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## Pursuit Policy

Northumbria Police recognises its positive duty to protect life imposed by Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. The force also has a duty to prevent crime and to prosecute offenders.

Pursuit of offenders in vehicles is sometimes necessary to identify or arrest offenders, to allow prosecution or to prevent or minimise the risk to the public caused by offending drivers. Pursuits, if not properly managed, can themselves cause danger to the public, police officers and police staff. To ensure that this danger is minimised, but allow effective deterrence and prosecution of offenders, pursuits will be kept to a minimum and where a pursuit becomes necessary, it will be conducted in accordance with Northumbria Police procedure 'Vehicle Pursuits and Follows' and the force Code of Practice for Police Drivers.

Air support will be used as the primary means of pursuit wherever possible. Pursuits will only be undertaken by officers who have appropriate advanced police driver training and who are driving suitable vehicles, to stop the subject vehicle as soon and as safely as possible. They will be subject to vigorous control by Communications Centre and other supervisors. Drivers and supervisors will continually assess the need for the pursuit to continue and will end the pursuit if the risk becomes too high - both drivers and supervisors have absolute authority to end a pursuit if they consider it necessary. To avoid the possibility of unnecessary pursuits, where a stolen vehicle is located police apparently abandoned, observations will not be kept on the vehicle to identify the thieves unless the vehicle can be effectively immobilised - otherwise it will instead be recovered as soon as possible.

This policy and the supporting procedures have been reassessed and amended where necessary to take into account recommendations of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) report 'Fatal Pursuit' (May 2002). However Northumbria Police continues to regard the distinction between 'pursuit' and 'follow' as appropriate and well understood by its staff. This distinction will be retained in force procedures as it allows safer effective management of both. Similarly the force does not accept the view of the report's author that pursuits should never be undertaken where the original reason for requiring the vehicle to stop was speeding or a traffic violation, as this would prevent the detection, prosecution and deterrence of these offences - which are responsible for many injuries - and many more serious offences. As for all pursuits the need and risk will be assessed continuously and pursuits will not be conducted where safety is compromised.

If a collision involving a police vehicle or vehicle being pursued or followed causes death or serious injury Northumbria Police will always refer the matter to the Police Complaints Authority