TRAINING POINTS FOR FOOT PURSUITS

Chasing fleeing suspects on foot represents an inherently dangerous activity for police officers. It is imperative that foot pursuits are conducted in manner that minimizes the risks to officers and citizens. This training bulletin is a reminder of general guidelines officers should consider if they become involved in or are responding to a foot pursuit.

Deciding Whether to Pursue:

An officer has the authority to stop any person reasonably suspected of having committed or is about to commit a crime, violation or traffic violation. While it is the sworn member who initiates the stop, it is the suspect who initiates the foot pursuit by fleeing. The decision to pursue should be made with an awareness of the degree of risk to which the officer exposes himself/herself and others.

A pursuit on foot should only occur where visual contact is maintained, and the suspect is readily capable of being apprehended by the pursuing officer.

Factors to Consider When Initiating/Continuing a Foot Pursuit:

- Whether the suspect is armed
- The offense committed by the suspect
- Availability/proximity of cover officers
- Pre-Assaultive indicators such as the suspect looking back to size up the officer, the suspect reaching for their waistband or a change of stride/pace which indicate the suspect is preparing for an attack.
- Nature of area: residential, commercial, school zone, freeway, etc.
- Environmental factors: inclement weather or darkness
- Whether the identity of the suspect is known and/or if there is an ability to apprehend the suspect at a later date
- Familiarity with area
- Radio frequency and coverage (dead spots)

Officers should take great consideration when pursuing suspects into areas unfamiliar to them, where the officer may become concealed from the view of responding units or areas that pose an increased level of danger. These areas include back yards, fenced areas, behind large buildings, around hard corners or into any location where the suspect has become momentarily concealed.
**Pursuing Officers Responsibility:**

In addition to continuously considering the need for apprehension vs. the degree of risk to themselves, their partners and the general public, the pursuing officer should notify the Communications Center of the following:

Unit ID, location, direction of flight, description/number of suspects, if the suspect is armed with a weapon, reason for foot pursuit and coordination of responding units to form a perimeter.

**Foot Pursuit Tactical Considerations:**

A foot pursuit should end when the officer loses visual contact with the suspect for more than a brief period of time (1-2 seconds). If the suspect is reasonably believed to be contained in an area by a perimeter, a tactical apprehension should begin. The perimeter should be held until the following apprehension strategies are considered:

- Verbal warnings for the suspect to surrender and that force may be used
- UAV search
- Outside agency air support request (depending on want/supervisor approval)
- K9 Search (depending on policy)
- Systematic search of contained area by SLPD personnel
- Activation of TACOPS (depending on want/supervisor approval)