

**ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS**

Effective:10/1/2009; Replaces: 11/04/2004

**2-55            PURSUIT BY MOTOR VEHICLE**

[N/A]

**POLICY:**

Department policy is to initiate a pursuit only when an officer has reasonable grounds to believe the offender presents a clear and immediate serious threat to the safety of other motorists or the public, which is ongoing and prior to the pursuit beginning, or the offender has committed or is committing a violent felony.

**DEFINITIONS:**

2-55-1            A.    MOTOR VEHICLE PURSUIT

[N/A]

A motor vehicle pursuit is an active attempt by a law enforcement officer operating a departmental vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving vehicle, when it is reasonably apparent that the driver of that vehicle is aware of that attempt and is resisting apprehension by increasing speed in excess of the posted speed limit, disobeying traffic laws, or attempting to elude the officer through evasive maneuvers or tactics.

B.    INITIATING/PRIMARY PURSUIT UNIT

The police unit that initiates a pursuit, or any other unit that assumes the lead position in a pursuit.

C.    MARKED UNIT

A police vehicle must be equipped with a roof mounted light bar, siren, and authorized police vehicle insignia. These elements must be present for the vehicle to be considered a marked vehicle.

D.    SUPERVISOR

For the purpose of this section "supervisor" will include only on-duty, operational, Field Services Supervisors.

E.    VIOLENT FELONY

Violent felonies for the purpose of this section are as follows: Homicide, criminal sexual penetration, robbery with a deadly weapon, kidnapping/false imprisonment, felony aggravated battery inflicting great bodily harm, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

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F. CLEAR AND IMMEDIATE SERIOUS THREAT

A threat which is present prior to the pursuit and which represents a willful disregard by the occupants of the vehicle of the rights and safety of others which reasonably places the public in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death.

G. PURSUIT IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE (PIT)

A technique used by officer(s) to stop a suspect vehicle, by utilizing their police vehicle.

H. HIGH RISK STOP

A high risk stop (felony stop) is a method of stopping, removing, disarming, and detaining occupants of a vehicle who are believed to be dangerous, violent, and/or armed with a deadly weapon. The high risk stop utilizes officers, cover, and assigned areas of responsibility and structured orders to stop a vehicle and remove occupants while reducing the risk of danger to citizens and the responding officers.

RULES AND PROCEDURES:

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[5]

INITIATING/PRIMARY PURSUIT UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

**A. An officer may initiate a pursuit when at least one of the following factors exists:**

- 1. Reasonable grounds have been established to believe the offender presents a clear and immediate serious threat. The threat must be ongoing and occurring prior to the pursuit beginning, and reasonably places the public in imminent danger of great bodily harm and/or death.**
- 2. The offender has committed or is committing a violent felony and allowing escape would put the public in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death.**

**B. If one of the factors in subsection "A" above are present, the officer shall also consider the following factors prior to initiating the pursuit:**

1. The nature of the offense for which the pursuit was initiated;
2. The current driving behavior exhibited by the offender(s);
3. The time of day;
4. Road, weather and vehicle conditions;
5. Any other risk presented by the pursuit itself;

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6. Knowledge of the offender's identity, possible destination, and previous activities.
  7. The risk of harm to others from the offender's escape.
- C. **Officers initiating a pursuit will request aerial assistance as soon as possible. See subsection 2-55-4 C for procedures on the use of aerial assistance.**
- D. Officers involved in pursuits must continually question whether the seriousness of the crimes(s) reasonably warrants continuation of the pursuit.
1. At any time during a pursuit when an officer or supervisor determines that the danger to the public or officer(s) outweighs the need for immediate apprehension, the officer will immediately discontinue the pursuit.
  2. The decision of an officer or supervisor to terminate a pursuit for safety considerations is not subject to review, and the officer will not be criticized, nor disciplined for that decision.
  3. **Officers initiating/sustaining pursuits are ultimately responsible for the outcome of their actions and compliance with this SOP.**
- E. Prior to engaging any emergency equipment to effect the stopping of a vehicle, the officer should attempt to note the license plate number and vehicle description.
- F. Any officer initiating a pursuit shall immediately notify Communications that a pursuit is in progress, giving the following information:
1. Reason for the pursuit;
  2. Present location and direction of travel;
  3. Vehicle speeds involved in the pursuit;
  4. Description of vehicle and occupants;
  5. Number of occupants in the offender(s) vehicle;
  6. Any safety factors that need to be noted;
  7. If a hostage is involved, this fact, along with a description and the exact location of the hostage in the vehicle, if known.
- G. All pursuits shall be conducted using "code 3" full emergency equipment.
- H. Officers radio transmission on the progress of the pursuit:
1. The primary officer is responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit until arrival of a secondary unit, who will then assume that responsibility.

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2. Communication for any pursuit will remain on the pursuing officers original dispatch channel, even if the pursuit changes Area Commands and/or jurisdictions.

