

# Vehicle Pursuits

## 305.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for vehicle pursuits in order to protect the safety of involved officers, the public, and fleeing suspects.

### 305.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Blocking or vehicle intercept** - A slow-speed coordinated maneuver where two or more pursuing vehicles simultaneously intercept and block the movement of a suspect vehicle, the driver of which may be unaware of the impending enforcement stop. The goal is containment and preventing a pursuit. Blocking is not a moving or stationary roadblock.

**Boxing-in** - A tactic designed to stop a suspect's vehicle by surrounding it with law enforcement vehicles and then slowing all vehicles to a stop.

**Immobilizing Spikes** - A device designed to puncture the tire of a vehicle that moves from a stopped position.

**Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT)** - A low-speed maneuver designed to cause the suspect vehicle to spin out, stall, and come to a stop.

**Ramming** - The deliberate act of contacting a suspect's vehicle with another law enforcement vehicle to functionally damage or otherwise force the suspect's vehicle to stop.

**Roadblocks** - A tactic designed to stop a suspect's vehicle by intentionally placing a law enforcement vehicle or other immovable object in the path of the suspect's vehicle.

**Terminate** - To discontinue a pursuit or stop chasing fleeing vehicles.

**Tire deflation device** - A device designed to puncture the tires of the pursued vehicle.

**Trail** - Following the path of the pursuit at a safe speed while obeying all traffic laws and without activating emergency equipment. If the pursuit is at a slow rate of speed, the trailing vehicle will maintain sufficient distance from the pursuit vehicles so as to clearly indicate an absence of participation in the pursuit.

**Vehicle pursuit** - An attempt by a uniformed officer in a vehicle equipped with emergency lights and a siren to stop a moving vehicle where the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be aware that the officer is signaling the operator to stop the vehicle and the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be willfully resisting or ignoring the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle by increasing vehicle speed, making evasive maneuvers, or operating the vehicle in a reckless manner that endangers the safety of the community or the officer.

### 305.1.2 IMMOBILIZING SPIKES

The goal is to prevent or deter any vehicle from fleeing a lawful stop by law enforcement. With this in mind, each patrol and detective vehicle will be equipped with one Immobilizing Spike device

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(currently a Stop Stick "Piranha") that is designed to be deployed only on a vehicle that is not in motion with the intent of preemptively preventing a vehicle pursuit.

Examples of this may be when contacting or surveilling a high-risk suspect with the intent of apprehending them, contacting a stolen vehicle, or serving a high risk warrant in which there is the likelihood that the occupant(s) of the vehicle may flee.

Immobilizing Spikes shall not be used to enforce traffic infractions. Discretion should be used when deploying Immobilizing Spikes for a misdemeanor crime.

Personnel must review the manufacturer instructions and review video on proper deployment of the device prior to utilizing it in the field.

- [See attachment: Piranha Manufacturer Guideline](#)
- [Piranha Training Video](#)

Before deciding to deploy an Immobilizing Spike device, many factors must be considered:

- (a) Immobilizing Spikes shall not be used on motorcycles.
- (b) Immobilizing Spikes will only be deployed against a vehicle that is not in motion.
- (c) Care must be taken to ensure that pedestrians are not in immediate danger if the vehicle does become mobile.
- (d) Consider the likelihood that the person approaching the target vehicle will see Immobilizing Spikes. If detection of the Immobilizing Spikes is a concern, then consideration should be given to placement on the passenger side of the vehicle.
- (e) Multiple Immobilizing Spikes may be used in situations where the vehicle could be moved either backward or forward.
- (f) Assume a safe position after deploying the Immobilizing Spikes.
- (g) The officer may choose to inform the occupant of the vehicle that a Immobilizing Spikes have been deployed and that moving the vehicle may result in damage to the tire and the immobilization of that vehicle.

After deployment:

- (a) If the Immobilizing Spikes are struck by any vehicle, turn the unit in to the Lieutenant for reloading or replacement as necessary.
- (b) If the Immobilizing Spikes were not struck by any vehicle, inspect the unit for damage and return it to your assigned vehicle

Any deployment of Immobilizing Spikes which results in damage to the target vehicle or any other object/vehicle shall be reported in an associated general report.

Immobilizing Spikes should be carried in your vehicle glove box or center console.

#### 305.1.3 ELUDING OR ATTEMPTING TO ELUDE

The crime of Eluding or Attempting to Elude includes the actions of any driver of a motor vehicle who willfully fails or refuses to immediately bring his vehicle to a stop and who drives his vehicle in

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a reckless manner while attempting to elude a pursuing police vehicle, after being given a visual or audible signal to bring the vehicle to a stop. The signal given by the police officer may be by hand, voice, emergency light, or siren. The officer giving such a signal shall be in uniform and the vehicle shall be equipped with lights and sirens. (RCW 46.61.024).

