



# Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

## Vehicle Pursuits

## General Order 4.12

### POLICY

High-speed pursuits are among the most hazardous functions performed by law enforcement. These acts can endanger the officer, citizens, and the fleeing suspect and passengers. It is the policy of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department that all officers will act in a manner that minimizes the risks associated with emergency driving and high-speed vehicular pursuits.

All Department personnel operating vehicles in a law enforcement capacity will do so with due regard for the safety of all persons. Officers shall be thoroughly familiar with all the laws of the State of Indiana concerning the use of emergency vehicles and equipment as well as applicable Department procedures.

### DEFINITIONS

**Pursuit** - An attempt by a law enforcement officer in an authorized emergency vehicle (see IC 9-21-20-1) to apprehend the occupant(s) of a moving motor vehicle when the officer reasonably believes the driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle and is resisting apprehension by maintaining or increasing vehicle speed, ignoring the officer, or otherwise attempting to elude the police.

**Clearly Marked Vehicle** – A county/city-owned or leased vehicle that is painted or marked with graphics to clearly identify it as a law enforcement vehicle. The vehicle must also have a readily-apparent police insignia visible to others, as well as an overhead emergency light bar attached to the roof of the vehicle.

**Semi-Marked Vehicle** – A county/city-owned or leased vehicle that may be painted or marked with graphics to identify it as a law enforcement vehicle, and has a readily-apparent police insignia visible to others. The vehicle typically has inside mounted emergency lights (i.e., grill, dash, and/or deck lights), but lacks an overhead emergency light bar attached to the roof of the vehicle.

**Unmarked Vehicle** – A county-owned or leased vehicle that is not clearly marked with painted works or graphics and does not display a readily-apparent police insignia. Although the vehicle may have hidden emergency lights (i.e., grill, dash, or deck lights), it lacks any clearly visible emergency lights.

### PROCEDURE

#### I. Pursuit Authority

- A. The authority of a law enforcement officer to engage in pursuit is inherent in the officer's duty to apprehend persons who have committed, or are committing a law violation. The authority to pursue law violators provides the Department an opportunity to deter crime and protect the citizens of Indianapolis and Marion County.
- B. The decision to engage in a pursuit must be considered a very serious matter. Officers must consider not only themselves, but the general public and occupants of the fleeing vehicle, as well. Members are reminded that state and local provisions will not protect them from the consequences of any reckless disregard for the safety of others.



- C. Members in either marked, semi-marked, or unmarked police vehicles, and equipped with emergency lights and sirens, may initiate a pursuit. Members operating unmarked vehicles shall immediately relinquish control of the pursuit to a clearly marked or semi-marked vehicle using emergency lights and siren as soon as possible. <41.2.2(d)>

## II. Pursuit Guidelines

- A. Vans, trucks, or prisoner wagons shall not initiate or become involved in a pursuit under any circumstances. <41.2.2(d)>
- B. The vehicle's emergency lights and siren shall be operated while driving under pursuit conditions. Should a member's emergency lights or siren fail or become disabled during the course of a pursuit, or other mechanical failure occur that would make the vehicle unsafe, the member must discontinue involvement and relinquish responsibility for continuation to the secondary pursuing officer.
- C. Pursuit driving shall only be permitted in the following circumstances:
1. On sight pursuit of a person who has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a felony;
  2. On sight pursuit of a traffic offense or misdemeanor violator when the violation has been witnessed by the pursuing member; and
  3. When ordered by a ranking officer to assist the primary pursuit vehicle.
- D. Before initiating and during the course of any pursuit, the pursuing member(s) and supervisor(s) must consider the following: <41.2.2(a)>
1. Seriousness of the offense;
  2. Knowledge of the identity of the pursued suspect(s);
  3. Other occupants of vehicle (i.e. children);
  4. Weather and lighting conditions;
  5. Road conditions (intersections, traffic controls, overhead lighting, curves, hills, repair, width of road, etc.);
  6. Density of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
  7. Locality of pursuit (residential, highway, etc.);
  8. Familiarity with area; and
  9. Nature of pursuit (i.e., manner of operation of suspect vehicle, speeding, erratic or reckless driving, etc.)
  10. Vehicle's speed
- E. All vehicle pursuits shall be reported by radio to Communications as soon as is reasonably possible. Terms such as "Following..." or "Trying to catch up to..." shall not be used when announcing a pursuit. The announcement of "pursuit" will prompt the Communications dispatcher to immediately begin the patching of radio channels of nearby districts or jurisdictions to enhance officer safety. Those not involved in the pursuit should restrict their radio traffic to a minimum level or be prepared to switch to an alternate channel.



