

41.2.2 Pursuits

I. Definitions

- A. A pursuit is an attempt to apprehend an offender in a motor vehicle by one or more police officers, while the offender is trying to avoid apprehension, usually by high speed driving, disregarding traffic control devices, or other evasive tactics. A pursuit is not an attempt to stop a person who merely fails to heed an order to stop, and is not actively attempting to flee.
- B. Ramming is the intentional collision between a pursuing police vehicle and a suspect's vehicle in order to temporarily or permanently disable the suspect's vehicle so that the suspect may be apprehended.
- C. A roadblock is any means or method of obstruction, either stationary or moving, utilized for preventing free passage of a motor vehicle in order to apprehend a suspect. The deployment of "Stop Sticks" is not considered a roadblock.

II. Pursuit Operations

- A. The decision to initiate, continue, and terminate a pursuit must be based on the totality of the existing circumstances. The pursuing officer and shift supervisor will continually evaluate the necessity of the pursuit versus the risk involved. *Safety of the officer and the community is always the primary consideration.* Shift supervisors will consider the following circumstances when determining whether or not to continue or terminate a pursuit:
 - 1. Offense(s) involved.
 - 2. The ability to identify the offender for apprehension at a later time.
 - 3. Location of the pursuit (residential area, business district, etc.)
 - 4. Speeds involved.
 - 5. Traffic, weather, and roadway conditions.
 - 6. Time of day or night.
 - 7. Driving abilities and emotional state of the offender and pursuing officer.
- B. An officer may initiate a pursuit whenever an offender clearly exhibits the intention of avoiding apprehension, *and the officer has probable cause to believe the offender has committed a felony offense of violence, as defined [in Ohio Revised Code Section 2901.01.](#)*
- C. Pursuing officers will also be responsible for immediately communicating the following information over the radio:
 - 1. Location and direction of the pursuit.
 - 2. Description of vehicle and/or occupants, if known.
 - 3. Estimated speed of the pursuit.
 - 4. Offense(s) committed that precipitated the pursuit.

- D. Unless a shift supervisor directs otherwise, only two police vehicles will engage in a pursuit, including police vehicles from other agencies. The officer operating the second vehicle will assume the responsibility for maintaining radio communications. The determination to use more than two pursuit vehicles should be based on the offense, number of suspects, and other facts that demonstrate need.
- E. When officers are engaged in a pursuit of a motor vehicle, the guidelines for emergency response to calls listed in Section 41.2.1 apply. Only marked police vehicles equipped with functioning, activated emergency lights and sirens may participate in pursuits. Unmarked vehicles will not be used in pursuits.
- F. Communication personnel are responsible for the following:
1. Immediately notifying the shift supervisor of the pursuit.
 2. Recording any pertinent information regarding the pursuit in the radio log
 3. Clearing the radio of all non-emergency traffic
 4. Performing relevant motor vehicle checks
 5. Coordinating assistance from outside agencies, if requested by the shift supervisor.
 6. Monitoring the pursuit until termination.
- G. The shift supervisor is responsible for the following:
1. Acknowledging the notification of the pursuit.
 2. Direction, control, and coordination of the pursuit.
 3. Deciding to continue, join, or terminate a pursuit.
 4. Determining if more than two police vehicles will engage in a pursuit.
 5. Requesting the assistance of other police agencies
 6. Ordering the deployment of "Stop Sticks."
 7. Authorizing the use of deadly force to terminate a pursuit.
 8. Responding to the scene if a pursuit has terminated with an apprehension or a traffic crash.
- H. Roadblocks and ramming may be utilized when:
1. Deadly force is authorized.
 2. All other efforts to effect apprehension have failed.
 3. The shift supervisor has authorized the use of roadblocks or ramming.
- I. Restrictions on the use of roadblocks are as follows:
1. Moving roadblocks are not permitted during high-speed pursuits in order to "box in" fleeing vehicles.
 2. Stationary roadblocks will not be established at a curve, near the crest of hills, or at any other location where visibility is limited to such a degree that a hazard to

- vehicular or pedestrian traffic is created.
3. No private or occupied vehicles will be used in the roadblock.
 4. Police vehicles used in stationary roadblocks will be unoccupied, and will have all emergency lighting activated. Care must be taken to insure that lights, especially vehicle headlights on bright, do not blind approaching traffic, including pursuing officers.
- J. The shift supervisor or pursuing officer will discontinue pursuit for any of the following reasons:
1. The shift supervisor or pursuing officer believes the level of danger created by the pursuit outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension.
 2. The pursuing officer does not know the location of the offender's vehicle.
 3. The pursuing officer fails to provide the information required by this order or the officer loses radio contact with Communications for any reason
- K. A pursuit entering Fairfield that is initiated by another agency will be the responsibility of that agency. The primary responsibility of Fairfield officers in these instances is the protection of motorists who may be in the path of the pursuit. When possible, officers will block traffic at intersections in the path of the pursuit. Fairfield officers may assist in the pursuit only when all of the following occur:
1. The agency has requested that the Fairfield Police Department join the pursuit.
 2. The reason for the pursuit is within the provisions of this order.
 3. The shift supervisor has approved participation in the pursuit.
- L. Officers engaged in a pursuit will submit a Special Report (FPD Form 32) to the shift supervisor describing the circumstances of the pursuit. The shift supervisor will submit a written critique of the pursuit, along with the report from the pursuing officer(s), to the Chief of Police via the Operations Lieutenant. At each level of review, the person reviewing the report will indicate concurrence or non-concurrence that the pursuit was consistent with this order.

41.2.3 Annual Review

The Operations Lieutenant will conduct an annual review of pursuits, and will submit a written report to the Chief of Police summarizing the pursuits and noting any patterns that indicate training needs or policy changes.