### **305.1.4 OFFICIALLY MARKED PATROL VEHICLE**

An officially marked patrol vehicle is equipped with exterior "Police" graphics, emergency lights, and siren and operated by a uniformed, law enforcement officer.

### **305.1.5 PRIMARY UNIT**

The primary unit is the officer engaged in the pursuit who is closest in proximity to the fleeing vehicle.

### **305.1.6 SECONDARY UNIT**

The second officer is ordinarily the next vehicle to engage in a pursuit and may be at the request of the primary unit or at the direction of a supervisor.

### **305.1.7 BACKUP UNITS**

Other officers in the area may become directly involved in the pursuit only if requested by the primary unit or directed by a supervisor. If a pursuit continues into another jurisdiction, officers from that jurisdiction may participate as they deem appropriate.

## **305.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of this department to weigh the importance of apprehending suspects who unlawfully flee from law enforcement against the risks associated with vehicle pursuits.

## **305.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Vehicle pursuits shall only be conducted using authorized police department officially marked patrol vehicles. Unmarked vehicles may only be utilized as a pursuit vehicle only in accordance with §304.4.1

Officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property. However, officers may, when in pursuit of a suspect and provided there is no unreasonable risk to persons and property (RCW 46.61.035):

- (a) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (b) Exceed the speed limit.
- (c) Disregard regulations governing parking, direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

### **305.3.1 WHEN TO INITIATE A PURSUIT**

Officers are authorized to initiate a pursuit only when:

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- (a) When reasonable suspicion exists to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing one of the following violent offenses:
1. Any felony defined under any law as a class A felony or an attempt to commit a class A felony;
  2. Criminal solicitation of or criminal conspiracy to commit a class A felony;
  3. Manslaughter in the first degree;
  4. Manslaughter in the second degree;
  5. Indecent liberties if committed by forcible compulsion;
  6. Kidnapping in the second degree;
  7. Arson in the second degree;
  8. Assault in the second degree;
  9. Assault of a child in the second degree;
  10. Extortion in the first degree;
  11. Robbery in the second degree;
  12. Drive-by shooting;
  13. Vehicular assault, when caused by the operation or driving of a vehicle by a person while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug or by the operation or driving of a vehicle in a reckless manner; and
  14. Vehicular homicide, when proximately caused by the driving of any vehicle by any person while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug as defined by RCW [46.61.502](#), or by the operation of any vehicle in a reckless manner; or
- (b) There is reasonable suspicion to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing one of the following sex offenses:
1. A felony that is a violation of chapter [9A.44](#) RCW other than RCW [9A.44.132](#);
  2. A violation of RCW [9A.64.020](#);
  3. A felony that is a violation of chapter [9.68A](#) RCW other than RCW [9.68A.080](#);
  4. A felony that is, under chapter [9A.28](#) RCW, a criminal attempt, criminal solicitation, or criminal conspiracy to commit such crimes; or
  5. A felony violation of RCW [9A.44.132](#)(1) (failure to register as a sex offender) if the person has been convicted of violating RCW [9A.44.132](#)(1) (failure to register as a sex offender) or [9A.44.130](#) prior to June 10, 2010, on at least one prior occasion; or
- (c) There is reasonable suspicion to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing Escape as defined in RCW [9A.76](#); or

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- (d) There is reasonable suspicion to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing an assault in the first, second, third, or fourth degree offense under chapter [9A.36](#) RCW only if the assault involves domestic violence as defined in RCW [10.99.020](#)
- (e) There is reasonable suspicion to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing an assault in the first, second, third, or fourth degree offense under chapter [9A.36](#) RCW only if the assault involves domestic violence as defined in RCW [10.99.020](#); or
- (f) There is reasonable suspicion that a person in the vehicle has committed the crime of vehicular assault with substantial bodily harm; or
- (g) There is reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a driving under the influence offense under RCW 46.61.502. Reasonable suspicion of driver impairment should be articulated from observations that occur before the initiation of a pursuit.

Any such pursuit must be necessary for the purpose of identifying or apprehending the person; and The person poses a serious risk of harm to others and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered to be greater than the safety risks of the vehicle pursuit under the circumstances.

At no time should simple traffic infractions(s) alone be the basis for a pursuit.

#### 305.3.2 SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY REQUIRED

The pursuing officer shall notify a supervising officer immediately upon initiating the vehicular pursuit. Supervisory oversight of the pursuit must be maintained throughout. The pursuing officer, in consultation with the supervising officer, shall consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit, the justification for the vehicular pursuit and other safety considerations, including but not limited to speed, weather, traffic, road conditions, and the known presence of minors in the vehicle.

The pursuing officer and the supervising officer, shall comply with any agency procedures for designating the primary pursuit vehicle and determining the appropriate number of vehicles permitted to participate in the vehicular pursuit

For purposes of this section, an on-duty supervisor can authorize their own pursuit subject to other conditions of this policy.

