



# Department of State Police

## General Order

Effective Date	January 31, 2001	Number	TRF-04
Subject			
PURSUIT			

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**Policy**

All members operating Department of State Police vehicles shall operate with due care and exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.

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**Initiating Vehicle Stops**

Once a violation of law is detected or reported and the officer has decided to initiate action, s/he must overtake and stop the violator as soon as it can be safely done.

If the violator fails to stop and operates in such a manner so as to avoid capture, the officer may initiate pursuit and stop the suspect driver in the approved manner.

- Emergency visual and audible devices should be utilized.
- If practicable, the emergency audible devices should be suspended during radio transmissions, and such transmissions should be clear, concise, and as unemotional as possible.
- The Station Desk Officer shall be immediately informed when an officer is about to engage, or is engaged, with a fleeing suspect operator.

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**Pursuit Termination**

In certain circumstances, the most intelligent course of action may be to not pursue or to abandon pursuit when:

- The hazards of exposing the officer and the public to unnecessary risks are high;
- The environmental conditions indicate the futility to pursue or continue to pursue;
- The triviality of the offense warrants less aggressive enforcement;
- The pursuit initiated on a limited access highway proceeds into densely populated areas;
- The roadway, vehicles, or operators involved reveal degenerative factors; or
- When ordered to terminate pursuit.

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**Station Desk Officer's Responsibilities**

The Station Desk Officer shall receive, record, and coordinate information on the pursuit and the pursued vehicle with Troop Headquarters and other agencies.

- Radio preference shall be immediately implemented by initiating a CODE ONE (1).
- The Station Desk Officer shall inform the Troop Duty Officer immediately upon being advised of a pursuit.

**Pursuit****TRF-04****Troop Duty  
Officer's  
Responsibilities**

Immediately upon being advised of a pursuit, the Troop Duty Officer shall broadcast that s/he has assumed command and control.

If the pursuing officer is of higher rank than the Duty Officer, then the officer of higher rank shall assume full responsibility for actions taken.

When a pursuit is in progress, the appropriate Troop Duty Officer shall ascertain the following:

- The cruiser number and officer;
- The location, direction, and speed of travel;
- The suspect vehicle description, including license plate number, if known, and number of occupants; and
- The specific reason for the pursuit, including laws violated.

Failure to provide the above information may be cause for the Troop Duty Officer to order termination of the pursuit.

The active pursuit should not involve more than two (2) State Police vehicles, unless specifically assigned or ordered. If more assistance is specifically requested, the Troop Duty Officer shall determine the amount based upon:

- The seriousness of the offense;
- The number of suspects;
- The number of police officers involved; and
- The extenuating circumstances and conditions that clearly demonstrate the need for additional help.

The Troop Duty Officer shall notify the State Police General Headquarters Communications Section with the appropriate information upon completion of the pursuit.

If available and feasible, the helicopter should be used to provide aerial assistance to the pursuit. All pertinent information shall be relayed to the helicopter pilot by the Troop Duty Officer.

Inter-Troop Pursuit - The command and control of a pursuit shall be assumed by the Troop Duty Officer of jurisdiction.

Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits - The Troop Duty Officer shall cause other law enforcement agencies to be notified when a State Police Officer is in pursuit within their jurisdiction. S/he shall clearly specify that the call is either:

- A request for their assistance; or
- Merely a courtesy notification with **NO** participation from them desired.

**Pursuit****TRF-04****Assisting Pursuit Officer's Responsibilities**

The assisting unit shall maintain a safe distance behind the primary unit, but be close enough to provide aid and assume radio communications if and when required.

Other units responding or assigned to assist should place themselves on alternate/parallel roadways to the one the pursuit is on.

- This shall create a "boxing in" effect which shall hopefully, if not capture, at least discourage the suspect operator from continuing the flight.
- This technique is also advantageous if the suspect operator eludes the pursuing officers(s) or abandons the vehicle and flees on foot.

