



*State of New Jersey*

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DIRECTIVE NO. 2022-4**

**TO:** All Law Enforcement Chief Executives and County Prosecutors

**FROM:** Matthew J. Platkin, Acting Attorney General

**DATE:** April 29, 2022

**SUBJECT: Directive Updating Statewide Vehicular Pursuit Policy and Use of Force Policy**

On December 21, 2020, Law Enforcement Directive No. 2020-13 was issued, which revised New Jersey's Use of Force Policy (UOF Policy). The revised UOF Policy included a revised statewide Vehicular Pursuit Policy, included as Addendum B. These policies became effective on December 31, 2021. Since that date, the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (OPIA), in cooperation with law enforcement leaders from throughout the state, has been monitoring the impact of the policies on police procedures and public safety. Based upon recommendations from law enforcement chief executives, county prosecutors and OPIA staff, I have determined that several revisions to the policy are appropriate in order to address crime trends, particularly an increase in violent crime, stolen vehicles and bias crimes. This Directive implements those revisions.

For the reasons stated in this Directive, and pursuant to the authority granted to me under the New Jersey Constitution and the Criminal Justice Act of 1970, N.J.S.A. 52:17B-97 to -117, which provides for the general supervision of criminal justice by the Attorney General as chief law enforcement officer of the state in order to secure the benefits of a uniform and efficient enforcement of the criminal law and the administration of criminal justice throughout the state, I hereby direct all law enforcement and prosecuting agencies operating under the authority of the laws of the state of New Jersey to implement and comply with the Use of Force Policy as revised by this Directive (the April 2022 UOF Policy), including the revised Addendum B (the April 2022 Vehicular Pursuit Policy), and to take any additional measures necessary to update their policies accordingly.



## I. Revisions to Vehicular Pursuit Policy

- A. ***Additions to the List of Criminal Offenses for which Vehicular Pursuit may be Authorized.*** Section 3.2(a) of the Vehicular Pursuit Policy is updated by adding six new crimes to the list of offenses for which a vehicular pursuit may be authorized, subject of course to all of the restrictions currently embedded in the Vehicular Pursuit Policy to promote officer and public safety.
1. **Possession of a Firearm, Explosive or Destructive Device for an Unlawful Purpose**, N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4(a) through (c).
  2. **Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Machine Guns and Handguns)**, N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5(a) and (b).
  3. **Burglary of a Dwelling**, N.J.S.A. 2C:18-2.  
Vehicular pursuits are authorized for the burglary of a dwelling. Vehicular pursuits are not authorized for the burglary of a commercial building, motor vehicle, shed or any other structure described in N.J.S.A. 2C:18-1. Vehicular pursuits shall continue to be authorized for any burglary during which the actor is armed with a weapon or injures a victim (second degree burglaries).
  4. **Theft of a Motor Vehicle**, N.J.S.A. 2C:20-3; N.J.S.A. 2C:20-2(b)(2)(b).  
The Policy authorizes vehicular pursuits for theft of a motor vehicle until at least December 31, 2022. I have directed OPIA to review the available data as of that date, including stolen vehicle trends, effectiveness of pursuits, and resulting accidents, and determine whether this provision should remain or be modified. Absent additional action, this provision will remain in force after December 31, 2022.
  5. **Receiving Stolen Property (Motor Vehicle Only)**, N.J.S.A. 2C:20-7; N.J.S.A. 2C:20-(b)(2)(b).  
The Policy authorizes vehicular pursuits for receiving stolen property (motor vehicle only) until at least December 31, 2022. I have directed OPIA to review the available data as of that date, including stolen vehicle trends, effectiveness of pursuits, and resulting accidents, and determine whether this provision should remain or be modified. Absent additional action, this provision will remain in force after December 31, 2022.
  6. **Bias Intimidation**, N.J.S.A. 2C:16-1.
- B. ***Clarifies Definition of Imminent Threat.*** Section 3.2(b) of the Policy is revised to clarify the definition of an “imminent threat to the safety of the public or other officers,” which may authorize a vehicular pursuit. The update makes clear that, “an imminent threat exists when an officer reasonably believes that the actions of the violator are immediately likely to result in death or serious bodily injury to another person absent action by the officer.”
- C. ***Activation of Law Enforcement Recording Equipment.*** Section 5.6 of the Policy is revised to require that “while closing the distance between two vehicles, officers shall activate the motor vehicle recorder (MVR) and body worn camera (BWC), if equipped and activation is possible without activating emergency lights.”
- D. ***Timing for Reporting of Vehicular Pursuits not in Compliance with Policy.*** Section 12.1(e) of the Policy is revised to require quarterly reporting to the County Prosecutor (for municipal and county agencies) or the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (for statewide agencies) of vehicular

pursuits that are determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy, or agency policy, following the mandatory command-level review of the vehicular pursuit.

