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Vehicular Pursuits		



I. Definition

A. Vehicular Pursuit

The following of a motor vehicle whose operator is attempting to elude or flee from a police officer after having received an officer's visible and/or audible signal to stop the vehicle.

II. Policy Statements

A. A respect for human life shall guide officers in determining whether to engage in or terminate a vehicular pursuit. Officers shall act within the boundaries of legal guidelines and Division policy when engaging in a vehicular pursuit.

B. Sworn personnel shall terminate a pursuit if the immediate danger of initiating or continuing the pursuit is greater than the immediate or potential danger to the public if the suspect remains at large.

C. Reasons for Vehicular Pursuits

1. Sworn personnel shall not engage in vehicular pursuits unless:
 - a. There is reasonable suspicion the suspect vehicle was used in, contains evidence of, is needed for the investigation of, or an occupant committed or has an active felony warrant for an offense involving:
 - (1) The attempted, threatened, or actual infliction of serious physical harm to a person, or
 - (2) The display, threatened use, or use of a deadly weapon
 - b. The suspect, presents a **greater** danger to human life **than** the **potential and** immediate dangers of **pursuing the suspect**. Fleeing, in and of itself, does not constitute a danger to human life for the purpose of this section.

D. Circumstances excluded as Vehicular Pursuits

1. **The interim period when an officer may be utilizing Emergency Vehicular Operations (EVO) in an attempt to catch up to a suspect vehicle in an effort to give an initial signal to stop.**
2. **The interim period after an officer first initiates a signal to stop the vehicle and the operator does not immediately respond but demonstrates no evidence of eluding or fleeing.**

E. Sworn personnel engaged in a vehicular pursuit shall have their emergency equipment activated.

F. A supervisor shall be assigned to **manage** a pursuit as soon as possible by either acknowledging the dispatcher's request or by taking responsibility on the air. The **managing supervisor, once identified, shall manage the incident until its conclusion.**

G. **When a pursuit is not permissible or has been terminated, personnel shall deactivate EVO equipment and obey all traffic laws.**

H. If a passenger is onboard a police vehicle, and unless exigent circumstances dictate, participating in a vehicular pursuit is not authorized unless the passenger is a:

1. Sworn law enforcement officer
2. Columbus City official or employee riding in an official capacity
3. Columbus Division of Police Explorer
4. Adult civilian who has signed a Citizen Ride Along Request/Release form, U-10.119

Note: If possible, involved sworn personnel with a civilian passenger shall relinquish involvement to another unit as soon as safe and practicable.

I. **Up to three** police vehicles (a primary, a second **and a third unit**) may become actively involved in a pursuit, unless otherwise specifically **authorized or prohibited** by the supervisor assigned to manage the pursuit. The purpose of the second **and third** units is to provide backup for the primary unit.

J. Sworn personnel shall not relinquish control of Division-initiated pursuits to any other law enforcement agency while within the city limits of Columbus.

K. Officers shall not become involved in a vehicular pursuit initiated by a foreign agency, unless assistance is specifically requested by the initiating agency and the pursuit conforms with Division policy.

L. **Sworn personnel shall not engage in a vehicular pursuit of a driver traveling the wrong way on the freeway unless:**

1. **The use of deadly force is justified, or**
2. **Other resources and/or strategies can not reasonably be utilized.**

M. Sworn personnel **should only** respond to the area of a vehicular pursuit on their precinct. **If responding, officers shall use EVO when violating traffic laws.**

Note: Freeway units may only respond to the area of a vehicular pursuit on the zone where they are currently patrolling.

N. Authorized Vehicles

1. A marked police vehicle with operable lights and siren should be used when participating in a vehicular pursuit. Marked cruisers shall take precedence over any other marked unit.

2. Under exigent circumstances or when authorized by a sworn supervisor, sworn personnel may use other police vehicles to participate in a vehicular pursuit.

Vehicles without emergency equipment shall relinquish involvement to a vehicle with emergency equipment as soon as safe and practical.

3. Personnel, ***such as SWAT***, operating any unit other than a marked cruiser shall relinquish ***their involvement*** to personnel in a marked cruiser and disengage from the pursuit as soon as safe and practical, ***unless authorized by the managing supervisor.***

O. Documentation

A zone or traffic lieutenant shall conduct an administrative investigation of vehicular pursuits.

III. Procedures

A. Vehicular Pursuit

1. Primary Unit

- a. Upon initiating a pursuit, immediately advise the dispatcher:

- (1) Cruiser/call number
- (2) Reason for the pursuit
- (3) Location and direction of travel
- (4) Description of vehicle being pursued
- (5) Pursuit speed

- b. Keep other officers and the dispatcher advised of the location, direction, and description of the fleeing vehicle until the helicopter is in position to take over airing the pursuit.

