



PAWNEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF DARRIN VARNELL

Policy # Foot Pursuit	Related Policies:
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Oklahoma Statutes:	
CALEA Standard:	

- I. **Purpose:** To provide for the safety of law enforcement personnel while at the same time facilitating the safe apprehension of suspects.
- II. **Policy:** Whenever an officer decides to engage, or continue a foot pursuit a quick and continuous risk assessment must take place. The officer must evaluate the risk involved to themselves, the suspect and the community versus the benefit of continuing the foot pursuit.
- III. **Definitions:**
 - A. **Foot Pursuit:** A situation in which an officer, on foot chases a suspect in an effort to detain or arrest that individual who the officer has a reasonable suspicion to believe is about to commit, is committing, or has committed a crime and who is resisting apprehension by fleeing from the officer.
 - B. **Suspect:** Includes any individual who an officer has a reasonable suspicion to believe is about to commit, is committing or has committed an offense or poses an imminent threat to the safety of the public, other Deputies or themselves.
 - C. **Contact/Cover:** A tactical practice of having two or more Deputies working together during a foot pursuit. The Deputies work as a team utilizing direct or indirect communication methods to coordinate their efforts, remain aware of the locations of Deputies and suspects, and keep abreast of the status of the pursuit.
- IV. **Procedure:**
 - A. **Alternatives to Foot Pursuit:** To the extent that resources are available, Deputies should consider the following alternatives to a foot pursuit:
 - a. Area Containment
 - b. Additional Deputies
 - c. Surveillance until additional resources become available
 - B. **Factors to Consider in Conducting the Risk Assessment:**
 - a. Whether the suspect is armed.

- b. How serious is the suspect's offense i.e. does he or she pose a serious threat to the community if allowed to escape;
- c. Officer acting alone
- d. Backup is not available in a timely manner
- e. Officer pursuing more than one suspect
- f. Officer not in physical condition to pursue a subject on foot
- g. Location:
 - 1) Nature of area- (i.e. residential, commercial, freeway) which impacts the safety of all those who may be affected by the foot pursuit.
 - 2) Conditions of structures: abandoned and condemned.
 - 3) Environmental factors: weather conditions or darkness.
 - 4) Area of pursuit is hostile to law enforcement personnel
- h. Ability to apprehend the subject at a later time. i.e. identity is known
- i. Communications Issues:
 - 1) Officer familiarity with location-able to identify subject's location with accuracy during pursuit.
 - 2) Radio frequency and coverage- Is officer in area where radio coverage may fail.

C. Pursuing Officer Responsibilities:

- a. 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.
- b. Once an officer decides to engage in a foot pursuit, the officer must immediately relay the following information to communications:
 - 1) Officer identifier (car number)
 - 2) Location (continuing responsibility)
 - 3) Direction of travel
 - 4) Description of suspect
 - 5) Whether suspect is armed
 - 6) Reason for foot pursuit
 - 7) Coordinating with other Deputies to establish perimeter for containment.
- c. The primary officer should maintain sufficient tactical gap between him or herself and the suspect to allow time for maintaining cover and allow for the arrival of backup Deputies before engagement.
- d. An officer should not enter a building, structure or area of limited or no cover without a backup officer present.
- e. An officer should not continue a foot pursuit if the officer has lost their firearm.

- f. Deputies should note that residents may mistake pursuing Deputies as prowlers; to the extent possible efforts should be made to notify area residents of the police presence. Deputies or supervisors might consider notification to area residents:
 - 1) Reverse 911
 - 2) Backup Deputies'/deputy's use of vehicle's P.A.
 - 3) Use of vehicle siren
 - 4) Law enforcement helicopter P.A.

D. Supervisor's responsibility: If a supervisor is on duty, the supervisor shall:

- a. Monitor the pursuit and direct available resources to provide for the swift and safe apprehension of the suspect.
- b. Terminate any foot pursuit where the risk to the officer/deputy, the public, or suspects outweighs the need for the foot pursuit.
- c. Consider the use of specialized units/personnel to aid in the apprehension i.e. canine, SWAT following containment etc. In the absence of a supervisor, this consideration should be undertaken by involved Deputies.

E. Communications Responsibility:

- a. Maintain open communications with involved officer.
- b. Notify a supervisor and provide relevant information (without compromising ability of involved officer in communicating ongoing information)

F. Termination of Foot Pursuits: Deputies shall terminate a foot pursuit:

- a. If ordered by a supervisor
- b. If the office believes the danger to the pursuing Deputies or the public outweighs the necessity for the immediate apprehension of the suspect.
- c. If the suspect's identity is known and he or she is not an imminent threat to the safety of the public or other Deputies, consider terminating the pursuit and apprehend at a later date.
- d. After termination of a foot pursuit, the involved officer will notify communications of the last known location of the suspect or in cases of apprehension, the location of apprehension.

G. Review of Foot Pursuits: At the conclusion of a foot pursuit as defined by this policy, Deputies shall compile a foot pursuit review form. The pursuit shall be reviewed by:

- a. First line supervisor
- b. Training officer
- c. The form shall then be forwarded up the chain of command to an executive officer designated by the sheriff for final review.