

Vehicle Pursuits

307.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for vehicle pursuits in order to protect the safety of involved officers, the public, and fleeing suspects.

307.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Blocking or vehicle intercept - A coordinated maneuver where two or more pursuing vehicles simultaneously intercept and block the movement of a suspect vehicle, the driver of which may be unaware of the impending enforcement stop. The goal is containment and preventing a pursuit. Blocking is not a moving or stationary roadblock.

Boxing-in - A tactic designed to stop a suspect's vehicle by surrounding it with law enforcement vehicles and then slowing all vehicles to a stop.

Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) - A maneuver designed to cause the suspect vehicle to spin out, stall, and come to a stop.

Ramming - The deliberate act of contacting a suspect's vehicle with another law enforcement vehicle to functionally damage or otherwise force the suspect's vehicle to stop.

Roadblocks - A tactic designed to stop a suspect's vehicle by intentionally placing a law enforcement vehicle or other immovable object in the path of the suspect's vehicle.

Terminate - To discontinue a pursuit or stop chasing fleeing vehicles.

Tire deflation device - A device designed to puncture the tires of the pursued vehicle.

Vehicle pursuit - An event involving one or more law enforcement officers attempting to apprehend a suspect, who is attempting to avoid arrest while operating a vehicle by evasive tactics willfully failing to yield to an officer's emergency signal to stop.

307.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to weigh the importance of apprehending suspects who unlawfully flee from law enforcement against the risks associated with vehicle pursuits.

307.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Vehicle pursuits shall only be conducted using authorized police department emergency vehicles that are equipped with and displaying emergency lighting and sirens as required by law (NRS 484A.020; NRS 484A.480(3); NRS 484D.400).

Operating an emergency vehicle in a pursuit with emergency lights and siren does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and does not protect the driver from the consequences of the driver's reckless disregard for the safety of others (NRS 484B.700(4)).

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307.3.1 WHEN TO INITIATE A PURSUIT

Officers are authorized to initiate a pursuit when it is reasonable to believe that a suspect, who has been given an appropriate signal to stop by a law enforcement officer, is attempting to evade arrest or detention by fleeing in a vehicle (NRS 484A.205; NRS 484B.550; NRS 484B.700).

Factors that shall be considered, both individually and collectively, when deciding to initiate or continue a pursuit include but are not limited to:

- (a) The seriousness of the known or reasonably suspected crime and its relationship to community safety.
- (b) The importance of protecting the public and balancing the known or reasonably suspected offense and the apparent need for immediate capture against the risks to officers, innocent motorists, and others.
- (c) The safety of the public in the area of the pursuit, including the type of area, time of day, the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic (e.g., school zones), and the speed of the pursuit relative to these factors.
- (d) The pursuing officer's familiarity with the area of the pursuit, the quality of radio communications between the pursuing vehicles and the dispatcher/supervisor, and the driving capabilities of the pursuing officers under the conditions of the pursuit.
- (e) Whether weather, traffic, and road conditions unreasonably increase the danger of the pursuit when weighed against the risks resulting from the suspect's escape.
- (f) Whether the identity of the suspect has been verified and whether there is comparatively minimal risk in allowing the suspect to be apprehended at a later time.
- (g) The performance capabilities of the vehicles used in the pursuit in relation to the speeds and other conditions of the pursuit.
- (h) Unmarked Units will not become involved in Pursuits unless the Pursuit involves a violent felony or poses an immediate threat to others, and the unmarked unit is equipped with both emergency lights and siren. Unmarked units will turn over the Pursuit to marked units as soon as possible.
- (i) Vehicle speeds.
- (j) Other persons in or on the pursued vehicle (e.g., passengers, co-offenders, hostages).
- (k) The availability of other resources such as air support assistance.
- (l) Whether the police pursuing vehicle is carrying passengers other than on-duty police officers. Pursuits should not be undertaken with civilian ride-along or an arrestee in the pursuit vehicle unless exigent circumstances exist, and then only after the need to apprehend the suspect is weighed against the safety of the civilian or the arrestee in transport.

