



Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

GENERAL ORDER

4.12

VEHICLE PURSUITS

POLICY

Vehicle pursuits are among the most hazardous duties performed by law enforcement officers. These acts can endanger the officer, citizens, the fleeing suspect, and passengers. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department's goal for this vehicle pursuit policy is to better equip all officers with the ability to act and make sound decisions in a manner reasonably minimizing the risks associated with emergency driving and vehicle pursuits.

All department personnel operating vehicles in a law enforcement capacity will do so with due regard for the safety of all persons. Officers will be thoroughly familiar with Indiana state law concerning the use of emergency vehicles and equipment as well as applicable department policies and procedures. Officers must exercise reasonable judgment to ensure the risk to public safety does not outweigh the government's interest in apprehending the suspect. The preservation of life is the highest priority.

DEFINITIONS

Vehicle Pursuit – An active attempt by one or more officers to apprehend a suspect who is either an occupant or operator of a motor vehicle, when the officer has probable cause to believe the suspect is attempting to avoid capture by failing or refusing to stop or taking evasive actions (e.g., driving off a highway, making sudden or unexpected maneuvers, etc.).

Officer – For the purposes of this general order, an officer refers to all sworn personnel performing in a law enforcement capacity, including park rangers.

Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) – The PIT is a maneuver to spin the fleeing vehicle through direct vehicle-to-vehicle contact. It may be used to end the pursuit at the safest, earliest, and most appropriate opportunity. The use of the PIT maneuver within the guidelines and training is not designed or likely to cause serious bodily injury or death. It is designed to prevent major injury to civilians, officers, and suspects, while minimizing the potential for property damage.

Rolling Road Block (RRB) – A RRB may be used in a situation where previously trained pursuing officers reasonably believe the situation is low risk. The RRB is a technique in which three police vehicles attempt to bring the driver to a safe, controlled stop by surrounding the suspect vehicle from the front, driver's side, and rear.

Termination Point – The location a pursuit is ordered terminated by the supervisor or initiating officer, where the fleeing vehicle surrenders, or where the vehicle pursuit ends due to other circumstances (e.g., vehicle crash, tire deflating devices, PIT, etc.).

Pursuit-Rated – A vehicle designated by the manufacturer and acknowledged by the department as suitable to engage in emergency driving or pursuit activity.

Marked Police Vehicle – A city-owned, leased, or confiscated vehicle painted or marked with graphics to clearly identify it as a law enforcement vehicle. The vehicle displays a police insignia visible to others, has an overhead emergency light bar attached to the roof of the vehicle, and is equipped with an audible siren.

Semi-Marked Police Vehicle – A city-owned, leased, or confiscated vehicle painted or marked with graphics to identify it as a law enforcement vehicle. The vehicle displays a police insignia visible to others and is equipped

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CHIEF OF POLICE

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with an audible siren. The vehicle has emergency lights mounted inside (i.e. grill, dash, or deck lights), but lacks an overhead emergency light bar attached to the roof of the vehicle.

Pursuit-Rated Unmarked Police Vehicle – A city-owned, leased, or confiscated vehicle not clearly marked with graphics to identify it as a law enforcement vehicle and not displaying a police insignia. The vehicle has department approved emergency lights mounted inside (i.e. grill, dash, or deck lights) and is equipped with an audible siren.

PROCEDURE

I. Pursuit Authority

- A. The authority of a law enforcement officer to engage in a vehicle pursuit may be necessary to apprehend persons who either have committed or are suspected of committing a law violation. The authority to pursue law violators provides the department an opportunity to deter crime, enhance public safety, and better protect the citizens of Indianapolis.
- B. The decision to engage in a vehicle pursuit must be considered very seriously. Officers must consider not only themselves, but also the general public and occupants of the fleeing vehicle. Preservation of life is the department's highest priority. Officers are reminded state and local provisions may not protect them from the legal consequences of any reckless or negligent disregard for the safety of others.
- C. Officers in pursuit-rated marked, semi-marked, or unmarked police vehicles equipped with emergency lights and siren may initiate a pursuit. This includes pursuit-rated sport utility vehicles (SUV). Officers operating pursuit-rated unmarked vehicles will relinquish control of the pursuit to a marked or semi-marked police vehicle using emergency lights and siren as soon as possible.

