



PORT ORCHARD POLICE DEPARTMENT
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POLICY REVIEW — IR# 19-002

DATE: August 26th, 2019

IR# 19-002

SUBJECT: Pursuit D19-002078

BY: 
Matt Brown, Chief of Police

REQUIRED REPORTING – GENERAL ORDER 1830 - MOTOR VEHICLE PURSUITS

Date/Time: August 10th, 2019 at 2009 hrs

Length of Pursuit: 0.3 miles / 12 seconds

Involved Units/Officers: M. Bell / A. Petritz

Initial Reason for the Pursuit: Criminal Traffic

Starting Point: Bethel/Blueberry

Termination Point: Bethel/Sedgewick

Disposition: Terminated

Injuries/Property Damage: None

Medical Treatment: None

Supervisor: D. Main

Preliminary Determination: Within Policy

Additional Review/Investigation Needed: None

Related Reports: D19-002078

BACKGROUND:

Officers located an occupied parked vehicle and believed the driver to be DWLS 1st. Off. Petritz set up a short distance away to affect a traffic stop should the driver choose to operate the vehicle on a public roadway.

A short time later the vehicle, with the suspected DWLS 1st driver, passed Off. Petritz traveling southbound on Bethel Rd. Off. Petritz activated her emergency equipment to signal the vehicle to stop. The driver chose to increase the vehicle's speed and drive into oncoming lanes.



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Off. Bell was quickly the second car in the pursuit and advised Cencom of the vehicle's actions. The suspect driver continued to drive recklessly into oncoming lanes and Off. Bell terminated the pursuit. Both officers deactivated their emergency equipment and slowed their patrol vehicles to the posted speed limit. The suspect vehicle got on the freeway and officers lost sight of it.

ANALYSIS:

To conduct this policy review, I reviewed all written reports, sergeant's documentation, and all audio files provided by Kitsap 911 related to this incident.

Officer Petritz initiated a vehicle stop and immediately broadcast that the vehicle was fleeing at a high rate of speed. Officer Petritz's voice was calm and even as she relayed the initial information about the vehicle fleeing from her. Officer Bell was with her almost immediately and took over all radio communications to allow Officer Petritz to focus on her driving. Officer Bell continuously broadcast his/her position, speed, traffic, and roadway conditions, in addition to other traffic violations the suspect was committing during the pursuit. Officer Bell, too, remained calm throughout and did not appear to be overwhelmed by the event.

POPD policy states, "Officers shall terminate the pursuit... whenever the level of danger created by the pursuit outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension." POPD policy also states, "Factors to be considered in terminating a pursuit shall include whether or not the crime is a dangerous felony or the violator poses an immediate or future threat of death or serious bodily injury to officers or the public." In this case, there did not appear to be any factors that showed the violator to be an immediate or future threat, the alleged crime was a gross misdemeanor violation of the traffic code, and officers initially believed they knew the driver. Additionally, the driver of the suspect vehicle increased the risk to the public by driving in oncoming lanes.

Officer Petritz and Officer Bell demonstrated in their radio transmissions that they were actively monitoring speed, road, and driving conditions throughout the event. I would submit that Officer Bell's decision to discontinue the pursuit as it continued to place the public at risk further demonstrates that he continually weighed the importance of apprehending the suspect against the risk factors associated with the pursuit.

CONCLUSION

It is my opinion that based upon the totality of the events, the actions of Off. Petritz and Off. Bell in this incident are within policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

None