

General Order 551.00

Reviewed: 03/24

551.00 VEHICULAR PURSUITS

551.01 POLICY

It is the responsibility of sworn members of the Department to apprehend known or suspected law violators. This requirement remains in effect when those offenders attempt to flee from apprehension in a vehicle.

Sworn officers may initiate a vehicular pursuit of an offender who attempts to flee in a vehicle. However, the decision to continue that pursuit shall be made by an officer or supervisor based upon such criteria as the following:

- Seriousness of crimes known
- Whether or not the identity of the offender is known
- Amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic present
- Time of day
- Nature of the vicinity, whether residential, commercial, rural, school zone, etc.
- Environmental factors such as road conditions and weather

GPD officers and supervisors shall utilize the following primary guidelines in determining whether to begin or continue a vehicular pursuit:

1. Sworn officers may initiate or engage in a pursuit when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the offender has committed or attempted to commit a felony crime involving violence and/or a deadly weapon. The pursued vehicle is not considered a deadly weapon unless it was used before the pursuit as the weapon in a crime of violence.
2. If in the judgment of the involved officer or supervisor, the public or officers would be in greater danger if the suspect was not apprehended, the pursuit shall be allowed to continue.

The decision to begin, continue, or cancel a vehicular pursuit may be altered as additional information becomes available or conditions change. In all vehicular pursuits and pursuit-related decision-making by Greeley police personnel, the primary concern at all times shall be for the safety of the public and police officers.

Personnel involved in a vehicle pursuit shall not exhibit a reckless disregard for the public's safety. Sworn personnel shall be familiar with the contents of CRS 42-4-108 regarding emergency vehicle operations.

551.02 DEFINITIONS

Vehicular Pursuit: An active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend a fleeing suspect who is actively attempting to elude the police by using high-speed driving or other evasive tactics such as driving off the roadway, making sudden or unexpected movements, or any other overt action directed at avoiding apprehension.

Eluding: Any operator of a motor vehicle who the officer has reasonable grounds to believe has violated a state law or municipal ordinance, who has received a visual or audible signal such as a red light or a siren from a police officer driving a marked vehicle showing the same to be official police, sheriff, or Colorado state patrol car directing the operator to bring the operator's vehicle to a stop, and who willfully increases his or her speed or extinguishes his or her lights in an attempt to elude such police officer, or willfully attempts in any other manner to elude the police officer, or does elude such police officer commits a class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense

Failure to Yield: Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle making use of audible or visual signals meeting the requirements of section 213 or 222, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and where possible shall immediately clear the farthest left-hand lane lawfully available to through traffic and shall drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of a roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in that position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer..

Authorized emergency vehicle: A vehicle equipped with operable visual and audible emergency equipment as designated by state law.

Primary unit: The police unit that initiates a pursuit or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit.

Secondary unit: A police vehicle that becomes involved as a backup to the primary unit and follows the primary unit at a safe distance.

Emergency Operation: Emergency operation shall mean the act of driving a police vehicle with emergency lights and siren in operation while in pursuit of a violator in accordance with the Colorado Motor Vehicle Code or any applicable Greeley Municipal Code.

Overtaking: Catching up to a violator's vehicle for the purpose of initiating a traffic stop. This action is not considered an initiation of a vehicular pursuit.

Termination of a pursuit: Discontinuing active attempts to maintain contact with and stop a suspect vehicle through the use of emergency equipment and driving actions.

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Citizen ride-a-long: A person who has successfully completed the appropriate ride-a-long application process and has been assigned to ride with a police officer.

Passenger: Any person, including a prisoner, who is being transported in a police vehicle.

Vehicle Pinning: A controlled or coordinated maneuver that results in direct, intentional positive contact with one or both bumpers of a non-moving suspect vehicle by an emergency vehicle(s). The vehicle pin reduces the suspect's ability to escape immediately. The intent is to restrict or prevent the target vehicle from moving while keeping damage to any vehicles involved to a minimum. Pinning does not involve ramming the target vehicle.

Boxing in: The tactic of surrounding a moving vehicle with moving police vehicles which are then stopped along with the fleeing vehicle.