II. Pursuit Guidelines

- A. Vans, trucks, or prisoner wagons will not initiate or become involved in a pursuit under any circumstances.
- B. Officers operating a pursuit-rated motorcycle may only initiate a pursuit for a felony offense (not including the act of fleeing). The motorcycle officer must discontinue pursuit once an officer in a pursuit-rated police car or SUV joins the pursuit.
- C. The vehicle's emergency lights and siren will be operated while driving under pursuit conditions. If an officer's emergency lights or siren fail or become disabled during a pursuit, or other mechanical failures occur making the vehicle unsafe, the officer will discontinue involvement and relinquish responsibility for continuation to the secondary pursuing officer.
- D. Pursuit driving is authorized when an officer:
 1. Has reasonable suspicion to believe an occupant has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a felony (beyond the act of fleeing alone) or a misdemeanor exception offense; and/or
 2. Witnesses a misdemeanor offense.

NOTE

A pursuit may not be initiated based solely upon an observed traffic infraction. If an officer has articulable suspicion additional criminal activity is afoot (beyond the traffic infraction and/or the act of fleeing), the officer may pursue.

- E. Before initiating and during any pursuit, the pursuing officer(s) and supervisor(s) must ensure the risk to the public's safety does not outweigh the governmental interest in apprehending the suspect(s) and must consider the following:
 1. The dangers and risks posed to the officers, bystanders, uninvolved motorists, and vehicle occupants;



2. Severity of the offense;
 3. Knowledge of the identity of the pursued suspect(s);
 4. Other occupants within the vehicle (e.g., children or elderly);
 5. Weather and lighting conditions;
 6. Road conditions (e.g., intersections, traffic controls, overhead lighting, curves, hills, repair, width of road, etc.);
 7. Traffic conditions (e.g., density of vehicle and pedestrian traffic);
 8. Locality of pursuit (e.g., residential, highway, school zones, etc.);
 9. Officer's familiarity with area;
 10. Danger presented by the suspect's actions (e.g., speed, driving against traffic, extreme evasive tactics, whether the officer knows or suspects the driver may be under the influence of an intoxicant, etc.); and
 11. The officer and fleeing suspect's driving skills, ability, and vehicle condition.
- F. All vehicle pursuits will be reported by radio to Communications as soon as reasonably possible. The officer will announce they are "in pursuit," which will prompt Communications to immediately begin patching the radio channels of nearby districts or jurisdictions to enhance officer safety. Those not involved in the pursuit should restrict radio traffic to a minimum level or be prepared to switch to an alternate channel.
- G. Any officer initiating a pursuit must notify Communications of the pursuit as soon as reasonably possible and provide the following information:
1. Unit number;
 2. Location;
 3. Direction of travel;
 4. Reason for initiating the pursuit;
 5. Description of suspect vehicle and occupants; and
 6. Other pertinent information (e.g., hazardous conditions, weapons, etc.)
- H. The initiating officer will remain in radio contact with Communications and advise all pertinent information until additional officers are available to assist. When a second officer joins the pursuit, that officer will handle all radio traffic to allow the initiating officer to maintain visual contact with the pursued vehicle.
- I. Communications will promptly assign, via radio, a supervisor from the district in which the pursuit began to manage the incident. The assigned supervisor will acknowledge responsibility over the radio as soon as reasonably possible. Another supervisor may take over responsibility for the pursuit if they are better positioned to monitor the incident. Communications will announce the unit number of the assigned supervisor and the reason for the pursuit once the primary pursuit channel is patched with another radio channel.
- J. The assigned supervisor will monitor and continually evaluate the pursuit to ensure the risk to the public's safety does not outweigh the governmental interest in apprehending the suspect(s), and respond to the termination point of the pursuit to take charge of the scene and investigate.