I. Vehicles involved in pursuits:

1. Motorcycles, slick-top, and unmarked units may initiate a pursuit only if the unit is equipped with a siren and red flashing lights.
2. When a marked unit with a roof mounted light bar joins the pursuit, all motorcycle, slick-top and unmarked units will terminate the participation in a pursuit.
3. Motorcycle, slick-top, and unmarked units will not join a pursuit in progress.

[5] J. Officers with a prisoner in their vehicle will not initiate or join a pursuit.

K. After a supervisor is notified of the pursuit, it may only continue with specific authorization from the supervisor.

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[7] ASSISTING/SECONDARY PURSUIT UNITS

Assisting/secondary pursuit units shall:

A. Engage all emergency equipment.

B. Notify communications of their identity.

C. Assume radio communications responsibility, allowing the primary unit to devote complete attention to pursuit.

[6] D. Officers will not parallel or caravan a pursuit; however, officers may proceed into the area of a pursuit if directed by the controlling supervisor to assist at the termination point of the pursuit. Assisting units may also be utilized in the stopping of the pursued vehicle.

[6] E. No more than two police vehicles will become actively involved in a pursuit, unless specifically authorized to do so by a supervisor. Assisting officers will be alert to the pursuit progress and location.

F. Officers involved in a pursuit will not attempt to pass the primary unit unless instructed to do so by that unit or the primary unit is unable to continue.

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[N/A]

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The initiating pursuit officer's on-duty supervisor or, if the on-duty supervisor is unavailable the next available on-duty supervisor will be in command of the pursuit.

1. Pursuits initiated by officers outside their Area Command or while off-duty will be under the command of the supervisor responsible for the sector where the pursuit initiated.

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2. **It is essential that on-duty sector supervisors constantly monitor radio communications within their area in order to ensure that any motor vehicle pursuit has met the proper criteria and that the pursuit is managed in accordance with this SOP section.**

B. Upon being notified of a pursuit, the supervisor shall:

1. Assume command from origination through conclusion.

2. Ensure the pursuit is in compliance with this section.

3. Ensure aerial assistance has been requested.

4. Ensure that effected public safety agencies are notified.

5. Assist the primary unit with the necessary support requested.

6. When necessary, abandon or direct the dispatcher to have officers abandon the pursuit.

7. When necessary for the protection of the public, call for establishment of a location to disable the fleeing vehicle.

C. Utilization of Aerial Assistance During Pursuits

1. Once aerial assistance has responded and has a visual on the pursued vehicle, the Aerial Unit shall be the primary unit and will relay the progress of the vehicle to ground units. **This will apply only to pursuits that meet department policy and have been authorized by an on-duty supervisor.**

a. All ground units involved in the pursuit will shut down emergency equipment and cease emergency driving activities **and cease following the vehicle.**

b. The supervisor will determine how many units are needed in order to track the vehicle based upon the information from the Aerial Unit.

c. With direction from the Aerial Unit, the supervisor will direct and control ground units in a manner which increasingly constricts the perimeter surrounding the vehicle in order to apprehend the offenders.



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- a. Review the pursuit to determine compliance with this SOP Section. The Division/Area Commander may conduct a meeting with the supervisor and officers involved in order to thoroughly review the pursuit.
- b. Prepare a written report of the review and deliver it to the Chief of Police and Operations Review Section within 10 working days of the incident.

- **The Operations Review Section will annually prepare an analysis of pursuits and distribute the analysis to the Chief of Police, Accreditation, and Internal Affairs.**

[7]

- G. Watch commanders of units involved in a pursuit shall hold an open critique session, preferable during briefing, of the pursuit wherein both the positive and negative aspects of the pursuit can be used as a training aide.

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COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

[7]

**Dispatcher will ensure (with all other dispatchers) that no radio air is secure before he/she utilizes ALL OPS.**

**When advised that a pursuit is in progress, Communications shall:**

- A. **Dispatcher will utilize the Alert Tone (10-3) on his/her air.**
- B. **The dispatcher will voice pursuit over ALL OPS channel and notify the concerned supervisor of the units involved and the reason for the pursuit.**

**Example:**

**The Alert Tone and ALL OPS will be activated and the dispatcher will voice: Northwest ALL OPS transmission, vehicle pursuit involving C614 reference a 27-3 offender. Dispatcher will un-key from ALL OPS.**

- C. **Once the field supervisor has approved the chase, the dispatcher will start a back up unit to the most current location of the pursuit and if aerial support is available, ensure that they are notified.**
- D. **Dispatcher assigned to any air that a pursuit is entering will notify the Area Command Supervisor. Area commands, not on the pursuit channel, will be updated on significant changes to the ongoing pursuit. This will include but is not limited to:**
  - \* **When the chase enters another command.**
  - \* **Which supervisor is in command.**
  - \* **Pending charges.**
  - \* **Weapons involved.**
  - \* **If the vehicle is spike belted.**
  - \* **If additional aggravated circumstances occur.**

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- \* If the pursuit is terminated.
- E. Notification will be made to any adjoining jurisdictions of any pursuit entering that jurisdiction.
- F. Coordinate with the supervisor in command to insure that all communications regarding the pursuit are on one (originating) channel.