- F. Any member initiating a pursuit must immediately notify the Communications Center of the pursuit and provide the following information: <41.2.2(b)>
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 (i.e., hazardous conditions, weapons, etc.)
- G. The pursuing member will remain in radio contact with Communications and advise all pertinent information until such time as additional units are available to assist. When a second officer joins the pursuit, that member will handle all radio traffic so that the initiating member can maintain eye contact with the pursued vehicle. <41.2.2(c)>
- H. The Communications Center shall formally notify or ensure that a supervisor is on the run (the initiating member's supervisor or supervisor assigned to the district in which the pursuit originated) to ensure awareness as well as prompt supervision and field management of the incident. <41.2.2(e)> Supervisors are also responsible for the preparation of the Pursuit Supervisory Special Report and related paperwork or reports. <41.2.2(f)>
- I. The assigned supervisor will monitor and continually evaluate the pursuit, then respond to the termination point of the pursuit to take charge of the scene. <41.2.2(f)>
- J. Only three (3) Department vehicles may operate under pursuit conditions in an attempt to stop a fleeing vehicle unless further Department vehicles are specifically ordered by a Shift Supervisor. Assisting units will not convoy behind the pursuing vehicle. A canine vehicle is permitted to be a fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Department vehicle in the pursuit.
- K. The field supervisor may consider the following when determining if more than three (3) Departmental vehicles are needed: <41.2.2(f)>
1. Number of occupants in suspect vehicle; and/or
  2. Nature of offense and danger presented to pursuing officers
- L. Departmental vehicles not directly involved in the pursuit as a pursuing vehicle shall not travel under emergency conditions unless specifically authorized to do so by the initiating member's supervisor. Police units relatively close to the pursuit may move in to assist using normal police vehicle operation, but may not leave their assigned districts unless specifically ordered to do so by a supervisor.
- M. Pursuing members shall operate Departmental vehicles in single file, maintaining adequate distance between the vehicle, to allow for evasive action and safe operation.
- N. The assisting member may take over control of the pursuit only after being requested to do so by the primary member. The assisting member(s) must not attempt to pass the primary member's vehicle, unless the assisting member has been requested to take control of the pursuit by the pursuing member. If a P.I.T. certified member joins the pursuit, then the P.I.T. member shall take over as lead car in the pursuit in order to attempt a P.I.T. Maneuver to end the pursuit at the first opportunity if conditions exist to do so in accordance with all IMPD written directives.



**NOTE: At no time shall ramming be used, or attempted, as a method of terminating the pursuit unless the situation warrants the use of deadly force.**

- O. No paralleling of pursuits will occur unless the pursuit passes through an officer's immediate vicinity. The paralleling officer's vehicle must not operate under emergency conditions.
- P. Upon termination of a pursuit, a member operating a police vehicle under emergency conditions will cease emergency operation once notification is made that sufficient assistance is on the scene.
- Q. Specialty unit officers may not proceed under emergency conditions after being notified sufficient assistance is on the scene unless it is determined that a specialty skill is necessary as approved by the appropriate supervisor. <41.2.2(f)>