E. ***Non-Substantive Edits.*** The following revisions address minor technical edits to the December 2021 Vehicular Pursuit Policy.

1. Section 1.3: Deleted reference to auto theft being removed from the Policy.
2. Section 7.2(a): Deleted reference to pursuits being authorized only for first degree or enumerated violent or serious second degree crimes.
3. Section 7.2(b): Added a reference to Section 3.2(b) of the Policy.

## II. **Revision to Use of Force Policy**

***Non-Substantive Edit.*** The following revision addresses a minor technical edit to the December 2021 Use of Policy.

1. Section 4.8.1: Deleted reference to pursuits being authorized only for first degree or enumerated violent or serious second degree crimes.

## III. **Other Provisions**

- A. ***Non-enforceability by third parties.*** This Directive is issued pursuant to the Attorney General's authority to ensure the uniform and efficient enforcement of the laws and administration of criminal justice throughout the State. This Directive imposes limitations on law enforcement agencies and officials that may be more restrictive than the limitations imposed under the United States and New Jersey Constitutions, and federal and state statutes and regulations. Nothing in this Directive shall be construed in any way to create any substantive right that may be enforced by any third party.
- B. ***Severability.*** The provisions of this Directive and the Use of Force policy shall be severable. If any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of either this Directive or the Use of Force Policy is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the validity of the remainder of either document shall not be affected.
- C. ***Questions.*** Any questions concerning the interpretation or implementation of this Directive or the Use of Force Policy shall be addressed to the Executive Director of OPIA, or their designee.
- D. ***Effective date.*** This Directive shall take effect ***immediately*** and remain in force and effect unless and until it is repealed, amended, or superseded by Order of the Attorney General. Accompanying this Directive is the April 2022 Use of Force Policy and Vehicular Pursuit Policy (Addendum B), which reflect the changes made by this Directive.



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Matthew J. Platkin  
Acting Attorney General

ATTEST:



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Thomas J. Eicher, Executive Director  
Office of Public Integrity & Accountability  
Dated: April 29, 2022

# USE OF FORCE POLICY

Office of the Attorney General | State of New Jersey

April 2022 Version

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# Core Principles

## 1 The Sanctity of Human Life and Serving the Community.

In serving the community, law enforcement officers (hereinafter “officers”) shall make every effort to preserve and protect human life and the safety of all persons. Officers shall respect and uphold the dignity of all persons at all times in a non-discriminatory manner.

## 2 Force as a Last Resort and Duty to De-Escalate.

Force shall only be used as a last resort when necessary to accomplish lawful objectives that cannot reasonably be achieved through verbal commands, critical decision making, tactical deployment or de-escalation techniques. Force shall never be used as a retaliatory or punitive measure.

## 3 Duty to Use Only Objectively Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional Force.

Officers shall use the least amount of force that is objectively reasonable, necessary and proportional to safely achieve the legitimate law enforcement objective under the circumstances.

## 4 Duty to Use Deadly Force Only as an Absolute Last Resort and Duty to Avoid Actions Which Create a Substantial Risk of Death or Serious Bodily Injury.

Deadly force shall only be used as an absolute last resort and in strict compliance with this Policy. Other actions by law enforcement that create a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury must be avoided or employed only under the strictest of conditions.

## 5 Duty to Intervene and Report.

Every officer, regardless of rank, title, seniority, or status, has an affirmative duty to take steps to prevent any use of force that is illegal, excessive, or otherwise inconsistent with such policies, regulations, and laws, if possible, before a fellow officer uses excessive, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate force. Every officer has a duty to immediately report any improper use of force.

## 6 Duty to Render Medical Assistance.

After any use of force, and when the environment is safe, officers shall promptly render medical assistance to any injured person consistent with the officer’s training and shall promptly request emergency medical assistance for that person, if needed or requested. Officers also have a duty to monitor individuals for potential medical intervention after any officer uses force.

## 7 Duty to Report and Review Uses of Force.

Every use of force must be reported and receive a meaningful command level review as set forth in a written department policy that includes review by the law enforcement executive. The law enforcement executive shall also conduct an annual review and analysis of the overall use of force by the department.

# Definitions

**Active Assailant.** A person who is using or imminently threatening the use of force, with or without a weapon, in an aggressive manner that poses a substantial risk of causing bodily injury to an officer or another person. A threatening assailant becomes an active assailant when the threat becomes imminent.

**Active Resistor.** A person who is uncooperative, fails to comply with directions from an officer, and instead actively attempts to avoid physical control. This type of resistance includes, but is not limited to, evasive movement of the arm, flailing arms, tensing arms beneath the body to avoid handcuffing, and flight. In a correctional institution, any member of a group of four or more inmates or detainees who fails to comply with an order from a correctional police officer – or a single inmate or detainee who fails to comply with an order related to handcuffing inside a cell or secured tier – shall be considered an active resistor. See Section 2.6 (requiring that officers provide warning and an opportunity to comply before force is used against active resisters).

