

Kent PD	WASPC	Title
#15.50	#15.4	Motor Vehicle Pursuits

Vehicle Pursuit Defined

A vehicle pursuit is the use of a marked police vehicle, operated by a commissioned police officer in department uniform, with the intent to stop a suspect who is intentionally trying to elude and/or evade the pursuing officer.

The Decision to Pursue/Evaluating the Circumstances

There are many factors to be considered before deciding to pursue a suspect. Each situation is unique. The policy of this department is to apprehend violators of the law, but that policy is balanced against a greater concern for the safety of the public and the employee. This may result in traffic violators or criminal suspects avoiding apprehension. Following this philosophy, officers are encouraged and supported to end the pursuits as soon as possible whether through forcible stopping, suspect error, or termination.

A police officer will not be criticized in any way for a decision to not initiate or discontinue a pursuit. Officers shall not initiate or engage in a pursuit while they have arrestees in their vehicle. Officers shall exercise their discretion before participating in a pursuit if they have a civilian rider, (i.e. family member, citizen academy member, employee applicant, etc.).

Officers must consider these factors before deciding whether or not to pursue:

1. The nature and seriousness of the initial offense.
2. The reason the suspect is fleeing, if known.
3. Whether there is a need for immediate apprehension, whether the suspect can be identified, the potential for apprehension of the suspect at a later time, and the danger to the officer and the public if the defendant is not apprehended immediately.
4. Other important considerations include: Traffic and pedestrian volume, roadway and weather conditions, familiarity with geography, the speed of the pursuit, the time of day, and the ability of other motorists and pedestrians to hear and see police emergency equipment.

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Responsibilities of Officer Initiating a Pursuit (Primary Unit)

1. Pursuits shall only be initiated by officers who are in uniform and who are operating a police vehicle that is equipped with functioning visual signals (lights) and audible signals (siren). Patrol cars without external light bars may initiate the pursuit but must request a vehicle equipped with an external light bar, to assist and assume primary responsibility. Police motorcycles shall not initiate or become involved in pursuits.
2. The primary unit shall comply with RCW 46.61.035 "Authorized Emergency Vehicles."
3. The primary unit shall immediately notify Valley Communications of the circumstances of the pursuit. Provide at a minimum: Vehicle description, speed, direction of travel, and reason for the pursuit.
4. The primary unit shall provide updated information to Valley Communications regularly as the circumstances reasonably permit, provided that this duty may be assumed by secondary units who join the pursuit.
5. The primary unit shall complete a case report documenting the pursuit and a pursuit form.

Responsibility of Secondary Units

1. Secondary units joining in the pursuit will notify Valley Communications immediately or as soon as reasonable.
2. The second unit's primary responsibility is to assist the primary unit by assuming the duty of communications during the pursuit and allowing the primary unit to concentrate on their driving.
3. The secondary units shall comply with RCW 46.61.035 "Authorized Emergency Vehicles."

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4. A pursuit ordinarily will involve no more than three units. Other units shall follow at a safe distance and shall comply with RCW 46.61.035 "Authorized Emergency Vehicles."

Responsibility of Valley Comm

1. On notification of a pursuit announce that the air is restricted.
2. Rebroadcast initial communications from the pursuing officer.
3. Confirm the supervisor knows of the pursuit. Supervisor may suspend rebroadcasts by the dispatchers to minimize communications interference.
4. Advise officers of known hazards affecting involved or responding units.
5. Notify surrounding agencies of the pursuit and/or requests for assistance.

Responsibility of Supervisors

1. State over the radio that he or she is monitoring the pursuit.
2. Direct the number of units to be involved in the pursuit.
3. Decide whether to let the pursuit continue or direct its termination.
4. Authorize the use of forcible stops.
5. Respond to the pursuit termination point, if at all possible, to provide guidance and supervision.
6. Assure that case reports, pursuit form, and pursuit critique are forwarded to the division commander.

Mandatory Pursuit Termination

Vehicle Pursuits will be terminated when:

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1. Directed by a supervisor or commanding officer.
2. The suspect is identified, immediate custody is not necessary to protect officers or the public, and apprehension at a later time is reasonably certain.
3. The danger of continuing the pursuit outweighs the immediate necessity of arresting the suspect.
4. Pursuing officer loses contact with the eluding vehicle.
5. Speed of the pursuit is beyond the driving skill of the officer.
6. Pursuing officers are unfamiliar with local geography or radio communication cannot be maintained.

When officers terminate a pursuit, they will pull to the side of the roadway, slow their vehicle, and de-activate their emergency equipment. They will announce by radio their location and that they have terminated their involvement. Terminated pursuits will be documented by case report, pursuit form, and pursuit critique form.

Pursuits That May Leave Kent Jurisdiction

For Kent Police Department pursuits that leave the city and go into another jurisdiction, officers should:

1. Have dispatch notify the outside agency sergeant and the Kent sergeant that the pursuit may be leaving the city before it occurs.
2. Consider having a unit from the other jurisdiction take over the pursuit if they are in a position to do so.
3. If there are no units available from the other jurisdiction, the officer should again consider the need to continue the pursuit due to unfamiliarity of the geography.
4. If a unit from the other jurisdiction is able to take over the pursuit, no more than two Kent (including K9) units shall remain in the pursuit. Other Kent

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units in the area should consider setting spikes in key locations within the outside agency jurisdiction.

After Action Reports/Pursuit Critique

All pursuits are to be documented by case report and pursuit form by the end of their duty shift. These reports are submitted to the shift supervisor for approval and critique. The patrol commander or designee is responsible for holding an after action critique for all vehicle pursuits.

The patrol Assistant Chief is responsible for storing the pursuit reports and the Support Services Commander will compile an annual statistical analysis, which is forwarded to the Chief or designee for review.

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