in the pursuit will discontinue their "pursuit" of the suspect vehicle and will follow the pursuit in a safe, lawful manner to make the "fresh pursuit" arrest at the conclusion of the pursuit. If not present a Lee County Sheriff's Office supervisor will be summoned to the scene. In the event that the adjoining Sheriff's Office chooses not to take over the lead in the pursuit the Watch Commander will reevaluate the continuation of the pursuit. The Watch Commander may choose to terminate the pursuit if radio communications become unstable, if the pursuing Deputy is unable to relate accurate information as to their location or is unfamiliar with the area ahead, or if any reason presents itself that would cause the termination of an "in county" pursuit.

Except as mentioned above, pursuits outside of Lee County will follow the same standards as "in county" pursuits and in no case will non-emergency equipped or personal vehicles be used in pursuits.

Any available support such as fixed wing aircraft or helicopters should be considered in making any decisions to continue or terminate a pursuit.