**Bodily Injury.** Physical pain or temporary disfigurement, or any impairment of physical condition. Bodily harm and bodily injury have the same definition for the purposes of this Policy. See N.J.S.A. 2C:11-1(a); N.J.S.A. 2C:3-11(e).

**Civil Disturbance.** An assembly of persons engaged in or creating an immediate threat of collective violence, destruction of property, looting, or other criminal acts. Such a gathering may also be referred to as a riot.

**Chokehold.** A technique that involves applying direct pressure to a person's trachea (windpipe) or airway (front of the neck) with the effect of reducing the intake of air. This includes a carotid restraint or any lateral neck restraint, where direct pressure is applied to the carotid artery restricting the flow of blood to the brain causing temporary loss of consciousness.

**Conducted Energy Device (CED).** A CED means any device approved by the Attorney General that is capable of firing darts/electrodes that transmit an electrical charge or current intended to temporarily disable a person.

**Constructive Authority.** Constructive authority is not considered a use of force because it does not involve physical contact with the subject. Rather, constructive authority involves the use of the officer's authority to exert control over a subject. Examples include verbal commands, gestures, warnings, and unholstering a weapon. Pointing a firearm at a subject is an example of constructive authority to be used only in appropriate circumstances outlined in Section 3.4 of this Policy.

**Cooperative Person.** A person who responds to and complies with an officer's directions.



**Critical Decision-Making Model.** The Critical Decision-Making Model is an organized way of making decisions about how an officer will act in any situation, including those that may involve potential uses of force.

**De-escalation.** De-escalation refers to the action of communicating verbally or non-verbally in an attempt to reduce, stabilize, or eliminate the immediacy of a threat. De-escalation may also be used to create the time needed to position additional resources to resolve the situation with the least amount of force necessary.

**Deadly Force.** Force that an officer uses with the purpose of causing, or that a reasonable officer knows creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury. Discharging a firearm, constitutes deadly force, unless the discharge occurred during the course of a law enforcement training exercise, routine target practice at a firing range, a lawful animal hunt, or the humane killing of an injured animal. A threat to cause death or serious bodily injury by the display of a weapon or otherwise, so long as the officer's purpose is limited to creating an apprehension that deadly force will be used if necessary, does not constitute deadly force.

**Enhanced Mechanical Force.** An intermediate force option between mechanical force and deadly force, generally requiring a greater level of justification than that pertaining to physical or mechanical force, but a lower level of justification than that required for the use of deadly force. Unlike deadly force, enhanced mechanical force does not require an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury. Examples include conducted energy devices and less-lethal devices and ammunition.

**Feasible.** Reasonably capable of being accomplished or carried out, given the totality of the circumstances, in a manner that maintains the safety of the public and officers.

**Imminent Danger.** Threatened actions or outcomes that are immediately likely to occur during an encounter absent action by the officer. The period of time involved is dependent on the circumstances and facts evident in each situation and is not the same in all situations. The threatened harm does not have to be instantaneous, for example, imminent danger may be present even if a subject is not at that instant pointing a weapon at the officer, but is carrying a weapon and running for cover to gain a tactical advantage.

**Law Enforcement Executive.** A law enforcement agency's highest-ranking sworn law enforcement officer, typically the chief of police. In situations where the highest-ranking officer is recused from a matter, then "law enforcement executive" refers to the next highest-ranking officer without a conflict.

**Law Enforcement Officer.** Any person who is employed as a sworn member of any state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency, department, or division of those governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of persons violating the criminal laws of this State. The term law enforcement officer shall include sworn members of the New Jersey State Police, the Division of Criminal Justice and the

Juvenile Justice Commission. It shall also include College and University Police Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.2 et seq., State Parole Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:154-4, State Correctional Police Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:154-4, County Correctional Police Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:154-3, Special Law Enforcement Officers of all classes pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-146.8 et seq., Humane Law Enforcement Officers appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:22-14.1 or 4:22-14.4, Auxiliary Police Officers appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. App.A:9-45(c), and Constables appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:9-120.

**Mechanical Force.** Mechanical force involves the use of a device or substance, other than a firearm, to overcome a subject's resistance to the exertion of the officer's authority. Examples include use of an asp, baton, or other object, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray or the physical apprehension by canines.

**Passive Resistor.** A person who is non-compliant in that they fail to comply in a non-movement way with verbal or other direction from an officer.

**Peaceful Demonstration.** A nonviolent assembly of persons organized primarily to engage in free speech activity. These may be scheduled events that allow for law enforcement planning or spontaneous. They include, but are not limited to, marches, protests, and other assemblies intended to attract attention. For purposes of the application of the provisions of this Policy, inmates and detainees in a correctional institution who fail to comply with an order from a correctional police officer shall not be considered peaceful demonstrators.