307.3.2 WHEN TO TERMINATE A PURSUIT

Pursuits should be terminated whenever the totality of objective circumstances known or which reasonably ought to be known to the officer or supervisor during the pursuit indicates that the

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present risks of continuing the pursuit reasonably appear to outweigh the risks resulting from the suspect's escape (NRS 484B.700(4)).

When a supervisor directs the pursuit to be terminated, officers will immediately terminate the pursuit.

The factors listed in this policy on when to initiate a pursuit will apply equally to the decision to terminate a pursuit. Officers and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential danger to innocent motorists, themselves, and the public when electing to continue a pursuit.

In addition to the factors that govern when to initiate a pursuit, other factors should also be considered in deciding whether to terminate a pursuit, including:

- (a) The distance between the pursuing vehicle and the fleeing vehicle is so great that further pursuit would be futile or require the pursuit to continue for an unreasonable time or distance.
- (b) The pursued vehicle's location is no longer definitely known.
- (c) The pursuing vehicle sustains damage or a mechanical failure that renders it unsafe to drive.
- (d) The pursuing vehicle's emergency lighting equipment or siren becomes partially or completely inoperable.
- (e) Hazards posed to uninvolved bystanders or motorists.
- (f) The danger that the continued pursuit poses to the public, the officers, or the suspect, balanced against the risk of allowing the suspect to remain at large.
- (g) The identity of the suspect is known and it does not reasonably appear that the need for immediate capture outweighs the risks associated with continuing the pursuit.
- (h) Extended pursuits of violators for misdemeanors not involving violence or risk of serious harm (independent of the pursuit) are discouraged.

307.3.3 SPEED LIMITS

The speed of a pursuit is a factor that should be evaluated on a continuing basis by the officer and supervisor. Evaluation of vehicle speeds shall take into consideration public safety, officer safety and the safety of the occupants of the fleeing vehicle.

Should high vehicle speeds be reached during a pursuit, officers and supervisors shall also consider these factors when determining the reasonableness of the speed of the pursuit:

- (a) Pursuit speeds have become unreasonably unsafe for the surrounding conditions (NRS 484B.700(1)).
- (b) Pursuit speeds are beyond the capabilities of the pursuit vehicle thus making its operation unsafe.

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307.4 PURSUIT VEHICLES

When involved in a pursuit, unmarked police department emergency vehicles should be replaced by marked emergency vehicles whenever practicable.

Vehicle pursuits should be limited to three police department emergency vehicles. However, the number of vehicles involved will vary with the circumstances.

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307.4.1 MOTORCYCLES

When involved in a pursuit, police department motorcycles should be replaced by marked emergency passenger vehicles as soon as practicable.

307.4.2 VEHICLES WITHOUT EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Officers operating vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and siren are prohibited from initiating or joining in any pursuit. Officers in such vehicles may provide support to pursuing vehicles as long as the vehicle is operated in compliance with all traffic laws. Those officers should discontinue such support immediately upon arrival of a sufficient number of authorized emergency police department vehicles or any air support.

307.4.3 PRIMARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The initial pursuing officer will be designated as the primary pursuit vehicle and will be responsible for the conduct of the pursuit unless the officer is unable to remain reasonably close enough to the suspect's vehicle. The primary responsibility of the officer initiating the pursuit is the apprehension of the suspect without unreasonable danger to themselves or others.

The primary pursuing officer should notify the dispatcher that a vehicle pursuit has been initiated and as soon as practicable provide information including but not limited to:

- (a) The location, direction of travel, estimated speed, and criminal charges related to any suspects within the pursued vehicle.
- (b) The description of the suspect's vehicle including the license plate number, if known.
- (c) Officer safety concerns, injuries, hostages, or other unusual hazards.
- (d) The number of occupants and identity or description.
- (e) The weather, road, and traffic conditions.
- (f) The need for additional resources or equipment.
- (g) The identity of other law enforcement agencies involved in the pursuit.