If no supervisor is on duty, officers may attempt to contact an off-duty supervisor to obtain authorization prior to engaging in a pursuit. If possible, the anticipation of an event which may trigger a pursuit (e.g. observing an in-progress crime) could prompt an on-duty officer to attempt to contact a supervisor in advance. The officer in consultation with the supervising officer must consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit.

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The pursuing officer must be able to directly communicate with other officers engaging in the pursuit, the supervising officer, and the dispatch agency, such as being on a common radio channel or having other direct means of communication;

The vehicular pursuit must be terminated if any of the requirements of this subsection are not met.

### 305.3.3 WHEN TO TERMINATE A PURSUIT

Pursuits should be terminated whenever the totality of objective circumstances known or which reasonably ought to be known to the officer or supervisor during the pursuit indicates that the present risks of continuing the pursuit reasonably appear to outweigh the risks resulting from the suspect's escape.

When a supervisor directs the pursuit to be terminated, officers will immediately terminate the pursuit. Pursuing units must make a clear break from an active pursuit by turning off emergency equipment, turning away from the last known path of the fleeing vehicle, and reducing speed to legal limits. Absent authorization from a supervisor, officers will not reinitiate a pursuit with the same fleeing vehicle.

The factors listed in this policy on when to initiate a pursuit will apply equally to the decision to terminate a pursuit. Officers and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential danger to uninvolved motorists, themselves and the public when electing to continue a pursuit.

### 305.3.4 AIRCRAFT ASSISTANCE

When available, outside agency aircraft assistance should be requested. Once the air unit has established visual contact with the pursued vehicle and communications have been established, it should assume coordination of the pursuit. The primary and secondary ground units should consider the participation of aircraft assistance when determining whether to continue the pursuit.

The air unit should coordinate the activities of resources on the ground, report progress of the pursuit and provide officers and supervisors with details of upcoming traffic congestion, road hazards, or other pertinent information to evaluate whether or not to continue the pursuit. The air unit shall not be responsible to decide if the pursuit should be continued or terminated.

### 305.3.5 VEHICLE PURSUIT FACTORS

Factors that shall be considered, both individually and collectively, when deciding to initiate or continue a pursuit include but are not limited to (Chapter 320 § 7, 2021 Laws):

- (a) The seriousness of the known or reasonably suspected crime and its relationship to community safety.
- (b) The importance of protecting the public and balancing the known or reasonably suspected offense and the apparent need for immediate capture against the risks to officers, innocent motorists, and others.
- (c) The safety of the public in the area of the pursuit, including the type of area, time of day, the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic (e.g., school zones), and the speed of the pursuit relative to these factors.

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- (d) The pursuing officers' familiarity with the area of the pursuit, the quality of radio communications between the pursuing vehicles and the dispatcher/supervisor, and the driving capabilities of the pursuing officers under the conditions of the pursuit.
- (e) Whether weather, traffic, and road conditions unreasonably increase the danger of the pursuit when weighed against the risks resulting from the suspect's escape.
- (f) Whether the identity of the suspect has been verified and whether there is comparatively minimal risk in allowing the suspect to be apprehended at a later time.
- (g) The performance capabilities of the vehicles used in the pursuit in relation to the speed and other conditions of the pursuit.
- (h) Emergency lighting and siren limitations on unmarked police department vehicles that may reduce visibility of the vehicle, such as visor or dash-mounted lights, concealable or temporary emergency lighting equipment, and concealed or obstructed siren positioning.
- (i) Vehicle speeds.
- (j) Other persons in or on the pursued vehicle (e.g., minors, passengers, co-offenders, hostages).
- (k) The availability of other resources, such as air support assistance.
- (l) Whether the pursuing vehicle is carrying passengers other than on-duty police officers. Pursuits should not be undertaken with an arrestee in the pursuit vehicle unless exigent circumstances exist, and then only after the need to apprehend the suspect is weighed against the safety of the arrestee in transport. A vehicle containing more than a single arrestee should not be involved in a pursuit.
- (m) The distance between the pursuing vehicle and the fleeing vehicle is so great that further pursuit would be futile or require the pursuit to continue for an unreasonable time or distance.
- (n) The pursued vehicle's location is no longer definitely known.
- (o) The pursuing vehicle sustains damage or a mechanical failure that renders it unsafe to drive.
- (p) The pursuing vehicle's emergency lighting equipment or siren becomes partially or completely inoperable.
- (q) Hazards to uninvolved bystanders or motorists.
- (r) The danger that the continued pursuit poses to the public, the officers or the suspect, balanced against the risk of allowing the suspect to remain at large.
- (s) The identity of the suspect is known or becomes known and it does not reasonably appear that the need for immediate capture outweighs the risks associated with continuing the pursuit.