**Physical Contact.** Physical contact involves routine or procedural contact with a subject necessary to effectively accomplish a legitimate law enforcement objective. Examples include guiding a subject into a police vehicle, holding the subject's arm while transporting, routinely handcuffing a subject, and maneuvering or securing a subject for a frisk. Physical contact alone does not constitute force.

**Physical Force.** Physical force involves contact with a subject beyond that which is generally used to effect an arrest or other law enforcement objective. Physical force is employed when necessary to overcome a subject's physical resistance to the exertion of the officer's authority, or to protect persons or property. Examples include taking a resisting subject to the ground, using wrist or arm locks, striking the subject with the hands or feet, or other similar methods of hand-to-hand confrontation, such as certain pain compliance techniques.

**Positional Asphyxiation.** Positional asphyxiation is insufficient intake of oxygen as a result of body position that interferes with the subject's ability to breathe. It can occur during the process of subduing and restraining a person by placing the person in a posture that prevents or impedes the mechanism of normal breathing. If the person cannot escape from the position, death may occur very rapidly. Restraint in the prone position presents a significant risk of asphyxia, particularly when a person is handcuffed and left in a face-down position. As soon as handcuffed and restrained, a person should be raised immediately to a seated or standing position that does not impede the mechanism of normal breathing.

**Proportional Force.** The minimum amount of force, of both type (e.g., physical, mechanical, enhanced mechanical, or deadly) and intensity, that is necessary to control a situation and achieve a legitimate law enforcement objective. The law permits officers to overcome unlawful force or resistance; thus, the term proportional force is not intended to mean a type and intensity of force that is exactly equal to the type and intensity of force being used by the subject. The term proportional force is intended to highlight that the level of force a law enforcement officer utilizes shall be no more than is necessary to overcome the unlawful force or resistance being confronted by the officer.

**Reasonable Belief.** A reasonable belief is an objective assessment based upon an evaluation of how a reasonable officer with comparable training and experience would react to, or draw inferences from, the facts and circumstances confronting and known by the officer at the scene.

**Serious Bodily Injury.** Serious bodily injury means bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious, permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. Serious bodily injury and serious bodily harm have the same definition the purposes of this Policy. See N.J.S.A. 2C:11-1(b); N.J.S.A. 2C:3-11(d).

**Strategic Redeployment.** Repositioning by an officer to increase space and time to react to a subject. It includes gaining time to de-escalate by withdrawing from the immediate vicinity of the subject if doing so will not create a threat to the safety of the public or the officer in doing so.

**Tactical Communication.** Verbal communication techniques that are designed to avoid or minimize the use of force. Such techniques include giving clear, simple instructions or directions, using active listening techniques to engage the suspect, and explaining the consequences of failure to comply with directions or instructions, including that force may be used.

**Tactical Positioning.** Making advantageous uses of position, distance, and cover to reduce the risk of injury to an officer and avoid or reduce the need to use force.

**Tactical Team.** A group of officers who are specially selected, trained, and equipped to handle high-risk incidents, including, but not limited to, those involving snipers, barricaded persons, warrant services, apprehensions, act of terrorism, and other situations or activities as deemed necessary by command leadership. Commonly used names for tactical teams include Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.), Special Response Team (S.R.T.), Technical Emergency and Mission Specialists (T.E.A.M.S.), Entry Teams, Rapid Deployment Teams, and Fugitive Teams.

**Threatening Assailant.** A person who is threatening the use of force against an officer or another person, with or without a weapon, in an aggressive manner that may cause bodily injury. Examples may include a person armed with a weapon who fails to disarm, and an unarmed person who advances on an officer or any other person in a threatening manner thereby reducing the officer's time to react, putting the officer in reasonable fear of a physical attack.

**Time as a Tactic.** A method to avoid forcing an immediate resolution to a situation if it can be safely done, including establishing a zone of safety around a person that creates an opportunity for an assessment and action, when feasible, thereby decreasing the need to resort to force.

## Core Principle One

**The Sanctity of Human Life and Serving the Community.** In serving the community, officers shall make every effort to preserve and protect human life and the safety of all persons. Officers shall also respect and uphold the dignity of all persons at all times in a non-discriminatory manner.

- 1.1** A respectful and cooperative relationship with the community is essential for effective law enforcement. That relationship can be undermined when force is used unnecessarily or unequally.
- 1.2** Every officer shall respect the sanctity of human life and the dignity of every person, and act to preserve every life, whenever possible, and avoid unnecessary injury to members of the public or themselves.
- 1.3** In carrying out their duties as guardians of public safety, officers shall at all times treat every person equally without regard to the individual's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, genetic information, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, nationality, familial status, or any other protected characteristic under N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.
- 1.4** Every law enforcement and prosecuting agency operating under the authority of the laws of the state of New Jersey, including the New Jersey Department of Corrections and county correctional institutions, shall implement or adopt policies consistent with this Use of Force Policy, including the Policy's addenda.

