



LIBERTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
LIBERTY, TENNESSEE

GENERAL ORDER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

MOTOR VEHICLE APPREHENSION				
G.O. Number	Effective Date	Date Issued	☒	New
1000.90	09/02/2026	08/19/2026	☐	Amended
Approved:	<i>David R. Callahan</i>	Rescinds:	General Order 2 Emergency Response/Vehicle Pursuit	
		Accreditation Standards:	10.9, 10.9-A, 10.9-B	
	Chief of Police	Reviewing Authority:	Operations Major	
This General Order is exclusively for departmental use and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceedings. It should not be interpreted as establishing a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense concerning third-party claims. Violations of this General Order will only result in departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a judicial setting.				

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PURPOSE:

This directive establishes policy for motor vehicle apprehensions. It also provides for an administrative review of circumstances involving pursuits, including the judgment exercised by involved Officers. This directive also establishes guidelines for the execution and documentation of vehicle apprehension techniques such as blocking maneuvers, precision immobilization technique, and the safe deployment and recovery of tire deflation devices.

POLICY:

The primary objective of the Liberty Police Department is the safeguarding of life and property. The circumstances under which officers may engage in a motor vehicle pursuit are subject to strict limitations. Officers are authorized to pursue suspects only when there is an articulable belief that they pose an imminent danger of grievous bodily harm or death to an individual or the public at large.

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Review (of Vehicle Apprehension Reports) – Administrative reviews of Vehicle Apprehension Reports are a mandatory part of the reporting process. Administrative reviews are conducted by chain of command personnel (not just line supervisors) to ascertain if policy, training, equipment, or disciplinary issues should be addressed.

Assist Units – Other emergency police vehicles, other than the three active pursuit vehicles (primary and secondary), may be designated as assist units. They are to remain alert to the direction and progress of the pursuit and may position themselves at strategic sites along the probable pursuit route or on parallel roadways for response to any emergencies that may develop.

Attempt to Stop – An initial effort made to lawfully stop a moving vehicle.

Blocking – Blocking is a maneuver to prevent the escape and/or movement of a vehicle by placing one or more emergency vehicles in the path of a vehicle. This maneuver is used to prevent or terminate a pursuit, or where it is evident a vehicle is refusing to yield. This maneuver is intended to be executed on stationary or very slow-moving vehicles.

Emergency Vehicle (Unit) – Any authorized police vehicle equipped with a siren and emergency lights.

Precision Immobilization Technique – The Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) is the intentional act of making contact with a violator's vehicle to force it (from its course of travel) to stop.

Primary Pursuit Unit – Generally the emergency unit that initiates the pursuit; or any emergency unit that assumes control of the pursuit as the lead vehicle.

Secondary Pursuit Unit – Up to a maximum of two emergency units who trail the primary unit at a safe distance and are available to assume the primary role or assist the primary unit if the fleeing vehicle is stopped.

Tire Deflating Devices (TDD) – A tire deflating device is an agency-approved device that is designed to deflate tires on a motor vehicle.

Vehicle Pursuit – An active and continuing effort by an Officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend the occupant(s) of a moving vehicle, provided the driver of such vehicle is aware or should be aware of the attempt being made to stop him; and said driver fails to stop after a reasonable time or reasonable distance or increases speed or takes other evasive action.

I. PURSUITS

- A. All sworn personnel shall receive initial training and demonstrate an understanding of this procedure prior to completion of the Field Training Program.

- B. Suspects may be pursued only if one or both of the following conditions exist:
1. There is reasonable belief that if not stopped the driver will commit or attempt to commit a forcible felony which involves the actual or threatened use of deadly force; and/or
 2. There is reasonable belief that the fleeing driver poses an imminent threat of grievous bodily harm or death to an individual or the public at large.
- C. The intentional striking of an emergency vehicle by the subject vehicle, absent other aggravating circumstances, does not automatically constitute an imminent threat of grievous bodily harm to the public.
- D. In instances where immediate apprehension cannot be effected with reasonable safety, Officers will try to obtain enough information to make a future arrest without having to engage in a pursuit.
- E. The decision to initiate a pursuit must be based on the Officer's conclusion that the immediate danger to the public created by the pursuit is less than the immediate or potential danger to the public should the suspect remain at large.
- F. Officers will turn off any AM/FM radio or CD Player (or similar devices) when beginning a pursuit to prevent noise interference with the police radio, in-car camera system, or body-worn camera system.
- G. After the successful completion of approved training, Officers are authorized to use a blocking maneuver, boxing-in maneuver, and/or tire deflation devices under the following circumstances.
1. There is a reasonable belief that the driver will flee upon the sight of law enforcement, or after being directed to stop,
 2. During the course of an ongoing pursuit when circumstances are favorable, and
 3. The driver has refused to stop or yield to an emergency vehicle.
- H. The use of tire-deflating devices (TDD) will be governed by sound, professional judgment and the procedures outlined in this policy. Should adjacent agencies request to use TDD's, they are expected to comply with the contents of this policy.

