**SAMPLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Foot Pursuits**

NOTE: The following guidelines address both safety and policy and are for internal use only. This document does not nor is intended to enlarge an employee’s civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of these guidelines if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

1. **PURPOSE**

To provide procedures regarding foot pursuits, including considerations for initiation and continuation, responsibilities of involved officers, supervisors, and communications personnel, and termination. These guidelines are intended to establish a balance between protecting public safety and officers during foot pursuits and law enforcement’s duty to enforce the law and apprehend suspects.

1. **POLICY**
2. It is the policy of this agency that officer, and public safety shall be the overriding consideration in determining whether a foot pursuit will be initiated or continued. Officers should act reasonably based on the overall circumstances and balance the ability of apprehending an individual with the risk of potential injury.
3. Although it is an officer’s decision to initiate a stop, it is the suspect or violator who decides to instigate a foot pursuit by fleeing. However, it is the policy of this agency that an officer’s decision to pursue on foot shall be made with an awareness of and appreciation for the risk to which the officer and others will be exposed.

1. **PROCEDURE**
2. Initiation of a Foot Pursuit
3. Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual believed to be involved in, about to be involved in, or who has been involved in criminal activity. Absent reasonable suspicion of an individual’s involvement in criminal activity flight alone does not justify engaging in a foot pursuit. Deciding to initiate a foot pursuit is a decision officers must make quickly under unpredictable circumstances.

a. In view of this no officer or supervisor will be criticized for not engaging in a foot pursuit.

1. Officers should consider practical alternatives to a foot pursuit based upon other methods and resources available, such as:
2. Surveillance of suspect and/or area.
3. Containment of the area.
4. Assistance from other officers and/or agencies.
5. Canine availability.
6. Thermal imaging or other sensing technology.
7. Air support.

4. Officers should also consider alternatives, including termination, to engaging in foot pursuit when:

1. The officer is acting alone.
2. The danger outweighs the probability of apprehension.
3. Officer is unsure of his/her location or direction of travel.
4. Officer is pursuing multiple suspects without the ability to control the suspects should a confrontation occur.
5. Officer is not in adequate physical condition to conduct a foot pursuit or control the subject if apprehended.
6. Officer loses his/her firearm or other essential equipment.
7. Officer loses radio contact with the communications center or assisting officers.
8. Officer becomes aware of circumstances that unreasonably increases the risk to officers or the public.
9. Officer or a third party is injured during the pursuit, requiring medical assistance.
10. Two or more officers become separated, losing visual contact with one another.
11. The suspect enters a building, structure, confined space, isolated area, or dense terrain, with inadequate officers to provide backup.
12. The suspect’s location is no longer known.
13. The identity of the suspect is established and/or the need to immediately apprehend the suspect does not reasonably appear to outweigh the risk of continuing the foot pursuit.
14. Inclement weather, darkness or other conditions severely restrict the ability   
    for apprehension.
15. Insufficient backup or assistance is available in a timely manner.
16. Responsibilities of Primary Pursuing Officer
17. Upon initiating a foot pursuit, the primary pursuing officer is responsible for the following:
    1. If equipped and not already activated, the officer shall activate their body-worn camera unless an immediate threat to the officer's life or safety makes activating the camera impossible or dangerous.
       1. In this circumstance, the officer shall activate the camera at the first reasonable opportunity to do so.
       2. Under no circumstances will the video camera be disengaged from its recording mode until the pursuit has been concluded.
    2. Immediately notify communications about the initiation of the foot pursuit, and provide ongoing updates throughout the entire pursuit on the following factors:
    3. Officer / Unit ID.
    4. Location and direction of travel.
    5. Number and description of the suspect(s).
    6. Initial reason for the foot pursuit.
    7. Whether the suspect(s) is armed.
    8. Other relevant information.
    9. The primary pursuing officer should continually re-evaluate and assess the pursuit situation, including all the initiating factors. Whenever the officer believes that the risks associated with the continued pursuit are greater than the public safety benefit of making an immediate apprehension, the foot pursuit should be terminated immediately.
    10. The initiating officer shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports and other required reports documenting, along with any required supplements as needed by assisting officers.
18. Communications Center Responsibility
    1. Upon notification that a foot pursuit is in progress, communications personnel should immediately advise a supervisor of essential information regarding the pursuit. In addition, the Communications Officer should:
       1. Receive and record all incoming information on the pursuit and the pursued vehicle.
       2. Control all radio communications and clear the radio channels of all nonemergency calls.
       3. Coordinate and dispatch backup assistance.
       4. Notify neighboring jurisdictions, where practical, when pursuit may extend into their locality.
19. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Upon notification that a foot pursuit has been initiated, the supervisor will assume responsibility for the monitoring and control of the pursuit as it progresses.

* 1. If possible, respond to the area, however; physical presence is not required to exercise control over the incident.
  2. Coordinate the foot pursuit as follows:
     1. Directing other officers to the vicinity of the foot pursuit.
     2. Establishing a perimeter, if appropriate.
     3. Requesting and directing additional assistance and/or resources, if available and needed.
  3. The supervisor should continuously review available information to determine whether the foot pursuit should be continued or terminated.
  4. Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor shall proceed to the termination point to direct the post-foot pursuit activity.
  5. The supervisor shall review any report associated or related to the foot pursuit to determine compliance with this policy or whether additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.

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1. Termination of Pursuit
2. A decision to terminate a foot pursuit may be the most reasonable means of preserving the lives and property of both the public, as well as involved officers and suspects involved in the pursuit. The pursuing officer, the shift commander/supervisor, or the Chief of Police may terminate pursuit.
3. If the foot pursuit is terminated for any reason, immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.
4. When a foot pursuit terminates, the officer will notify communications of his/her location and the status of the foot pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect), and will direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for officers, suspects, or members of the public.
5. Upon termination of a foot pursuit, communications personnel shall advise all responding personnel and document their acknowledgement.

APPROVED: CHIEF OF POLICE DATE

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS ORDER

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER DATE

***DISCLAIMER***

***NOTE****: These documents are being provided to you from the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division and are not intended to be legal advice. They do not identify all the issues surrounding a particular topic. Laws and “Best Practices” change and policies must be continually reviewed and updated as needed. Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert or an attorney who is knowledgeable about the topic. Reliance on this information is at the sole risk of the user.*