## Core Principle Two

**Force as a Last Resort and Duty to De-Escalate.** Force shall only be used as a last resort when necessary to accomplish lawful objectives that cannot reasonably be achieved through verbal commands, critical decision making, tactical deployment or de-escalation techniques. Force shall never be used as a retaliatory or punitive measure.

- 2.1 Authority to use force.** Officers are granted the unique authority to use force for lawful purposes, including, but not limited to, the following:
- (a) effectuating a lawful arrest or detention;
  - (b) carrying out a lawful search;
  - (c) overcoming resistance directed at the officer or others;
  - (d) preventing physical harm to the officer or to another person (including intervening in a suicide or other attempt of self-inflicted injury);
  - (e) protecting the officer or a third party from unlawful force; or
  - (f) preventing property damage or loss.
- 2.2 Prohibitions on certain force.** Officers may not use or threaten to use force for any following reasons:
- (a) to punish a person or to retaliate against them for past conduct;
  - (b) as a lesson to prevent a person from resisting or fleeing in the future; or
  - (c) to resolve a situation more quickly, unless delay would risk the safety of the person involved, officers, or others, or would significantly interfere with other legitimate law enforcement objectives.
- 2.3 Force as a last resort.** Officers shall exhaust all other reasonable means to gain compliance before resorting to force, if feasible. Thus, if a safe alternative would achieve law enforcement's objective, force shall not be used. Officers shall, therefore, use verbal commands, critical decision making, tactical deployment and de-escalation techniques to gain voluntary compliance, when feasible. Importantly, officers shall never engage in unnecessary, overly aggressive, or otherwise improper actions that create a situation where force becomes necessary.
- 2.4 Critical decision making.** Critical decision-making and tactical deployment techniques include tactical communication and tactical positioning, such as strategic redeployment and time as a tactic. Critical decision-making and tactics require officers to do the following:
- (a) begin critical assessment and planning prior to arriving at the scene;

- (b) collect available information;
- (c) assess situations, threats, and risks;
- (d) identify options for conflict resolution;
- (e) determine the best course of action; and
- (f) act, review, and re-assess the situation as it evolves.

**2.5 De-escalation.** De-escalation is the action of communicating verbally or non-verbally in an attempt to reduce, stabilize, or eliminate the immediacy of a threat. De-escalation may also be used to create the time needed to allow the situation to resolve itself or to position additional resources to resolve the situation with the least amount of force necessary. Officers should employ de-escalation techniques when feasible, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) communication techniques to calm an agitated subject (e.g., regulating tone and pitch, such as speaking slowly in a calm voice);
- (b) techniques to promote rational decision making, such as ensuring that only one officer addresses the person and the other officers remain detached as safety permits as to not escalate the situation; and splitting up individuals at the scene who may be arguing;
- (c) active listening techniques, such as sharing the officer's name, asking the subject their name, and exhibiting a genuine willingness to listen;
- (d) slowing down the pace of the incident by taking deep breaths, slowing speech, and/or applying strategic or critical thinking;
- (e) using calming gestures and facial expressions (e.g., arms extended with palms out and avoid angry expressions);
- (f) practicing procedural-justice techniques, such as explaining the officer's actions and responding to questions;
- (g) verbal persuasion and advisements (e.g., explaining, without threats, how the person would benefit from cooperation, and the subject's rights or what the officer wants the subject to do); and
- (h) avoiding the unnecessary display of weapons, including firearms, Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs), batons, or OC Spray.

**2.6 Warning and opportunity to comply.** Officers should generally not use force immediately when encountering noncompliance with verbal directions. Instead, whenever feasible, before using force, officers shall:

- (a) provide clear instructions and warnings;
- (b) attempt to determine whether the person has a special need, mental condition, physical limitation, developmental disability, or language barrier (See Section 2.7);
- (c) state the consequences of refusing to comply with a mandatory directive, including that force will be used unless the person complies; and
- (d) give the suspect a reasonable opportunity to comply.

**2.7 Dealing with persons in a behavioral or mental health crisis or other factors affecting compliance.** Officers should consider an individual’s mental, physical, developmental, intellectual disability, or other conditions, such as age of the suspect, that affect the person’s ability to communicate or comply. This includes, when feasible, considering the following factors related to the individual:

- (a) behavioral or mental health crisis;
- (b) drug interaction;
- (c) medical condition;
- (d) mental impairment;
- (e) physical limitation;
- (f) developmental disability, including autism spectrum disorder;
- (g) cognitive impairment or intellectual disability;
- (h) hearing loss or impairment;
- (i) communication disorder, including speech impairment;
- (j) language barrier;
- (k) visual impairment;
- (l) age; or
- (m) other factors beyond the individual’s control.

