

# MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

**TITLE:** VEHICULAR PURSUITS  
**MPD POLICY #:** H.702  
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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish when members of the department may engage in pursuit driving situations, or engage in situations that could result in pursuit driving.

### DEFINITIONS

**Pursuit** – An attempt to apprehend the occupant(s) of a motor vehicle when the driver has been requested or signaled to stop and is refusing to stop or resisting apprehension by increasing the vehicle's speed or otherwise maneuvering the vehicle in such a manner as to elude the officer.

### POLICY

Members of this department shall adhere to the guidelines established herein governing pursuit-driving situations.

### PROCEDURE

#### CONSIDERATION

##### H.702.1 Considerations regarding pursuits:

1. No assignment shall be of such importance, and no task shall be expedited with such emphasis, that the principles of safety become secondary. Nothing justifies the reckless disregard of the safety of innocent persons.
2. Law enforcement personnel will be held strictly accountable for the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.
3. Law enforcement officers must bear in mind that immediate pursuit action occasionally can be delayed for a later apprehension and a change in tactics may save lives and prevent damage to property.
4. Officers must take into consideration the mechanical condition and capabilities of their vehicle prior to engaging in high-speed pursuits.
5. The element of personal challenge to the officer should never enter into a decision to pursue, nor should there be any suggestion or implication that by stopping a pursuit for safety reasons, the officer is lacking in courage or determination.

##### H.702.2 Decision to Pursue

1. Law enforcement officers may engage in a pursuit in order to apprehend an individual(s) reasonably suspected of committing a forcible felony (F.S. 776.08).
2. Pursuits of individual(s) reasonably suspected of committing other felonies or criminal traffic offenses (i.e., burglary, reckless driving, D.U.I., and leaving the scene of an accident with injuries) are considered less serious and

should only be conducted when such a pursuit is in the best interest of public safety.

3. Pursuits of individuals for misdemeanors, traffic infractions, or eluding the officer solely for a traffic infraction should be avoided unless no other means of identifying the driver exists and public safety is not jeopardized.
4. Approval of a Field Supervisor or Watch Commander must be obtained prior to pursuit. The officer requesting pursuit must state the reason for pursuit at the point of engagement, in addition to the information requested in H.702.3 below. Once pursuit is engaged, all officers involved, the Field Supervisor and the Watch Commander will be held strictly accountable for adhering to the provisions of this policy.

#### **H.702.3 While In Pursuit**

1. Upon engaging in pursuit, units should maintain safe and maneuverable control of their vehicles and radio contact with the Communications Center. Units are to indicate a pursuit is in progress, giving location and direction of travel, the color, year, make, body style, license of the pursued vehicle, and the crime or suspected crime that justifies the pursuit.
2. Existing conditions and availability of other field units should determine the course of action to be taken to accomplish the apprehension. No other units, whether uniformed, investigative or administrative should enter into emergency operation unless specifically directed to do so by a Field Supervisor or a command officer.
3. The following tactics and conditions should be adhered to while engaged in pursuit:
  - a. Normally, only two (2) units should be directed to engage in the pursuit. These are the primary unit and assigned backup.
  - b. If appropriate, a supervisory unit may also choose to engage in the pursuit. In this event, the appropriate shift commander should become the pursuit monitor. Additional assistance, if authorized, should be determined by:
    - (1) Nature of the offense
    - (2) Number of suspects
    - (3) Number of units present
    - (4) Other clear and articulated facts that would warrant the increased hazard

4. Pursuing units and any assigned parallel unit(s) should respond utilizing emergency lights and siren.
5. Unmarked vehicles equipped with blue lights and sirens shall not ordinarily engage in pursuits, if an appropriate number of marked vehicles are present.
6. Unmarked vehicles not equipped with blue lights and sirens shall not engage in pursuits.
7. Motorcycle units should not engage in pursuits unless ideal traffic conditions exist. In any event they should discontinue when a marked vehicle is present or when the pursuit enters onto a limited access roadway.
8. Caravanning of unassigned units is prohibited.
9. Units should never follow a suspect vehicle the wrong way on a limited access roadway and should use extreme caution if a suspect vehicle proceeds the wrong way on a one-way street.
10. Units should not pass one another unless the lead vehicle grants permission.
11. Except in extreme cases, units shall terminate any pursuit when two-way communications with the Communications Center or the Field Supervisor is lost.
12. Other than for forcible felonies, a pursuit should be terminated if the suspect has or can be identified for later prosecution.
13. A pursuit should be terminated if unit(s) loses sight of the suspect vehicle other than for a momentary period. The Field Supervisor shall be immediately notified of this event.
14. Units should not utilize the PIT (Pursuit Intervention Technique) unless deadly force is authorized (F.S. 776.06). Approval from a command officer should also be obtained, unless the use of such force is immediately necessary to protect human life from death or great bodily harm.
15. Units should not engage in pursuits initiated by other jurisdictions unless approved by each jurisdiction's command officer.
16. The presence of an air unit should negate the need for the continuance of a pursuit and allow ground units to proceed at a reduced rate of speed to assist in the apprehension.
17. Units should use extreme caution when engaging in pursuits on congested roadways and in congested areas (i.e., apartment complexes, schools, playgrounds, parks, and shopping centers).

