



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
19.3 Replaces 304.2  
Chapter 19 – Vehicle Operation  
Section 3 – Emergency Operation, Pursuits and Road Blocks

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Signature:

All personnel shall exercise due regard for the safety of themselves and others while operating an emergency vehicle.

**Definitions:**

Vehicular Pursuit -	An active attempt to apprehend a suspect operating a motor vehicle, while the suspect is trying to avoid capture by using high speed driving or other evasive tactics including driving off the roadway, making sudden unexpected movements, or maintaining legal speed, but willfully failing to yield to the officer's signal to stop.
Serious Felony -	A felony that involves an actual or threatened crime which the officer has reasonable cause to believe could result, or has resulted, in a death or serious bodily injury (i.e. - aggravated assault, armed robbery, murder, etc.)
Roadblock -	Any method, restriction, or obstruction utilized or intended for the purpose of preventing free passage of motor vehicles on a highway in order to affect the apprehension of an actual or suspected violator in a motor vehicle.
Authorized Emergency Vehicle -	All police vehicles equipped with sirens, flashing lights, and other emergency equipment are authorized emergency vehicles under Wyoming Statute 31-5-102.
Emergency -	An emergency exists when the safety of a person or property is in imminent peril and the situation calls for immediate action.
Primary Unit -	The police unit that initiates pursuit or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit.
Commanding Officer -	The chief of police, deputy chief, or division commander.
Field Supervisor -	Patrol sergeant, corporal, or designated shift supervisor.

**19.3.1 Emergency Vehicle Operation**

- A. Officers must exercise good judgment to determine whether the known facts and circumstances justify an emergency call. Officers will recognize that protection of human life is paramount. The responding officer must remember that the objective is to get to the location of the occurrence as soon as possible but to do so safely.

- B. All emergency vehicle operations shall be conducted in strict accordance with existing statutes. Wyoming Statute 31-5-106 permits the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle responding to an emergency call or when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law to:
1. Park or stand irrespective of the provisions of this act;
  2. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;
  3. Exceed the maximum speed limit so long as he does not endanger life or property; and
  4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.
- This statute does not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor does it protect from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.
- C. Officers engaged in emergency vehicle operations shall utilize both siren and emergency lights consistent with legal requirements and the safety of the public.
1. Officers should use their discretion as to the use of the siren continually keeping in mind that radio traffic is often inaudible when the siren is used and that the siren becomes less effective at higher speed.
  2. The nature of certain crimes in progress may call for the use of the emergency lights and siren to be discontinued upon approach to the location of the occurrence. Although such action is permitted, law enforcement vehicle operations under these conditions require extreme caution.
- D. Primary and back-up units responding to emergency calls shall respond rapidly to the location of the emergency, by the most direct means, using emergency warning devices with a paramount consideration for safety of the public and the assigned officers.
- E. As a general rule, officers will not drive more than twenty (20) miles per hour above the posted speed limit in an emergency response; excluding pursuits. Under no circumstance will an officer operate the vehicle at an excessive speed considering road conditions and other traffic present.
- F. Upon approaching a controlled intersection or other location where there is greater possibility of collision, the officer who is responding under emergency conditions shall reduce the speed of the vehicle, stopping completely, if necessary, before entering the intersection.
- G. Regardless of the seriousness of the situation to which the officer is responding, the operator of a law enforcement vehicle shall be held accountable for the manner in which the vehicle is operated.

### **19.3.2 Pursuits**

- A. Initiating Pursuit
1. The decision to initiate pursuit must be based on the pursuing officer's conclusion, based on the subject's actions prior to the pursuit, 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.
  2. Any law enforcement officer in an authorized emergency vehicle may initiate a vehicular pursuit only when both of the following criteria are met:
    - a. The suspect operating the vehicle refuses to stop at the direction of the officer; and
    - b. The suspect, if allowed to escape, presents a danger to human life.

