

## Tom Yabe

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**From:** Tom Yabe  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 12:55 PM  
**To:** Public Safety  
**Subject:** Vehicle pursuits  
**Attachments:** Pursuit criteria.pdf

Hello, everyone.

As we previously discussed, please find our pursuit guidance attached. Each supervisor has been provided a copy of this document for short-notice reference.

For some clarification:

- We are unable to provide blanket pre-authorization for vehicle pursuit of any particular crime. The RCW does not authorize that pre-authorization without the supervisor being present also to monitor the pursuit: "A peace officer may not engage in a vehicular pursuit, unless [...] the officer has received authorization to engage in the pursuit from a supervising officer **and there is supervisory control of the pursuit.**" ([RCW 10.116.060: Vehicular pursuit. \(wa.gov\)](#)). While I recognize that other departments provide pre-authorization to pursue, those departments also provide that pre-authorization while a supervisor is immediately available to provide for control of the pursuit.
- This cheat sheet is not intended to imply or direct that an officer contact an off-duty supervisor on every occasion when a pursuit could occur. I think that would be an excessive burden to place upon our patrol officers. Instead, please consider the specific circumstances which may be present during your investigation that lead you to suspect that a pursuit is likely. In that event, contacting a supervisor ahead of the pursuit would be appropriate.
- If an event evolves into a situation where a pursuit would be lawful, request Dispatch to contact an off-duty supervisor and utilize the attached guidance. South Sound 911 has been provided with the duty cell phone numbers for our supervisors. While awaiting the response of a supervisor, officers may follow a suspect vehicle without conducting a vehicle pursuit. Circumstances which differentiate following versus a vehicle pursuit include, but are not limited to those mentioned in RCW 46.61.035 ([RCW 46.61.035: Authorized emergency vehicles. \(wa.gov\)](#)):
  - o Proceed[ing] past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;
  - o Exceed[ing] the maximum speed limits so long as he or she does not endanger life or property;
  - o Disregard[ing] regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- Concerning the use of stop sticks, current policy states: "Whenever practicable, an officer shall seek approval from a supervisor before employing any intervention to stop the pursued vehicle," and "Tire deflation devices should be deployed only after notification of pursuing officers and the supervisor of the intent and location of the intended deployment [...]".
  - o As this action is not addressed within the applicable RCW, I will be modifying our current policy to reflect the following direction: "When a supervisor is on duty, an officer must notify the supervisor prior to deploying tire deflation devices. When a supervisor is not on duty, an officer must notify the supervisor as soon as practicable following deployment of a tire deflation device."

- Steilacoom officers seeking to engage in any vehicle pursuit must first obtain authorization and oversight by a supervisor. This includes vehicle pursuits initiated by Steilacoom officers or vehicle pursuits initiated by outside agencies.

Sgt. Bailey has crafted a list (attached) of offenses that qualify for vehicle pursuit consideration, as well as example language for what to communicate when requesting authorization from an off-duty supervisor.

Thank you.

Tom Yabe