**2.8** Whenever an officer determines that one of the above listed factors exists and is influencing the person’s failure to comply with an officer’s command, when feasible, the officer shall consider whether specific techniques or resources would help resolve the situation without the need to utilize force. Techniques for responding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) obtaining information about the person from available sources including family members, caregivers or others who know the individual;
- (b) decreasing exposure to the potential threat by moving to a safer position. This may involve creating distance, seeking cover, tactical repositioning, concealment, and/or placing barriers between an uncooperative person and the officer;
- (c) slowing down the pace of the incident by the officer slowing their speech, taking deep breaths, and/or applying strategic and critical thinking;
- (d) keeping the non-compliant person confined to a limited area and calling for a supervisor, back-up officers, and specially-trained resources to assist in resolving the incident. These specially-trained resources may include Crisis Intervention Team-trained officers, behavioral or mental health care providers, negotiators, qualified bi-lingual officers, or officers equipped with less-lethal devices;
- (e) using time as a de-escalation strategy, thereby creating an opportunity to calm the non-compliant person;
- (f) using simplified speech and shorter verbal directions or instructions;
- (g) eliminating or reducing sensory distractions (bright flashing lights, sirens, or other loud noises); and



(h) any reasonable strategy that lessens the emotional anger, frustration, combativeness of a subject or others who may be present may be appropriate.

**2.9** Importantly, officers should not default to attempting to resolve the incident immediately if slowing down the pace is viable and can be accomplished without creating an immediate threat to the public or placing officers in unreasonable danger.

## Core Principle Three

### Duty to Use Only Objectively Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional Force.

Officers shall use the least amount of force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to safely achieve the legitimate law enforcement objective under the circumstances.

- 3.1 Limitations on use of force.** In situations where officers are justified in using force, officers shall use only that degree of force that is reasonable, necessary, and proportional considering the totality of the circumstances, including the subject's mental and physical condition, the nature of the offense, and most importantly the level of resistance or threat known to the officer at the time.
- 3.2 Considerations when using force.** The decision to use force and the appropriate amount of force requires careful attention to the facts and circumstances of each incident. The officer must, as time permits and is feasible, consider the following non-exhaustive list of factors when determining whether and how much force to apply:
- (a) immediacy and severity of the threat to officers or the public;
  - (b) the conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time;
  - (c) characteristics of the officer and subject (e.g., age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, the number of officers available vs. subjects);
  - (d) the effects of drugs or alcohol;
  - (e) the individual's mental state or capacity;
  - (f) the proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices;
  - (g) the degree to which the subject has been effectively restrained and their ability to resist despite being restrained;
  - (h) the availability of other options and possible effectiveness;
  - (i) the seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual. For example, in dealing with minor offenses, such as motor vehicle or and local ordinance violations practicing procedural-justice techniques, such as explaining the officer's actions and responding to questions before resorting to force, is particularly important;
  - (j) the officer's training and experience; and
  - (k) the potential for injury to officers, suspects, and the public.
- 3.2.1** It is important to note that law enforcement encounters are never static and rapidly evolve. Thus, officers must continuously assess the effectiveness, proportionality, and necessity of their actions, including their tactical positioning, in order to decrease the likelihood of force being needed for self-protection. Officers may increase the time

available to evaluate the threat by positioning an object between themselves and the subject, being aware of their surroundings, and waiting for backup, when it is available.

**3.3 Level of Resistance.** The level of resistance that an officer encounters is a key factor in determining the appropriate amount of force that may be used in response. Although it is not possible to determine in advance what the appropriate level of force is for every encounter, one factor that is consistent is the amount of resistance the officer is facing at the time. The less resistance an officer faces, the less force the officer should use. Consistent with training, the following general rules apply in determining the appropriate level of force:

- (a) *Cooperative Person.* When dealing with a cooperative person, officers may rely on police presence and/or verbal control techniques, but should not use force.
- (b) *Passive Resistor.* When dealing with a passive resistor, officers may rely on police presence, verbal control techniques, holding techniques, lifting/carrying, wrist locks and other manual pain compliance techniques. Greater force, such as strikes, punches, CEDs, or less lethal devices shall not be used.
- (c) *Active Resistor.* When dealing with an active resistor, in addition to the options available for passive resistors, officers may use physical strikes with hands or feet, OC spray, batons or asps applied with non-impact pressure, and taking the person to the ground. Intentional strikes to the head or face, which are only allowed in an act of self-defense, are not permitted when dealing with an active resistor. Police canines shall not be utilized against an active resistor.
- (d) *Threatening Assailant.* In general, when dealing with a threatening assailant, officers may use all types of force options other than deadly force. This includes striking with batons or asps, less lethal ammunition, and CEDs. Although a range of force options is generally available, the officer shall only use force that is proportional to the threat faced. Any strikes to the head or neck with a baton or asp are considered deadly force and can only be used when deadly force is allowed.
- (e) *Active Assailant.* In general, when dealing with an active assailant, officers have all force options available, though deadly force shall only be used as a last resort in accordance with Core Principle Four of this Policy.

