

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS**  
**OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMMISSIONER**  
**SPECIAL ORDER**

**Date Issued:**                    **October 17, 2019**                    **Order No.:**    **Section II of SO 5-05**

**Effective Date:**                **October 17, 2019**                    **Expiration:**    **Indefinite**

**Reference:**

**CALEA Standards:**            **41.2.2**

**Cancelled Publications:**    **Section II of SO 5-05, issued January 21, 2009**

**Subject:**                        **VEHICULAR PURSUITS**

**To:**                                **ALL BUREAUS, DISTRICTS AND DIVISIONS**

PURPOSE: To establish policy and procedures for vehicular pursuits.

A.    DEFINITIONS

1.    Caravanning – The operation of police vehicles in a line or alongside each other in a vehicular pursuit situation.
2.    Continuing Along the Route – An officer is considered to be continuing along the route when he/she has lost sight of a vehicle and now is traveling along the actual or anticipated route while obeying all traffic laws. An Officer may follow this practice to determine if the suspect may have been involved in a crash or has abandoned his/her vehicle.
3.    Following a Vehicle – An officer is considered to be following a vehicle only when the officer has the vehicle in sight and is obeying all traffic laws. The officer could be attempting to stop the vehicle or simply waiting for the right moment to attempt the stop.
4.    Officers – For the purpose of this Order, "officers" include those participating in a vehicular pursuit, and Supervisors and Commanders who participate in, or are responsible for monitoring, the vehicular pursuit.
5.    Paralleling – The operation of police vehicles parallel to the pursuit route.
6.    Pursuit – A vehicular pursuit occurs when a suspect in a vehicle attempts to elude officers by speeding and/or violating traffic control, requiring the officer to drive in the same manner in order to make the apprehension.
7.    Pursuit Assistance Positions – When an officer becomes aware that a vehicular pursuit has entered the City from another jurisdiction, the Watch Commander or respective precinct Supervisor will announce for one or more patrol units to assume pursuit assistance positions. Officers will proceed to a location that will likely give the officer the opportunity to provide assistance. That position will be announced to the precinct Supervisor.
8.    Roadblock – Any method, restriction, or obstruction used or intended to prevent free passage of a vehicle being pursued by officers.

B. INTRODUCTION (41.2.2.a)

Few policing activities are as potentially dangerous to officer and others as vehicular pursuits. It is the responsibility of every officer to weigh the risks to determine if a pursuit should be initiated. In the event a pursuit begins, it is a continuing responsibility of those involved to monitor all of the circumstances that arise as it continues. At all points during a vehicle pursuit, officer have an obligation to make decisions to continue pursuing based on the safety of the pursuing and assisting officer and the safety of the public.

An officer's job includes many different obligations, including making arrests based upon probable cause that a suspect has committed a criminal offense. However, it is sometimes a difficult balance to exercise the responsibility to make arrests with the responsibility to help manage as safe an environment as possible for citizens and fellow officers. Dangers to officers and to citizens exist throughout the vehicle pursuit. Officers will make reasonable judgments based on safety considerations before being drawn into a potentially hazardous situation caused by the behavior of a suspect.

C. CRITERIA FOR INITIATION (41.2.2.b)

Vehicular pursuits may be initiated when an officer has reason to believe that the suspect has committed a felony involving the use, or threatened use, of deadly force and a delay in apprehending the suspect(s) will pose a danger to other people. The officer will decide to pursue based on facts known at the time.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Safety is the overriding concern during vehicular pursuits. Officers must consider that other officers are responding to assist and that unaware populations are both drivers and pedestrians along the route. The decision to continue a vehicular pursuit must constantly be weighed against these safety concerns. When the risks of injury to anyone become greater than a failed apprehension, the vehicular pursuit is no longer reasonable. **(41.2.2.c)**
2. Vehicle maneuvers, roadblocks, paralleling, caravanning, or other action outside of standard emergency vehicle operation are prohibited. **(41.2.2.e)**
3. Only marked vehicles should engage in vehicular pursuits, with emergency lights and sirens activated. Unmarked vehicles should only engage in vehicular pursuits in exigent circumstances, with emergency lights and sirens activated and only until the first marked vehicle arrives in the area. **(41.2.2.e)**
4. Generally, two marked vehicles, a primary and secondary, will be assigned to a vehicular pursuit. If necessary, other support units may be directed to engage by the Supervisor. **(41.2.2.e)**
5. The secondary pursuit vehicle will remain a safe distance behind the primary pursuit vehicle but close enough to provide needed assistance. The secondary vehicle will maintain radio silence, unless: **(41.2.2.d)**
  - a. Directed by the pursuit Supervisor or Watch Commander to assume that function in place of the primary pursuit vehicle; or
  - b. Unusual circumstances dictate otherwise. Should the primary pursuit vehicle become disabled, the secondary pursuit vehicle will become the primary pursuit vehicle. The

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pursuit Supervisor will advise the Dispatcher to assign a new secondary pursuit vehicle. Vehicles in the geographic area of the pursuit are to remain alert as to the direction and progress of the pursuit. While remaining in their assigned areas, they may position themselves at strategic sites along the probable pursuit route for response, if necessary. These vehicles are not to be operated in an emergency mode and they must obey all traffic laws.

