



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL		
CHAPTER 104	EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS	
	Effective: 09/07/2023	Commissioner Approval: 
	Authorities: <a href="#">13 AAC 571</a> ; <a href="#">13 AAC 04.210</a>	
	Applicability: Commissioned and Partially Commissioned	
	Special Instructions: REFER TO CHAPTER 107	

## 104.100 INTRODUCTION

The department establishes policy and protocol for engaging in emergency vehicle operations. Each Section details specific responsibilities of involved officers, dispatchers, supervisors, and Commanders. When a pursuit or high-speed emergency operation is undertaken that results in damage or injury, the officer involved will be accountable for the reasonableness of the pursuit and/or the driving actions taken during the course of the emergency. Refer to Use of Force chapter 107.

## 104.300 RULES AFFECTING ALL EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

The rules in this section apply to all emergency vehicle operations including responses, pursuits, overtaking, and the use of vehicle interdiction tactics (VIT). Additional limitations on specific types of emergency vehicle operations can be found in sections 104.310 - 340.

**A. *Risk factors to consider.*** An officer engaging in an emergency vehicle operation of any kind must balance the need for an EVO against the dangers associated with such operations. Officers shall be aware of and consider all conditions affecting this balance, including:

1. the seriousness of the initial underlying offense;
2. other emergency resources at or near the scene, or in a position to affect the outcome;
3. the immediate danger posed by the suspect's attempts to flee;
4. the suspect's identity, history of violence or dangerous behavior, and whether later apprehension is possible;
5. the type of road and its surface condition;
6. existing weather conditions;
7. the officer's familiarity with the area;
8. the amount and nature of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; and,
9. the officer's skill as a driver and the current performance capabilities of the department vehicle.

**B. *Special restrictions on emergency vehicle operations.***

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## CHAPTER 104 EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

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1. Vehicles transporting prisoners or members of the public may not engage in emergency vehicle operations unless a passenger is suffering a medical emergency.
2. Privately owned vehicles may not be used as emergency vehicles in any emergency vehicle operation.
3. Officers may not escort emergency vehicles unless a special circumstance exists which requires the action, e.g., driver of an emergency vehicle is not familiar with location of a hospital.
4. Officers engaging in emergency vehicle operations may not pull out in front of, turn into the path of, or pass another vehicle unless the other vehicle has indicated through their actions (e.g., pulling over) that they are aware of the presence of the emergency vehicle.
5. Any vehicle that sustains damage to, or suffers a failure of any essential vehicular equipment shall immediately cease emergency vehicle operations. Damaged vehicles that can do so safely are permitted to engage in non-EVO responses.

**C. *Special precautions at intersections.*** Officers shall exercise extreme caution at all intersections when engaging in any emergency vehicle operation.

1. No department vehicle may enter an intersection in violation of a traffic control device unless it can be done safely.
2. Officers should use red lights and siren, when available, to warn pedestrians and other traffic of their approach to an intersection except when to do so would warn a dangerous suspect of their approach.
3. Vehicles without permanently mounted emergency lights adequate to provide visual warning to other vehicles are required to stop before entering an intersection in violation of a traffic control device.
4. It is the responsibility of the officer to ensure that all other vehicles are yielding the right of way to the emergency vehicle before entering an intersection in violation of a traffic control device.

**D. *Notification to dispatcher of emergency vehicular operation.*** It is the responsibility of all officers engaging in an emergency response or pursuit to advise dispatch of their participation and to receive acknowledgment from the dispatch center. Officers engaged in an emergency response or pursuit shall communicate the following information to dispatch:

1. identity of the officer;
2. reason for the emergency vehicle operation;
3. current location;
4. intended destination (if applicable);
5. direction of travel (if applicable);

6. details which will enable supervisors, dispatchers, and other officers to assess the situation and, if authorized and necessary, provide assistance.

**E. *Termination of emergency vehicle operations.*** Emergency vehicle operations shall be terminated by an officer any time they consider it unwise to continue based upon risk to the persons involved or the public, or upon the order of a supervisor or OIC. Officers will not be disciplined for terminating emergency vehicle operations that they consider unsafe or unwise to continue.

