98-010 Tire Deflation Device Deployment

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

TIRE DEFLATION DEVICE DEPLOYMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to define policy and procedures for the use of tire deflation pursuit termination devices by patrol personnel. Since all situations cannot be anticipated, this directive is general in nature and serves as a policy and guide for the deployment and use of the tire deflation device. Personnel are encouraged to develop innovative methods for the use of the tire deflation device to terminate vehicle pursuits, consistent with our obligation to care for the safety of the public.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to deploy and use pursuit termination devices whenever and wherever possible to safely end vehicle pursuits (including surveillance mode operations), while placing paramount importance on the safety of deputy personnel, the public, and suspects.

Only personnel who are trained in the operation and deployment of tire deflation devices shall be permitted to deploy these devices.

UNIT COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Unit commanders are responsible for establishing unit level procedures to ensure that:

- Tire deflation devices are available in patrol units throughout the station's patrol area;
- Existing and newly assigned personnel are trained in the use of tire deflation devices;
- Tire deflation devices deployed from the station are properly maintained; and
- All other aspects of this directive are carried out.

PROCEDURES

When suspect vehicles cross a tire deflation device, hollow spikes are embedded into the tires, causing the tires to deflate at a controlled rate. Even though the suspect vehicle has one or more of its tires deflated, the suspect vehicle may not stop.

However, the ability of the suspect driver to operate the vehicle at high speeds is greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

I. DEPLOYMENT

There are few law enforcement operations that require a higher degree of common sense and sound judgment than the deployment of tire deflation devices during vehicular pursuits. Deputies must effectively perform in an atmosphere where long- range consequences may hinge upon the soundness of split-second decisions.

The immediate apprehension of the violator is never more important than the safety of innocent motorists or deputy personnel. When it becomes apparent that the immediacy of apprehension is outweighed by a clear and unreasonable danger to deputy personnel or others, the deployment of tire deflation devices must be discontinued.

The decision to deploy a tire deflation device is not irreversible and it is the intelligent Deputy who knows when to discontinue the deployment. Deputies must continually question whether the seriousness of the crime justifies the deployment of tire deflation devices. The deployment shall be discontinued when there is a clear and unreasonable danger to the Deputy or other users of the highway.

Personnel responding to deploy tire deflation devices shall abide by all Department pursuit and Code 3 policies and procedures. With the approval of the watch commander or field supervisor, patrol units equipped with tire deflation devices may respond Code 3 to potential deployment locations.

As with any tactical operation, the response between all involved units, including those actively engaged in the pursuit and those attempting to deploy tire deflation devices, shall be in a coordinated manner, with command and control exercised by the handling unit, field sergeant, and/or the watch commander, as appropriate. In those situations when specific direction to deploy the tire deflation devices has not been given, personnel may use their own discretion to deploy and use the tire deflation devices, subject to the guidelines listed below. When anticipating the use of tire deflation devices, the following shall be considered:

- Pursuing units shall make frequent location, direction, and speed updates.
- Tire deflation deployment locations should provide deploying personnel with good visibility of the approaching pursuit and other traffic in the area.
- Suspects will drive erratically to avoid driving over tire deflation devices, deploying personnel shall take adequate cover for officer safety, while considering traffic flow in the immediate area, upcoming intersections, high-use driveways, school zones, pedestrian traffic, etc.
- Where possible, the patrol vehicle(s) of the deploying personnel should be placed in locations that are not readily visible to the suspect driver.
- Deploying personnel shall notify pursuing units of placement of the tire deflation devices. Station desk personnel are responsible for notification/relaying of this information to involved outside agencies.
- Deploying personnel shall always use protective cover. **Use of the patrol vehicle for cover does not provide adequate protection and its use as such is discouraged**.
- The use of assisting units to block intersections or stop traffic to provide additional officer safety to a deploying deputy.
- Tire deflation devices shall not be used to stop the following vehicles: motorcycles; mopeds; other similar type vehicles unless the use of deadly force is objectively reasonable for the circumstances.
- Except in the most compelling of circumstances, tire deflation devices should generally not be used on

the following vehicles: vehicles transporting hazardous materials; passenger or school buses with occupants; articulated vehicles (vehicles towing trailers; large semi-truck/trailer combinations, etc.).

The successful conclusion of a pursuit is dependent upon proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment.

II. OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUEST FOR DEPLOYMENT

An outside law enforcement agency's pursuit shall be regarded as a critical or life-threatening situation. Upon request of an outside agency and with approval of the station watch commander, Sheriff's units may deploy tire deflation devices in an attempt to terminate the pursuit. The approval to deploy the tire deflation device in an outside agency pursuit does not imply an authorization for Department units to become actively involved in the pursuit unless specifically directed by the station watch commander.

Watch commanders shall limit their authorization for deployment of the tire deflation device in an outside agency pursuit to those pursuits that are either approaching or are within reasonably close proximity to Sheriff's Department jurisdiction. Requests by outside agencies from adjacent counties shall be honored only if the pursuit is approaching or is immediately adjacent to our Department's jurisdiction.

III. POST DEPLOYMENT INSPECTION

At the conclusion of a pursuit operation wherein a vehicle has driven over any part of the tire deflation device, personnel shall inspect the tire deflation device for damage. Damaged sections of the tire deflation device shall be replaced prior to re-deployment in the field.

IV. REPORTING

The use of a tire deflation device shall be indicated in the Vehicle Pursuit Summary Report and Incident Report. Include the following as appropriate:

- Location of deployment (include: direction of travel, lanes covered, nearest intersection, etc.)
- Names of all deputies who placed tire deflation devices, whether or not their tire deflation device was traversed by the suspect vehicle
- Injuries and/or deaths (suspects, civilians, or deputy personnel)
- Civilian and/or patrol vehicles damaged by the deployment of the tire deflation device

V. TIRE REPLACEMENT

Civilian Vehicles - When uninvolved civilian tires are deflated by Department personnel, either accidently or intentionally, during a Departmental or outside agency pursuit, the Department will assist in obtaining replacement of the damaged tires. Therefore, stations shall:

- Make arrangements with contract tow companies to tow vehicles to the tire replacement business of the motorist's choice. Field personnel shall ask the affected driver if they desire to use a local tow company of their choice or if they would like the Department to tow the vehicle. In either case, there will be no cost to the motorist –***Personnel are not authorized to recommend any tow agency or tire replacement***

business.

- Units shall immediately contact the on-call Civil Litigation Investigator for assistance in the expedited claim process. Investigators will respond as necessary and assist in the process of making an immediate payment for any tire replacement and/or other incident related costs, 24 hours a day.
- As expeditiously as possible, preferably within one hour of the event, the vehicle and motorist should be transported to the local tire replacement facility of their choice. If such transportation is not possible, the watch commander shall indicate in the watch commander's log the reason(s) that prevented such transportation.
- In the event all tire replacement facilities are closed, stations shall do one or more of the following as appropriate: tow the vehicle to the appropriate tire facility; transport the motorists and other occupants to their residence or to their destination (local); offer to have them stay at the station while waiting for family or friends to pick them up, or if necessary, provide a hotel room, etc.

VI. EQUIPMENT ISSUES

Field Operations Support Services, [REDACTED TEXT], is the contact point for all tire deflation device policy and procedural issues.

- The tire deflation device retraction systems function properly.
- The tire deflation devices are in good working order.

VII. TRACKING

All patrol units with tire deflation devices shall be designated on the in-service sheet with the symbol "S". This will aid dispatcher recognition of tire deflation- device-equipped vehicles and help ensure even distribution of tire deflation devices throughout a station's jurisdiction.