Heading off: The tactic of attempting to end a pursuit by pulling police vehicle(s) ahead of, alongside and towards a fleeing vehicle in an attempt to force it off the roadway or cause it to stop.

Officer: A sworn, commissioned peace officer.

Supervisor: A commissioned peace officer with the rank of sergeant or higher.

Ramming: The deliberate act of striking a fleeing vehicle with another vehicle in an effort to cause it to stop.

Pit maneuver: A driving maneuver in which a police vehicle intentionally strikes the rear quarter panel of the moving pursued vehicle in an attempt to force the fleeing driver to lose control.

Roadblock: A restriction or obstruction intended to prevent the passage of a fleeing vehicle.

Deadly weapon: A weapon the primary purpose of which is to inflict death or serious bodily injury. Examples include firearms, knives, clubs, and explosive devices.

Vehicle Pursuit Management Technology (VPMT) – A pursuit management system containing a miniature GPS module encased in a tracking projectile/dart that is deployed from a fixed launcher mounted on a law enforcement vehicle. Once the tracker is affixed, its location can be tracked using a computer with an internet connection.

551.03 PROCEDURES

1. Officers engaged in a vehicular pursuit shall use both audible and visual emergency equipment throughout the pursuit.

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2. Officers engaged in a vehicular pursuit shall operate their police vehicles with due regard for the safety of other users of the roadway and shall obey all laws governing the operation of emergency vehicles.

3. Upon engaging in a vehicular pursuit, the primary officer shall notify Dispatch and the other police units on the air of all pertinent information available, to include the following:

- a. Location and direction of travel
- b. Description of the pursued vehicle
- c. Known or suspected offenses that precipitated the pursuit
- d. Speeds involved
- e. Identity or description of suspect(s), if known
- f. Other pertinent information, such as special hazards or conditions

4. A pursuit shall consist of no more than two GPD vehicles, a primary and a secondary unit, unless additional police units are authorized by a sworn supervisor.

5. The officer in the primary unit shall determine which unit will handle radio traffic, including updated information on the pursuit.

6. Secondary Unit Responsibilities:

Take over duties delegated by the primary unit. These may include Direction of travel, speeds, environmental conditions, or other pertinent information.

7. Officers not involved in the pursuit may assist by blocking off intersecting streets and/or assist should a foot pursuit ensue.

8. When an officer terminates a pursuit, he shall advise Dispatch by radio. At that time, all involved GPD police units shall turn off emergency equipment and stop or turn off from the direction of the pursuit.

9. When a pursued vehicle comes to a halt, the involved officers will make every effort to employ high-risk vehicle stop tactics in the apprehension of the offender(s).

VEHICLE PURSUIT MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY (VPMT)

Deployment of VPMT by involved officers during an authorized pursuit is permitted. VPMT equipment shall only be utilized by those officers who have been trained in its proper use. VPMT is only to be used for official police duties.

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A pre-deployment of VPMT may be utilized for traffic situations, such as DUI/DUIDs, traffic infractions, stolen vehicles, failures to yield, or other criminal investigations when practicable. VPMT deployment as pursuit prevention may require the time and tactics similar to initiating a traffic stop, but shall not meet the criteria for initiating or engaging in a pursuit. However, officers are required to follow the criteria outlined in 551.01 of this policy. The VPMT will not be deployed on motorcycles or other similar un-enclosed vehicles.

It is recommended that officers involved in authorized pursuits attempt to utilize VPMT. If not already involved as a primary or secondary pursuit unit and are within reasonable distance to the pursuit, VPMT equipped patrol vehicles may join a pursuit for the potential use of the device upon approval from a supervisor. Once a VPMT equipped vehicle joins a pursuit, it becomes an authorized unit in accordance with this policy.

The decision to discharge the VPMT rests solely on the deploying officer, who shall take into account the safety of the community, officers and occupants of the subject vehicle.

A deploying officer must remain cognizant of his or her own safety in reaching a deployment position. Unless directed otherwise, the VPMT equipped vehicle shall join the pursuit as the last patrol vehicle. A total number of two police vehicles involved in the pursuit shall remain in effect unless more are approved by a supervisor.