Until relieved by a secondary pursuing officer, the officer in the primary pursuit vehicle shall be responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit. Unless circumstances reasonably indicate otherwise, the primary pursuing officer should, as soon as practicable, relinquish the responsibility of broadcasting the progress of the pursuit to an officer in a secondary pursuit vehicle or air support joining the pursuit to minimize distractions and allow the primary pursuing officer to concentrate foremost on safe pursuit tactics.

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307.4.4 SECONDARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The second officer in the pursuit is responsible for the following:

- (a) Immediately notifying the dispatcher of entry into the pursuit.
- (b) Remain at a safe distance behind the primary pursuit vehicle unless directed to assume the role of primary pursuit vehicle or if the primary pursuit vehicle is unable to continue the pursuit.
- (c) Broadcasting information that the primary pursuing officer is unable to provide.
- (d) Broadcasting the progress of the pursuit, updating known or critical information, and providing changes in the pursuit, unless the situation indicates otherwise.
- (e) Identifying the need for additional resources or equipment as appropriate.
- (f) Serve as backup to the primary pursuing officer once the subject has been stopped.

307.5 PURSUIT DRIVING

307.5.1 AIR SUPPORT ASSISTANCE

When available, air support assistance should be requested. Once the air support crew has established visual contact with the pursued vehicle, they should assume communication control over the pursuit. The primary and secondary ground pursuit vehicles, or involved supervisor, will maintain operational control but should consider whether the participation of air support warrants their continued close proximity and/or involvement in the pursuit.

The air support crew should coordinate the activities of resources on the ground, report progress of the pursuit, and provide officers and supervisors with details of upcoming traffic congestion, road hazards, or other pertinent information to evaluate whether to continue the pursuit. If officers on the ground are not within visual contact of the pursued vehicle and the air support crew determines that it is unsafe to continue the pursuit, the air support crew should recommend terminating the pursuit.

307.6 SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY

Available supervisory and management control will be exercised over all vehicle pursuits involving officers from this department.

The field supervisor of the officer initiating the pursuit, or if unavailable, the nearest field supervisor will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Immediately notifying the involved officers and the dispatcher of supervisory presence and ascertaining all reasonably available information to continuously assess the situation and risk factors associated with the pursuit. This is to ensure that the pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.
- (b) Exercising management and control of the pursuit even if not engaged in it.
- (c) Ensuring that no more than the number of required law enforcement vehicles are involved in the pursuit under the guidelines set forth in this policy.

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- (d) Directing that the pursuit be terminated if, in the supervisor's judgment, it is not justified to continue the pursuit under the guidelines of this policy.
- (e) Ensuring that assistance from air support, canines, or additional resources is requested, if available and appropriate.
- (f) Ensuring that the Watch Commander is notified of the pursuit, as soon as practicable.
- (g) Ensuring the notification and/or coordination of outside agencies if the pursuit either leaves or is likely to leave the jurisdiction of this department.
- (h) Controlling and managing Reno Police Department officers when a pursuit enters another jurisdiction.
- (i) Preparing a post-pursuit review and documentation of the pursuit as required.

307.6.1 WATCH COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITY

Upon becoming aware that a pursuit has been initiated, the Watch Commander should monitor and continually assess the situation and ensure the pursuit is conducted within the guidelines and requirements of this policy. The Watch Commander has the final responsibility for the coordination, control and termination of a vehicle pursuit and shall be in overall command.

The Watch Commander shall review all pertinent reports for content and forward them to the Captain.

307.7 LOSS OF PURSUED VEHICLE

When the pursued vehicle is lost, the involved officers should broadcast pertinent information to assist other officers in locating the vehicle. The primary pursuing officer or supervisor will be responsible for coordinating any further search for either the pursued vehicle or suspects fleeing on foot.

307.8 INTERJURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When a pursuit enters another agency's jurisdiction, the primary officer or supervisor, taking into consideration distance traveled, unfamiliarity with the area, and other pertinent facts, should determine whether to request the other agency to assume the pursuit. Unless entry into another jurisdiction is expected to be brief, it is generally recommended that the primary officer or supervisor ensure that notification is provided to each outside jurisdiction into which the pursuit is reasonably expected to enter, regardless of whether such jurisdiction is expected to assist.