**Pursuit Driving Tactics**

Deliberate Physical Contact or forcing the suspect operator off the road or into obstacles is prohibited unless specifically authorized and ordered by the Troop Duty Officer.

Tire Deflating Devices - see **TRF-21**

Caravanning (single file of vehicles) by State Police cruisers involved is discouraged.

Units paralleling a pursuit may operate with emergency visual and audible systems activated, with due regard for the safety of all persons. Units may also monitor the radio communications, but may not join in or interfere with the pursuit.

Passing - There should not be any attempts made by officers to pass one another unless ordered to do so.

Spacing - All units in pursuit shall space themselves at a safe distance to ensure proper braking and reaction time.

Unmarked State Police Vehicles - Officers operating unmarked State Police vehicles may engage in pursuits until a marked/semi-marked unit can assume the primary pursuit position.

- The unmarked vehicle shall then remove itself as the primary unit and become the assisting unit.

State Police Motorcycles **SHALL NOT** become involved in a pursuit.

Divided Highways - Reckless or hazardous driving maneuvers should not be duplicated by any pursuing State Police vehicle. Officers shall not pursue vehicles the wrong way on a controlled access or divided highway. In the event a vehicle enters a controlled access or divided highway the wrong way and travels contrary to traffic, the officer should:

- Maintain visual contact with the vehicle by paralleling it on the correct side of the highway;
- Request that assisting units strategically position themselves to forewarn motorists in an effort to avoid the possibility of a collision which could result from the vehicle travelling contrary to the normal flow of traffic;
- Request assisting units to observe potential exit locations available to the pursued, wrong-way vehicle.

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**Emergency Roadblocks**

All emergency roadblocks shall be conducted in accordance with TRF-17

**Jurisdictional Considerations**

Notification from another law enforcement agency of a pursuit in progress should not be assumed to be a request to join in their pursuit. The caller from the outside law enforcement agency shall be specifically asked whether they are making a request for State Police assistance, or whether merely making a courtesy notification with **NO** State Police participation desired.

- Information obtained from the outside law enforcement agency should contain the same basic pursuit information that State Police Officers are required to provide.

When authorized by the Troop Duty Officer, requests by other law enforcement agencies for pursuit assistance shall be broadcast.

- State Police Officers shall act as a backup unit and become the secondary pursuit vehicles.
- In these situations, officers shall adhere to established procedures.

**Out-Of-State Pursuits**

Out-of-state Pursuits - Officers shall not pursue a suspect operator across the territorial boundaries of the Commonwealth and into another state's jurisdiction for a misdemeanor.

- If a FELONY has been committed, a Troop Duty Officer may authorize an officer to continue pursuit into another state.
- The Troop Duty Officer shall call the out-of-state State Police station or law enforcement agency of jurisdiction and request their assistance.
- The first out-of-state law enforcement agency vehicle that joins the pursuit shall become the primary pursuit vehicle.
- The Massachusetts State Police vehicle shall then become a backup unit and become the secondary pursuit vehicle.

**Foot Pursuits**

Before initiating a foot pursuit, the officer(s) shall:

- Broadcast their exact location (CODE 6);
- Remove keys from the ignition of the State Police vehicle(s) and suspect operator's vehicle before commencing the tracking of the suspect operator.

Unless there is an immediate threat to another officer or a member of the public, officers shall not initiate a foot pursuit under the following conditions:

- The officer has no portable radio and no means of communicating with other officers;
- The officer is alone and the subject has fled into the woods;
- The officer is alone and the subject has fled into an unoccupied building

**Pursuit Evaluation**

The Troop Commander or designee is responsible for submitting a Pursuit Evaluation SP. 343 to the Office of the Division Commander of Field Services as soon as it is practical to do so, but in no event shall the submission be later than the end of the shift. The report should be of such type, format, and time period as the Colonel/Superintendent requires.

Promulgated By: