



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Foot Pursuits

Eff. Date 02/03/2025

Purpose

To facilitate the safe apprehension of a subject who flees on foot and to reduce the likelihood of 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 avoiding police contact by fleeing from the officer.

Subject: Includes any individual whom a police officer has a lawful reason to detain.

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.

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. 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

- iv. Canine search/track
 - v. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
 - e. Officers shall terminate a foot pursuit if ordered by a supervisor. If the officer believes that the risk to officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the subject, they should terminate the foot pursuit. If the subject's identity is known and the subject does not pose 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 the subject or point of apprehension.
- 3. Supervisor's role:
 - a. The supervisor's role is to monitor a foot pursuit and appropriately direct resources to safely apprehend the subject.
 - b. The supervisor should coordinate with involved officers to establish a perimeter. K9 use should be considered if the subject is believed to be in a confined area.
 - c. The supervisor will terminate a foot pursuit at any time if it is determined the danger to the pursuing officers or to the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the subject.
 - d. Supervisors acknowledge that uncontrollable environmental factors might inhibit an officer's ability to hear radio traffic. If an officer fails to acknowledge an order for termination of a foot pursuit, the supervisor must continue to air their termination request until an officer complies.

Original SOP: 05/03/2016

(Revised: 09/06/2018, 09/11/2018, 11/19/2019, 12/21/2020, 1/22/2024, 02/03/2025)

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