**F. *Dispatch responsibilities during emergency vehicle operations.*** During any type of emergency vehicle operation it shall be the responsibility of dispatch to:

1. account for all officers involved and attempt to identify all units responding;
2. provide all information to the supervisor or OIC who oversees the event; and
3. clear radio channels of all non-emergency calls and control radio traffic as directed by a supervisor.

**G. *Supervisors to oversee any emergency vehicle operations.*** Supervisors are responsible for monitoring any emergency vehicle operations in their area of responsibility and for determining the necessity, compliance with all applicable rules, and for ordering termination of any unnecessary or out-of-policy emergency vehicle operations.

When monitoring an emergency vehicle operation the supervisor shall consider ordering termination in any situation where there is uncertainty as to the necessity for the emergency vehicle operation; as to compliance with applicable policies, rules, or procedures; or in the wisdom of continuing.

**H. *Commanders to review emergency vehicle operations*** Commanders shall, on a regular basis, review the conduct of emergency vehicle operations within their area of responsibility. This review shall be for the purpose of monitoring compliance with all applicable department policies and especially the appropriate consideration of the factors listed in 104.300 A.

**I. *Commanders to contact adjacent police agencies.*** Commanders are to provide the heads of adjacent police agencies with a copy of the DPS pursuit policy. Commanders will obtain copies of the pursuit policies of any adjacent local police agencies. Where possible, commanders will engage in discussions with the heads of adjacent police agencies in an effort to establish a plan for the interaction of their agencies during pursuits that cross areas of responsibility.

**J. *Use of lights and siren during emergency vehicle operations.*** Officers will use their emergency lights and / or sirens during any emergency vehicle operation when reasonably necessary to warn pedestrians and other drivers of their approach. Applicable portions of the Alaska Administrative Code include:

13 AAC 02.517. AUTHORIZED AND OTHER EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

(b) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle when responding to an emergency must use an audible signal meeting the requirements of 13 AAC 04.210(d) and visual signals meeting the requirements of 13 AAC 04.090, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not display a red light visible from in front of the vehicle and except as provided in (c) of this section.

(c) A driver of an authorized emergency vehicle which is parked, stopped or standing in disregard of a regulation or ordinance prohibiting the parking, stopping, or standing may not use an audible signal.

13 AAC 04.210. HORNS AND WARNING DEVICES.

(d) Every authorized emergency vehicle must be equipped with a siren, whistle, or bell capable of emitting sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of at least 500 feet; the siren may be used only when the emergency vehicle is operated in response to an emergency call or is in the immediate pursuit of a suspected violator of the law. The driver of the emergency vehicle shall sound the siren when reasonably necessary to warn pedestrians and other drivers of its approach.

**104.310 EMERGENCY RESPONSES**

During an emergency response both the provisions of this section and those of Section 300 (Rules Affecting All Emergency Vehicle Operations) apply.

**A. *When emergency response is authorized.*** Emergency response is authorized in the following situations:

1. when overtaking an offender where circumstances justify the prudent disregard of traffic regulations;
2. for medical emergencies when there is a reasonable expectation that the officer can arrive before EMS or other professional medical personnel;
3. for person crimes where the offender is still at the scene;
4. for person crimes where the offender has left the scene but where the officer is near enough to have a reasonable opportunity to apprehend them in the immediate vicinity;
5. to prevent a person crime, or injury to a person from occurring; or
6. for crimes which by their very nature endanger persons (e.g. burglary, arson, negligent discharge of a firearm, etc.) when the officer is near enough to have a reasonable opportunity to affect the outcome or apprehend the offender.

**B. *Emergency response to alarms limited.*** Emergency responses are not authorized for intrusion or other alarms (including 911 hang-ups) unless there is a strong indication beyond the alarm itself that a crime is actually in progress and there is a reasonable expectation that the officer will arrive while the crime is still in progress.

**104.320 VEHICULAR PURSUITS**

During a vehicular pursuit both the provisions of this section and those of Section 300 (Rules Affecting All Emergency Vehicle Operations) apply.