- K. Only three department vehicles may operate under pursuit conditions to stop a fleeing vehicle unless further department vehicles are authorized by a supervisor. Assisting officers will not convoy behind the pursuing vehicle. A canine and/or PIT vehicle are permitted to be a fourth or fifth department vehicle in the pursuit.
- L. The assigned supervisor may consider the following when determining if more than three department vehicles are needed/authorized:
 - 1. Number of occupants in suspect vehicle;
 - 2. Nature of offense and danger presented to pursuing officers; and/or
 - 3. Potential increased risk to officers and bystanders.
- M. Department vehicles not directly involved in the pursuit will not travel under emergency conditions unless specifically authorized to do so by the assigned supervisor. Officers relatively close to the pursuit may move toward the area to assist using normal police vehicle operation, but will not leave their assigned districts unless specifically authorized to do so by a supervisor.
- N. Pursuing officers will operate department vehicles in single file to maintain adequate distance between the vehicles, to allow for evasive action and safe operation, and to enhance overall safety.
- O. An assisting officer may assume control of the pursuit only after being requested to do so by the initiating officer. An assisting officer(s) will not attempt to pass the initiating officer's vehicle, unless the assisting officer has been requested to assume control of the pursuit by the initiating officer.

NOTE

At no time will a department vehicle intentionally contact the suspect vehicle to terminate a pursuit unless the situation warrants the use of deadly force or the officer is PIT certified.

- P. Paralleling pursuits will not occur unless the pursuit passes through an officer's immediate vicinity. The paralleling officer's vehicle must not operate under emergency conditions.
- Q. If a crash occurs during a pursuit due to the actions of the suspect, the secondary officer will notify Communications of the location, number of vehicles involved, and any apparent injury/damage as soon as reasonably possible. Communications will then dispatch an uninvolved officer to the accident scene to be investigated in accordance with General Order 7.1 – *Traffic Crash Investigations*.
- R. If the operator and/or occupant(s) of the vehicle being pursued discard any item(s) of potential evidentiary value, the witnessing officer will notify Communications of the location with a brief description of the discarded item. Communications will dispatch an uninvolved officer to the location to search for the discarded item. If the discarded item is located, the officer will notify Communications and request an evidence technician, gun liaison, or other appropriate personnel.
- S. Upon termination of a pursuit, any officer operating a police vehicle under emergency conditions will cease emergency operation once notification is made sufficient assistance is on the scene.
- T. Specialty unit officers may not proceed under emergency conditions after being notified sufficient assistance is on the scene unless it is determined a specialty skill is necessary and approved by the assigned supervisor.

III. Inter-jurisdictional Pursuits

- A. When a pursuit initiated on IMPD jurisdiction enters the jurisdiction of another agency and officers of that agency enter to assist, the initiating officer will retain responsibility of the pursuit unless relieved by a supervisor.



- B. If a pursuit initiated by another agency enters IMPD's jurisdiction, officers will not join the pursuit if they know three or more vehicles from any agency are currently in pursuit of the fleeing vehicle unless ordered to do so by a supervisor. If a PIT and/or K9 officer is available and authorized by the other agency, then one PIT and/or K9 officer may join the pursuit to attempt to terminate the pursuit.
- C. If the initiating officer from another agency is not communicating on a radio frequency capable of being monitored by Communications, the shift supervisor may permit one department vehicle to join the pursuit. The sole purpose will be to communicate the progress of the pursuit while in the IMPD's jurisdiction.
- D. If an officer properly joins a pursuit of another jurisdiction, and leaves IMPD's jurisdiction, the officer will not discontinue the pursuit until a second vehicle from a proper jurisdiction joins to assist. No officer will abandon another agency's officer until sufficient assistance has joined the pursuit, provided the IMPD officer remains in compliance with all department written directives.