### III. Inter-jurisdictional Pursuits <41.2.2(i)>

- A. When a pursuit initiated on IMPD jurisdiction crosses into the jurisdiction of another agency and is joined by members of that agency, the initiating officer will retain responsibility of the pursuit unless relieved by a supervisor.
- B. Should a pursuit initiated by another agency enter into the Department's jurisdiction, officers must not join in the pursuit if three (3) or more vehicles are currently in pursuit of the fleeing vehicle unless ordered to do so by a supervisor. If an officer trained in the Precision Intervention Technique (P.I.T.) is available and authorized by the other agency, then one (1) P.I.T. officer may join the pursuit to attempt to terminate the pursuit.
- C. If the pursuing officer from another agency is not communicating on a radio frequency that is capable of being monitored by MECA, 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. Should a member properly join a pursuit of another jurisdiction, and that pursuit then leave our jurisdiction, the member will not discontinue the pursuit until a second vehicle from a proper jurisdiction joins in the pursuit. No member will abandon another agency's officer until sufficient assistance has joined the pursuit, provided the IMPD officer remains in compliance with all departmental written directives.

### IV. Canine Involvement

Whenever the canine unit is involved in a pursuit, the canine unit shall, when safely able, move to become the first law enforcement vehicle in the pursuit. The canine handler shall notify all units in the pursuit of the potential for canine release upon termination of the pursuit. (see Canine Operations Policy #4.2)

### V. Tire Deflating Devices / Road Blocks <41.2.2(g)>

- A. Stationary Road Blocks shall **not** be used to terminate a pursuit. Blocking a roadway, street, alleyway, etc., with vehicles or any other objects so that a vehicle cannot pass is prohibited. However, blocking of intersections and entry ramps, etc. to enhance public safety is allowed. <61.3.4>
- B. Tire deflating devices may be used by officers with properly documented training to end a vehicle pursuit, either by hand or by an automated rear-deployment device, except when pursuing the following vehicles:



1. Motorcycles (unless deadly force is authorized);
  2. School Buses (when children are on board);
  3. Any vehicles transporting hazardous materials;
  4. Other two-wheeled vehicles;
  5. Semi-tractors and trailers (unless extreme/exigent circumstances exist); and
  6. Any vehicle that would pose an unusual hazard.
- C. When a member not involved in a pursuit is responding to place tire deflating devices, use of emergency lights and siren is authorized. When placing tire deflating devices on the roadway, emergency lights on all vehicles must be in operation.
- D. The officer deploying tire deflating devices must notify the Communications Center of the location of the devices with ample time for pursuing units to be notified. Extreme caution should be used during deployment.
- E. If an escape route around tire deflating devices is possible, they may also be placed in the escape route.
- F. Details concerning the use of tire deflating devices must be documented in the police incident report.
- G. In order to have a used tire deflating device replaced, it must be taken to the Fleet Maintenance office where a new unit will be exchanged for the used one.

#### VI. Rolling Road Blocks <41.2.2 (g)> <61.3.4>

- A. A Rolling Road Block (R.R.B.) may be used in a situation where the pursuing officers have reasonable belief the situation is generally low risk. R.R.B. is a technique where three (3) police vehicles will attempt to bring the driver to a safe, controlled stop by surrounding the suspect vehicle from the front, driver's side, and rear.
1. R.R.B. is best used for situations where a suspect is not necessarily increasing speed, however the driver will not stop. Examples may include: DUI, medical condition, elderly person, etc.
  2. R.R.B. shall 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.
  3. When attempting a R.R.B., 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 aborted and an alternate means used to end the pursuit.

#### VII. Precision Intervention Technique (P.I.T.) <41.2.2(g)>

- A. The P.I.T. will be used in order to stop the pursuit at the safest, fastest, and most appropriate opportunity before the pursuit continues placing civilians, officers, and the suspect in further danger. If, in the judgment of the member(s) trained in the P.I.T. maneuver the fleeing vehicle must be stopped immediately to safeguard life and preserve public safety, the P.I.T. may be used.