II. MOTOR VEHICLE APPREHENSIONS

- A. Once the decision has been made to engage in a pursuit, Officers will continue to give careful consideration in determining if the immediate danger to the public created by the pursuit is less than the immediate or potential danger to the public should the suspect remain at large.

B. Responsibilities of the Primary Apprehension Vehicle

1. Officers will immediately notify Dispatch if a pursuit begins to provide the following:
 - a. Their radio identification number,
 - b. The location, speed and travel direction of the fleeing vehicle,
 - c. A description and license plate number, if known, of the fleeing vehicle,
 - d. Any reason to believe that the suspect poses an imminent danger of grievous bodily harm or death to an individual or the public.
 - e. The number of suspects (occupants) in the vehicle.
2. Responsibility for pursuit actions rests with the primary unit, unless directed otherwise by a supervisor.

C. Responsibilities of the Secondary Pursuit Vehicle

1. Upon joining a pursuit, the secondary unit shall immediately notify Dispatch of its identity. If practical, the first secondary unit should assume radio communications responsibility for the primary unit.
2. A secondary unit should maintain a safe distance from the primary unit, but be close enough to render assistance.
3. Should the primary pursuit unit become disabled the secondary unit will become the primary unit and the supervisor will designate a new secondary unit.

D. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. The supervisor of pursuing units has responsibility for continuing or terminating pursuits. Supervisors shall assert control of the pursuit by monitoring and directing specific units into or out of the pursuit, re-designating primary, secondary, and back-up units, approving or ordering alternative tactics, or terminating the pursuit if appropriate.
2. Upon being notified of a pursuit, supervisors shall verify the following factors:
 - a. The reasons which initiated the pursuit,
 - b. That no more than the necessary number of units is involved in the pursuit,
 - c. That the correct radio channel is being used,

- d. That any potential inter-jurisdictional law enforcement agencies are notified, and
- e. That the following duties are being executed by Dispatch:
 - 1) "Emergency radio traffic" has been initiated,
 - 2) All units have been told that a pursuit is in progress,
 - 3) Radio transmissions are multi-selected on all radio channels, if applicable, and that locations or changes in pursuit directions are routinely updated,
 - 4) Record checks are handled as quickly as possible,
 - 5) Information provided by pursuing units is repeated as necessary,
 - 6) The status availability of K-9 units is known,
 - 7) Establish a common radio channel when pursuits have or are likely to cross jurisdictions, and
 - 8) Monitor the pursuit until it has been terminated.

E. Motor Vehicle Apprehension Operational Tactics

- 1. Factors to be considered before beginning a pursuit include:
 - a. The area in which the pursuit will be occurring:
 - 1) Residential areas
 - 2) School zones
 - 3) Road conditions
 - 4) Special events in progress, and
 - 5) Congested business areas or intersections.
 - b. Time of Day:
 - 1) Are school children going or coming from school?
 - 2) Is traffic congestion going to be a problem?
 - c. Suspects' vehicle speed and driving style.

- 1) Extreme high speed,
- 2) Reckless driving habits, failure to stop at stop signs or lights, and
- 3) Ramming other vehicles to escape capture.

2. Method of Pursuit

- a. No more than three units will engage in the pursuit.
- b. All emergency equipment including sirens will be used.
- c. A caravan of unassigned units is prohibited.
- d. Officers shall not follow a suspect the wrong way on a divided roadway and should use extreme caution if the suspect vehicle proceeds the wrong way on any other roadway.
- e. Pursuing units will maintain a reasonable and safe following distance.
- f. Unmarked vehicles equipped with blue lights and siren are permitted to engage in pursuits but will be relieved by the first available marked vehicle. Unmarked vehicles will act as secondary units until a second marked vehicle is present, at which time the unmarked vehicle will discontinue pursuit mode, and continue safely if additional units are required.
- g. Initiating pursuit vehicles may relinquish primary pursuit position to neighboring city/county law enforcement officers when crossing jurisdictional boundaries.
- h. Officers will terminate a pursuit if they lose radio contact with Dispatch or their Supervisor.
- i. Stationary roadblocks in the path of moving vehicles are prohibited.
- j. Officers shall not discharge their firearms at or from a moving vehicle unless the occupants of the other vehicle are using deadly force against the Officer or another person by means other than the vehicle.
- k. Officers must be aware that firing at a moving motor vehicle or its driver is extremely hazardous. A damaged or disabled vehicle, or a vehicle with a driver who has lost control, could collide with other motorists, pedestrians, or even residential and commercial structures.