**A. *Special rules applying to vehicular pursuits.***

1. Officers must always operate their own vehicles in a manner that balances the goal of apprehending the suspect with the goal of creating the least amount of additional risk to them, the public or the suspect.
2. Unless there is an immediate need to apprehend a suspect, a pursuit will not be continued once the suspect is identified to the point where later apprehension can be accomplished. Officers shall seek supervisory approval for continuation in these circumstances.
3. Unless specifically authorized by a supervisor or OIC, the following limitations on the number of pursuing police vehicles apply. No more than four vehicles may engage in pursuit of the same vehicle.
4. The maximum number of participating vehicles includes any vehicle participating in any manner using emergency equipment or traveling in excess of the speed limit. Participants may include, but are not limited to: vehicles paralleling the route of travel; vehicles converging on the anticipated route of the pursuit; vehicles seeking to conduct VIT; and vehicles from other departments. Once the participating vehicle limit has been reached, officers shall remain in their assigned areas unless specifically requested to participate by a supervisor or OIC.
5. Vehicles attempting to get to locations to conduct VIT or other reasonable non-vehicular means of assisting in stopping the suspect vehicle or apprehending the suspect which are being operated in a safe and prudent manner and within normal speed restrictions are not considered as part of the pursuit.
6. Only vehicles equipped with emergency lights and siren are permitted to engage in pursuits.
7. If practical, any non-pursuit rated vehicle involved in a pursuit will be replaced with a pursuit rated (preferably fully marked) vehicle at the earliest opportunity.
8. Officers may not imitate or mirror dangerous vehicular maneuvers of a pursued vehicle.
9. Except in circumstances that would reasonably result in the imminent death or serious injury resulting from the violator's actions during a pursuit, the decision to continue a pursuit may not be based on new offenses that are the result of the pursuit process itself, but must be justifiable based on the original underlying reason for the pursuit.
10. Officers engaged in a pursuit who loses sight of the pursued vehicle under circumstances where the route of, or the location of the pursued vehicle is no longer known shall immediately terminate the pursuit and any emergency vehicle operations. Termination is not required for momentary loss of visual

contact due to limited sight distance from curves in the roadway or other brief obstructions.

11. The pursuing officer must have a plan for concluding the pursuit at the earliest possible point. Additionally, the officer must have a secondary plan in the event that the first attempt to conclude the pursuit fails. The pursuit plan must be immediately put into effect by making specific requests for actions by other units, dispatch or employees of another law enforcement agency. Intentional termination of a pursuit can occur in one of three ways - the violator stops, the officer or a supervisor ends the pursuit, or the violator is forcibly stopped through the use of VIT.
12. Termination of a pursuit does not prohibit following the vehicle at a safe speed or remaining in an area to apprehend the subject if the opportunity arises and conditions permit.
13. All officers involved in a vehicular pursuit must be able to clearly articulate the manner in which they evaluated each of the factors and applied the rules found in this Section and in Section 300.

**B. *Pursuits involving other agencies.***

1. Officers will only become involved in pursuits initiated by other agencies when the other agency requests assistance and the reason for the pursuit is known and the underlying reason for the pursuit constitutes an immediate life threatening circumstance. DPS personnel will not be involved in pursuits initiated by other agencies where the initial underlying reason is a traffic offense or non-life threatening crime.
2. Any officer involved in a pursuit initiated by another agency will comply with all provisions of this chapter and will refuse any request to operate outside our policy. When a DPS vehicle becomes the primary vehicle in any pursuit the pursuit becomes the responsibility of the department to manage consistent with this policy and to terminate the pursuit if full compliance is not adhered to by other agencies involved.
3. This section does not prohibit a DPS officer from employing other, non-vehicular methods or means of assisting the other agency, assisting with VIT or providing traffic control ahead of the pursuit as long as no emergency vehicle operation is required.

**C. *Notification to dispatch when pursuit occurs.*** In addition to the notification requirements for any emergency vehicle operation as outlined in Section 104.300 D, dispatch shall be provided with the following during a vehicular pursuit:

1. The speed of a vehicle being pursued including updates of significant increases or decreases in speeds.

2. A detailed description of the pursued vehicle, license number, occupants and any other known information that might assist in the apprehension of the suspects, formulation of a pursuit plan or supervisory assessment of the pursuit.