6. When vehicular pursuits are initiated, the Dispatcher will immediately announce the pursuit "all points", to include on which channel the pursuit is being monitored. All radio traffic on that channel will cease except for the pursuing units and Supervisors. The only dispatches allowed will be urgent Priority 1 transmissions (e.g., aid call, shooting, robbery in progress). Other calls will be held until the pursuit is terminated. **(41.2.2.f)**
  7. Termination of a vehicular pursuit occurs when the pursuing officer, or any officer or Supervisor with responsibility for the pursuit, directs a cancellation. At that point, all emergency operation of police vehicles related to the pursuit will stop. **(41.2.2.i)**
  8. A vehicular pursuit should be terminated when: **(41.2.2.h)**
    - a. A Supervisor or Commander orders the pursuit terminated; or
    - b. The primary pursuit vehicle loses contact with the suspect vehicle for approximately fifteen (15) seconds or more.
  9. Pursuing officers and the responsible Supervisor/Commander must give strong consideration to terminating the vehicular pursuit when a potentially hazardous situation develops involving the following: excessive speed; dangerous road, traffic, or environmental conditions; dangerous driving maneuvers by the suspect; officer unfamiliarity with area; or vehicle operated by juvenile whose actions reflect a lack of appreciation of the danger involved. **(41.2.2.g) (41.2.2.h)**
  10. The vehicular pursuit Supervisor and Watch Commander will respond to the termination point of all Department vehicular pursuits to ensure that necessary assistance is rendered, investigations are conducted, reports are made, etc. **(41.2.2.g)**
- E. PURSUIT INTO OTHER JURISDICTIONS **(41.2.2.j)**
1. Officer and citizen safety renders pursuing into other jurisdictions a serious matter. Unfamiliarity with surroundings should be a concern for officers. Officers should seriously weigh the advantages of continuing a pursuit in an area that he or she does not know. This is a substantial reason for terminating a pursuit.
  2. If a vehicular pursuit is quickly joined by officers from the appropriate jurisdiction, officers from this Department will allow them to become the primary pursuit vehicle. Depending on the number of responding vehicles, officers from this Department may drop from the pursuit but follow the route, obeying traffic laws until the pursuit is called off or is so far away that the officer's participation has no more value. In all cases of vehicular pursuits into other jurisdictions, the Supervisor of the primary officer will contact the Supervisor from the appropriate jurisdiction to share information. This contact should be made at the earliest possible convenience of the Supervisor.
  3. No more than two Department vehicles and a Supervisory vehicle should continue into another jurisdiction, unless a Supervisor determines that additional assistance is needed. This decision

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will be based on the likelihood that the pursuit will continue and assistance from other jurisdictions is unavailable.

### F. PURSUIITS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS ENTERING THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS (41.2.2.j)

1. This Department will assist other jurisdictions pursuing into the City of St. Louis when the pursuit meets the vehicular pursuit criteria in this Order. Assistance will include any request from the involved jurisdiction that can be reasonably accommodated. It also will include monitoring the route to ensure that we can provide necessary direction and quick aid to officers unfamiliar with the City. Supervisors will be responsible for directing the involvement of their officers in the event a pursuit from another jurisdiction is moving along a route that may lead through their District.
2. Recognizing the potential danger in vehicular pursuits, and our limited information about the circumstances of pursuits not initiated by our Department, our primary involvement will be carefully considered. Assistance does not mean that we will automatically engage in the pursuit, but the Supervisors in Districts that are, or perhaps will be, part of the pursuit route will direct specific units to be prepared to help along the route.
3. Officers who witness a vehicular pursuit involving another jurisdiction should announce the location and direction of travel to the Dispatcher. If reasonable, officers may monitor a pursuit route within their District boundaries, obeying all traffic laws.

### G. REPORTS (41.2.2.k)

1. An incident report will be prepared whenever a vehicular pursuit is initiated by an officer or an officer engages in a pursuit which enters the City of St. Louis from another jurisdiction.
2. A "Vehicle Pursuit Observation Form" (MPD Form GEN-270) (available on the Intranet → Forms) will be completed for each pursuit to facilitate an administrative review:
  - a. The Communications Supervisor will prepare the first page of the "Vehicle Pursuit Observation Form" (MPD Form GEN-270), assigning a tracking number and emailing the form to the involved unit Commander and to Planning and Research by the next business day. (41.2.2.f)
  - b. The unit Commander will ensure that the pursuit Supervisor completes the remaining portions of the "Vehicle Pursuit Observation Form" (MPD Form GEN-270). Within fourteen (14) days, the completed "Vehicle Pursuit Observation Form" (MPD Form GEN-270) and a copy of the incident report will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Bureau Commander for approval. The Bureau Commander will forward the approved "Vehicle Pursuit Observation Form" (MPD Form GEN-270) and incident report to Planning and Research. (41.2.2.g) (41.2.2.k)
3. Planning and Research will conduct an annual documented analysis of all pursuits occurring the previous year, to include facilitating a review of policy and reporting procedures, that will be approved by the Police Commissioner. (41.2.2.l)

JWH/ash  
482-18-00203