5-09/210.10 - Control of a Pursuit

Primary Unit Responsibility

The deputy initiating a pursuit is the primary unit and shall, in all cases, immediately provide the station/unit watch commander with the following information through the Sheriff's Communications Center (SCC):

- Unit identification;
- Location, speed, and direction of travel;
- The specific reason for the pursuit, including known laws violated;
- Vehicle description, including license number, if known;
- Number of occupants;
- Traffic conditions, including the description of any hazardous driving by the suspect; and
- Any information concerning the use of firearms or other officer safety factors when present.

Failure to immediately provide the above information shall be cause for the station/unit watch commander to consider termination of the pursuit.

The primary unit shall maintain field command and bears operational responsibility for the pursuit unless relieved by a supervisor.

The authority of the primary unit pertains to the immediate field operation and is, at all times, subordinate to the command of the field supervisor and station/unit watch commander.

Any time a pursuit is initiated due to a "possible" crime, including reckless driving under the influence (DUI), personnel shall be required, subsequent to the pursuit, to articulate to the watch commander the objective criteria which led them to believe the suspect(s) was involved in criminal activity which warranted initiation of a pursuit under this policy. During the pursuit, the watch commander may solicit sufficient information from the initiating unit, via radio, to justify continuation of the pursuit.

Personnel who participate in a pursuit, or are present at the termination of a pursuit, shall immediately report their involvement to the on-scene field supervisor.

Assisting Unit Responsibility

Assistance will be coordinated by the SCC dispatcher who will immediately activate the duplex patch and advise the primary unit of the identity and location of back-up units in the immediate vicinity to assist in the pursuit and any subsequent tactical operation.

The active pursuit shall normally consist of the primary vehicle unit and three back-up units. A field supervisor's vehicle, if involved in the pursuit, is not counted toward the four unit limit. If additional assistance is specifically requested, the level will be determined by:

- Nature of crime;
- Number of suspects;
- Whether participating units are one or two-person cars; and

- Other clear and articulated facts that would warrant the increased number of units.

Only a field supervisor or watch commander may authorize more than four units to engage in a pursuit. All other units will remain aware of the direction and progress of the pursuit, but shall not actively participate and shall not respond code 3 unless specifically authorized. No unit shall parallel the pursuit on adjacent streets, code 3 or otherwise.

NOTE: A field supervisor is expected and authorized to respond code 3 toward the pursuit operation to enable the supervisor to be present for any post-pursuit tactical operation.

Assisting units, upon joining a pursuit, shall notify the SCC dispatcher of their presence and identity. If the primary unit is a one-person unit, the deputy can request the first assisting unit to assume radio broadcast responsibility, allowing the primary unit to devote full attention to driving. The third, and any additional authorized units are back-up units intended to be available to provide tactical assistance at the terminus of the pursuit.

If the primary unit becomes disabled, the first assisting unit will then become the primary unit. The SCC dispatcher will advise field units that a new back-up unit is needed and the next unit to join the pursuit will be designated the back-up unit as authorized by the watch commander or field sergeant.

Personnel who participate in a pursuit, or are present at the termination of a pursuit, shall immediately report their involvement to the on-scene field supervisor.

SCC Responsibility

Pursuit operations shall be conducted on the initiating unit's home frequency. The SCC dispatcher will immediately activate the duplex patch and advise the primary unit of the identity and location of back-up units in position to assist. SCC shall immediately request an Aero Bureau unit. When the pursuit approaches or traverses another station's/unit's area, that station's/unit's frequency will be patched with the frequency upon which the pursuit is being broadcast, unless another emergency or other significant circumstance(s) indicates otherwise. This procedure is intended to enhance officer safety.

NOTE: The broadcast of a pursuit on any frequency shall not, by itself, be considered authorization for other units' participation in the pursuit.

Supervisory Responsibility - Field Sergeant

The field sergeant of the initiating unit, or the unit assisting an outside agency, shall acknowledge and actively monitor the pursuit. If there is no field sergeant, the watch commander shall deploy the watch sergeant, or request the assistance of the field sergeant of the station/unit nearest the pursuit. If necessary, the sergeant shall assert control of the pursuit by directing specific units into or out of the pursuit, re-designating primary and/or back-up responsibilities or by terminating the pursuit. The field sergeant shall also ensure that the watch commander's orders are strictly followed. As with any tactical operation, it is not necessary that the sergeant be physically present to begin coordination.

The sergeant shall respond to the terminus of the pursuit, oversee post-pursuit tactics, and assert control when warranted. The sergeant will ensure compliance with all Department policies, specifically as they relate to the

use of force and field tactics. The sergeant shall also identify all Department personnel who participated in, or responded to, the terminus of the pursuit. Personnel who participate in a pursuit, or are present at the termination of a pursuit, shall immediately report their involvement to the on-scene field supervisor. The field sergeant may respond code 3.

Supervisory Responsibility - Watch Commander

The watch commander of the patrol unit initiating the pursuit shall maintain overall command of the operation. This command responsibility shall include all Department units involved in the pursuit.

NOTE: If a deputy from a unit other than a patrol station, in transit from one assignment to another or from their headquarters to an assignment, or assigned to Community Colleges Bureau, initiates a pursuit, the SCC watch sergeant shall notify the watch commander of the nearest station, who shall assume immediate command of the operation.

NOTE: If a deputy assigned to Transit Services Bureau (TSB) initiates a pursuit, the TSB watch commander shall assume immediate command of the operation.

The watch commander shall respond to the desk area and immediately take command. In order to maintain operational command and control, the watch commander, either directly or through subordinate personnel, shall establish “cold line” communications with the SCC watch sergeant, who shall immediately and directly carry out the orders of the watch commander. If necessary to assert operational control, the watch commander may communicate with field units using station/unit transmitting capabilities. This should rarely be necessary.

The watch commander shall make a decision regarding the continuation or termination of the pursuit based upon the information received, including weather and traffic conditions. In the absence of immediate information from the field, the watch commander shall consider termination of the pursuit.

Should the watch commander be in the field during a pursuit, his/her duties and responsibilities shall be accomplished by use of the Sheriff’s radio system. If the watch commander is not immediately available, the watch sergeant shall assume operational responsibility for the pursuit.

NOTE: For purposes of clarification, references to the watch commander throughout this policy will apply to the watch sergeant and/or field sergeant in those instances wherein the watch commander is not immediately available to assume command of the pursuit operation.

Watch commanders shall ensure that adjacent jurisdictions or station/unit areas are notified of any public or officer safety concerns following the termination of a pursuit by this Department when the suspect vehicle is known or believed to be traveling into the other agency’s or station’s/unit’s area. If the watch commander authorizes an Aero Bureau unit to continue monitoring a vehicle whose pursuit has been terminated, the watch commander may direct the Aero Bureau unit to make that notification via radio.