**3.3.1** An individual's status evolves from a resistor to an assailant when they use force, threaten to use force, or otherwise act in an aggressive manner that increases the likelihood that they may cause physical injury to an officer or to another person. However, flight from an officer does not, on its own, qualify a person as an assailant. When dealing with an individual who poses a threat to the officer, the individual could be considered either a threatening assailant or an active assailant. To determine the individual's status for appropriate officer response, the officer must assess whether the threat poses an

imminent danger. If the threat is imminent, then that individual is considered an active assailant and all use of force options are available with deadly force being an absolute last resort in accordance with Core Principle Four of this Policy.

3.3.2 Officers face a dynamic environment in which interactions with individuals can escalate very quickly from one level of resistance to another. For example, a passive resistor may become an active assailant in an instant. In responding to the level of resistance, the officer may use the level of force that corresponds to the level of resistance the officer is facing, and need not use lesser levels of force that will not address the threat that the officer faces at the time. If the individual's resistance diminishes, the officer shall immediately reduce the level of force used against the individual. If the individual stops resisting entirely, the officer must immediately cease using force.

3.4 **Displaying of Firearms.** Special requirements must be met before an officer may display a firearm. Unholstering or pointing a firearm are tactics that should be used with great caution. The presence of an officer's firearm, under the right circumstances, can discourage resistance and ensure officer safety in potentially dangerous situations without the need to resort to force. At the same time, however, unnecessarily or prematurely drawing a firearm could limit an officer's options in controlling a situation, could create greater anxiety on the part of citizens, and may result in an unwarranted or accidental discharge of the firearm.

(a) *Pointing a firearm.* Consistent with training, officers may point a firearm at a person only when circumstances create a reasonable belief that it may be necessary for the officer to use deadly force. When the officer no longer reasonably believes that deadly force may be necessary, the officer shall, as soon as practicable, secure or holster the firearm.

(b) *Reporting the pointing of a firearm.* Pointing a firearm, though not a use of force, constitutes a seizure that must be reported as a Show of Force on the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal, except in the circumstances described in Section 3.4(c).

(c) *Clarification of reporting requirements for tactical teams.* An officer engaged in the operation of a tactical team shall be required to report the pointing of a firearm only when the pointing involves a sustained active engagement with a person in order to gain that person's compliance. A member of a tactical team who quickly "sweeps" a room during an operation need not report each person at whom a firearm was momentarily pointed during the sweep.

3.5 **Defensive Tactics & Pain Compliance Techniques.** Pain compliance techniques may be effective in controlling a passive or active resistor. Officers may only apply pain compliance techniques for which the officer has received department approved training and only when the officer reasonably believes that the use of such a technique is necessary to further a

legitimate law enforcement purpose. Officers utilizing any pain compliance technique should consider the totality of the circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) the potential for injury to the officer(s) or others if the technique is not used;
- (b) the potential risk of serious injury to the individual being controlled;
- (c) whether the pain compliance technique is effective in achieving an appropriate level of control or a different technique should be employed;
- (d) the nature of the offense involved;
- (e) the level of resistance of the individuals(s) involved;
- (f) whether immediate resolution is necessary;
- (g) the application of any pain compliance technique shall be immediately discontinued once the officer determines that compliance has been achieved or other more appropriate alternatives can reasonably be utilized; and
- (h) officers shall only use striking techniques directed at a subject's face as a means of self-defense, or in the defense of others. Striking at a subject's face using fists, elbows, knees, and feet, shall not be used as a means of pain compliance.

**3.6 Positional asphyxiation.** Officers must recognize the heightened risk of positional asphyxiation and compression asphyxiation during restraint and be alert to any actions that must be immediately taken to avoid or minimize the risk of asphyxiation. Positional asphyxia can occur when a person is restrained, handcuffed or left unattended in any position that impedes their ability to breathe normally, particularly in a prone position. If the person cannot escape from the position, death may occur very rapidly. Thus, in the course of using force officers shall be alert to the following heightened risk factors for positional asphyxiation:

- (a) alcohol or drug intoxication;
- (b) possible mental health episode or incident;
- (c) a substantially overweight individual;
- (d) possible suffering of respiratory muscle fatigue (exhaustion);
- (e) possible airway obstruction; and
- (f) unconsciousness.