IV. Canine Involvement

- A. An officer involved in the pursuit or a supervisor will promptly request canine support through Communications.
- B. Canine officers operating pursuit-rated marked or semi-marked vehicles assisting in a pursuit will take the lead car position as safety permits. The canine handler will notify all officers in the pursuit of the potential for canine release upon termination of the pursuit.
- C. If a PIT officer is involved in the pursuit, the canine unit will allow the PIT officer to be the lead car position.

V. Tire Deflating Devices

- A. Tire deflating devices may be used by properly trained officers to help end a vehicle pursuit, either by hand or by an automated rear-deployment device, except when pursuing the following vehicles:
 - 1. Motorcycles or other two-wheeled vehicles (unless deadly force is authorized);
 - 2. School Buses (when children are on board);
 - 3. Any vehicles known to be transporting hazardous materials;
 - 4. Semi-tractors and trailers (unless extreme/exigent circumstances exist); or
 - 5. Any vehicle that would pose an unusual hazard to public safety.
- B. Officers not involved in a pursuit responding to place tire deflating devices are authorized to use emergency lights and siren. When placing tire deflating devices on the roadway, emergency lights on all vehicles must be in operation.
- C. Officers deploying tire deflating devices will notify Communications of the location of the devices with ample time for pursuing officers to be notified. Extreme caution will be used during deployment.
- D. Tire deflating devices may also be placed in areas suspects might drive while trying to avoid the primary deflating devices.
- E. Details concerning the use of tire deflating devices must be documented in the incident report and Blue Team entry.
- F. Officers may go to the IMPD Fleet Management office at Riverside Garage during normal business hours to obtain replacement parts for standard tire deflating devices.

**VI. Stationary and Rolling Road Blocks (RRB)**

- A. Stationary road blocks will not be used to terminate a pursuit. Blocking a roadway, street, alleyway, etc., with vehicles or any other objects so a vehicle cannot pass is prohibited. However, blocking of intersections and entry ramps, etc. to enhance public safety is allowed.
- B. A RRB is best used for situations where a suspect is not necessarily increasing speed, but will not stop (e.g., DUI, medical condition, elderly person, etc.).
- C. A RRB will not be used in any kind of high-risk situation or if the suspect attempts to strike the police vehicles when they attempt to perform this maneuver.
- D. When attempting a RRB, if the suspect displays a weapon, is reckless, or any officer involved does not believe the technique can be safely performed, the technique should be discontinued and an alternate method used to end the pursuit.
- E. Details concerning the use of the RRB will be documented in the incident report and Blue Team entry.

VII. Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT)

- A. The PIT maneuver will only be used by officers who have received agency-approved training. PIT officers will attend annual training to maintain certification. Every PIT maneuver will be performed based on the department's approved training.
- B. A PIT officer will move up to become the lead car in the pursuit. The decision to execute a PIT maneuver rests with the PIT officer. In addition to the factors listed in Section II., E., PIT officers should also consider the following:
 - 1. Danger presented by the suspect's actions (e.g., speed, driving against traffic, extreme evasive tactics, etc.);
 - 2. The fleeing driver and officer's driving skill, ability and vehicle condition;
 - 3. Location to reasonably expect the maneuver can be safely accomplished; and
 - 4. Speed in relation to the location where the PIT will be executed.
- C. The officer performing the PIT maneuver will exercise reasonable judgment to ensure appropriate conditions are met and announce the intention to perform the maneuver over the radio.
- D. Once a PIT maneuver has been performed, assisting officers will use high-risk stop procedures to include:
 - 1. Use a tactical pause – Do not rush up to the suspect vehicle;
 - 2. Maintain a safe distance;
 - 3. Use or create barriers for cover/concealment;
 - 4. Give loud verbal commands with clear instructions for exiting the vehicle;
 - 5. Handcuff behind cover, if feasible; and
 - 6. Avoid crossfire positioning.
- E. Damage to any vehicle(s) involved in a PIT maneuver is not a crash and will be documented in the incident report. A Damage to Police Vehicle Blue Team entry is also required if the PIT resulted in damage to a police vehicle. Photos will be taken of all vehicles involved, even if there was no damage, as well as the location where the PIT was performed and the path of the vehicles.