#### **305.4 PURSUIT VEHICLES**

Only an officially-marked police vehicle shall serve as the primary unit in a pursuit. Unmarked vehicles will not initiate or serve as a primary unit. When involved in a pursuit, unmarked police

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department emergency vehicles should be replaced by marked emergency vehicles whenever practicable. Operators of unmarked police vehicles should factor in the limitations imposed by this type of vehicle and the possible lack of recognition of these vehicles to uninvolved motorists.

Vehicle pursuits should be limited to no more than three police department emergency vehicles, however, the number of vehicles involved will vary with the circumstances.

An officer or supervisor may request that additional vehicles join a pursuit if, after assessing the factors outlined above, it appears that the number of officers involved would be insufficient to safely arrest the number of suspects. All other officers shall stay out of the pursuit but should remain alert to its progress and location. Any officer who drops out of a pursuit may then, if necessary, proceed to the pursuit termination point at legal speeds, following the appropriate rules of the road.

#### 305.4.1 VEHICLES WITHOUT EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Officers operating vehicles not equipped with emergency lights and siren are prohibited from initiating or joining in any pursuit. Officers in such vehicles may provide support to pursuing vehicles as long as the vehicle is operated in compliance with all traffic laws. Those officers should discontinue such support immediately upon arrival of a sufficient number of authorized emergency police department vehicles or any air support.

#### 305.4.2 PRIMARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The initial pursuing officer will be designated as the primary pursuit vehicle and will be responsible for the conduct of the pursuit unless he/she is unable to remain reasonably close to the suspect's vehicle. The primary responsibility of the officer initiating the pursuit is the apprehension of the suspect without unreasonable danger to him/herself or others.

The primary pursuing officer shall notify a supervisor immediately upon initiating a vehicle pursuit. The officer and the supervisor shall consider alternatives to initiating a vehicle pursuit as well as safety considerations (RCW 10.116.060).

The primary pursuing officer should notify the dispatcher, commencing with a request for priority radio traffic, that a vehicle pursuit has been initiated, and as soon as practicable provide information including, but not limited to:

- (a) The location, direction of travel and estimated speed of the suspect's vehicle.
- (b) The description of the suspect's vehicle including the license plate number, if known.
- (c) The reason for the pursuit.
- (d) The use of firearms, threat of force, violence, injuries, hostages or other unusual hazards.
- (e) The number of occupants and identity or description.
- (f) The weather, road and traffic conditions.
- (g) The need for any additional resources or equipment.
- (h) The identity of other law enforcement agencies involved in the pursuit.



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Until relieved by a supervisor or a secondary pursuing officer, the officer in the primary pursuit vehicle shall be responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit. Unless circumstances reasonably indicate otherwise, the primary pursuing officer should, as soon as practicable, relinquish the responsibility of broadcasting the progress of the pursuit to an officer in a secondary pursuit vehicle or to air support joining the pursuit to minimize distractions and allow the primary pursuing officer to concentrate foremost on safe pursuit tactics.

### **305.4.3 SECONDARY PURSUIT VEHICLE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The second officer in the pursuit will be designated as the secondary pursuit vehicle and is responsible for:

- (a) Immediately notifying the dispatcher of his/her entry into the pursuit.
- (b) Remaining a safe distance behind the primary pursuit vehicle unless directed to assume the role of primary pursuit vehicle or if the primary pursuit vehicle is unable to continue the pursuit.
- (c) Broadcasting information that the primary pursuing officer is unable to provide.
- (d) Broadcasting the progress of the pursuit, updating known or critical information and providing changes in the pursuit, unless the situation indicates otherwise.
- (e) Identifying the need for additional resources or equipment as appropriate.
- (f) Serving as backup to the primary pursuing officer once the suspect has been stopped.

### **305.5 SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Available supervisory and management control will be exercised over all vehicle pursuits involving officers from this department (RCW 10.116.060).

The field supervisor of the officer initiating the pursuit, or if unavailable, the nearest field supervisor, will be responsible for:

- (a) Immediately notifying involved officers and the dispatcher of supervisory presence and ascertaining all reasonably available information to continuously assess the situation and risk factors associated with the pursuit. This is to ensure that the pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.
- (b) Engaging in the pursuit, when appropriate, to provide on-scene supervision.
- (c) Exercising management and control of the pursuit even if not engaged in it.
- (d) Ensuring that no more than the required law enforcement vehicles are involved in the pursuit under the guidelines set forth in this policy.
- (e) Directing that the pursuit be terminated if, in the field supervisor's judgment, it is not justified to continue the pursuit under the guidelines of this policy.
- (f) Ensuring that assistance from air support, canines, or additional resources is requested, if available and appropriate.
- (g) Ensuring that the proper radio channel is being used.
- (h) Ensuring that the Shift Supervisor is notified of the pursuit, as soon as practicable.

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- (i) Ensuring the notification and/or coordination of outside agencies if the pursuit either leaves or is likely to leave the jurisdiction of this department.
- (j) Controlling and managing Gig Harbor Police Department officers when a pursuit enters another jurisdiction.
- (k) Preparing a post-pursuit review and documentation of the pursuit as required.

