

OBJECTIVE 4.4 Identify factors that impact on the termination of a pursuit: suspect voluntary or involuntary stopping.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Whether a pursuit is terminated by the officer's decision that the risks outweigh the gain or the suspect's voluntarily or involuntarily stop, certain factors are critical to ensuring a successful and safe conclusion. Of paramount concern always must be the safety of the public, suspect, and officer.

## **CONTENT**

The following areas should be considered when officers formulate split second plans for actions associated with pursuit terminations:

1. Safety of public, suspects, and officer
2. Termination without apprehension (Review)
3. Contact with telecommunications
4. Acknowledgment of psychological and physiological state of both officer and suspect
5. Pursuit terminations - high-risk felony stop situations
6. Documentation needs (Reports)

## **SAFETY OF PUBLIC, SUSPECTS, AND OFFICER**

Decisions and actions at the point of termination should always focus on safety and what will be in the best interest of all involved

1. Extra precautions should be taken that will ensure safety.
  - a. Officer survival procedure - this is a high risk situation.
  - b. Adequate warning of the public regarding an emergency situation in progress

- c. Should risks escalate with threat to public, the situation may warrant immediate abandonment actions.

#### TERMINATION WITHOUT APPREHENSION

(An option that must be continually considered.)

Lengthy pursuits pose an increasing threat to the general public. If the suspect will not stop, the pursuing officer may have to terminate the pursuit. This is a very difficult decision to make. Most officers believe that terminating before a suspect is in custody goes against everything they stand for. As soon as a test of reasonableness shows that the risk of a continued pursuit or arrest action outweighs the potential gain of an apprehension, the pursuing officer's course of action is clear: call off the effort.

#### CONTACT WITH TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Critical to successful terminations and officer survival, is the need to stay in constant radio contact. Once the pursuit has reached a stopping point, give the location and exact time of the termination.

1. Give an immediate, detailed description of the vehicle and license tag along with unique suspect and passenger information.
2. Request assistance and a supervisor (high-risk stop situation).
3. Make all transmissions precise so that the record will be accurate and complete.
4. Maintain radio contact and update as time permits.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL STATES OF BOTH PURSUING OFFICERS AND SUSPECTS

1. It is important to recognize and understand the human factor changes that have occurred and the need to control emotions and behaviors that are critical to an officer's safety and the suspect's well-being.
  - a. The pursuit has caused a mixture of emotions, such as excitement, fear, anger, anxiety and worry. These emotions can be so intense they have a crippling effect. Observable effects include faster heart and respiratory rates, flushed face, higher blood pressure and tense muscles.

- b. Signs of aggression may be present. Anger will easily be aroused, particularly when the actions of other people do not conform to your sense of correctness.
  - c. Peer pressure may be fueled by personal pride and the fear of rejection. Often, its influence will lead to actions from risks one clearly knows he or she cannot handle.
2. Pursuing officers must always remember that the suspects have been involved in the same stressful incident.
    - a. Their actions and lack of response should be considered in the arresting officer's decision-making process concerning the appropriate and reasonable use of force to effect the custodial arrest.
    - b. Issues of safety and officer survival are paramount.

#### PURSUIT TERMINATIONS - HIGH-RISK FELONY STOP SITUATIONS

Every pursuit termination should be treated as a high-risk situation that has the potential to escalate at any moment.

1. All terminations are high-risk stops, and extreme caution should be exercised.
  - a. Agency/general policy directives concerning felony stops (high-risk) should be reviewed.
  - b. Back-up assistance should be coordinated when possible. It's always better to wait out a situation rather than charge into the unknown.
2. Placement of emergency vehicles and approach to suspect's vehicle
  - a. Pursuit vehicles should be placed so as to provide a safe avenue of approach while giving optimum warning to the general public. (Maintain visual emergency lighting devices.)
  - b. Approach to suspect's vehicle should be a deliberate, planned and coordinated activity that keeps all alerted for the unexpected. Officers should have weapons drawn while remaining at a safe distance, verbally directing suspects and occupants to exit the vehicle to a safe location that will not jeopardize the arrest or detention procedure.

- c. When possible, back-up officers or supervisors not actively involved in the actual pursuit should physically handle the suspects, to safeguard against the potential for mistreatment (or allegations of such) that often occur.

