

Foot Pursuits

635.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist officers in making the decision to initiate or continue the pursuit of suspects on foot. This policy applies to all Probation Officers and designated personnel.

635.2 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- Executive Committee

635.3 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 public or the suspect. No pursuit decision shall be based solely upon whether or not the pursuing officer is armed.

Vehicle pursuits by probation employees are not authorized.

635.4 DECISION TO PURSUE

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.

Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual subject to probation officer authority. This includes persons subject to conditions of probation, mandatory or post-release community supervision, violations of any penal provisions of law which are discovered while performing the usual or authorized duties of a probation officer, and the rendering of mutual aid to another law enforcement agency. 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.

Mere flight by a person who is not suspected of criminal activity shall not serve as justification for engaging in a foot pursuit without the development of reasonable suspicion regarding the individual's involvement in criminal activity or being wanted by law enforcement.

Deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit is a decision that an officer must make quickly and under unpredictable and dynamic circumstances. Prior to engaging in a pursuit, the following factors shall be considered:

- (a) How important is the individual's immediate apprehension?
- (b) Will anyone be placed in imminent danger if a pursuit is initiated?
- (c) Will anyone be placed in imminent danger by a delay in the apprehension of the individual?

Foot Pursuits

- (d) What is the probability apprehension can/will be safely effected if a pursuit is required?
- (e) Is adequate “back up” from other probation officers or law enforcement immediately available?
- (f) Is the identity of the suspect known, or is there information available that would likely allow for later apprehension?

635.5 GUIDELINES FOR FOOT PURSUITS

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 are encouraged to consider alternatives to engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit. Foot pursuits shall not be initiated unless the officer has access to a PSEC radio or phone to call for assistance, report the location of the individual or otherwise inform dispatch of developments.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation an officer may encounter, officers are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate actions to initiate or continue a foot pursuit. A number of factors should be taken into consideration as time and circumstances permit, such as:

- (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.
- (d) The officer is unsure of his/her location and direction of travel.
- (e) When pursuing multiple suspects and the pursuing officers do not reasonably believe that they would be able to control the suspect should a confrontation occur.
- (f) When the physical condition of the officers renders them incapable of controlling the suspect if apprehended.
- (g) When the officer loses radio or phone contact with dispatch/base or with backup officers.
- (h) When 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.
- (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 that 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.

Foot Pursuits

- (m) The suspect's location is no longer reasonably 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 that 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.
- (p) The officer is not in possession of adequate restraint devices.

Deadly force shall not be employed to stop any person who is merely fleeing to avoid arrest/apprehension.

Pursuing officers shall verbally identify themselves, and/or be plainly identified with a badge, raid vest with probation markings, or other official marking.

635.6 RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOT PURSUITS

635.6.1 INITIATING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

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 notify dispatch/base with the following information as soon as it becomes practicable and available:

- (a) Identities and descriptions of pursuing officers.
- (b) Location and direction of travel.
- (c) Reason for the foot pursuit.
- (d) Number of suspects and description, to include name(s) if known.
- (e) Whether the suspect is believed to be armed.

Officers should be mindful that radio and phone 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/base 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 necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for officers, suspects or members of the public.

All pursuits shall be reported to the immediate supervisor immediately and an incident report be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the shift.

Riverside County Probation Department

Policy Manual

Foot Pursuits

635.6.2 ASSISTING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

When operating in support of law enforcement agencies or in multi-agency operations, the same general guidelines shall be in effect. However, any reasonable request for support by a law enforcement officer should be given high priority. Any deviation from departmental guidelines shall be reported to the supervisor.

Any officer 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. Assisting officers shall also report pursuits to the immediate supervisor by incident report as soon as possible, but no later than the end of shift.

635.6.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information to direct responding resources and to take command, control and coordination of the foot pursuit. The supervisor should respond to the area whenever possible; however, the supervisor does not need to be physically present to exercise control over the foot 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 appears to outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect.

Upon termination of the pursuit, the supervisor or designee, should promptly proceed to the termination point to direct the post-pursuit activity if necessary.

635.6.4 BASE RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified or becoming aware that a foot pursuit is in progress, base personnel shall, as soon as practicable, notify the field supervisor and provide available information. Base personnel are also responsible for the following:

- (a) Clearing the radio or phone of non-emergency traffic.
- (b) Repeating the transmissions of the pursuing officer as needed.
- (c) Relaying all pertinent information to responding personnel.
- (d) Contacting additional resources as directed by a supervisor.
- (e) Coordinating response of additional resources to assist with the foot pursuit.

Should the field supervisor determine exigent circumstances do not exist, the supervisor is responsible for terminating the pursuit and communicating the order to the responsible base operator.

635.7 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At minimum, all officers engaging or assisting in a foot pursuit shall include the following in incident report documentation:

Riverside County Probation Department

Policy Manual

Foot Pursuits

- (a) Date and time of the foot pursuit.
- (b) Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the foot pursuit.
- (c) Involved personnel.
- (d) The course and approximate distance of the pursuit.
- (e) Alleged offenses and/or violations that led to or occurred during the pursuit.
- (f) Whether a suspect was apprehended as well as the means and methods used. Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
- (g) Arrestee information, if applicable.
- (h) Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
- (i) Any property or equipment damage.
- (j) Name of the supervisor at the scene or who handled the incident.

Date(s) revised:

12/07/2017

05/22/2013

12/01/2005

08/28/1995

Created: 05/14/1994

Attachments: None