NOTE: Firearms may be used only under circumstances which provide a high probability of striking the intended objective and without causing harm to innocent persons

F. Terminating the Pursuit

1. A decision to terminate a pursuit may be the most rational means of protecting property and the lives of the public, law enforcement officers, and suspects. Officers have an obligation to discontinue a pursuit when circumstances dictate it is no longer justified or reasonable.
2. A pursuit will be terminated if:
 - a. The Officer or Supervisor determines the level of danger outweighs the necessity of the pursuit,
 - b. The suspect's identity has been established to the point that later apprehension can be accomplished, and he/she does not pose an imminent danger to the public.
 - c. The distance between the Officer and the pursued vehicle is so great it becomes obvious that apprehension is unlikely,
 - d. Equipment failure makes it impractical or unsafe to continue the pursuit,
 - e. Radio contact is lost with Dispatch and/or the Supervisor,
 - f. The Officer engaged in the pursuit no longer has a reasonable belief that the suspect is an imminent threat to an individual or the public.

NOTE: If a pursuit is terminated, all pursuing Officers will immediately cease to follow the suspect vehicle in any manner whatsoever and will turn off their emergency lights and siren.

G. Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits:

1. Outbound Pursuits:
 - a. If a pursuit appears to be continuing outside the Town of Liberty, the pursuing Officer will instruct Dispatch to notify the foreign jurisdiction into which the pursuit is entering and request their assistance. Notifications should include:
 - 1) Nature of offense/reason for pursuit,
 - 2) Number of suspects in the pursued vehicle,
 - 3) Number of units currently involved,
 - 4) Direction of travel and the suspect's description, and

5) Any special conditions or considerations.

- b. If assistance is granted, a unit from the foreign jurisdiction should assume the primary unit position, if practical, once the pursuit has entered that jurisdiction. The primary pursuing Liberty Police Department unit should then continue as a secondary unit at a safe distance behind the new primary unit.
- c. If a foreign jurisdiction requests the pursuing Liberty Police Department unit discontinue the pursuit in view of public safety concerns, the Liberty Police Department unit will terminate the pursuit.
- d. Officers continuing a pursuit outside the Town of Liberty will adhere to the policies of the Liberty Police Department.

2. In-Bound Pursuits:

- a. Officers shall not become involved in another agency's pursuit unless clearly and specifically directed to assist by a Liberty Police Department Supervisor.
- b. Assisting with a pursuit that enters the Town of Liberty will depend upon the methods used by the pursuing agency. If those methods do not appear to meet with this policy, Liberty Police Department Officers will not become involved in the pursuit.
- c. Liberty Police Department Officers may request the pursuing agency terminate a pursuit due to public safety considerations.

H. If a suspect fails to stop but makes no overt action to flee or elude the Officer and does not violate traffic laws, this is considered a failure to stop rather than a motor vehicle pursuit. Officers may continue to safely monitor and follow the suspect's vehicle while utilizing emergency lighting and sirens and following applicable traffic safety laws for a reasonable period of time and distance. If the suspect violates traffic laws or makes any overt action to flee or elude the Officer, the Officer must discontinue all attempts to stop the vehicle unless one or both of the following conditions exist:

- 1. There is reasonable belief that if not stopped the driver will commit or attempt to commit a forcible felony which involves the actual or threatened use of deadly force; and/or
- 2. There is reasonable belief that the fleeing driver poses an imminent threat of grievous bodily harm or death to an individual or the public at large.

NOTE: The intentional striking of an emergency vehicle by the subject vehicle, absent other aggravating circumstances, does not automatically constitute an imminent threat of physical harm to the public.

NOTE: Officers must use sound judgment in determining if a driver of a vehicle that is failing to stop is merely attempting to locate a safe location to stop based upon the time of day, environmental conditions, type of law enforcement vehicle (marked versus unmarked), etc. Officers should use their public address system to direct the vehicle to a safe location and identify themselves as Liberty Police Department Officers.