VIII. Aviation Support

- A. Officers and supervisors will request aviation support through Communications.
- B. When aviation support is available and has visual contact with the suspect vehicle, the pursuing officer(s), when appropriate, will leave emergency lights and siren on and decrease speed in order to create a safe distance between the suspect vehicle and police vehicle. Pursuing officers will allow aviation support to continue surveillance and provide direction to the ground officers.
- C. If feasible, aviation support personnel will advise ground personnel of upcoming traffic congestion, road hazards, and other factors that may endanger life and property.

IX. Pursuit Termination

- A. Any supervisor or pursuing officer should terminate the pursuit if, after assessing the factors listed in Section II., E., it is determined the risk to public safety outweighs the government's interest in apprehending the suspect.
- B. The supervisor assigned to manage the incident will have final authority to terminate a pursuit, even if a pursuing officer is of equal or greater rank.
- C. Officers ordered to discontinue a pursuit must immediately acknowledge this order via radio to both the assigned supervisor and Communications. The involved officer(s) will announce their location and remain at or near the termination point until the assigned supervisor arrives for a debriefing.
- D. Once a vehicle pursuit is terminated, no officer will knowingly reengage the suspect vehicle unless the officer can articulate additional justification for doing so and is authorized by a supervisor.
- E. Officers must notify Communications as soon as possible once the suspect vehicle has stopped, regardless of the distance or duration of the pursuit. This applies to pursuits of short duration even if the officer had not yet had an opportunity to broadcast details via radio.
- F. If occupants remain in the vehicle once a pursuit has ended, officers will use high-risk stop procedures as outlined in Section VII., D.
- G. The initiating officer, if not still involved in the pursuit, will proceed to the termination point under normal driving conditions in the event of an apprehension.
- H. Once the scene is under control, the only officers remaining at a pursuit's termination point will be the initiating officer, the last pursuing officers, the assigned supervisor, any officer who used force on a suspect, any officer who used a forcible stopping technique, and other personnel ordered by the assigned supervisor. All other officers will immediately mark back in service.
- I. The initiating officer will be responsible for all arrests once the pursuit ends. If the initiating officer is unable to proceed to the termination point (e.g., involved in a traffic accident), the officer directly in pursuit at the time of the apprehension will be responsible for the arrest and reports.
- J. If an officer attempts to stop a vehicle solely for a traffic infraction and the vehicle flees, the officer will not pursue and will notify communications via radio the following information:
 - 1. A vehicle just fled from an attempted traffic stop and they are not pursuing;
 - 2. The officer's location and the suspect vehicle's last known direction of travel;
 - 3. A description of the suspect vehicle; and
 - 4. A description of the driver and any occupants, if known.
- K. Communications will broadcast the information provided by the officer on all channels for situational awareness and in case the vehicle or driver is wanted for a crime on another district.