- B. The P.I.T. member will move to become the lead car in the pursuit (even if a canine vehicle is involved). The P.I.T. member shall make notice to assisting officers that the P.I.T. maneuver will be performed at the first available opportunity. The decision to perform the P.I.T. must take into account the suspect's hazardous driving and other means to terminate the pursuit prior to attempting P.I.T. (such as tire deflating devices). The P.I.T. member must consider the following prior to performing a P.I.T.:
1. Safety of bystanders;
  2. Suspect's speed;
  3. Risk of injury to occupants of the suspect vehicle and member(s) involved; and
  4. Adequate space for the maneuver.
- C. Assisting members shall attempt a tactical "V" with their vehicles after the pit maneuver has been completed. Members shall use their vehicles to block any escape by the suspect vehicle, unless an officer safety or other high-risk situation arises. The tactical "V" should be considered a felony stop under certain circumstances.
- D. The use of the P.I.T. maneuver within the guidelines and training of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department is not designed or likely to cause serious bodily injury or death.
- E. Members who have not been trained or certified by a P.I.T. instructor shall not perform the P.I.T. maneuver. If there is a question of training by a supervisor or instructor, the member shall be responsible for providing training documentation.
- F. The P.I.T. is meant to prevent major property damage and injury to civilians, officers, and/or suspects. Therefore, it is recommended the P.I.T. be used at speeds not greater than 45 to 50 miles per hour.
- G. Vehicular damage may occur to vehicles involved in the maneuver. P.I.T. is a trained pursuit termination procedure use-of-force. Damage to the vehicle(s) involved in the maneuver is not an accident or crash, thus the Accident Review process shall not be initiated. Any damage that occurs shall be documented in the case report and photos shall be taken, regardless of whether there is damage to the police vehicle or not.
- H. Members trained in the P.I.T. maneuver shall attend an eight (8) hour class for initial certification. Members shall then attend annual in-service training on the P.I.T. maneuver. Any member failing to attend the in-service class shall not be allowed to perform the maneuver and will have to attend another certification class.

### VIII. Aviation Support

- A. Communications will attempt to determine if a public safety agency helicopter is available to assist in a pursuit. The pursuing officer and supervisor should be promptly advised of the availability of a helicopter. <41.2.2(e)>
- B. When a helicopter is available and has visual contact with the suspect vehicle, the pursuing officer, when appropriate, will leave emergency lights and siren on, decrease speed in order to increase a safe distance between the suspect vehicle and police vehicle, and allow the helicopter to continue surveillance and provide direction to the ground units.
- C. Helicopter personnel may be able to advise ground personnel of upcoming traffic congestion, road hazards, and other factors that may endanger life and property.



**IX. Pursuit Termination <41.2.2(h)>**

- A. As the supervisor continually assesses conditions, he or she may order the termination of a pursuit. Members ordered to discontinue a pursuit must immediately acknowledge this order via radio to both the supervisor and the communications dispatcher.
- B. The pursuing officer may end a pursuit, or a supervisor may order a pursuit terminated. Factors to consider include the following:
  - 1. Nature of offense;
  - 2. Time of Day;
  - 3. Location;
  - 4. Knowledge of the identity of the pursued suspect(s);
  - 5. Occupants of vehicle (i.e., children);
  - 6. Weather conditions;
  - 7. Traffic conditions/congestion;
  - 8. Pedestrians; and
  - 9. Speed or recklessness of the fleeing vehicle.
- C. The supervisor and pursuing member are responsible for quickly weighing the above factors and determining if it is in the public interest to continue a pursuit. Supervisors are responsible and accountable for ordering the termination of a pursuit if, in their experience and judgment, the risk factors are too great to continue the pursuit.
- D. Following any pursuit, officers must immediately notify Communications once the vehicle is 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.
- E. The initiating unit, if not still involved in the pursuit, should proceed to the termination point of the pursuit under normal driving conditions in the event of an apprehension.
- F. The only units remaining at the termination point of a pursuit will be the initial pursuing officer, the last pursuing officers, and other personnel ordered by the supervisor.
- G. The officer initiating the pursuit will be responsible for the arrest of the suspect when the suspect voluntarily terminates the pursuit, is involved in a traffic accident, or is forced to stop by other means. If the officer initiating the pursuit is unable to proceed to the termination point (i.e., involved in a traffic accident), then the officer directly in pursuit at the time of the apprehension will be responsible for the arrest and reports.

