



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



## Foot Pursuits

Eff. Date 9/11/2018

### Purpose

To facilitate the safe apprehension of a subject who flees on foot and to prevent injuries to all involved parties.

### Definitions

- Foot Pursuit:** A situation in which an officer, on foot, chases a subject in an effort to detain or arrest that individual, when the subject is resisting apprehension by fleeing from the officer.
- Subject:** Includes any individual who a police officer has a lawful reason to detain.
- Contact/Cover:** Describes the practice of having two or more officers working together during a foot pursuit. The officers work in unison via direct or indirect communication to coordinate their efforts, remain aware of the locations of officers and subjects, and keep abreast of the status of the pursuit.

### Procedure

Whenever an officer decides to engage, or continue to engage in a foot pursuit, a quick risk assessment must take place. Officers must evaluate the risk involved to themselves, other officers, the subject and the community to balance that risk with the need to pursue and immediately apprehend the subject. Supervisors are responsible for reviewing the tactical soundness of foot pursuits.

1. Factors to Consider when Initiating a Foot Pursuit:
  - a. Whether the subject is armed or dangerous
  - b. The reason for detaining the subject
  - c. Risk to officers and/or the community posed by the subject
  - d. Environmental risks (low light, dangerous structures, officer's familiarity with the area, officer's ability to keep sight of suspect, etc.)
  - e. Ability to apprehend the subject at a later date
  - f. Communications (ability to transmit location, radio coverage, etc.)
  - g. Physical ability of the officer to:
    - i. Apprehend the subject (officer/subject factors, available equipment, etc.)
    - ii. Communicate effectively with dispatch
    - iii. Be readily identifiable as an officer (uniform or plain clothes)
  - h. Availability of backup units to assist
2. If possible, officers should consider the feasibility of the following strategies or tactics prior to initiating foot pursuits:
  - a. Area containment
  - b. Surveillance
  - c. Obtaining additional officers
  - d. Canine search/track
  - e. UAS
3. Pursuing Officer(s) Responsibility
  - a. Once the foot pursuit has been initiated (and as soon as practical, considering the difficulty in transmitting under the circumstances) the officer should broadcast the following information:

- i. Location
    - ii. Direction
    - iii. Description of subject
    - iv. Whether the subject is armed
    - v. Reason for foot pursuit
  - b. Dispatch will notify a supervisor of the pursuit circumstances, if they are unaware, and any other relevant information.
  - c. The pursuing officer will coordinate with other officers to establish a perimeter in the area to contain the subject. K9 use should be considered if the subject is believed to be in a confined area.
  - d. If possible, officers should consider the feasibility of the following strategies or tactics prior to initiating foot pursuits:
    - i. Area containment
    - ii. Surveillance
    - iii. Obtaining additional officers
  - e. Officers should terminate a foot pursuit if ordered by a supervisor or if the officer believes that the risk to officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the subject. If the subject's identity is known and he or she is not an immediate threat to the safety of the public or other officers, consideration should be given to terminating the pursuit and apprehending the suspect at a later date.
  - f. After termination of the foot pursuit, officers will notify Dispatch with the last known location of subject or point of apprehension.
4. Supervisor's Role
  - a. The supervisor's role is to monitor a foot pursuit and appropriately direct resources to safely apprehend the subject.
  - g. The supervisor should coordinate with involved officer to establish a perimeter. K9 use should be considered if the subject is believed to be in a confined area.
  - b. The supervisor will terminate a foot pursuit at any time if it is determined the danger to the pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the subject.

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