**D. *Additional dispatch responsibilities during pursuits.*** In addition to the dispatch responsibilities outlined in Section 104.300 F, during a vehicular pursuit dispatch shall:

1. Notify a supervisor that a pursuit has begun. If the on-duty supervisor is involved in the pursuit, immediately notify the Deputy Commander or the Commander.
2. Receive and record all information incoming on the pursuit and pursued vehicle.
3. Obtain and broadcast to involved units any known vehicle and registration information and any known criminal check information involving the suspect vehicle or known suspects.
4. Notify neighboring police agencies if it appears the pursuit may potentially cross out of AST's normal area of responsibility. Early notification of neighboring police agencies is essential if they are to be expected to assist in the incident. Notifications are to be made even when the possibility of the pursuit traveling outside of AST's area is remote. Any police agency previously notified of a pursuit must be immediately re-contacted and informed when the pursuit has terminated.

**E. *Supervisor to be notified.*** Officers engaging in a vehicular pursuit shall immediately notify a supervisor or request that a supervisor be notified. In remote locations where there is no supervisor on duty, the pursuing officer shall request dispatch personnel to notify an on-duty supervisor in another location, or locate an off-duty supervisor within the Detachment (e.g. pursuing officer in Delta Junction will have the shift supervisor in Fairbanks notified).

In the event that a supervisor cannot be contacted or if the on-duty supervisor is the pursuing officer, every reasonable effort will be made to involve another officer in the analysis and decision making process. The second officer may advise the pursuing officer that the pursuit should be terminated and assist in the formulation of the pursuit plans.

**F. *Supervisory responsibilities during vehicular pursuits.*** Upon being notified of a vehicular pursuit supervisors will exercise active command and control of the pursuit including:

1. Identifying all units involved and their locations.
2. Continuously reviewing the incoming data to determine whether the pursuit should continue.
3. Ensuring that there is a plan for the conclusion of the pursuit and any contingencies.
4. Directing the response and actions of all units involved at any level.

5. Maintaining and exercising final authority to terminate the pursuit at any point when an assessment of the risk factors indicates a need to terminate. This does not relieve the pursuing officers from a responsibility to terminate the pursuit when their own assessment of the risk factors indicates the same need to terminate.
6. Approving and assigning additional backup to the pursuit. When considering the approval of additional units the supervisor will assess and be prepared to clearly articulate the assessment of at least the following factors in addition to the previously stated risk factors:
  - a. Nature of the underlying offense.
  - b. Any available information concerning the suspect and knowledge of past violence or other dangerous acts engaged in by that suspect.
  - c. The officers in the pursuing vehicles, their skills and experience.
  - d. Details of any damage to the pursuing or back up vehicles and any injury to involved officers or members of the public.
  - e. Any other facts that would justify the increase in potential danger caused by an increase in the number of pursuit vehicles.
7. Terminating a pursuit immediately if they lack sufficient information to make a reasonable assessment of the risk factors and other conditions outlined in this chapter.

#### **104.330 ROADBLOCKS**

The rules in this section apply to roadblocks used to apprehend specific vehicles attempting to evade capture.

**A. *Use of a roadblock is a use of force.*** The use of a roadblock against a moving vehicle carries significant risk of injury or death to persons riding in the pursued vehicle, to officers, and to others using the roadways. Because of this danger, the use of roadblocks is ranked on the “use of force options” above the use of impact weapons and may overlap with the use of deadly force depending upon the specific circumstances. The use of roadblocks shall be limited to those cases where officers have exhausted other VIT reasonable under the circumstances and there is a clear necessity to immediately stop the vehicle and where no other reasonable alternative exists to apprehending the vehicle.

**B. *Use of roadblocks authorized only to remove threat of harm to persons.*** The use of roadblocks is authorized only to remove an unreasonable hazard to motorists or to apprehend a person who presents an immediate threat to persons. Examples of allowable uses include the case where a driver is operating their vehicle on the wrong side of a controlled access highway and is an immediate danger to life; or where there is probable cause to believe the person has committed a felony using deadly force against another, and will immediately endanger life if not apprehended. Officers using roadblocks must be able to specifically identify the threat posed by the suspect or pursued vehicle and be prepared to explain why other VIT were



impractical. A possible, speculative, or theoretical, threat to unknown persons is not sufficient justification for the use of roadblocks.