**H.702.4 Roadblocks:**

1. Rolling roadblocks, boxing in, heading off, parallel approaches or stationary roadblocks shall be prohibited without the authorization of the on-duty Watch Commander.
2. Roadblocks shall be utilized only when the person(s) wanted are sought for a felony and the person(s) constitutes a serious hazard to the public. If approved, a stationary roadblock should present the suspect vehicle with a choice of stopping (i.e., no roadblocks on curves). Lights and flares should be utilized if time permits. No private vehicles should be used in a roadblock situation. Only a Watch Commander or higher shall authorize the use of a road block after first considering the following factors:
  - a. The roadblock must be in a highly visible area to ensure the pursued vehicle appropriate time to stop after seeing the roadblock.
  - b. Determine if uninvolved motorists have appropriate room to maneuver their vehicles with safety.
  - c. Ascertain that ample emergency lights, flares and other necessary available material are used to make all motorists and the pursued vehicle driver fully aware of the roadblock.
  - d. Notify the Communications Center of the roadblock to include location and anticipated duration.
  - e. Establish back-up units to allow continuation of the pursuit if the roadblock is avoided.
3. The utilization of any tire deflation devices must be authorized by a supervisor prior to deployment.

**H.702.5 Decision to Terminate Pursuit:**

1. The decision to terminate a pursuit should rest with the individual law enforcement official up to the point that the Field Supervisor or department command officer becomes aware of the situation, takes command of and becomes responsible for the pursuit.
2. Any unit ordered to terminate a pursuit by a Field Supervisor or other department command officer shall do so immediately. Notwithstanding the above, pursuing units have an obligation to discontinue the pursuits when circumstances dictate a pursuit is not justified.

3. In making the decision to continue or discontinue the pursuit, some factors to be considered are:
  - a. The great danger to the public caused by the eluding acts of a fleeing violator and pursuing officers
  - b. Traffic congestion in the area
  - c. Nature of the suspected crime
  - d. Possibility of identifying the operator and/or vehicle at a later date
  - e. Daylight or darkness
  - f. Weather conditions
  - g. Road conditions
  - h. Type of police vehicle (motorcycle, marked or unmarked car, maneuverability, etc.)

**H.702.6 Reporting Procedure of Pursuits:**

1. The Watch Commander will be responsible for the completion of a Vehicle Pursuit Report form (Appendix "A") for all pursuits regardless of the outcome.
2. This report will be forwarded to the Operations Division Commander for review and filing.

**H.702.7 Communication's Center Responsibilities:**

1. Initiate emergency traffic and advise all other units that a pursuit is in progress, and provide all relevant information
2. Immediately notify the Watch Commander and the Field Supervisor when a pursuit is initiated
3. Receive and record all incoming information on the pursuit and the pursued vehicle
4. Perform relevant record and motor vehicle checks
5. Control all radio communication during the pursuit
6. Coordinate assistance under the direction of the Watch Commander or the Field Supervisor
7. Ascertain the availability of aerial and K-9 units and report their status to the Field Supervisor or the Watch Commander
8. Notify any affected area agencies of the pursuit and attempt to establish a common radio network (e.g. county wide) when pursuits have or are likely to cross jurisdictions
9. Continue to monitor the pursuit until it has been terminated

**H.702.8 Pursuits Crossing Other Jurisdictions:**

1. Pursuits crossing other jurisdictions should result in a coordinated effort of the affected agencies in order to provide for the protection of the public. The Communications Center will notify outside agencies if the pursuit is headed toward their jurisdictions and if the notifications are merely a courtesy or a request for assistance.

**H.702.9 Requesting assistance of Other Jurisdiction:**

1. When requesting assistance of another agency, the dispatcher shall advise the following:
  - a. Nature of offense (not persuasive but actual)
  - b. Number of suspects
  - c. Number of units present
  - d. Vehicle description and direction
2. Officers should not become involved in another agency's pursuit unless specifically authorized by their Field Supervisor. In these instances, all respective departmental pursuit policies should be adhered to.
3. Assisting units should help to notify other units of the location of the pursuit. Units unfamiliar with their surroundings should use landmarks as reference points.


**H.702.10 Aerial Assistance:**

1. Aerial assistance will be utilized if available, keeping in mind the strict adherence to the definition of a pursuit and the offense (not persuasive but actual).
2. In the event the flight crew reports visual contact with the vehicle being pursued, surface units will discontinue the pursuit and reduce their speed to that which is reasonable and prudent, thereafter converging on the suspect vehicle as the flight crew relays directions.

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REVISED/STS/lko/03/00  
FILED: H702 Vehicular Pursuits

**Approved by:**



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**Keith I. Chandler**  
Chief of Police

APPENDIX A

MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
VEHICLE PURSUIT REPORT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ CR#: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Division/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Units Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Agencies Involved? Yes  No  If yes, what agencies? \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Incident: Traffic  Misdemeanor  Felony  Forcible Felony   
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuit Authorized By: \_\_\_\_\_ Pursuit Terminated By: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Geographical Areas Involved: Residential  Business  Highway

Distance Traveled (Approximate): \_\_\_\_\_

Traffic Conditions: Light  Medium  Heavy  Road Conditions: Dry  Wet

Maximum Speeds: Suspect \_\_\_\_\_ MPH Police \_\_\_\_\_ MPH

Suspect's Name (If Known): \_\_\_\_\_ Apprehended: Yes  No

Accident Involved: Yes  No  If yes, complete below and attach copy of Crash Report:

Vehicle(s) Involved: Suspect  Police  Civilian  Other

Injuries: Yes  No  Injured Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Injury/Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Injured Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Injury/Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospitalized: Yes  No  Injured Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Injury/Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Injured Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Injury/Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICER SIGNATURE

REVIEWER SIGNATURE