#### 305.5.1 ASSUMPTION OF PURSUIT BY ANOTHER AGENCY

The supervising officer, the pursuing officer, or dispatcher shall notify other law enforcement agencies or surrounding jurisdictions that may be impacted by the vehicular pursuit or called upon to assist with the vehicular pursuit, and the pursuing officer and the supervising officer, if applicable, shall comply with any agency procedures for coordinating operations with other jurisdictions, including available tribal police departments.

Units originally involved will discontinue the pursuit when advised that another agency has assumed the pursuit and assistance of the Gig Harbor Police Department is no longer needed. Upon discontinuing the pursuit, the primary unit may proceed upon request, with or at the direction of a supervisor, to the termination point to assist in the investigation.

The role and responsibilities of officers at the termination of a pursuit initiated by this department shall be coordinated with appropriate consideration of the units from the agency assuming the pursuit.

Notification of a pursuit in progress should not be construed as a request to join the pursuit. Requests to or from another agency to assume a pursuit should be specific.

#### 305.5.2 PURSUITS EXTENDING INTO THIS JURISDICTION

The agency that initiates a pursuit shall be responsible for conducting the pursuit. Units from this department should not join a pursuit unless specifically requested to do so by the agency whose officers are in pursuit. The exception to this is when a single unit from the initiating agency is in pursuit. Under this circumstance, up to two additional units from this department may join the pursuit as the secondary units until sufficient units from the initiating agency join the pursuit.

When a request is made for this department to assist or take over a pursuit from another agency that has entered this jurisdiction, the supervisor should consider these additional following factors:

- (a) Ability to maintain the pursuit.
- (b) Reason for the pursuit is authorized within this policy.
- (c) Adequate staffing to continue the pursuit.
- (d) The public's safety within this jurisdiction.
- (e) Safety of the pursuing officers.

If the allied agency is no longer directly involved in a pursuit or has lost reasonable contact with the fleeing vehicle, officers of this department will not serve as a primary pursuit unit unless the reason for the pursuit meets the same criteria specified in §304.3.1.

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As soon as practical, a supervisor should review a request for assistance from another agency. The supervisor, after consideration of the above factors, may decline to assist in, or assume the other agency's pursuit.

Assistance to a pursuing allied agency by officers of this department will terminate at the City limits provided that the pursuing officers have sufficient assistance from other sources. Ongoing participation from this department may continue only until sufficient assistance is present.

In the event that a pursuit from another agency terminates within this jurisdiction, officers shall provide appropriate assistance to officers from the allied agency including, but not limited to, scene control, coordination and completion of supplemental reports and any other assistance requested or needed.

### **305.6 DISPATCH**

If the pursuit is confined within the City limits, radio communications will be conducted on the primary channel unless instructed otherwise by a supervisor or dispatcher. If the pursuit leaves the jurisdiction of this department or such is imminent, involved officers should, whenever available, switch radio communications to a tactical or emergency channel most accessible by participating agencies.

#### **305.6.1 USE OF FIREARMS**

The use of firearms to disable a pursued vehicle is not generally an effective tactic and involves all the dangers associated with discharging firearms. Officers should not utilize firearms during an ongoing pursuit unless the conditions and circumstances dictate that such use reasonably appears necessary to protect life and no other reasonably effective alternative appears to exist. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any officer from using a firearm to stop a suspect from using a vehicle as a deadly weapon.

#### **305.6.2 WRONG-WAY PURSUITS**

Officers should not pursue vehicles that proceed the wrong way on a divided highway, freeway, freeway access, or one-way street unless specifically authorized by a supervisor. Officers may attempt to stop the vehicle from legally available lanes of travel.

### **305.7 LOSS OF PURSUED VEHICLE**

When the pursued vehicle is lost, the involved officers should broadcast pertinent information to assist other officers in locating the vehicle. The primary pursuing officer or supervisor will be responsible for coordinating any further search for either the pursued vehicle or suspects fleeing on foot.

### **305.8 PURSUIT INTERVENTION**

Pursuit intervention is an attempt to stop the suspect's ability to continue to flee in a vehicle through tactical application of technology, tire deflation devices, blocking or vehicle intercept, boxing-in, the PIT, ramming or roadblock procedures.

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#### 305.8.1 WHEN USE IS AUTHORIZED

As soon as practicable after initiating a pursuit, the primary pursuing officer and supervisor, if available, shall develop a plan for the termination of the pursuit using available intervention options (RCW 10.116.060).

In deciding whether to use intervention tactics, officers/supervisors should balance the risk of allowing the pursuit to continue with the potential hazards arising from the use of each tactic to the public, the officers, and persons in or on the pursued vehicle. With this in mind, the decision to use any intervention tactic should be reasonable in light of the circumstances apparent to the officer at the time of the decision.

