



# CITY OF MARICOPA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Vehicle Pursuits

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to outline the responsibilities and guidelines for Maricopa Police Department (MPD) personnel with respect to vehicle pursuits.

## 2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A pursuit may be initiated when an officer reasonably determines the apprehension of a suspect is **immediately** necessary because the suspect poses an imminent threat of death or serious physical injury to human life. [41.2.2a]
  - The danger created by the fleeing vehicle does not justify the need for immediate apprehension of the suspect.
  - If law enforcement operations create an exigent circumstance, a pursuit shall not be authorized, absent justifiable circumstances.
- Consideration for the number of officers required for a pursuit is determined by an ongoing situational threat assessment by the pursuing officer or functional supervisor.
- Emergency lights and sirens shall be used while engaged in a pursuit. Units shall not use emergency lights only.
- Non-routine driving is authorized for the functional supervisor to properly monitor and direct the pursuit.
- Attempt to maintain quality communication between pursuing unit(s), dispatcher and functional supervisor.
- Reports by all involved in the pursuit shall be completed and approved by a supervisor prior to going off duty.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

### Primary Police Unit [41.2.2b]

- Immediately activate emergency lights and siren when initiating a pursuit.
- Notify Communications of the pursuit, and broadcast, "**Unit Identifier, in pursuit.**"
- Provide the following information:
  - Reason for the pursuit.
  - Location, direction and speed of the pursuit.
  - Traffic conditions.
  - Description of the suspect vehicle.
  - Description and number of occupants.
  - Description of hazards or unusual occurrences.
- If the primary unit is a two-officer unit, the passenger shall take over radio communications.

### Secondary Police Unit [41.2.2c]

- Assist the primary police unit by:
  - Notifying Communications of secondary police unit role.
  - Continually updating information on progress of pursuit.
  - If the secondary unit is a two-officer unit, the passenger shall take over radio communications.
- Maintain secondary police unit role unless requested to assume the primary police unit role.

### Functional Supervisor [41.2.6f]

- Acknowledge and actively supervise the pursuit.



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- Monitor incoming information.
- Respond to the area and refrain from becoming the primary or secondary police unit.
- Coordinate and direct pursuit activities. Options include, but are not limited to:
  - Directing specific units in and out of the pursuit.
  - Reassigning primary and secondary police units.
  - Requesting Air Unit.
  - Terminating the pursuit when circumstances warrant.
  - Utilizing stop sticks.
- Ensure there is no caravanning by monitoring radio traffic, communications with Air Unit, and/or personal observations.

### Non-Authorized Emergency Vehicle

- Officers operating non-authorized emergency vehicles and police motorcycles shall request an authorized emergency vehicle response when initiating a pursuit.
- The non-authorized emergency vehicle may continue as a secondary police unit only until another authorized emergency vehicle assumes the secondary police unit role. At that time the non-authorized emergency vehicle shall immediately disengage from the pursuit.
- Only pursuit-rated K-9 vehicles may engage in a pursuit when authorized to do so.

### Support Units

- May parallel the pursuit while maintaining routine driving.
- Stay off the radio unless necessary.
- Be available if pursuit terminates and back-up is required.
- **DO NOT engage in non-routine driving to become involved in the pursuit.**

### Dispatcher Responsibilities [41.2.2e]

- Notify units of the pursuit on the appropriate frequencies.
- Notify the responsible supervisor to the location of the pursuit.
- Allow units to communicate car to car when necessary.
- Notify neighboring jurisdictions when the pursuit approaches its boundaries.

### 4. RESTRICTIONS [41.2.2d]

- A pursuit SHALL NOT be initiated or participated in:
  - If the offense is a civil traffic violation, stolen vehicle only, misdemeanors, or non-violent, non-life threatening felony.
  - When a prisoner or citizen, including a Police Explorer, Police Volunteer, or citizen ride-a-long is a passenger in the police vehicle.
  - When traveling on the wrong side of any roadway, freeway access ramp or frontage road of a divided highway or one-way street unless directed by an involved sworn supervisor.
- During a pursuit, officers SHALL NOT (unless directed by a sworn supervisor):
  - Pass the primary police unit, unless requested by the primary police unit.
  - Attempt to overtake the fleeing vehicle.
  - Engage in rolling or stationary road blocks.
- DO NOT become involved in a pursuit for any reason while off duty and traveling in a privately owned vehicle.



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- DO NOT engage in other agency pursuit that enters the City of Maricopa unless it meets MPD pursuit policy guidelines. [41.2.6h]
  - MPD units may act as Support Units.
  - Shall not leave the City of Maricopa without supervisor approval.
- DO NOT deploy stop sticks on moving vehicles that do not meet the criteria for pursuing.
- DO NOT deploy stop sticks when it is clear their use creates a danger to the public and/or employee that outweighs the benefit of use.
- DO NOT deploy stop sticks when pedestrians, bystanders, or observers are in the area, as they are vulnerable to injury if struck by the vehicle.
- Stop sticks shall not be used for stopping vehicles with less than three wheels (e.g., motorcycles, ATVs, etc.).
- Stop sticks shall not be used when motorcycle officers are involved in a pursuit.