The deploying officer should consider:

- (a) Whether the officer can safely pass any other vehicle involved in the pursuit and will do so only after notifying and receiving acknowledgment from the unit to be passed.
- (b) Whether the officer can safely maneuver close enough to the suspect vehicle to come within targeting range.
- (c) Circumstances that would indicate the device could be ineffective (e.g. adverse weather conditions, suspect vehicle weaving, etc.).

During times in which there are multiple primary GPD dispatch channels, the involved officers will remain on the current channel of the incident regardless of where the incident travels within the city.

Once successfully deployed, all units will discontinue actively pursuing the subject vehicle and shall immediately notify a supervisor and Weld County Dispatch. The on-duty supervisor shall take command and coordinate recovery efforts of the subject vehicle.

A supervisor must approve any pre-deployments of VPMT on stationary or unoccupied vehicles. Officers in VMPT equipped vehicles who have prisoners are not allowed to deploy VPMT.

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All VPMT deployments will require documentation to include either an offense or Incident Report detailing the number of GPS devices deployed, whether or not an apprehension was made, if the subject vehicle or property was recovered, as well as all offender information, if known.

551.04 RESTRICTIONS ON VEHICULAR PURSUITS

1. Officers shall not discharge firearms at fleeing vehicles unless deadly force is authorized against the occupant(s).
2. Officers shall not pursue vehicles wanted only for minor traffic violations.
3. Officers shall not pursue stolen vehicles unless the offender is wanted for another offense serious enough to justify the vehicular pursuit.
4. Greeley police officers shall not join a vehicular pursuit entering the City from another jurisdiction until and unless pursuit is authorized by a GPD sworn supervisor.
5. Unmarked GPD vehicles and GPD police motorcycles with activated audible and visual emergency equipment may participate in a vehicular pursuit only until they can safely be relieved by marked police vehicles.
6. Officers with passengers other than other Police Department employees or ride-a-longs shall not participate in vehicular pursuits.

551.05 INTER-JURISDICTIONAL PURSUITS

1. The pursuing officer shall notify Dispatch when it appears that a vehicular pursuit will continue into another jurisdiction.
2. When a GPD pursuit enters another jurisdiction, the actions of Greeley officers continue to be governed by Greeley Police Department policies, orders, and pertinent state statutes.
3. Greeley Police Department policies and orders remain in effect for GPD personnel when any other jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit enters Greeley, or when they participate in an inter-jurisdictional pursuit. GPD personnel may render any assistance authorized by a GPD sworn supervisor but shall not accommodate requests that deviate from the Department's policies and orders.
4. Sworn personnel are responsible for being familiar with the contents of the Weld County Interagency Vehicular Pursuit Agreement. (Appendix A)

551.06 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The sworn supervisor in charge of a vehicular pursuit has the authority and responsibility to monitor the pursuit, continually assess the risks and hazards involved in allowing the pursuit to continue and make the decision to allow the pursuit to continue or to order it terminated.

2. A sworn supervisor shall order a pursuit terminated anytime he or she concludes that the danger to the pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for the immediate apprehension of the suspect(s).
3. The supervisor will order the pursuit terminated if the identity of the offender is known, and immediate apprehension is not necessary to protect the public from a known dangerous offender.
4. If a suspect or suspect's vehicle is present at the termination point of a pursuit, a sworn supervisor shall respond to that location. The supervisor is responsible for coordinating and controlling GPD police operations there and assuring that required reports are completed.
5. A sworn supervisor shall complete a pursuit review at the conclusion of all GPD-involved vehicular pursuits.

551.07 USE OF TIRE DEFLATION DEVICES

1. The use of a tire deflation device such as Stop Stick may be deployed by an officer who has been trained in the use of this tool. Officers will follow the training guidelines presented to them for the use of Stop Stick.
2. At least one police vehicle equipped with emergency lights and at least one uniformed sworn officer shall be at the site where a tire deflation device is deployed. However, a tactical deployment can be initiated if an officer determines it is safe to do so. A tactical deployment is when an officer deploys a tire deflation device with or without the presence of a marked police vehicle or a uniformed officer.
3. The location of the planned deployment of the device shall be communicated to the pursuing police units by the deploying officer before the device is placed on the roadway.
4. Deployment of a tire deflation device in the path of a stationary or moving vehicle that has fewer than four wheels is only permitted if the use of deadly force is authorized.
5. Officers are permitted to deploy a tire deflation device if a vehicle is actively eluding, or officers have reasonable suspicion to believe it will elude if a traffic stop is initiated.