**X. Supervisor Responsibility <41.2.2 (f)(j)>**

- A. A Pursuit Supervisory Special Report will be completed for all vehicle pursuits. The field supervisor assigned to the pursuit by Communications will be responsible for the thorough and accurate completion of the Pursuit Supervisory Special Report.
  - 1. The supervisor will provide a written evaluation of the pursuing officer(s) actions in the "Supervisor's Opinion" section of the Pursuit Supervisory Special Report, indicating any necessary counseling, corrective actions, or other recommendations relative to any involved officer's performance and decision-making throughout the pursuit.



2. The supervisor must indicate whether or not the pursuit was "In Compliance" or "Not in Compliance" with Department policy.
  3. If a P.I.T. maneuver was used to terminate the pursuit, the supervisor shall make note of that on the supervisory special report.
  4. The supervisor will complete the section titled "Supervisory Actions" and explain why the pursuit was either allowed to continue or ordered to be terminated.
- B. The field supervisor originally assigned to the pursuit by Communications will also be responsible for any additional special reports that are necessary (Damage to City Vehicle, Resisting Arrest, etc.).
- C. The Pursuit Supervisory Special Report will be reviewed by all of the involved officers' supervisors and forwarded to the respective Deputy Chief(s). The Deputy Chief(s) will review the Pursuit Supervisory Special Report and all other relative reports.
- D. Upon review, the Deputy Chief will forward all available information regarding the pursuit to the Vehicle Operations Review Board with one of the following recommendations. <41.2.2(j)>
1. The Vehicle Operations Review Board will Administratively Review the pursuit; or
  2. The Vehicle Operations Review Board will conduct a Hearing to formally evaluate the actions of the officers(s) and supervisor(s) involved.
- E. The Vehicle Operations Review Board will consist of the following members.
1. The Driver Training Unit Supervisor, or in the event of death, the Homicide Commander
  2. Training Academy Commander
  3. Internal Affairs Commander
  4. A lieutenant or captain as chosen by the Operations Division Commander
  5. A peer member of the officer investigated as selected by the officer involved
- Note -- The Chairman of the Vehicle Operations Review Board shall be the highest ranking officer on the board. Any conflict among equal ranks will be resolved first by longevity in the current rank, and second (if necessary) by longevity on the department.*
- F. Results of the Department Vehicle Operations Review Board finding will be forwarded to the member(s) Division Deputy Chief.
- G. The Deputy Chief will be responsible for reviewing the Board's finding and instituting any necessary remedial counseling or training relative to the performance and actions of the officer(s) or supervisor(s).
- H. The Deputy Chief will make recommendations to the Chief, or designee, regarding any disciplinary action.
- I. A copy of the Pursuit Supervisory Special Report must be forwarded to the Planning and Research Office.





## **XI. Investigative Responsibility**

- A. The appropriate district detective section will be responsible for the investigation of all incidents in which a person is intentionally injured by the pursued suspect's vehicle. The Homicide Branch will be responsible for all incidents in which a person is intentionally injured with critical or fatal results.
- B. If the pursued vehicle is involved in an accident, the procedures stated in General Order regarding Traffic Accident Investigation must be followed.
- C. The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) will investigate circumstances surrounding pursuits that result in serious injury or fatality, pursuant to the General Order covering CIRT responsible. The accident will continue to be investigated as outlined in General Order regarding Traffic Accident Investigations.

## **XII. Annual Review <41.2.3>**

The Chief, or designee, shall annually review and examine all documented reports relating to vehicle pursuits that involved members of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. The purpose of this review will be to reveal patterns or trends that may indicate training needs and/or policy modifications. If modifications are needed, the Planning and Research Office shall coordinate with any designated members in drafting an updated policy for approval by the Chief of Police.