**DOCUMENTATION NEEDS**

During the entire termination activity, it is critical that special attention is given to the detail and facts that surround the incident. Constant mental awareness of this need will aid in developing accurate and complete reports.

1. Always give as much detail as possible when communicating with the telecommunications center. This will be available on permanent record, and assist post-pursuit reporting efforts.
2. Secure the names of all parties involved:
  - a. Witnesses
  - b. Other back-up officers or assisting agencies
  - c. Citizens offering assistance
3. Account for all physical evidence along with scene and evidence preservation needs.

**SUMMARY**

When pursuits reach a termination point, recognizing personal limitations and changes, constant communication, and clear and deliberate planning while maintaining a focus on safety will assist in creating defensible outcomes. The termination point, whether the suspect voluntarily or involuntarily stops, is an extremely dangerous situation, and must be responded to as a high-risk encounter. Special attention to detail, in addition to continued communication with the telecommunications center, will contribute to the development of accurate and complete records.

**SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY****SMALL GROUPS**

Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students. Ask the students to list what factors and considerations are involved in the termination of a pursuit. List the responses on a flipchart.

**LECTURE WITH GUEST SPEAKER**

Use the content as a guide for presentation to the class. Supplement the presentation with comments from an officer who had a vehicle pursuit terminate with negative consequences. The guest speaker could also utilize video footage showing actual pursuit termination situations.

**INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING WITH CLASS DISCUSSION**

Using a handout, emphasize potential pursuit situations involving motor vehicle or felony violations. Tell the students to react, individually, to each of the pursuit possibilities. The students should identify their attitudes, emotions, and desires in each of the situations. As their answers may be controversial and because seldom will an entire class agree on strategy, discussion may exist individually or in the form of a class debate. The answers are not as important as identifying how psychological and physiological factors impact on pursuit decision making.

**RESOURCES AND AIDS**

1. State statute
2. Agency policy
3. Experience of veteran officers
4. Refer to Chapter 8, Pursuit Exercise Section
5. Pursuit films and videotapes (See Chapter 8, Pursuit Exercise Section)
6. 1996 IACP Sample Pursuit Guidelines

**SUGGESTED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

**STUDENTS**

1. Written or verbal responses to questions on pursuit termination; suspect voluntary or involuntary stopping
2. Observation of student's reaction to controversial decisions regarding the termination of a pursuit
3. Observation of student's reaction to legal decisions, legal restrictions, and agency policy regarding the termination of a vehicle pursuit
4. Observation of on-the-job performance
5. Review agency documentation involving pursuits and their terminations

**COURSE**

1. Review of agency emergency/pursuit response data

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## Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies

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### Factors That Impact On The Termination of a Pursuit

The following areas should be considered when officers formulate split second plans for actions associated with pursuit terminations:

- ***Safety of Public, Suspects, and Officers***  
Should risks escalate with threat to public, the situation may warrant immediate termination?

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## Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies

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### ■ *Termination Without Apprehension*

Lengthy pursuits pose an increasing threat to the general public. This is very difficult decision to make. As soon A test of reasonableness shows that the risk of a continued pursuit or arrest action outweighed the potential of an apprehension, the pursuing officer's course of action is clear: call off the effort.

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## Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies

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- ***Contact With Telecommunications***

Critical to successful terminations and officer survival, is the need to stay in constant radio contact. Once pursuit has reached a stopping point, give the location of the termination.

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## **Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies**

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### **■ *Acknowledgment of Psychological and Physiological States of Both Pursuing Officers and Suspects***

The pursuit has caused mixture of emotions, such as excitement, fear, anger, anxiety and worry. These emotions can be so intense they have a crippling effect. Observable effects include faster heart and respiratory rates, flushed face, higher blood pressure and tense muscles.

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## **Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies**

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- **Signs of aggression may be present. Anger will easily be aroused, particularly when the actions of other people do not conform to your sense of correctness.**
- **Peer pressure may be fueled by personal pride and the fear of rejection. Often, its influence will lead to actions from risks one clearly knows he or she cannot handle.**

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## **Conducting Pursuits Recommended Strategies**

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### **■ *Pursuit Termination High-Risk Felony Stop Situations***

Every pursuit termination should be treated as a high-risk situation that has the potential to escalate at any moment.