If a radio air is secure, Communications shall:

- A. The Dispatcher will utilize the Alert Tone on the pursuit air.
- B. An ALL OPS transmission will be utilized to announce the pursuit.
- C. Each additional Dispatcher who does not have secure air:
  - \* The Dispatcher will utilize the Alert Tone (10-3) on his/her air.
  - \* The Dispatcher will voice/BOLO pursuit information.

Example:

The Alert Tone will be activated and the dispatcher will voice:  
BOLO form Northwest Command vehicle pursuit reference a 27-3 offender, Blue Honda at Coors/Irving, south bound Coors.  
Dispatcher will un-key from ALL OPS.

- \* The Dispatcher will then (10-8) making the air available.

When the pursuit has been terminated by the approving supervisor, the dispatcher shall

- A. Voice (after verifying with all airs) over ALL OPS that the pursuit has been terminated:

Example:

ALL OPS will be activated and the dispatcher will voice:  
Northwest ALL OPS transmission, per S63 the 27-3 pursuit is terminated. Dispatcher will un-key from ALL OPS.

The Dispatcher will then (10-8) making the air available.

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[7]

STOPPING A PURSUED VEHICLE

- A. Officers will use high risk stop (felony stop) procedures if possible.
- B. Mechanical Tire Deflation System.
  - 1. The mechanical tire deflation system is an acceptable method of terminating a pursuit when authorized by a supervisor. Only those officers who have received training in the device are authorized to deploy the system.
  - 2. The mechanical tire deflation system will not be deployed on two wheeled vehicles unless the use of deadly force is justified.

[N/A]

- C. Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT)



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The pursuit immobilization technique is an acceptable method of terminating a pursuit when authorized by a supervisor. The pursuit immobilization technique will not be used at speeds greater than 35 MPH unless deadly force is warranted. Every effort will be made to utilize a high risk stop (felony stop) with additional units after PIT has been employed.

1. ONLY THOSE OFFICERS WHO ARE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED IN THE PURSUIT IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE (P.I.T.) ARE AUTHORIZED TO EMPL OY IT.
2. **THE P.I.T. WILL NOT BE DEPLOYED ON TWO (2) OR THREE (3) WHEELED VEHICLE UNLESS THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE IS JUSTIFIED.**

D. Use of Deadly Force

[4]

1. Supervisors Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. Supervisors must ensure that all feasible means for stopping a pursued vehicle have been exhausted before authorizing an officer(s) to use deadly force.
  - b. **Supervisors will only authorize deadly force to stop a fleeing vehicle, in order to:**
    1. **Protect the officer or others from what is reasonably believed to be an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury.**
    2. **Prevent the escape of one reasonably believed to have committed a violent felony, but only when there is probable cause to believe the suspect poses a immediate threat of death or serious physical injury to the officer of others.**
  - c. When authorizing the use of deadly force to stop a vehicle, the supervisor will articulate that the only firearm(s) to be used will be the shotgun or authorized rifle, and that the only target area of the vehicle will the tires.
2. Officers Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. Officers must obtain authorization from the supervisor managing the pursuit before deploying the shotgun/rifle.
  - b. Officers must have exhausted all other feasible means for stopping the vehicle.
  - c. Sidearms will not be used to disable the tires of a vehicle being pursued.
  - d. Officers will target the tires *ONLY*, of a vehicle being pursued.
  - e. Officers must place themselves in the most tactically safe position before deploying the shotgun/rifle.

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Officers must not place themselves in a position where they may be assaulted by the vehicle being pursued.

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JURISDICTION ISSUES

[6]

- A. When a pursuit leaves the city limits of Albuquerque, the officer will terminate the pursuit if:
1. Directed to do so by a supervisor;
  2. A supervisor is no longer in command of the pursuit;
  3. Requested to do so by the jurisdictional agency.
  4. Proper communications becomes a safety issue.
- B. When a pursuit by another agency enters the city limits of Albuquerque, the responsible supervisor will:
1. Ensure the department pursuit policy is adhered to;
  2. Ensure every attempt is made to assist the pursuing agency as resources and safety factors allow. This assistance must remain within the guidelines of this agency.
  3. Request the pursuing agency **to terminate the chase if the pursuit is not in compliance with department policy.**
- C. When another public safety agency's pursuit does not meet the standards of this policy, limited departmental participation may be provided if resources allow, however such participation is restricted. Department personnel will not actively participate in the pursuit but may provide the following safety measures:
1. Blocking of intersection(s) to allow unrestricted and safe passage of vehicles involved in the pursuit.
  2. Communications support will be utilized to coordinate the movements of the pursuit and facilitate the timely response of assisting units to the areas involved.
  3. Containment and preservation of the location where a pursuit is terminated, if it is within the city service area.