X. Vehicle Pursuit Investigation and Reporting

- A. For all pursuits, the initiating officer (regardless of rank) will complete an incident report and Blue Team entry. The Blue Team entry will be completed within 24 hours. For vehicle pursuits initiated by another agency, the initial officer joining the pursuit will complete a Blue Team entry as if he/she were the officer initiating the pursuit; however, that officer does not need to complete an incident report.
1. The officer's incident report and Blue Team entry will include the reason the pursuit was initiated, a detailed description of the circumstances of the pursuit (e.g., speed, weather and traffic conditions, etc.), if any forcible stopping techniques (e.g., rolling road block, tire deflating devices, etc.) were attempted and/or successfully applied, how the pursuit was terminated, and a description of any injuries resulting to the arrestee, any involved officer, and/or involved citizens.
 2. Injuries resulting from uses of force related to the incident should not be included in the vehicle pursuit Blue Team entry. Instead, they should be included in the use of force Blue Team entry.
 3. The initiating officer will carbon copy (cc) the district commander on the original Blue Team entry and forward the Blue Team up through the chain of command.
- B. The assigned supervisor will respond to the termination point and investigate the circumstances of the vehicle pursuit. Upon receiving the Blue Team entry from the initiating officer, the assigned supervisor will:
1. Review the entry for accuracy and completeness. If additional information is required, the entry will be disapproved and routed back to the officer for correction.
 2. Once the supervisor is satisfied with the officer's entry, it will be approved and the following information, at a minimum, will be entered in the "Instructions" field of the entry:
 - a. A finding of "In Compliance/Within Policy", "In Compliance/Not Within Policy," or "Not In Compliance" with department policy;
 - b. A justification detailing all applicable considerations listed in Section II., E. for why the pursuit was either allowed to continue or ordered to be terminated; and
 - c. A summary of the supervisor's investigation, including information provided by the involved officer(s), suspect(s), and witnesses; any other relevant evidence; justification for the disposition finding; any further action taken and/or recommendations for further action.
 3. The assigned supervisor will also be responsible for any additional non-Blue Team special reports that are necessary (e.g., Injured Officer, etc.).
- C. Blue team entries for vehicle pursuits that end in accidents resulting in death or serious bodily injuries will be completed by the assigned Internal Affairs investigator based on information provided by the initiating officer, the assigned supervisor, and witnesses during the subsequent interviews. Upon completion, the IA investigator will forward the Blue Team entry to the initiating officer's lieutenant (or next higher rank if the initiating officer is a lieutenant or above), to be processed as provided below.
- D. If an officer attempts to stop a vehicle solely for a traffic infraction and the vehicle flees, the officer will complete a "Vehicle Fled – No Pursuit" Blue Team entry. The supervisor is not required to respond to the scene.

NOTE

These notifications and reporting requirements apply to officers of all ranks. If a supervisor initiates a vehicle pursuit, the investigation must be conducted by an uninvolved supervisor; it does not need to be conducted by a supervisor of a higher rank.



E. Blue Team Chain of Command routing requirements are as follows:

1. Within three working days of receipt, the assigned supervisor and any subsequent reviewing supervisor through the rank of lieutenant must forward the Blue Team entry to his/her supervisor, including a finding of "In Compliance/Within Policy", "In Compliance/Not Within Policy," or "Not in Compliance," or return it to the officer for corrections. If the assigned supervisor is not in the initiating officer's chain of command, the supervisor will forward the Blue Team entry to the initiating officer's immediate supervisor, rather than his/her own supervisor.
2. Within five working days of receipt, a captain or commander must forward the Blue Team entry to IA Pro, including a finding of "In Compliance/Within Policy", "In Compliance/Not Within Policy," or "Not In Compliance," or return it to the assigned supervisor or officer for corrections.
3. If a supervisor in the chain of command will be absent for a period of time making compliance with these deadlines impossible, that supervisor should be skipped and the Blue Team entry should be forwarded to the next supervisor in the chain of command. Under no circumstances should a Blue Team entry take longer than twenty-one days to go through the chain of command to be approved.

NOTE

If the Blue Team entry takes longer than twenty-one days to submit, the captain or commander is required to document the reason for the delay and what actions, if any, were taken to address the postponement.

- F. Incidents in which a person is intentionally injured by the suspect vehicle will be investigated in accordance with General Order 5.9 – *Investigative Responsibility*. The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) will investigate all vehicle pursuits in which a forcible stopping technique (e.g., PIT, stop sticks, etc.) results in serious bodily injury or death to any person.
- G. If the suspect vehicle is involved in an accident, the procedures outlined in General Order 7.1 – *Traffic Crash Investigations* must be followed.
- H. After the chain of command has reviewed and submitted the finalized Blue Team entry, the Vehicle Operations Review Board may review the pursuit or hold a hearing to evaluate the actions of the officer(s) and supervisor(s). See General Order 7.7 – *Vehicle Operations Review Board* for more information.

XII. Annual Review

The Performance and Policy division will conduct an annual analysis of pursuit reports to help identify issues with the department's pursuit policies, reporting, and training. The Performance and Policy division will also conduct an annual review which will help to identify issues and trends with pursuit policies and procedures.