
Foot Pursuits

453.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Foot pursuits are inherently dangerous and require sound decision making, trained tactics and heightened officer safety awareness. This policy sets forth guidelines to assist officers in making the decision to initiate or continue the pursuit of suspects on foot by balancing the objective of apprehending the suspect with the risk of potential injury to the officer, the suspect or the public.

453.1.1 POLICY

It is the policy of this Department when deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit that officers must continuously balance the objective of apprehending the suspect with the risk and potential for injury to Department personnel, the suspect or the public.

Officers are expected to act reasonably, based on the totality of the circumstances. Absent exigent circumstances, the safety of department personnel and the public should be the primary consideration when determining whether a foot pursuit should be initiated or continued. Officers must be mindful that immediate apprehension of a suspect is rarely more important than the safety of the public and Department personnel.

453.2 DECISION TO PURSUE

Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual they have probable cause to believe committed a crime. The decision to initiate or continue such a foot pursuit, however, must be continuously re-evaluated in light of the circumstances presented at the time.

If circumstances permit, surveillance and containment are generally the safest tactics for apprehending fleeing persons. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, an officer should continuously consider reasonable alternatives to pursuit based upon the circumstances and resources available, such as the following:

- Containment of the area.
- Canine search.
- Saturation of the area with patrol personnel.
- Aerial support.
- Apprehension at another time when the identity of the suspect is known or there is information available that would likely allow for later apprehension, and the need to immediately apprehend the suspect does not reasonably appear to outweigh the risk of continuing the pursuit.

453.3 GUIDELINES FOR FOOT PURSUIT

Unless the officer reasonably believes that exigent circumstances exist (e.g., a serious threat to the safety of personnel or members of the public), officers should consider alternatives to engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit under the following conditions:

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- (a) When directed by a supervisor to terminate the foot pursuit. Such an order shall be considered mandatory.
- (b) When the officer is acting alone.
- (c) When two or more officers become separated, lose visual contact with one another, or obstacles separate them to the degree that they cannot immediately assist each other should a confrontation take place. In such circumstances, it is generally recommended that a single officer keep the suspect in sight from a safe distance and coordinate the containment effort.
- (d) The officer is unsure of his or her location and direction of travel.
- (e) When pursuing multiple suspects and the pursuing officers do not reasonably believe they would be able to control the suspect should a confrontation occur.
- (f) When the physical condition of the officer renders them incapable of controlling the suspect if apprehended.
- (g) When the officer loses radio contact with Dispatch or with backup officers.
- (h) The suspect enters a building, structure, confined space or a wooded or otherwise isolated area and there are insufficient officers to provide backup and containment. The primary officer should consider discontinuing the pursuit and coordinating containment pending the arrival of sufficient officers.
- (i) The officer becomes aware of unanticipated or unforeseen circumstances that unreasonably increase the risk to officers or the public.
- (j) The officer reasonably believes the danger to the pursuing officers or public outweighs the objective of immediate apprehension.
- (k) The officer loses possession of his/her firearm or other essential equipment.
- (l) The officer or a third party is injured during the pursuit, requiring immediate assistance, and there are no other emergency personnel available to render assistance.
- (m) The suspect's location is no longer definitely known.
- (n) The identity of the suspect is established or other information exists that will allow for the suspect's apprehension at a later time, and it reasonably appears there is no immediate threat to Department personnel or the public if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.
- (o) The officer's ability to safely continue the pursuit is impaired by inclement weather, darkness or other conditions.

453.4 RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOT PURSUITS

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453.4.1 INITIATING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Unless relieved by another officer or a supervisor, the initiating officer shall be responsible for coordinating the progress of the pursuit. When acting alone and when practicable, the initiating officer should not attempt to overtake and confront the suspect but should attempt to keep the suspect in sight until sufficient officers are present to safely apprehend the suspect.

Early communication of available information from the involved officers is essential so that adequate resources can be coordinated and deployed to bring a foot pursuit to a safe conclusion. Officers initiating a foot pursuit should broadcast the following information as soon as it becomes practicable and available:

- (a) Unit identifier.
- (b) Location and direction of travel.
- (c) Reason for the foot pursuit.
- (d) Description of the suspect.
- (e) Whether the suspect is known or believed to be armed.

Officers should be mindful that radio transmissions made while running may be difficult to understand and may need to be repeated.

Absent extenuating circumstances, any officer unable to promptly and effectively broadcast this information should terminate the pursuit. If the foot pursuit is discontinued for any reason, immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.

When a foot pursuit terminates, the officer will notify Dispatch of his/her location and the status of the pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect), and will direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary to detain the suspect.

Should the pursuing officer gain custody of the suspect, that officer will turn custody over to a backup or responding officer as soon as the scene is rendered safe and it is practical to do so. This will allow the pursuing officer to recover from the physical and emotional exertion resulting from the pursuit before re-engaging with the suspect for processing procedures.

453.4.2 ASSISTING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever any officer announces he/she is engaged in a foot pursuit, all other officers should minimize non-essential radio traffic to permit the involved officers maximum access to the radio frequency.

Any officers who is in a position to intercept a fleeing suspect, or who can assist the primary officer with the apprehension of the suspect, shall act reasonably and in accordance with Department policy, based upon available information and his/her own observations.

The assisting officers must be ready to accept the temporary custody of the suspect as soon as it is safe and practical post-pursuit, in order that the pursuing officer can compose themselves after the physical and emotional exertion of the pursuit.

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453.4.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information necessary to direct responding resources and to take command, control and coordination of the foot pursuit. The supervisor should respond to the area whenever possible; the supervisor does not, however, need not be physically present to exercise control over the pursuit. The supervisor shall continuously assess the situation in order to ensure the foot pursuit is conducted within established Department guidelines.

The supervisor shall terminate the foot pursuit when the danger to pursuing officers or the public unreasonably appears to outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect.

Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor shall promptly proceed to the termination point to direct the post-pursuit activity.

453.4.4 DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITIES

CRESA's policies regarding foot pursuit events offer some response flexibility, depending upon how the situation is initiated. The following aspects are handled by dispatch:

- (a) Clear the radio channel of non-emergency traffic.
- (b) Repeat the transmissions of the pursuing officer as needed.
- (c) Ensure that a field supervisor is notified of the pursuit.
- (d) Relay all pertinent information to responding personnel.
- (e) Contact additional resources as directed by a supervisor.
- (f) Coordinate response of additional resources to assist with the foot pursuit.

453.5 REPORTING

The initiating officer shall complete the appropriate crime/arrest reports documenting, at minimum, the following:

- (a) The reason for initiating the foot pursuit.
- (b) The identity of involved personnel.
- (c) The course and approximate distance of the pursuit.
- (d) Whether a suspect was apprehended, as well as the means and methods used.
 - 1. Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Department Use of Force Policy.
- (e) Any injuries or property damage.

Assisting officers taking an active role in the apprehension of the suspect shall complete supplemental reports as necessary or as directed.

In any case in which a suspect is not apprehended and there is insufficient information to warrant further investigation, a supervisor may authorize that the initiating officer need not complete a formal report.

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