2. *Additional* Units

- a. ***Notify radio of involvement and position.***

- b. Enter the pursuit behind the primary unit. Do not pass the primary unit unless it cannot continue the pursuit or relinquishes its position.

- c. Back up the primary unit.

3. Pursuit Units

- a. Keep the radio volume turned up to hear instructions from the supervisor assigned to manage the pursuit.

- b. Drive defensively.

- c. If the helicopter crew has the fleeing vehicle in sight:

- (1) Reduce speed
- (2) Avoid using the radio, unless assistance is requested by the helicopter crew or information is requested by the supervisor assigned to manage the pursuit

4. Dispatcher

- a. As soon as possible after a vehicular pursuit is initiated, assign a supervisor to direct and manage the pursuit, or acknowledge the supervisor that is managing the pursuit.
 - (1) Advise the supervisor of the stated reason(s) for the pursuit
 - (2) If the pursuit was initiated by a foreign agency, advise the supervisor whether the assistance of the Columbus Division of Police was requested by the pursuing agency **and all other known information**
- b. Notify the helicopter crew, if available.
- c. Avoid transmitting non-emergency information.
- d. Use available information to ascertain the possible identity of the fleeing suspect(s).
- e. Once the helicopter crew becomes involved in the pursuit,
 - (1) Advise other units to relinquish the air except:
 - (a) For emergency use
 - (b) To broadcast essential information requested by the supervisor assigned to manage the pursuit
 - (2) Allow the helicopter crew to **direct information to involved units**
 - (3) Monitor information aired by the helicopter crew

5. Helicopter Crew

- a. When in position to direct pursuits from the air:
 - (1) Provide information regarding location, direction, description, and speed estimates of fleeing vehicle
 - (2) Transmit relevant conditions such as vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - (3) Advise the supervisor of unassigned units that are actively engaged in the pursuit **and/or in the area of the pursuit**
 - (4) Direct other units to key positions in the event the suspect vehicle eludes the pursuing vehicles or the suspect flees on foot
 - (5) If the vehicle stops, advise units of the location, suspect(s) description, number of occupants exiting the vehicle, possession of weapons if observed, and other relevant information
- b. If the pursuit is terminated, keep units advised of the location and direction of the fleeing vehicle to allow units to remain in the area of the vehicle, unless ordered to cancel by a sworn supervisor.

6. Managing Supervisor

- a. Direct and manage the pursuit until its conclusion.
- b. Ensure pursuit speeds are updated.
- c. **Ensure the appropriate number of** units are assigned to the pursuit, giving consideration to:

- (1) The reason for the pursuit
 - (2) The number of suspects in the vehicle
 - (3) Knowledge that the suspect is armed
 - (4) The use of stopping tactics
 - (5) Any authorized pursuing unit that becomes inoperable or should relinquish involvement
 - (6) Any additional information
- d.** Obtain information about the amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the area of the pursuit, if possible.
- e.** If a crime scene possibly exists, **direct** unit(s) to the scene(s) in order to gain information.
- f.** Advise the dispatcher to notify foreign agencies, as appropriate, of vehicular pursuits near their jurisdictions. Request the foreign agency's assistance if deemed necessary.

B. Termination of Vehicular Pursuits

1. Pursuit Units and Managing Supervisor

- a. Consider the following in determining whether to terminate a pursuit:

(1) *The need for an immediate apprehension or the probability of the suspect being identified and/or arrested at a later time*

- (2) Reason for the pursuit
- (3) Seriousness of the crime
- (4) Identity of suspect is known
- (5) Driver's/suspect's actions
- (6) Pedestrian and vehicular traffic density
- (7) Road surface and weather conditions

Even good weather can create sudden hazards, such as driving into a morning or evening sun

- (8) Inability to air location and direction of travel without diverting an undue amount of attention from driving

2. Primary Unit

- a. Terminate the pursuit if:

- (1) The reason for the pursuit does not follow established policy
- (2) The immediate danger of the pursuit is greater than the immediate or potential danger to the public if the suspect remains at large
- (3) The distance between the pursuing vehicle and the violator's vehicle becomes so great that further pursuit is futile
- (4) Ordered to do so by a supervisor or advised to by a dispatcher

3. Managing Supervisor

- a. Terminate the pursuit if:

- (1) **The reason for the pursuit does not follow established policy, *or***
- (2) **Based on information available at the time, you determine the**

immediate danger of the pursuit is greater than the immediate or potential danger to the public

b. Upon termination, advise all units of actions to be taken. For example, stay in the area, or take an overt disengagement maneuver.