3. The pursuing officer shall consider the following factors in determining whether to initiate pursuit:
    - a. The performance and equipment capabilities of the pursuit vehicle;
    - b. The condition of the road surface upon which the pursuit is being conducted;
    - c. The amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the area;
    - d. Weather conditions; and
    - e. The officers present mental and physical conditions, and ability to engage in a pursuit.
  4. Officers, when accompanied by civilian passengers, shall not engage in a vehicle pursuit. If the civilian is in the law enforcement vehicle at the beginning of the pursuit, that officer will turn the pursuit over to another officer, or leave the civilian at an appropriate, safe location.
- B. Initiating/Primary Unit Responsibilities
1. The responsibility for the decision to initiate vehicle pursuit rests with the individual officer. The officer initiating the pursuit shall, in all cases, notify the dispatcher as soon as reasonably possible that a pursuit is under way and provide the following information:
    - a. Officer's identification number;
    - b. Location, speed, and direction of travel;
    - c. Vehicle description;
    - d. The specific reason for the pursuit, including laws violated; and
    - e. Number of occupants with description, if possible.
  2. Failure to provide the above information may be cause for the commanding officer/field supervisor to terminate the pursuit.
  3. The initiating/primary unit will be responsible for the pursuit unless relieved by a supervisor or another backup unit has been assigned to primary pursuit responsibility.
  4. The primary unit may maintain pursuit as long as it is reasonably safe to do so, until directed by a supervisor to terminate the pursuit or until the suspect stops.
  5. Any primary or backup unit sustaining damage or failure of essential vehicle equipment shall not be permitted to continue in the pursuit. The unit shall notify the field supervisor so that another unit may be assigned to the pursuit.
- C. Termination of Pursuits
1. The decision to abandon pursuits may be the best course of action. Officers must continually question whether the seriousness of the situation justifies continuing the pursuit. A pursuit will be terminated under any of the following circumstances:
    - a. If in the opinion of the pursuing officer, commanding officer, or the field supervisor there is an unreasonable danger to the officer and/or other users of the highway to include suspects, created by the pursuit that outweighs the necessity of immediate apprehension;
    - b. The suspect's identity has been established to the point that later apprehension can be accomplished, and there is no longer any need for immediate apprehension;
    - c. The prevailing traffic, roadway, and environmental conditions indicate the futility of continued vehicular pursuit;
    - d. The pursuit vehicle's location is no longer known or the distance is so great that further pursuit is futile; or

- e. The pursuing officer knows or is reasonably certain that the fleeing vehicle is operated by a juvenile and that the offense constitutes a misdemeanor or non-serious felony, and the safety factors involved are obviously greater than a juvenile can cope with.
  - 2. The termination of a pursuit does not prohibit the following of a vehicle at a safe speed, or remaining in an area to reinitiate pursuit if the opportunity and conditions permit.
- D. Assisting Unit Responsibility
- 1. Assistance will be coordinated by the field supervisor/commanding officer.
  - 2. The active pursuit will normally involve no more than two (2) units, the primary unit and a backup unit. If more assistance is specifically requested, the amount will be determined by:
    - a. The nature of the offense;
    - b. The number of suspects;
    - c. Whether the participating units have more than one officer;
    - d. Any damage or injuries to the assigned units or officers;
    - e. The number of officers needed to make an arrest at the conclusion of the pursuit; and
    - f. Other clear and articulated facts that would warrant the increased hazard.
  - 3. Only supervisor may authorize more than two (2) units to be in active pursuit. All other units will remain aware of the pursuit, but shall not actively participate and shall not respond or parallel the pursuit on adjacent streets unless specifically authorized to do so.
  - 4. The assisting unit upon joining the pursuit shall immediately notify the dispatcher of its identity, and will utilize all emergency vehicle equipment while in pursuit. If the primary unit is a one (1) person unit, the assisting unit may assume radio communications responsibility allowing the primary unit to devote its full attention to driving.
  - 5. The assisting unit will maintain a safe distance behind the primary unit, however be close enough to render backup assistance if and when required.
  - 6. If the primary unit becomes disabled, the assisting unit will become the primary unit. The officer will advise the field supervisor if this change occurs. The next unit to join the pursuit, as designated by the field supervisor, will become the backup unit.
- E. Dispatcher Responsibilities
- 1. Receive and record all incoming information on the pursuit;
  - 2. Notify the field supervisor that a pursuit is in progress and provide all relevant information;
  - 3. Clear the radio channel of any unnecessary radio traffic and non-emergency calls;
  - 4. Perform relevant record and motor vehicle checks;
  - 5. Notify neighboring jurisdictions when necessary; and
  - 6. Continue to monitor the pursuit until it has been terminated.
- F. Supervisory Responsibilities
- 1. Upon being notified, the field supervisor shall verify the following and coordinate assistance:
    - a. No more than the authorized number of units are involved in the pursuit;
    - b. Proper radio frequency is being used; and
    - c. Affected allied agencies are being notified.

