



POLICE SCOTLAND

Keeping people safe

VEHICLE PURSUITS

Standard Operating Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 It is essential that a common approach be taken within all areas of the Police Service of Scotland in relation to the management and tactical control of vehicle pursuits. The inherent risk involved creates an obligation to ensure that every pursuit is controlled through an effective Command structure.

2. PROCESS / PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Guidance should always be sought in this respect from accredited Pursuit Tactical Advisors and the [Police Scotland Manual of Guidance on Police Vehicle Pursuits](#). Officers will adhere to this Guidance in respect of all pursuits. Reference should also be made to the [Police Scotland Pursuit Tactics directory](#).

3. DEFINITION

- 3.1 A police driver is deemed to be in pursuit when:
'a driver indicates by their actions or continuance of their manner of driving that they have no intention of stopping for police and the police driver believes that the driver of the subject vehicle is aware of the requirement to stop and decides to continue behind the subject vehicle with a view to either reporting its progress or stopping it. Pursuit may be spontaneous or pre-planned'
- 3.2 There is no place for the term 'follow' in this context. A police vehicle is either in pursuit or it is not.

4. TRAINING

- 4.1 Officers should be aware of their own level of training and current driving authorisations as per the [Driving Training and Standards, Vehicle Safety Checks Standard Operating Procedure](#).

5. ARMED PURSUITS

- 5.1 Where intelligence exists indicating that occupants of a subject vehicle are, or are likely to be armed, unarmed officers must not be used to terminate that pursuit and the incident must be declared an Armed Pursuit. In every such case, input from a Firearms Tactical Advisor must be sought and the incident managed in accordance with the [Police Scotland Armed Policing Operations SOP](#)

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

6.1 BASIC DRIVER

Where basic drivers are permitted to stop vehicles, they must immediately inform the control room of the circumstances when it becomes evident that a vehicle is refusing to stop. At this point the situation falls within the definition of pursuit and basic drivers must immediately withdraw and take no part in that pursuit.

6.2 STANDARD/RESPONSE DRIVER & RESPONSE MOTORCYCLIST. (INITIAL PHASE)

Standard/Response Driver & Response Motorcyclists are responsible for:

- Immediately informing the control room as soon as a vehicle fails to stop, seeking authority to pursue and requesting an authorised advanced driver to assist or, where it becomes known there are no tactics available, discontinuing the pursuit immediately. This responsibility also applies to advanced drivers in suitable vehicles if they initiate the pursuit
- Dynamically risk assessing the unfolding situation and providing information to the control room regarding the pursuit criteria
- Passing control to an advanced driver as soon as possible
- Driving in accordance with their level of authority, personal capability, and in a manner which does not contribute to increased risk
- Discontinuing a pursuit as soon as risk becomes disproportionate to the known reasons for undertaking it

6.3 AUTHORISED ADVANCED DRIVER (TACTICAL PHASE)

During the Tactical Phase the Authorised Advanced Driver in a suitable vehicle is responsible for:

- Dynamically risk assessing the pursuit as it unfolds and providing accurate information to the control room relative to the pursuit criteria.
- Once appropriately placed, identify themselves or a suitably qualified radio operator as Operational Commander
- Assisting control rooms by requesting additional resources and suggesting tactical options as appropriate
- Driving in accordance with training and capabilities to manage risk levels
- Discontinuing a pursuit as soon as risk becomes disproportionate to the known reasons for undertaking it

6.4 RADIO OPERATOR (VEHICLE), WHERE AVAILABLE

The vehicle radio operator, where available, is responsible for:

- Maintaining a commentary containing accurate and timely information for control rooms, other units and supervision regarding pursuit criteria.
- Recommending discontinuance of pursuit as soon as risk becomes disproportionate to the known reasons for undertaking it

6.5 CONTROL ROOM OPERATOR

A control room operator has the following responsibilities:

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- At the earliest opportunity inform the control room supervisor of the start of a pursuit
- If a supervisor is not immediately available, make decisions regarding authorisation
- Constantly risk-assess the activity based on information and intelligence received.
- Where a standard/response driver has initiated a pursuit, which has been authorised for continuance, to immediately identify and assign an advanced driver in a suitable vehicle to take the Operational Commander role
- Identify, advise, guide, deploy and control other units (including air support) during the pursuit
- Receive and record all incoming information from the pursuing vehicle including the reasons leading to the taking of a particular action and, where applicable, any other options considered
- Co-ordinate radio communications during the pursuit
- Discontinuing a pursuit as soon as risk becomes disproportionate to the known reasons for undertaking it (where authorised to do so)