4. Helicopter Crew

a. Terminate the pursuit if observation of the pursuit and available information indicate **the danger of pursuit is greater than the immediate or potential** danger to the public or other officers **if the suspect remains at large.**

b. Discontinue observation and airing suspect location of the fleeing vehicle if ordered to do so by a sworn supervisor.

5. Ground Units

Upon termination, immediately disengage from the pursuit.

6. Dispatcher

Upon termination of a vehicular pursuit, broadcast the termination on all Patrol zone channels.

C. Post-Pursuit Actions

1. Immediate and/or Managing Supervisor

Conduct a debriefing with involved officers as soon as possible to resolve any questions regarding the pursuit and to identify areas for improvement.

2. Investigating Lieutenant

a. Follow the procedures outlined in the Supervisor's Manual.

b. Forward an email to the "VehicularPursuits@columbuspolice.org" email account by the end of the tour. This shall serve as notification of the incident.

c. Complete the Vehicular Pursuit Report, form U-10.114.

d. Forward the original and two copies of the administrative investigative packet through your commander to the Pursuit Review Committee Chairperson. If an accident involving a police vehicle or personnel occurred, forward a copy of the administrative investigation along with a routing sheet to the Fleet Safety Committee.

3. Investigating Lieutenant's Commander

a. Review the administrative investigation for completeness only, and return the administrative investigation if further information is needed.

Note: No recommendations should be made until the incident has been reviewed by the Pursuit Review Committee.

b. Forward the administrative investigation to the Pursuit Review Committee Chairperson.

4. Pursuit Review Committee
 - a. Review all information concerning the vehicular pursuit and/or use of a stopping tactic during a pursuit.
 - b. Determine whether the incident was within Division policy and make a recommendation regarding conformity with Division policy.
 - (1) The majority opinion is the final recommendation of the committee.
 - (2) Attach a letter to the investigative packet outlining the committee's recommendation.
 - (3) Attach any dissenting opinions, to include a letter of finding, to the investigative packet.
 - c. Forward the investigative packet to the involved personnel's deputy chief.
5. Involved Personnel's Chain of Command
 - a. Review the vehicular pursuit and/or use of a stopping tactic during the pursuit and the recommendation of the Pursuit Review Committee.
 - b. Make a recommendation regarding conformance with Division policy and when appropriate, a recommendation concerning disciplinary action to be taken. Consider only information available to involved personnel at the time of the pursuit.
 - c. Forward the investigative packet through the chain to the involved personnel's deputy chief.
6. Deputy Chief
 - a. Review the administrative investigation and make a determination concerning the incident.

Note: If the recommendation of the deputy chief is in disagreement with the findings of the Pursuit Review Committee, forward the administrative packet to the Chief of Police.

 - (1) If the vehicular pursuit and/or use of stopping tactic during the pursuit is within policy, forward the investigative packet to the Pursuit Review Committee Chairperson and notify the involved personnel of the decision.
 - (2) If the vehicular pursuit and/or use of stopping tactic during the pursuit is not within policy, forward the investigative packet through the involved personnel's chain of command for review and a discipline recommendation.
 - (3) Upon receipt of the chain of command's discipline recommendation, make a determination concerning the disciplinary action to be taken.
7. Chief of Police
 - a. Make a final determination regarding compliance with Division policy when the findings of the deputy chief are in disagreement with the Pursuit Review Committee.
 - b. Forward the packet to the deputy chief.

8. Immediate Supervisor

- a. Upon determination by the deputy chief that the vehicular pursuit and/or use of stopping tactic during the pursuit was not within policy:
 - (1) Issue the discipline.
 - (2) Forward the investigative packet through the chain of command to the Pursuit Review Committee Chairperson.

9. Pursuit Review Committee Chairperson

Review the chain of command comments and forward the investigative packet to the Pursuit Recording Secretary for processing and filing.

10. Pursuit Recording Secretary

- a. Forward a copy of the Vehicular Pursuit Report to the Training Bureau Commander.
- b. Forward the original Vehicular Pursuit Report and investigative packet to the Internal Affairs Bureau for filing.

11. Patrol Administration Lieutenant

Conduct an annual documented analysis of all vehicular pursuits and/or use of a stopping tactic during a pursuit. Forward the analysis to the Accreditation Unit **and the Training Bureau Commander**.

12. Training Bureau Commander

Have **the annual pursuit analysis report and the** Vehicular Pursuit Reports reviewed to develop training for the Division, as needed.

13. Internal Affairs Bureau

Maintain the original Vehicular Pursuit Report and investigative packet.

D. Filing Felony Fleeing Charges

1. Accident Investigation Unit

- a. Assist officers with the necessary paperwork when filing felony fleeing charges.
- b. Present the felony case to the Grand Jury.