**C. *Supervisory approval required where practical.*** Where practical, officers must request and receive authorization for use of roadblocks prior to their use.

**D. *Placement and utilization of roadblocks.*** Officers establishing roadblocks shall assure that they can be used with reasonable safety to officers, the person pursued, and to other persons using the roadway. Factors which officers shall consider when using roadblocks include:

1. a location that does not create an unreasonable hazard to the vehicle being pursued, or other users of the roadway;
2. sufficient marking of any blockade (such as reflectors, traffic cones, flashing lights, flares, etc.) so that the person pursued and other users of the roadway can see and avoid crashing into the blockade;
3. positioning of police vehicles to allow the vehicle pursued an alternative to crashing into a blockade;
4. positioning of officers to avoid injury if the pursued vehicle fails to stop;
5. planning for continued pursuit if the vehicle fails to stop; and
6. The use of vehicle immobilization devices and other VIT in conjunction with the roadblock.

#### **104.340 VEHICLE IMMOBILIZATION DEVICES**

**A. *Requirements for use of a vehicle immobilization device.*** The following requirements are established to govern the use of vehicle immobilization devices used by officers of the department:

1. Vehicle immobilization devices shall be used only by officers who have successfully completed department sponsored or authorized training in the use of the particular device.
2. Officers may only use vehicle immobilization devices approved and issued by the department.
3. Vehicle immobilization devices shall be used only to terminate pursuits where reasonable cause exists to believe the suspect has committed or is committing an offense justifying arrest.
4. Whenever time and communications permit, a supervisor or OIC will be notified and make the decision to use or deploy any vehicle immobilization device. When such contact and approval cannot be obtained in a timely manner, the decision to use or deploy shall be made by the pursuing officer.
5. Officers shall apply the same considerations to the deployment of a vehicle immobilization device as to the continuation of a pursuit [Ref.104.300 A 1- 9].

6. Immobilization devices shall not be deployed when the deploying officer is unable to reliably communicate with pursuing officers. The deploying officer is responsible for notifying the pursuing officers of the precise location of deployment. The pursuing officer is responsible for notifying the deploying officer when the suspect is approaching.
7. An officer deploying a vehicle immobilization device is responsible for clearing the roadway of all debris resulting from its use.

**B. *Factors to consider when using a vehicle immobilization device.*** An officer deploying a vehicle immobilization device must take the following factors into consideration:

1. Whenever possible, the deployment location should:
  - a. have sufficient sight distance so that the officer deploying the device can observe the approach of the suspect vehicle and other traffic;
  - b. take advantage of barriers such as roadway overpasses, bridge abutments, or guardrails (vehicles are not considered a proper and safe barrier) that provide both visual concealment and a position of relative safety for the deploying officer; and
  - c. not increase the risk of injury to the suspect or other motorists by placement near steep embankments, curves, or other hazards.
2. Units pursuing the suspect must back off a sufficient distance so that they are not disabled by the immobilization device and so that they have time to react to sudden speed decreases, evasive action, or unpredictable maneuvers on the part of the suspect as the immobilization device is encountered.
3. Pursuing officers should not attempt to pass a pursued vehicle that is traveling in excess of the posted speed limit for the purpose of deploying an immobilization device. This does not apply to vehicle simply failing to yield.

**C. *Use of vehicle immobilization devices limited on certain types of vehicles.*** Special limitations on the use of immobilization devices apply to the following types of vehicles:

1. Motorcycles, mopeds, or other ATVs -- use of a vehicle immobilization device against motorcycles, mopeds, or other ATVs is authorized only when the use of deadly force would be authorized.
2. Vehicles transporting hazardous materials, school buses transporting students or passenger buses transporting passengers -- no vehicle immobilization device shall be deployed against vehicles of these types unless continued movement of the vehicle would present an extraordinary hazard to the passengers or other persons.