### 5. TERMINATION OF PURSUIT [41.2.2g]

- A pursuit may be terminated by any of the following personnel:
  - Units engaged in the pursuit.
  - Functional supervisor.
  - Ranking sworn department member.
- Terminate a pursuit when:
  - Danger to the public outweighs the need to apprehend the suspect.
  - Failure of police vehicle's emergency or mechanical equipment.
  - Visual contact is lost for a reasonable period of time.
  - Ordered by a supervisor.
- How to terminate a pursuit:
  - Turn off emergency lights and siren.
  - Cease non-routine driving.
  - Terminate any attempts to follow the suspect vehicle.
  - Broadcast termination of pursuit or acknowledge the order to terminate the pursuit by broadcasting, "Unit Identifier, terminating pursuit."
  - Return to service.

### 6. FORCIBLE STOPPING

- All intervention tactics short of deadly force such as the following may be used when:
  - Possible to do so in safety.
  - The officer has received appropriate training for their use.
  - Authorized by the supervisor. [41.2.3]
- The officer shall provide a written report to their supervisor following any method of forcible stopping. Damage will be documented in an incident report to include photographs of the damage.
- Stop Sticks – These tire deflation devices are an effective way to prevent a vehicle from being moved by a suspect attempting to flee a scene or to conclude and/or avoid pursuits while minimizing danger to the public and the officers involved. This policy is not meant to supersede the decision by an involved officer or supervisor to terminate a pursuit prior to use of tire deflation devices.
  - Deployment of stop sticks requires the approval of an MPD sworn supervisor.
  - Only officers who have received department-approved training in the use of stop sticks



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are authorized to deploy them.

- Stop sticks may also be deployed during barricade/static situations as a method of disabling a vehicle.
- Avoid deploying the stop sticks on wet surfaces, gravel, or loose pavement.
- When other law enforcement agencies involved in a pursuit enter Maricopa, deployment of stop sticks will only be used when an MPD unit has taken over as the primary unit due to potential damage to police cars and the difficulty in communicating with outside agencies.
- When possible, officers involved in a pursuit will be advised that stop sticks are being deployed and the location where they will be used.
- Officers involved in a pursuit should allow ample room between the suspect vehicle and their police vehicles to avoid damage to department vehicles and injury to the officer.

**Boxing** - An attempt to block a suspect's avenue of escape by positioning police vehicles such that the suspect's stopped vehicle, occupied or unoccupied, is unable to flee. Minor contact could be made with the suspect vehicle; however, officers should attempt to not make contact. Boxing shall only be used by officers trained in this technique.

**Ramming** - An attempt to halt a pursuit by striking the suspect's moving vehicle with a police vehicle and is authorized under conditions which justify the use of deadly force, refer to [OPS 3.00 Response to Resistance/Use of Force](#).

## 7. REPORTING PROCEDURES

### Pursuits/Forcible Stopping

- Reports by all involved in a pursuit and/or forcible stop shall be completed and approved by a supervisor prior to going off duty.

**Sergeant Responsibilities** - If a supervisor is involved in a pursuit as the primary or secondary police unit and/or a Stop Stick deployment, the supervisor will only complete a supplement report. If assigned as Functional Supervisor of a pursuit, the supervisor shall:

- Complete pursuit or stop stick deployment documentation within **seven (7) days** to include:
  - Summary of the pursuit or stop stick deployment shall be added to Blue Team.
  - Copies of involved officers AVL history, including speeds and locations during the incident, if vehicle is equipped with AVL.
  - Complete copies of the original and any connecting DR's and supplements.
  - A copy of the Communications tape of the pursuit or stop stick deployment.
- Complete and attach all documents to Blue team and forwarded to the assigned Lieutenant.

**Lieutenant Responsibilities**- Within **seven (7) days** of receipt of Blue Team documentation from the Functional Supervisor, all pursuit documentation will be reviewed and forwarded to the Operations Commander.

**Commander Responsibilities** - Within **seven (7) days** of receipt from the Lieutenant, forward



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all pursuit documentation to the MPD Review Board chairperson.

- Upon receiving the MPD Review Board summary of findings:
- Ensure documentation is placed in the involved member's workstation file.
- If needed, send member to relevant training to improve performance.

### Police Vehicle Accidents and/or Damage

See [OPS 5.12 Traffic Collisions – Department Vehicles](#)

### Employee Driving Incident/Citation

All allegations of improper driving by police employees operating a city-owned, leased, or seized vehicle will be reported to the employee's supervisor who will ensure that a proper investigation is completed.

All photo-technology citations issued to department employees driving city-owned, leased, or seized vehicle will be forwarded to the employee's supervisor

## 8. GRIEVANCES

- The City of Maricopa ***Personnel Rule 2.3.1 Right to Grievances and Appeals*** defines a grievance as follows: "Merit employees shall have the right to file a grievance if the employee feels that their rights, benefits, or privileges have been violated or discriminated against in any way. Any merit employee shall have the right to appeal any grievance response, termination, reprimand, demotion, or suspension except under circumstances where appeal is specifically prohibited under these policies and procedures."