III. PRECISION IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE

- A. The Precision Immobilization Technique will be used only by Officers who have received Liberty Police Department approved training. Officers trained in PIT techniques must receive re-training every two years.
- B. The use of the Precision Immobilization Technique to apprehend a driver or occupant the Officer reasonably believes is committing or has committed a "Forcible Felony" crime that involved the actual or threatened use of deadly force and the perpetrator's escape would create a substantial risk to the public will be permitted only if the Precision Immobilization Technique occurs at a time and place and in a manner that human life and property are not unreasonably endangered.
- C. The use of the Precision Immobilization Technique against motorcycles and vehicles having a high center of gravity (i.e. sport utility vehicles, trucks, and vans) is prohibited unless the use of deadly force is justified.
- D. Trained Officers operating sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks or similar vehicles may only use the technique with extreme caution and only under those conditions when it can be applied with relative safety to the Officer, suspect, and innocent parties.
- E. The use of the Precision Immobilization Technique against vehicles with one or more deflated tires is prohibited unless the use of deadly force is justified.

IV. TIRE DEFLATION DEVICE PROCEDURES

- A. Officers may only use an agency-approved tire deflation device or system to deflate the tires of a motor vehicle. Deflation devices may be deployed in an attempt to prevent or terminate a pursuit. One or more of the following criteria shall be met prior to the use of a TDD.
 - 1. There is reasonable cause to believe that the suspect has committed an offense justifying arrest.
 - 2. The Officer attempting to apprehend a moving suspect vehicle has given notice of the intention to stop the suspect by means of emergency equipment. If the incident involves a stationary vehicle, visual/verbal commands will suffice prior to deployment.

3. During covert operations where it is necessary to deploy a TDD before contacting a suspect(s), no prior notification is necessary. This type of deployment may be done when there is reason to believe that the suspect will flee prior to law enforcement contact.
 4. The suspect ignores the efforts and warnings obvious and visible to a reasonable person in the suspect's position.
- B. After the successful deployment of deflation devices, a vehicle may be followed and stopped as soon as possible. A vehicle will not be followed when the level of danger outweighs the necessity to immediately stop the vehicle. The use of firearms or the Precision Immobilization Technique is prohibited unless deadly force is justified, once a TDD is deployed. Supervisors will review the in-car camera or body-worn camera recordings (if applicable) when a TDD is deployed.
- C. Before continuing to follow a vehicle with deflated tires, Officers will consider the following factors:
1. The area in which the vehicle is located or approaching:
 - a. Residential areas,
 - b. School zones,
 - c. Road conditions,
 - d. Special events in progress, and
 - e. Congested business areas or intersections.
 2. The time of day:
 - a. Are school children going or coming from school?
 - b. Is traffic congestion going to be a problem?
 3. Suspects' vehicle speed and driving style:
 - a. Extreme high speed,
 - b. Reckless driving habits, failure to stop at stop signs or lights, and
 - c. Ramming other vehicles to escape capture.
- D. Officers involved in using a TDD will consider the following before using this equipment:

1. Before using a TDD, Officers shall have received training and demonstrated proficiency in the use of the devices. Officers assigned tire deflation devices will receive mandatory device retraining every two years.
2. Circumstances permitting, back-up or secondary units will normally attempt to establish at least one location where the visible presence of a law enforcement officer(s) is apparent to the suspect. This will be done in an effort to make the suspect fully aware of law enforcement's command to stop and their attempts to apprehend. Should the suspect fail to stop or if the pursuing officer and/or supervisor have reason to believe that the continued movement of the fleeing vehicle will place the driver and/or the general public in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death, the back-up units may use the approved TDD. The devices will be used for the sole purpose of bringing the suspect vehicle to a stop.
3. Most effective location for the placement of tire-deflating devices:
 - a. Deployment locations should have reasonable sight distances to enable the Officer deploying a TDD to observe the pursuit and/or suspect vehicle as well as other traffic as it approaches. TDD's should not be deployed immediately before entering a curve unless the use of deadly force is justified.
 - b. The Officer deploying a TDD should choose a location with natural barriers such as overpasses, buildings, or other dense objects. These barriers will conceal the Officer from the suspect's view and allow deployment of the devices from a position of safety. Patrol vehicles may not be used as a barrier.
 - c. Traffic, construction, special events, and/or school zones may create situations where the use of tire-deflating devices would be inappropriate.
4. Position and vulnerability of the public, private property, other assisting units and equipment:
 - a. Tire-deflating devices will not be used on vehicles having less than four tires unless the use of deadly force is justified.
 - b. Tire-deflating devices should not be deployed to stop the following vehicles unless continued movement of the suspect vehicle would result in an increased hazard to others:
 - 1) Any vehicle transporting known hazardous materials, unless such vehicle is being used by a terrorist organization/individual as a means to carry out terrorist activity.
 - 2) Any passenger bus transporting passengers.
 - 3) Any school bus transporting students.