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#### 104.370 REQUIRED REPORTING

The rules in this section apply to the reporting of pursuits and VIT.

**A. *Pursuit documentation.*** A report shall be filed using the [BlueTeam](#) by the primary officer involved within 24 hours of the pursuit incident. The report will include each involved officer and identify the officer's role in the pursuit. Additionally, an ARMS report is prepared covering the pursuit incident. The ARMS report narrative shall include the factual basis for the pursuit and shall detail the conduct and outcome of the pursuit.

**B. *Vehicle Interdiction Techniques.*** In all incidents involving the use of force greater than uniformed officer presence, or as a result of the maneuver where there is any visible or alleged injury to any person or property damage to any equipment/vehicle, it shall be documented in a thorough manner. Unless the shift supervisor is not available, they shall respond to this scene to document the incident, to include tactics used, a scene investigation, and to document any injuries. The entire incident shall be documented thoroughly in the ARMS report narrative for all involved, and the Trooper who initiated the VIT shall complete a Pursuit report (listed above) and a separate Use of Force report pursuant to [OPM Chapter 107](#).

**104.380 REQUIRED EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION TRAINING**

All commissioned officers are required to receive emergency vehicle operation training and to review this chapter periodically. The emergency vehicle operation training will be of a duration and content to be determined by the Division Director.

**104.900 DEFINITIONS**

**Emergency vehicle operations (EVO)** – Include emergency responses, vehicular pursuits, overtaking, roadblocks, and the use of vehicle immobilization devices.

**Emergency response** – A vehicular response using emergency lights or sirens, and/or during which traffic regulations (including those regulating speed) are disregarded. (This does not include the brief use of emergency lights or sirens while overtaking or to warn other drivers of hazardous or unusual maneuvers by the response vehicle.)

**Vehicular pursuit** – The pursuit of an offender who refuses to stop at the direction of an officer and who exhibits the intention to avoid arrest or contact by using a vehicle to flee.

**Overtaking** – Operation of an emergency vehicle to catch and attempt to contact a person or stop a violator.

**Emergency vehicle** – A vehicle equipped with a flashing red light and a siren meeting the requirements of 13 AAC.

**Pursuit rated vehicle** – A sedan of the same make, model, and specifications as AST marked patrol cars. By definition, all AWT and FLS, including sedans otherwise meeting the definition, are not pursuit rated.

**Vehicle Interdiction Tactics** – A set of pre-planned strategies or maneuvers employed by law enforcement officers to safely and effectively prevent a stationary or moving vehicle from fleeing or continuing to flee. Tactics include the use of PIT, PIN, Block, Vehicle immobilization devices, Roadblocks, etc.

**Roadblock** – A stationary blockade of roadways where the usual movement of traffic is prevented or obstructed, moving blockades or "boxes," or intentional ramming or contact with a moving vehicle, where these techniques are intended to stop a specific vehicle attempting to elude law enforcement officers. This does not include roadblocks established for traffic control, nor for checkpoints established for DUI enforcement or similar programs.

**Vehicle immobilization device** – A device that disables a motor vehicle, allowing the vehicle to come to a safe and controlled stop. Vehicle immobilization device includes tire deflation devices such as Stingers.

**Pursuit plan** – The mental plan an officer makes on how they expect a pursuit to develop and end.

**Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT)** - The Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) is a form of vehicle pursuit intervention involving the direct contact of a suspect vehicle by a law enforcement vehicle, in an attempt, to cause the suspect vehicle to spin, slow or stop and end the pursuit.

**Pinning maneuver** – A tactical maneuver utilizing police vehicles to stop or contain a stationary or slow-moving suspect vehicle from fleeing, by use of reasonable vehicle contact. A Pinning maneuver is NOT a ram and should not create a substantial risk of causing extensive property damage, death or serious physical injury. A pinning maneuver is accomplished by vehicle contact on as little as one and as many as four sides of the suspect vehicle.

**Blocking maneuver** - A tactical maneuver utilizing police vehicles to prevent a stationary suspect vehicle from fleeing, by blocking its path of escape without intentional vehicle contact. A blocking maneuver is accomplished by blocking as little as one and as many as four sides of the suspect vehicle.