#### 305.8.2 INTERVENTION STANDARDS

Any intervention tactic, depending upon the conditions and circumstances under which it is used, may present dangers to the officers, the public, or anyone in or on the vehicle being pursued. Certain applications of intervention tactics may be construed to be a use of force, including deadly force, and are subject to policies guiding such use. Officers shall consider these facts and requirements prior to deciding how, when, where, and if an intervention tactic should be employed.

- (a) Blocking or vehicle intercept should only be considered in cases involving felony suspects or impaired drivers who pose a threat to the public's safety, and when officers reasonably believe that attempting a conventional enforcement stop will likely result in the driver attempting to flee in the vehicle. Because of the potential risks involved, this intervention tactic should only be employed by properly trained officers and after giving consideration to the following:
  - 1. The need to immediately stop the suspect vehicle or prevent it from leaving substantially outweighs the risk of injury or death to occupants of the suspect vehicle, officers, or others.
  - 2. All other reasonable intervention tactics have failed or reasonably appear ineffective.
  - 3. Employing the blocking or vehicle intercept maneuver does not unreasonably increase the risk of danger to those involved or the public.
  - 4. The suspect vehicle is stopped or traveling at a low speed.
  - 5. Only law enforcement vehicles should be used in this tactic.
- (b) The PIT is limited to use by properly trained officers upon assessment of the circumstances and conditions presented at the time, including the potential for risk of injury to officers, the public, and occupants of the pursued vehicle.
- (c) Ramming a fleeing vehicle should be done only after other reasonable tactical means at the officer's disposal have been exhausted or would not be effective, and immediate control is necessary. Ramming should be reserved for situations where there does not appear to be another reasonable alternative method. If there does not reasonably appear to be a present or immediately foreseeable serious threat to the public, the use of ramming is not authorized. When ramming is used as a means to stop a fleeing vehicle, the following factors should be present:

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1. The suspect is an actual or suspected felon, who reasonably appears to represent a serious threat to the public if not apprehended.
  2. The suspect is driving with willful or wanton disregard for the safety of other persons or is driving in a reckless and life-endangering manner or using the vehicle as a weapon.
- (d) Boxing-in a suspect vehicle should only be attempted upon approval by a supervisor. The use of such a tactic must be carefully coordinated with all involved vehicles, taking into consideration the circumstances and conditions apparent at the time, as well as the potential risk of injury to officers, the public, and occupants of the pursued vehicle. Officers and supervisors should weigh the potential consequences against the need to immediately stop the vehicle.
- (e) Tire deflation devices should be deployed only after notification of pursuing officers and the supervisor of the intent and location of the intended deployment, and in a manner that:
1. Should reasonably only affect the pursued vehicle.
  2. Provides the deploying officer adequate cover and escape from intentional or unintentional exposure to the approaching vehicle.
  3. Takes into account the limitations of such devices as well as the potential risk to officers, the public, and occupants of the pursued vehicle.
  4. Takes into account whether the pursued vehicle is a motorcycle, a vehicle transporting hazardous materials, or a school bus transporting children.
- (f) Because roadblocks involve a potential for serious injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle if the suspect does not stop, the intentional placement of roadblocks in the direct path of a pursued vehicle is generally discouraged and should not be deployed without prior approval of a supervisor. If roadblocks are deployed, it should only be done under extraordinary conditions when all other reasonable intervention tactics have failed or reasonably appear ineffective and the need to immediately stop the pursued vehicle substantially outweighs the risks of injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle, officers, or the public.

#### 305.8.3 PURSUIT IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE (PIT)

The Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT) is a technical maneuver designed to cause the suspect vehicle to spin out and terminate the pursuit. PIT is a forced rotational vehicle stop of a noncompliant suspect in an effort to end the suspect's flight. Officers must have received formal training in the utilization of the PIT maneuver before using the technique.

#### 305.8.4 PIT INTERVENTION

The Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT) is authorized for use in stopping pursued or fleeing vehicles under the following circumstances:

- (a) To apprehend offenders whose actions indicate a willful or wanton disregard for the safety of the officer(s) or the public, or the desire to inflict serious injury to the officer(s) or the public

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- (b) After less intrusive methods have been tried and have been ineffective or when the totality of the circumstances require intervention at this level of force.
- (c) When an appropriate location is available/selected for the use of PIT, including good sight distance and free from hazards such as bridges, pedestrians, oncoming traffic and ditches.
- (d) The officer has completed department-approved training on PIT and has practiced the technique in a training environment.
- (e) The use of the PIT technique at speeds of 40 MPH or less does not require supervisor approval.
- (f) When practical, supervisory approval should be obtained for the use of PIT at speeds over 40 MPH, but is not required if exigent circumstances exist.
- (g) The PIT technique will not be used on a bicycle, motorcycle, trailer, scooter, bus, motorhome or any vehicle carrying hazardous materials.
- (h) The PIT will only be conducted in a department marked patrol vehicle that is pursuit rated.