307.8.1 ASSUMPTION OF PURSUIT BY ANOTHER AGENCY

Officers will relinquish control of the pursuit when another agency has assumed the pursuit, unless the continued assistance of the Reno Police Department is requested by the agency assuming the pursuit. Upon relinquishing control of the pursuit, the involved officers may proceed, with supervisory approval, to the termination point of the pursuit to assist in the investigation. The supervisor should coordinate such assistance with the assuming agency and obtain any information that is necessary for any reports.

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The role and responsibilities of officers at the termination point of a pursuit initiated by this department shall be coordinated with appropriate consideration of the needs of the agency assuming the pursuit.

Notification of a pursuit in progress should not be construed as a request to join the pursuit. Requests to or from another agency to assume a pursuit should be specific. Because of communication limitations between local law enforcement agencies, a request for another agency's assistance will mean that its personnel will assume responsibility for the pursuit. For the same reasons, when a pursuit leaves another jurisdiction and a request for assistance is made to this department, the other agency should relinquish control.

307.8.2 PURSUITS EXTENDING INTO THIS JURISDICTION

The agency that initiates a pursuit shall be responsible for conducting the pursuit. Officers from this department should not join a pursuit unless specifically requested to do so by the pursuing agency and with approval from a supervisor. The exception to this is when a single vehicle from the initiating agency is in pursuit. Under this circumstance, an officer from this department may, with supervisor approval, immediately join the pursuit until sufficient vehicles from the initiating agency join the pursuit or until additional information is provided allowing withdrawal from the pursuit.

When a request is made for this department to assist or take over a pursuit that has entered the jurisdiction of the Reno Police Department, the supervisor should consider:

- (a) The public's safety within this jurisdiction.
- (b) The safety of the pursuing officers.
- (c) Whether the circumstances are serious enough to continue the pursuit.
- (d) Whether there is adequate staffing to continue the pursuit.
- (e) The ability to maintain the pursuit.

As soon as practicable, a supervisor or the Watch Commander should review a request for assistance from another agency. The Watch Commander or supervisor, after considering the above factors, may decline to assist in or assume the other agency's pursuit.

Assistance to a pursuing agency by officers of this department will conclude at the City limits provided that the pursuing agency has sufficient assistance from other sources. Ongoing participation from this department may continue only until sufficient assistance is present.

In the event that the termination point of a pursuit from another agency is within this jurisdiction, officers shall provide appropriate assistance including but not limited to scene control, coordination and completion of supplemental reports, and any other assistance requested or needed.

307.9 LEGAL INTERVENTION

Pursuit intervention, Emergency Tactics, Vehicle Intervention Techniques and surrounding a suspect vehicle, are all extremely hazardous tactics and should be used only when necessary for very hazardous traffic violations or felony crimes in which the perpetrator poses a significant risk to the public, or to protect an officer or others from an immediate threat of death or serious physical

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injury, or to prevent a crime where the suspect's actions place persons in immediate jeopardy of death or serious physical injury.

307.9.1 WHEN USE IS AUTHORIZED

Officers should obtain approval from the supervisor in command of the pursuit prior to employing any Vehicle Intervention Technique (VIT) unless an imminent threat exists to a person, other than the suspect. The supervisor in command of the Pursuit or the Watch Commander may authorize a pursuit's termination by employing any VIT. The decision to employ a VIT shall be based on careful consideration of the situation while maintaining significant regard for public and officer safety.

A VIT may be employed when the officer believes that the continued movement of the vehicle would place persons in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death and/or the risk of harm to persons outweighs any risks created by the application of a VIT.

Due to the potential for officers to be in close contact with the suspect, extreme caution should be used when the offender is known to be armed.

Only officers who have successfully completed Department-approved training are authorized to employ these methods. Currently, the Department authorizes the following Vehicle Intervention Techniques:

1. Tire Deflation Devices -
 - A. Potential uses could include any situation when the target vehicle is stationary, such as warrant service, SWAT situations, surveillance of stolen vehicles, or vehicle checkpoint areas.
 - B. Tire Deflation Devices are designed to be used on vehicles with four or more tires.
 - C. Tire Deflation Devices may be deployed on paved surfaces, soft ground, gravel or sand surfaces.

2. Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) -

The PIT is designed to be executed by a pursuing police vehicle. The PIT is a technique in which the officer's vehicle makes contact with the rear quarter panel of the suspect's vehicle, causing it to rotate and come to a stop. If the technique is properly executed, damage to the officer's vehicle should be minor or negligible. The location chosen to implement a PIT is of paramount importance. The area should be clear of pedestrians and other occupied vehicles, and roads should be in good condition, e.g., free from loose gravel, significant road repair, etc. Unless exigent circumstances exist, the PIT should not be attempted when the following exists:

- A. The pursued vehicle is traveling in excess of 35 mph.
- B. The size of the pursued vehicle is significantly heavier than the primary unit's police car, e.g., bus, motor home, semi-truck, dual-rear-wheel pickup truck, etc.
- C. The pursued vehicle is transporting hazardous material.

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D. The pursued vehicle is a motorcycle, motor scooter, or three-wheeled cycle.

3. Vehicle Blocking Techniques (VBT)

The VBT is designed to be executed by two or more police vehicles. The VBT is a technique in which the officers' vehicles form a perimeter around the suspect vehicle in an attempt to stop or prevent the movement of the suspect vehicle. If the technique is properly executed, damage to the officers' vehicles should be minor or negligible. The location chosen to implement a VBT is of paramount importance. The area should be clear of pedestrians and other occupied vehicles, and roads should be in good condition, e.g., free from loose gravel, significant road repair, etc.

Officers conducting a VBT must be wearing clearly marked police uniforms or raid vests, that can be readily identifiable after the VBT has been applied. Vehicle blocking techniques should only be used when officers can later articulate facts that would reasonably lead to the conclusion that the risk to the public and to officers of non-intervention is greater than the risk associated with the use of such techniques.

4. Temporary Roadblocks

Temporary roadblocks may only be established with the permission of a supervisor. Temporary roadblocks will be in compliance with NRS 484B.573.

307.9.2 USE OF FIREARMS

The use of firearms to disable a pursued vehicle is not generally an effective tactic and involves all the dangers associated with discharging firearms. Officers should not utilize firearms during an ongoing pursuit unless the conditions and circumstances meet the requirements authorizing the use of deadly force. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any officer from using a firearm to stop a suspect from using a vehicle as a deadly weapon.

307.10 CAPTURE OF SUSPECTS

Proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment are the keys to a successful conclusion of a pursuit and apprehension of evading suspects. Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Unless relieved by a supervisor, the primary pursuing officer should coordinate efforts to apprehend the suspect following the pursuit. Officers should consider the safety of the public and the involved officers when formulating plans for setting up perimeters or for containing and capturing the suspect.

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307.11 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All appropriate reports should be completed to comply with appropriate laws and policies or procedures:

- (a) The primary pursuing officer shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports.
- (b) The primary pursuing officer or supervisor shall complete the appropriate pursuit report.
- (c) After first obtaining available information, the involved, or if unavailable, the on-duty field supervisor shall promptly complete a supervisor's log or interoffice memorandum, briefly summarizing the pursuit to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. This log or memorandum should include, at minimum:
 - 1. Date and time of pursuit.
 - 2. Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the pursuit.
 - 3. Length of pursuit in distance and time, including the starting and termination points.
 - 4. Involved vehicles and officers.
 - 5. Alleged offenses.
 - 6. Whether a suspect was apprehended, as well as the means and methods used.
 - (a) Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
 - 7. Arrestee information, if applicable.
 - 8. Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
 - 9. Any property or equipment damage.
 - 10. Name of supervisor at scene or who handled the incident.
 - 11. A preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.
- (d) Annually, the Chief of Police should direct a documented review, and analysis of department vehicle pursuits to minimally include policy suitability, policy compliance and training needs.

307.12 REGULAR AND PERIODIC PURSUIT TRAINING

In addition to initial and supplementary training on pursuits, all officers will participate in regular and periodic training addressing this policy and the importance of vehicle safety and protecting the public.