

5-09/210.00 - Pursuits

The Sheriff's Department's pursuit policy is a comprehensive plan to ensure that pursuits, when necessary, are managed as safely as possible and adhere to all applicable State laws. Because the policy is comprehensive, sworn personnel must understand it in its entirety. This will ensure proper coordination between Units, Bureaus, supervisors and managers. Pursuant to state law, all sworn members shall certify, in writing, that they have received, read, and understand this policy. In addition, the Department shall provide regular and periodic training regarding this policy. The Training Bureau, Administrative and Training Division, shall ensure that appropriate records of this certification and required training are maintained.

Definition of a Pursuit

A pursuit is an active attempt by the driver of a departmental vehicle to stop a moving vehicle whose driver is attempting to avoid apprehension through evasive driving tactics or, after a reasonably short period of time, fails to stop after red light and siren have been activated. Following a vehicle whose driver is attempting to evade, or has failed to yield, after a reasonably short period of time, whether accomplished with or without red lights activated and siren sounding, and regardless of the terminology used to describe these acts, is also a pursuit.

Policy Governing Pursuits

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Department that pursuits are permitted only when the necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the degree of danger created by the pursuit, and only when in compliance with this policy and applicable state laws.

The purpose of this policy is to secure a balance between protecting the public against personal injury, death, or property damage and law enforcement's duty to enforce the law and apprehend violators. It is also intended to provide guidance for the management, control, and tactics associated with pursuit operations as required by state law. Since there are numerous situations which arise in law enforcement that are unique, it is impossible for this policy or any standard operating procedure to anticipate all possible circumstances. Therefore, this policy is intended to direct as well as guide a sworn member's discretion in matters of vehicular pursuits.

Initiating Deputies, Supervisors, and Watch Commanders engaged in any pursuit operation will be responsible for providing the Unit Commander objective reasons for initiating, continuing, and terminating a vehicle pursuit. Consideration must be given to the extent of danger the suspect poses to the public beyond the act of evasion itself.