- D. The existing need for a pursuit.
- 2. The field supervisor will continue to direct the pursuit, review the incoming data and approve or order alternative tactics; such as the use of a roadblock or road spikes. The field supervisor will maintain control of the pursuit until the pursuit is terminated. In the absence of adequate information from the primary or secondary unit, the field supervisor may order the termination of the pursuit.
- 3. The field supervisor should proceed to the termination point of the pursuit and provide any guidance and necessary supervision.
- G. Emergency Vehicle Operation and Tactics
  - 1. Offensive tactics in the course of the pursuit, deliberate contact between vehicles or forcing the pursued vehicle into parked cars, ditches, or any other obstacle, boxing in or heading off, ramming, or driving alongside the pursued vehicle while it is in motion are prohibited unless such actions are specifically authorized by the field supervisor, or if the situation warrants the use of deadly force.
  - 2. There shall be no attempt by officers to pass other field units involved in the pursuit unless the passing officer receives specific permission from the primary officer or field supervisor.
  - 3. All units in pursuit, whether the vehicle in front of the unit is the suspect vehicle or another police vehicle, shall space themselves at a distance that will ensure proper braking and reaction time in the event the lead vehicle stops, slows, or turns.
  - 4. Unmarked police vehicles and officers operating unmarked units, provided they are equipped with emergency lights and sirens, may engage in vehicular pursuit only when the fleeing vehicle presents an immediate and direct threat to life or when the officer in the unmarked unit has reasonable and articulable reason to believe that if the suspect is not apprehended, he may pose a threat to public safety. Whenever a marked unit becomes available to take over the pursuit, the unmarked unit will withdraw from an active pursuit and serve in a support role. Officers operating an unmarked unit should be aware that Wyoming Statute 31-5-225 sets forth specific vehicle emergency equipment, vehicle marking, and uniform requirements that must be met in order to charge a suspect with "eluding a police officer". While the violator is required to yield to an emergency vehicle including unmarked police vehicles (see Wyoming Statute 31-5-224), he may not be charged with "eluding a police officer" (see Wyoming Statute 31-5-225).
  - 5. Officers shall not pursue suspects the wrong way on an interstate or other controlled access highway unless specifically authorized by the field supervisor.
  - 6. Extreme caution must be used whenever officers disregard traffic signs or signals, even though state statutes specifically permit such conduct. The officer shall make use of all available warning devices to alert other motorists and pedestrians.
- H. Inter-Jurisdictional Pursuits
  - 1. The dispatcher, as directed by the field supervisor, will notify other agencies that this department is in pursuit in their jurisdiction. The informing person will specify if the call is a request for assistance or merely a courtesy notification with no participation desired.
  - 2. Officers will not become involved in other agency pursuits unless specifically authorized by the field supervisor, or unless it is clearly demonstrated that a unit from an outside agency is unable to request assistance or the emergency nature of the call

dictates the need for assistance. In these instances, all department pursuit policies are in effect.

I. Review and Report

1. The patrol operations bureau lieutenant, or designee, shall complete a comprehensive review of the pursuit. The report shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the office of the chief of police.

**19.3.3 Roadblocks**

- A. Wyoming Statute 7-17-102 authorizes peace officers to establish temporary roadblocks upon the highways within the state for the purpose of apprehending persons reasonably believed by the officers to be wanted for violation of the law.
- B. Roadblocks, with supervisory approval, may only be utilized in cases of suspected fleeing felons whose escape poses a danger to life.
- C. Minimum requirements for a roadblock are defined by Wyoming Statute 7-17-103. For the purpose of warning and protecting the traveling public, the following minimum requirements shall be met by peace officers establishing temporary roadblocks if time and circumstances allow:
  1. The temporary roadblock shall be established at a point on a highway clearly visible at a distance not less than two hundred (200) yards in either direction.
  2. At the point of the temporary roadblock, flashing warning lights shall be visible to oncoming traffic for a distance not less than two hundred (200) yards. The display of flashing emergency warning lights on a marked law enforcement vehicle shall be sufficient under this paragraph.
  3. At least one (1) person working a temporary roadblock shall be in uniform and visible, and at least one (1) vehicle used in a temporary roadblock shall be clearly marked as a law enforcement vehicle.
- D. Training in the use of roadblocks shall be conducted annually during briefing training.
- E. The field supervisor shall complete a comprehensive review of the road block and document the information. The report shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the office of the chief of police.

**19.3.4 Tire Deflation Devices**

- A. Tire Deflation Devices shall be used in accordance with policy 19.5.