6. Officer shall not deploy a tire deflation device on a vehicle for a non-violent crime or minor traffic violation that is failing to yield without supervisor approval. For the purpose of this policy, failing to yield is when a vehicle obeys all traffic laws and does not pull over.

7. Officers are permitted to place a tire deflation device under a stationary vehicle if they have reasonable suspicion to believe it will be used in the commission of a crime.

551.08 ROADBLOCKS

1. Department personnel shall only use roadblocks to apprehend an extremely dangerous felon who, if allowed to escape, would create a substantial risk of serious injury or death to another person.

2. The authority to initiate and cancel a roadblock lies with a sworn supervisor.

3. At least one marked police vehicle with operating emergency lights shall be at the scene of a roadblock. At least one uniformed officer shall be present.

551.09 VEHICLE PINNING

1. The act of pinning a subject vehicle may only be conducted by an officer who has been trained in the proper technique and methods of this maneuver. Officers should only pin vehicles when there is an articulable justification that such action is necessary to immediately and safely apprehend a subject and keep the subject vehicle from fleeing the area.

2. For this directive, the mere act of a subject driving a vehicle in a manner to elude officers does not presumptively constitute a threat justifying the officer's use of the pinning maneuver. When practical, the on-duty supervisor should pre-approve the use of the pinning maneuver under the conditions described below.

3. Before initiating the use of the pinning technique, the officer will evaluate whether justification exists to immobilize the subject vehicle. The officer will notify the on-duty supervisor when practicable to do so of their intent to employ the pinning maneuver.

4. Pinning should only be employed by officers after considering the following:

a. The severity of the crime.

b. How weather conditions, vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and road or surface conditions may adversely impact the successful operation of pinning a subject vehicle.

c. Location: Officers must consider the safety of others, including passengers, private citizens, and pedestrians before engaging in the pinning technique.

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- d. Initiating the pin does not unreasonably increase the risk to the public, officers, and individuals in the subject vehicle.
 - e. Utilizing solid objects (i.e., Concrete structure, including a wall, pillar, or solid barriers, etc.) The officer will consider the stability of the stationary object and the likelihood the object will hold the pinned vehicle.
 - f. The location and proportion of the contact points of the emergency vehicle to the contact points of the subject vehicle. The ability of the emergency vehicle(s) to properly immobilize the subject vehicle.
5. Properly trained officers of the Greeley Police Department can employ the pinning maneuver under the following circumstances:
- a. When a subject vehicle is stationary, running or not, and occupied, and if in the judgment of the officer or supervisor, the public or officers would be in greater danger if the suspect vehicle was not immediately immobilized by pinning and the suspect apprehended.
 - b. When the subject vehicle is stationary and unoccupied, and the act of pinning the vehicle would deny the subject access or ability to flee upon re-entry.
 - c. The driver of a stationary vehicle appears to be incapacitated or unconscious for any reason, and their vehicle location could place other drivers, pedestrians, or officers at substantial risk of injury, serious bodily injury, or death if the subject vehicle were to be placed into motion.
 - d. Any situation where articulable exigent circumstances exist that are not listed above. Use of the pinning maneuver under exigent circumstances requires supervisory approval when practical.


551.10 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Whenever a GPD officer engages in a vehicular pursuit, all appropriate crime and other reports will be completed by the involved personnel.
2. A sworn supervisor shall complete a pursuit review on the appropriate forms. The report normally will be completed by the supervisor who has the most direct knowledge of the pursuit. If that supervisor was one of the pursuing officers, a higher-ranked supervisor shall complete the report.

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551.11 PURSUIT REVIEW

1. Pursuit reports shall be reviewed by the Chain of Command, including the Chief of Police. Each level of command shall enter findings and, as appropriate, make recommendations based on the review.
2. Pursuit review reports shall be retained by the Professional Standards sergeant who will periodically report to the Department's command staff regarding statistics, trends and other pertinent information.
3. Pursuit reviews shall be utilized by command staff in helping determine the need for training, corrective action, policy and/or procedural changes and equipment requirements

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