
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Foot Pursuits		
	GENERAL ORDER 622.4	Related CALEA Standards:	
Effective Date 07/26/2016	None		
Authorized by: Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE <i>Mark Sroka</i>	DATE 07/26/2016	

I. Purpose

The purpose of this order is to facilitate the safe apprehension of a suspect who flees on foot.

II. Department Policy

It is the policy of the Department that whenever an officer decides to engage, or continue to engage in a foot pursuit, a risk assessment should take place. The officer should evaluate the risk involved to themselves, to other officers, the suspect, and to the community versus what would be gained from pursuing the suspect.

III. Definitions

A. Foot Pursuit:

Within the context of this directive, the term “foot pursuit” refers to a situation in which a police officer on foot, or bicycle chases a suspect in an effort to detain or arrest that individual who he or she has reasonable suspicion to believe is about to commit, is committing, or has committed a crime and who is actively resisting apprehension by fleeing from the officer.

B. Suspect:

Within the context of this directive, the term “suspect” refers to any individual who a police officer reasonably believes is about to commit, is committing, or has committed an offense and/or poses an immediate threat to the safety of civilians, other officers, or themselves.

IV. Procedure

A. Factors To Consider When Initiating A Foot Pursuit

1. Whether the suspect is armed.

2. The type of offense committed by the suspect and the possibility of the destruction or loss of evidence if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.
3. Location of pursuit: residential, commercial, school zone, highway, etc.
4. Conditions of the structures: occupied, abandoned, or condemned.
5. Weather and light conditions.
6. The possibility of apprehending the suspect at a later date.
7. Familiarity with area.
8. Ability to transmit location of officer and suspect (radio coverage and dead spots).
9. Availability of backup officers and/or canine to assist.
10. Does the suspect pose an imminent threat to the safety of civilians, officers or him/herself?
11. Is the identity of the suspect known?

B. Pursuing Officer's Responsibility

1. The decision to initiate or continue a foot pursuit requires weighing the need to apprehend the suspect against the degree of risk to which the officer and others are exposed as a result of the pursuit.
2. An officer should have a reasonable expectation that some type of officer use of force is likely to occur in order to apprehend a fleeing suspect.
3. As soon as possible, the pursuing officer will notify the dispatcher of the following:
 - a. Officer's identification;
 - b. Location;
 - c. Direction of travel;
 - d. Suspect(s) description;
 - e. If suspect is armed with a weapon (type); and

- f. Reason for the foot pursuit (must identify charges).
- 4. If possible, the pursuing officer will coordinate with other officers to establish a perimeter in an attempt to contain the suspect.
 - a. Officers should use a canine officer, in conjunction with the perimeter to facilitate apprehension whenever possible.

C. When To Terminate A Foot Pursuit

- 1. If ordered by a supervisor, officers will discontinue the foot pursuit.
- 2. If the suspect's identity is known, and there is no perceived, immediate threat to the safety of the public, officers, or suspect(s), or if the pursuit is discontinued, and the suspect can be arrested at a later time; or
- 3. When the suspect's location is no longer known after reasonable efforts to locate him/her.

D. Supervisor's Role

- 1. If a supervisor believes that the danger to pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the suspect, he or she will have the officers discontinue the foot pursuit.
- 2. The supervisor will monitor the foot pursuit and direct resources in an effort to safely apprehend the suspect.