

**POLICY
458**

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
05-20-16**

**Eugene
Police Department**



Foot Pursuit Policy

458.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Department has the duty and responsibility to pursue and apprehend offenders. Foot pursuits are inherently dangerous and require good judgement, sound tactics, and heightened officer safety awareness. This policy sets forth guidelines to assist officers in making the decision to initiate or continue the pursuit of suspects on foot.

458.1.1 POLICY

It is the policy of this department when deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit that officers continuously balance the objective of apprehending the suspect with the risk and potential for injury to department personnel, the public, or the suspect.

Officers are expected to act reasonably, based on the totality of the circumstances. Absent exigent circumstances, the safety of department personnel and the public should be the primary consideration when determining whether a foot pursuit should be initiated or continued. Officers must be mindful that immediate apprehension of a suspect is rarely more important than the safety of the public and department personnel.

458.2 DECISION TO PURSUE

- a. Officers may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual who the officer reasonably believes he or she has the authority to stop. The decision to initiate or continue such a foot pursuit, however, must be continuously reevaluated in light of the circumstances.
- b. Mere flight by a person who is not suspected of violating the law will not serve as the sole justification for engaging in an extended foot pursuit without the development of reasonable suspicion of the individual's involvement in criminal activity.
- c. Deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit is a decision that an officer must make quickly and under unpredictable and dynamic circumstances. It is recognized that foot pursuits potentially place department personnel and the public at significant risk. Therefore, no officer or supervisor will be criticized or

disciplined for deciding not to engage in a foot pursuit because of the perceived risk involved.

- d. Officers should secure their police vehicles before initiating a foot pursuit. A single officer should not abandon an unsecured police vehicle to chase a suspect fleeing on foot from a vehicle while other occupants of the suspect vehicle remain inside the vehicle.
- e. If circumstances permit, surveillance and containment are generally the safest tactics for apprehending fleeing persons. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, officers should continuously consider reasonable alternatives to pursuit based upon the circumstances and resources available, such as the following:
 - Containment of the area
 - Canine search
 - Saturation of the area with patrol personnel
 - Aerial support
 - Apprehension at another time

458.3 GUIDELINES FOR FOOT PURSUIT

The involved officer(s) must terminate a foot pursuit if ordered to do so by a sworn supervisor. Unless the officer reasonably believes that exigent circumstances exist (e.g., a serious threat to the safety of personnel or members of the public), officers should consider alternatives to engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit under any of the conditions listed below.

- a. The officer is acting alone.
- b. When two or more officers become separated, lose visual contact with one another, or obstacles separate them to the degree that they cannot immediately assist each other should a confrontation take place. In such circumstances, it is generally recommended that a single officer keep the suspect in sight from a safe distance and coordinate the containment effort.
- c. The officer is unsure of his or her location and direction of travel.
- d. When pursuing multiple suspects and the pursuing officers do not reasonably believe that they would be able to control the suspects should a confrontation occur.

- e. When the physical condition of the officers renders them incapable of controlling the suspect if apprehended.
- f. The officer loses radio contact with Central Lane Communications or with backup officers.
- g. The suspect enters a building, structure, confined space, or a wooded or otherwise isolated area and there are insufficient officers to provide backup and containment. The primary officer should consider discontinuing the pursuit and coordinating containment pending the arrival of sufficient officers.
- h. The officer becomes aware of unanticipated or unforeseen circumstances that unreasonably increase the risk to officers or the public.
- i. The officer reasonably believes that the danger to the pursuing officers or public outweighs the objective of immediate apprehension.
- j. The officer loses possession or functionality of his or her firearm or other essential equipment.
- k. The officer or a third party is injured during the pursuit, requiring immediate assistance, and there are no other emergency personnel available to render assistance.
- l. The suspect's location is no longer definitely known.
- m. The identity of the suspect is established or other information exists that will allow for the suspect's apprehension at a later time, and it reasonably appears that there is no immediate threat to department personnel or the public if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.
- n. The officer's ability to safely continue the pursuit is impaired by inclement weather, darkness, or other conditions.

458.4 RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOT PURSUITS

458.4.1 INITIATING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Unless relieved by another officer or a supervisor, the initiating officer(s) will be responsible for coordinating the progress of the pursuit. When acting alone and when practicable, the initiating officer should not attempt to overtake and confront the suspect but should attempt to keep the suspect in sight until sufficient officers are present to safely apprehend the suspect.

Early communication of available information from the involved officers is essential so that adequate resources can be coordinated and deployed to bring a foot pursuit to a safe conclusion. An officer initiating a foot pursuit should broadcast the following information as soon as it becomes practicable and available:

- a. Unit identifier
- b. Location and direction of travel
- c. Reason for the foot pursuit
- d. Number of suspects and description
- e. Whether the suspect is known or believed to be armed

Officers should be mindful that radio transmissions made while running may be difficult to understand and may need to be repeated.

When a foot pursuit terminates, the officer will notify the Central Lane Communications of his or her location and the status of the pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect.) Immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.

458.4.2 ASSISTING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever any officer announces that he or she is engaged in a foot pursuit, all other officers should minimize nonessential radio traffic to permit the involved officer(s) maximum access to the radio talk group/frequency, and those who are in a position to assist with containment or apprehension should do so.

458.4.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor will make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information necessary to direct responding resources and to take command, control, and coordination of the foot pursuit. The supervisor should respond to the area whenever possible; the supervisor does not need to be physically present to exercise control over the pursuit. The supervisor will continuously assess the situation in order to ensure the foot pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.
- b. The supervisor will terminate the foot pursuit when the danger to pursuing officers or the public unreasonably appears to outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect. The supervisor may discontinue the pursuit if he or she does not receive sufficient information to make an informed decision that the pursuit should continue.

- c. Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor will normally proceed to the termination point to direct the post-pursuit activity.

458.5 REPORTING

- a. Any foot pursuit which involves a reportable use of force, or which results in injury to any person or property damage, will be reported by the supervisor utilizing BlueTeam. This documentation will be done in accordance to policies and procedures defined for the BlueTeam system.

If the foot pursuit involves a suspect who has potentially committed a significant crime or is involved in a pattern of criminal activity, and there is usable investigative information, a police report should be prepared. In other cases, the foot pursuit can be documented through a FI card or CAD entry, including as much information about the suspect as possible in case there is later determined to be a connection to an identified crime.

PETE KERNS
Chief of Police