Before employing PIT, the involved officer should also consider if there are known weapons involved and the number of backup officers available at the moment of the maneuver.

### **305.9 CAPTURE OF SUSPECTS**

Proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment are the keys to a successful conclusion of a pursuit and apprehension of evading suspects. Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Unless relieved by a supervisor, the primary pursuing officer should coordinate efforts to apprehend the suspect following the pursuit. Officers should consider the safety of the public and the involved officers when formulating plans for setting up perimeters or for containing and capturing the suspect.

### **305.10 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

All appropriate reports shall be completed to comply with appropriate laws and policies or procedures.

- (a) The primary pursuing officer shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports.
- (b) The primary pursuing officer or supervisor shall complete the appropriate pursuit report.
- (c) After first obtaining the available information, the involved, or if unavailable, on-duty field supervisor shall promptly complete a supervisor's log or interoffice memorandum, briefly summarizing the pursuit to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. This log or memorandum should include, at a minimum:

# Gig Harbor Police Department

Gig Harbor PD Policy Manual

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

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1. Date and time of the pursuit.
  2. Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the pursuit.
  3. Length of pursuit in distance and time, including the starting and termination points.
  4. Involved vehicles and officers.
  5. Alleged offenses.
  6. Whether a suspect was apprehended, as well as the means and methods used.
    - (a) Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
  7. Arrestee information, if applicable.
  8. Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
  9. Any property or equipment damage.
  10. Name of supervisor at the scene or who handled the incident.
  11. A preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.
- (d) After receiving copies of reports, logs, and other pertinent information, the Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall conduct or assign the completion of a post-pursuit review, as appropriate.
- (e) Annually, the Chief of Police shall direct a documented management review and analysis of department vehicle pursuits to minimally address policy (including suitability and compliance), procedure, training, and/or personnel issues that are identified during the review process. The Chief of Police shall review and approve the final report.

### **305.11 REGULAR AND PERIODIC PURSUIT TRAINING**

In addition to initial and supplementary training on pursuits, all officers will participate, no less than biennially, in regular and periodic training addressing this policy and the importance of vehicle safety and protecting the public. Training will include recognition of the need to balance the known offense and the need for immediate capture against the risks to officers and others.

All officers engaging in vehicle pursuits shall have completed an emergency vehicle operator course, refresher training in emergency vehicle operation within two years prior to the pursuit, and be certified in at least one pursuit intervention option (RCW 10.116.060).

## **Attachments**



## **Piranha Manufacturer Guidelines.pdf**

# **Guidelines for Use of **PIRANHA®****

## **Student Lesson Plan**

**To be completed after viewing the Piranha® User Training Video**

**Issue No. 2  
September 2006**



# Guidelines For Use of PIRANHA® Student Lesson Plan

## *Student Lesson:*

Before reading these guidelines, WATCH the Piranha® User Training Video and READ your agency's Pursuit Policy.

### **⚠ WARNING**

**You or others can be killed or seriously injured if you don't follow safety messages.**

Your safety and the safety of others is very important. We have provided many safety messages in this lesson plan. A safety message alerts you to potential hazards and instructs you on how to avoid or reduce the hazard. Each safety message is preceded by a safety alert symbol ⚠. Please carefully read and follow these important messages.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Piranha® is one of a series of law enforcement tools, that have been developed by Stop Stick, Ltd., to assist law enforcement agencies in preventing vehicle pursuits. In the course of this lesson, you will be instructed on methods of deployment for Piranha®.

## **II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this training, each participant should be able to:

1. Describe the basic construction of Piranha®.
2. State, orally or in writing, the recommended surface for successful deployment of Piranha®.
3. State, orally or in writing the safety and tactical considerations for use of Piranha®.
4. State, orally or in writing, the type of vehicle Piranha® should **NOT** be deployed against.
5. State, orally or in writing, the various methods of deployment.
6. Demonstrate the proper method for reloading Piranha®.



**Piranha**

# Guidelines For Use of PIRANHA® Student Lesson Plan

## *Student Lesson:*

### III. OVERVIEW and NOMENCLATURE

Piranha® is a “pursuit prevention” device for use on a stationary target vehicle. If the target vehicle is moved and the tire rides over Piranha®, it will result in tire deflation quickly, generally, in approximately five seconds. Potential uses could include any situation when the target vehicle is stationary, such as warrant service, SWAT situations, stake-out of stolen vehicle, or vehicle check point areas.

Piranha® is 3 ½ inches (8.9cm) in length and weighs 5.2 ounces (147g). Piranha® is comprised of the following components and sub-assemblies:

1. One (1) black polypropylene SHROUD which covers the quills and allows safe handling.
2. Two (2) Teflon® coated hardened steel QUILLS; 3/8 inch (.95cm) in diameter and 2 inch (5.08cm) in length oriented in the cartridge and secured perpendicular to the base.
3. One (1) glass polypropylene CARTRIDGE to which the shroud is secured and which holds the quills in place.
4. One (1) 3 5/16 inch (7.94cm) ABS plastic BASE into which the cartridge is inserted.
5. Two (2) polymer END CAPS which hold the cartridge in the base.
6. Four (4) fastening SCREWS to secure end caps.

### IV. DEPLOYMENT OF PIRANHA®

**⚠ ALWAYS follow the policies and procedures of your Agency when deploying Piranha®.**

Piranha® training materials are intended to supplement the formal Pursuit Policy of your agency. Stop Stick, Ltd. recommends that these “Guidelines For Use” be incorporated into your agency’s written Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). However, the training, policies, and procedures of your agency – including when and how to deploy Piranha® – supersede any written or verbal instructions from Stop Stick, Ltd.



**Exploded View**

# Guidelines For Use of Piranha®

## Student Lesson Plan

### *Student Lesson:*

#### A. Before Deploying Piranha®

Before deciding to deploy Piranha®, many factors must be considered. The following are some important safety and tactical issues to think about.

#### **Safety Considerations:**

The circumstances of each pursuit are very different, but safety is always the most important factor.


The following warnings appear on every Piranha® and should ALWAYS be kept in mind when using Piranha®:


#### **WARNING**


- **DO NOT** use this device without proper **TRAINING**
- **NEVER** use tire deflation devices on **MOTORCYCLES**
- Contains **SHARP SPIKES**, never bend or push spikes through housing
- **READ** and **FOLLOW** the "Reload Instructions" when replacing cartridges
- **DO NOT** attempt to repair or disassemble spike cartridges

Visit [www.stopstick.com](http://www.stopstick.com) or call 1-800-537-0102 for more information.

In addition to the product label warnings, ALWAYS keep the following important safety considerations in mind when using Piranha:

 **RESTRICT PEDESTRIANS.** Bystanders, observers and other pedestrians in the surrounding area are especially vulnerable to injury if they are struck by a vehicle. **NEVER** deploy Piranha with pedestrians in the immediate vicinity.

 **NEVER use Piranha on vehicles with fewer than four wheels.** Vehicles such as motorcycles and 3-wheeled ATVs are less stable and persons driving these vehicles are more likely to lose control when their tires deflate.

 **ONLY deploy Piranha when you have a safe location to observe the target vehicle.** You could be struck if suspects unexpectedly swerve, stop, or lose control of their vehicle. You must be able to safely observe the target vehicle and other traffic.

# Guidelines For Use of Piranha®

## Student Lesson Plan

### *Student Lesson:*

**⚠ CONSIDER that the driver may attempt to continue operating the target vehicle after deployment of Piranha®.** Vehicles with one or more deflated tires may still be operated. In this event, the driver may lose control of the vehicle while attempting to operate it with one or more deflated tires, potentially endangering you, pedestrians and other motorists.

### **Tactical Considerations:**

Before deploying Piranha®, you should consider the

following:  
1. What is the likelihood that the person approaching the target vehicle will see Piranha® and how might the person react?

2. If detection of Piranha® is a concern, then placement should be on the passenger side of the vehicle.
3. Multiple Piranha® may be used in situations where the vehicle could be moved either backward or forward.
4. After deploying Piranha®, position yourself in a safe location away from the point of contact between the target vehicle and the deployed Piranha®.

### **B. Deploying Piranha®**

To deploy Piranha®, the following guidelines apply:

1. Piranha® may be deployed on paved surfaces, soft ground, gravel or sand surfaces.
2. Place Piranha® approximately 6 inches (15cm) from the target vehicle tire.
3. The grooved ABS plastic base must be placed face down against the road surface.
4. If it appears possible that the target vehicle could depart by going forward or backward, be sure to place Piranha® on each side of the target vehicles' tire(s).



# Guidelines For Use of Piranha®

## Student Lesson Plan

### *Student Lesson:*

#### C. After Deploying Piranha®

If Piranha® **was struck** by any vehicle:

- refer to reload instructions included with each Piranha®.
- contact Stop Stick, Ltd. at 513 202 5500 to order a Piranha® Hit Kit if no replacement cartridges are available.

If Piranha® **was not struck** by any vehicle:

- inspect Piranha® for damage.
- return Piranha® to your selected storage area for the next deployment situation.



**Piranha® Reload**

#### V. CARE AND MAINTENANCE

With reasonable care, your Piranha® will be ready to aid you in preventing or terminating a pursuit that creates a hazard to you and the public.

Follow these simple guidelines to ensure your Piranha® is ready for use:

- Keep Piranha® separate from other equipment to prevent inadvertent contact that could damage Piranha® or other equipment.
- Store Piranha® in a location that is easily accessible for rapid deployment.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Piranha® can allow you to prevent a pursuit before it starts; thus avoiding the potential of a pursuit that could endanger you, the public, and the fleeing suspect.