6.6 CONTROL ROOM SUPERVISOR

In addition to providing support and advice to the operator engaged with the pursuit, the control room supervisor has the following responsibilities:

- Overall control of the pursuit (Strategic Commander)
- Constantly risk-assessing the activity based on information and intelligence received.
- Giving or approving initial and continued authority for pursuit
- Giving or approving authority for use of tyre deflation systems
- Where a standard/response driver has been authorised to **continue**
- Initial Phase pursuit, ensuring that an authorised advanced driver in a suitable vehicle has been assigned and can respond within a time frame that balances operational need with the potential for harm
- Identify and agree the Operational Commander
- Consider current levels of authority in light of incoming information gleaned from the dynamic risk assessment process, sources of intelligence and advice from an appointed Tactical Advisor
- Order additional units to assist if necessary
- Suggest the range of tactical options available to the pursuing driver/Operational Commander in the circumstances surrounding the pursuit
- **Ensure when a pursuit is approaching an Area Control Room (ACR), or a Force boundary that they are notified and identify any tactical authorities previously given are current**

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- Ensure specific instructions are given that only those notified vehicles should continue the pursuit
- Discontinuing a pursuit as soon as risk becomes disproportionate to the known reasons for undertaking it

7. PURSUIT TACTICAL ADVISOR

- 7.1 Tactical advice regarding pursuit can range from simple suggestions and guidance over the radio to a pursuing driver and/or control room through to recommendations for implementation of specific tactics or discontinuance.
- 7.2 Persons deemed suitable to act as Pursuit Tactical Advisors should be clearly identified. The primary consideration in selecting an individual to take on the responsibility should be capability rather than rank.
- 7.3 A Pursuit Tactical Advisor will be a person authorised to undertake the role, who has a thorough working knowledge of the codes of practice and associated tactics, together with sufficient operational experience of pursuit situations to be able to dynamically interpret policy and advise a proportionate course of action to be taken by those persons currently involved in pursuit. They will have no other role to play in the pursuit management in order to allow clarity of thought focused on tactical options
- 7.4 Tactical advice may be provided in real-time as part of the communications loop using personal force radio equipment or as part of the control room based team managing the event.
- 7.5 Under no circumstances should the tactical advisor be a person directly involved as a crew-member in a pursuing vehicle, the first line communicator or the managing control room supervisor.
- 7.6 Specific tasks for the tactical advisor will be:

SPONTANEOUS PURSUIT

- Provide real-time advice to Operational Commanders and/or control room staff during the pursuit
- Work with firearms tactical advisors to give advice regarding armed pursuits
- Provide operational support to crews of pursuing police vehicles
- Monitor incoming commentary
- Consider the range of tactical options available, and make suggestions

PRE-PLANNED PURSUIT

- Take part in the operational planning process
- Provide input to any documented risk assessment
- Suggest the range of tactical options available

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- Where time constraints allow, be present in the control room during the operation to assist staff
- 7.7 Training will be provided in line with approved National Standards for all officers required to act as pursuit tactical advisors.
- 7.8 The degree of planning possible will be directly proportionate to the complexity of the task and the timescales. The level of formality in delivery of tactical advice and the location from where it is given will also be governed by these constraints.
- 7.9 In all cases, advice offered by the pursuit tactical advisor will be recorded for future reference by control room voice recording systems and /or in other forms of official computer or paper systems such as incident logs and official police notebooks/PDAs.

8. RECORDING OF PURSUITS

- 8.1 The officer initiating the Pursuit (the first officer for whom the subject vehicle fails to stop) in all cases will complete a Pursuit Return Form.
- 8.2 A Pursuit Return Form should be completed even when the initiating officer was immediately stood down / not given permission or not authorised to pursue due to their level of training.
- 8.3 Once the initiating officer completes their part of the Form it should be forwarded and completed by all persons involved in the pursuit.
- 8.4 The completed form will be passed to the Divisional Road Policing Inspector, where the pursuit commenced.
- 8.5 The Inspector will then forward to the OIC of Road Policing for comment who will in turn forward it to **Redacted – S30*

LIST OF ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

- [Police Scotland Manual of Guidance on Police Vehicle Pursuits](#)
- [Police Scotland Armed Policing Operations Standard Operating Procedure](#)
- [Police Scotland Manual of Guidance on Police Vehicle Pursuits Tactics Directory](#)

LIST OF ASSOCIATED GENERIC PSOS FORCE FORMS

- [National Pursuit Return Form](#)