- c. Single Stick deployments are intended for use on stationary vehicles to prevent escape. Only Officers who have received specialized training may use single stick deployment.
 - d. Stop Stick deployments on stationary vehicles may be used to prevent escape by placing sleeved Stop Sticks (without removing individual sticks) under the tires of the vehicle.
 - e. The primary method of deploying Stop Sticks is with all sticks sleeved and cord reel properly attached.
- E. If it appears that an Officer will drive over the tire-deflating devices before the system is retrieved, the Officer must not take radical evasive action and accept the flat tires. Radical evasive action can cause catastrophic results such as rollovers, multiple vehicle collisions or injury to the deploying Officer.
- F. Any vehicle(s) or other property sustaining damage as a result of the use of a TDD will be reported immediately to the Officer's supervisor. The supervisor will then properly document the damage as outlined in this policy.
- G. Anytime life-threatening injuries or death result from the deployment of a TDD, the incident shall be documented on the appropriate forms. If the incident is deemed to be a crash and not a legal intervention, the Tennessee Highway Patrol shall be called and asked to complete the crash report.
- NOTE: A copy of the Vehicle Apprehension Report and Zuercher Report, containing information on the deployment of a TDD, or all other pertinent reports will be forwarded to the Chief of Police through the chain of command.**
- H. Officers shall obtain replacements for damaged TDD's from the appropriate personnel. If any portion of a tire deflation device becomes damaged, a replacement will be obtained as soon as possible.
- I. TDDs are assigned to individual Officers and not to a particular vehicle. TDDs shall be located in the trunk of authorized law enforcement vehicles.

V. BLOCKING MANEUVERS

- A. After the successful completion of approved training, Officers are authorized to use a blocking or boxing-in maneuver, under the following circumstances:
- 1. There is a reasonable belief that the driver will flee upon the sight of law enforcement or after being directed to stop,
 - 2. During the course of an ongoing pursuit when circumstances are favorable, and

3. The driver has refused to stop or yield to an emergency vehicle.
- B. Attempting or executing a blocking maneuver on a motor vehicle in motion may only be performed at low speeds or stationary vehicles by Officers that have successfully completed requisite training.

VI. REPORTING A VEHICLE APPREHENSION EVENT

- A. Immediately following a vehicle pursuit, a Vehicle Apprehension Report is required to be completed in order to document the pursuit and any vehicle apprehension method used by Officers, including the use of the Precision Immobilization Technique, successful deployment of tire deflation devices, or the execution of a vehicle blocking or boxing-in maneuver. Following a vehicle pursuit, Officers will complete a Vehicle Apprehension Report along with a Zuercher report.
 1. A Vehicle Apprehension Report will be completed by the Officer who conducted (or who was directly involved in) the event and shall be submitted to a reviewing supervisor before going off duty.
 2. Upon receiving the report, the supervisor will review and critique the incident with the Officer and any other involved personnel. Problems or concerns will be discussed, and a written recommendation shall be forwarded to higher authority, if necessary, detailing any recommendations regarding the handling of future incidents.
 3. The Vehicle Apprehension Report, along with any recommendations, shall be signed by the Officer's supervisor and forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. During the chain of command review process, any available audio and/or video recordings (i.e. in-car camera or body-worn camera systems) related to the incident will be reviewed.
 4. Once an administrative review is completed, Vehicle Apprehension Reports will be forwarded to the Administration Major for statistical analysis.
- B. In addition to a Vehicle Apprehension Report, following the successful deployment of a tire deflation device, including all incidents that directly involve Liberty Police Department Officers, a Zuercher report (new or supplementary) must also be completed before going off-duty.
- C. A Vehicle Apprehension Report is not required if Officers execute a blocking or boxing-in maneuver in a parking lot or similar setting when the maneuver is conducted at low speeds and with no or minimal property damage. However, a Zuercher report (new or supplementary) must be completed before going off duty to document the blocking or boxing-in maneuver along with any property damage or physical injuries. A Vehicle Apprehension Report is required if a blocking or boxing-in maneuver is executed on a roadway, highway or interstate.

VII. ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF MOTOR VEHICLE APPREHENSIONS

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Operations Major or designee will complete a written analysis of vehicle apprehensions for the previous year. Data used for this analysis will be extracted from Vehicle Apprehension Reports, or other sources as may be required. The purpose of the analysis is to alert supervisors throughout the chain of command to patterns or trends indicating training needs and/or policy modification. The pursuit policies and reporting procedures will be reviewed annually.

RELATED FORMS:

Vehicle Apprehension Report