

	LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT Ardmore, Pennsylvania	
	Policy 3.8.8	
Subject:		Distribution:
Foot Pursuits		All Personnel
Date of Issue:	Expiration Date:	Rescinds:
06-01-2014	Until Amended or Rescinded	Directive: 10-106
References:		
CALEA: N/A; PLEAC: N/A		
By Authority of:		
		Superintendent of Police

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a balance between protecting the safety of the public and police officers during police pursuits on foot and law enforcement's duty to enforce the law and apprehend suspects.

POLICY

Foot pursuits are inherently dangerous police actions. It is the policy of this department that officer and public safety shall be the overriding consideration in determining whether a foot pursuit will be initiated or continued. Foot pursuits occur in a wide variety of circumstances. Therefore, this policy is intended to provide overall direction and guidance to officers when deciding if such pursuits are warranted and how they should be conducted.

PROCEDURE

Although it is an officer's decision to initiate a stop, it is the suspect/violator who decides to precipitate a foot pursuit by fleeing. An officer's decision to pursue on foot shall be made with an awareness of, and appreciation for, the risk to which the officer and others will be exposed. Where necessary, an officer may pursue person(s) who he/she reasonably believes have committed an act that would warrant a stop, investigative detention, or arrest.

A. Factors to consider when initiating a foot pursuit are:

1. Whether the suspect is armed;
2. The offense committed by the suspect;
3. Location;

- a. Nature of area: residential, commercial, school zone, highway, etc.
 - b. Conditions of the structures: i. e., abandoned or condemned
4. Environmental factors: weather, lighting conditions.
5. Ability to apprehend the suspect at a later time
6. Communications
 - a. Familiarity with the area, ability to transmit location of fleeing suspect
 - b. Radio coverage
7. Availability of backup units to assist

B. Pursuing Officer

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 to as a result of the pursuit.
2. Pursuing officer must notify the Communications Center of the following information:
 - a. Unit number
 - b. Location
 - c. Direction
 - d. Description of suspect
 - e. Number of suspects
 - f. Reason for foot pursuit
 - g. If suspect is armed
3. Pursuing officer will coordinate with other officers to establish a perimeter in the area to contain the suspect.
4. If the foot pursuit is terminated, pursuing officer(s) will notify the Communications Center with the last known location, direction of travel, or point of apprehension of the suspect.

C. Supervisors

1. The supervisor's role is to monitor a foot pursuit and appropriately direct resources to safely apprehend the suspect.

2. The supervisor will terminate a foot pursuit at any time if it is determined that the danger to the pursuing officer(s) or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the suspect.

CONSIDERATIONS

If possible, the officer(s) should consider the feasibility of the following strategies or tactics prior to initiating a foot pursuit or in determining whether to continue with the foot pursuit:

- A. Area containment
- B. Obtaining additional officers
- C. Surveillance - Use of Night Vision or Thermal Imaging Equipment.
- D. If identity of suspect is known - Apprehension at a later time
- E. In the event the suspect is in a confined area consideration can be given to the use of specialized units such as:
 1. Canine unit
 2. Emergency Response Team (ERT)

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all supervisory personnel to ensure that officers under their immediate supervision comply with this policy.

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