**3.6.1** Officers shall take the following actions to reduce the risk of positional asphyxiation:

- (a) As soon as handcuffed and restrained, a person should be immediately rolled to the side and taken to an upright position that does not impede the mechanism of normal breathing. This requirement is especially important when the subject is handcuffed face down in the prone position;
- (b) Care should be taken not to put sustained pressure on the neck or back, as breathing can be restricted even if the person is placed in the recovery position. This includes sitting, kneeling, or standing on a person's chest, back, or neck for a prolonged period of time;

- (c) Officers shall continuously monitor the person's condition while being restrained, as death can occur suddenly and develop beyond the point of viable resuscitation within seconds;
- (d) Whenever possible during team restraint, a "Safety Officer," with the responsibility to monitor the health and welfare of the person during restraint, should be designated;
- (e) The arrested person must not be transported in the prone position; and
- (f) The arrested person should be monitored prior to, during, and at the conclusion of the transport.

3.6.2 Officers shall continually monitor the condition of the subject(s) in their custody for the following warning signs of positional asphyxiation:

- (a) verbal complaints of being unable to breathe properly, although be aware that a person suffering breathing difficulties may not be able to complain about their crisis;
- (b) visual signs that the subject is struggling or exhibiting increased effort to breathe;
- (c) gurgling/gasping sounds with foam or mucus coming from the nose or mouth;
- (d) display of a heightened level of aggression during restraint, which may be a physiological response to fighting for air, such that any increased resistance during restraint of a person should be regarded with caution;
- (e) sudden behavioral changes, such as going from being violent and noisy to passive, quiet, and tranquil, or alternatively, suddenly becoming more aggressive;
- (f) blue discoloration of facial skin (cyanosis);
- (g) swelling, redness or blood spots to the face or neck; and
- (h) any loss or a reduced level of consciousness.

**3.7 Conducted energy devices and less-lethal devices.** Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs) and other authorized less-lethal devices and ammunition are forms of Enhanced Mechanical Force which may be utilized against a Threatening Assailant or an Active Assailant, but only within the parameters outlined in this Policy and in Addendum A of this Policy. CEDs and other authorized less-lethal devices and ammunition shall not be utilized against a passive resistor or an active resistor. Officers shall always strive to use only that degree of force that is objectively reasonable, necessary and proportional considering the totality of the circumstances.

3.7.1 An officer authorized to use a CED or a less-lethal device pursuant to this Policy may fire, discharge, or utilize drive stun mode of the device during an actual operation, consistent with Addendum A, only against:

- (a) an active assailant;
- (b) a threatening assailant who will not voluntarily submit to custody after having been given a reasonable opportunity to do so considering the exigency of the situation and the immediacy of the need to employ law enforcement force;
- (c) a person who is attempting to cause death or serious bodily injury to themselves; or

- (d) a fleeing suspect, if clear and convincing evidence exists to believe the suspect has committed a crime in which the suspect caused or attempted to cause death or serious bodily injury.
- 3.7.2 Officers shall reevaluate the situation and reassess the need to use force before any second or subsequent firing or discharge or utilization of drive stun mode of the device against the same person. Any second or subsequent firing or discharge or utilization of drive stun mode of the device must be necessary and justified by the circumstances at that moment.
- 3.7.3 CEDs shall not be utilized in the following manner:
  - (a) against a person in drive stun mode more than twice unless deadly force would be authorized and permitted pursuant to this Policy;
  - (b) against a handcuffed subject unless deadly force would be authorized and permitted pursuant to this Policy;
  - (c) against the operator of a moving vehicle unless deadly force would be authorized and permitted pursuant to this Policy;
  - (d) to prevent a subject from damaging property; or
  - (e) against a person simultaneously with two or more CEDs.
- 3.7.4 CEDs must be capable of making a digital recording of the encounter each time the device is utilized, unless the officer carrying the CED is equipped with a body worn camera (BWC), as that term is defined in the BWC Policy issued by the Attorney General. The officer shall activate the BWC prior to utilization of the CED, unless exigent circumstances make it unsafe or not feasible for the officer to do so.
- 3.7.5 CED spark displays shall be considered constructive authority, but must be reported as a Show of Force in the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal.
- 3.7.6 Police administrators and officers authorized to utilize CEDs and other authorized less-lethal devices and ammunition are also required to adhere to the instructions contained in Addendum A to this Policy.
- 3.8 Use of force for crowd management.** The following restrictions and limitations on the use of force should be observed during peaceful demonstrations and civil disturbances. The generally applicable rules in this Policy apply to both peaceful demonstrations and civil disturbances and in all cases, weapons or other devices should be carried and deployed only by trained and authorized officers and deployed consistent with this Policy.
  - 3.8.1 Prior to using force against people in a crowd, officers shall:
    - (a) provide clear instructions and warnings in a manner that can be heard by persons in the crowd, such as through a bullhorn or speaker system when available;

- (b) state the consequences of refusing to comply with a mandatory directive, including that arrests will occur and force may be used unless persons comply; and
  - (c) give a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- 3.8.2 Force shall not be used against crowds engaged in peaceful demonstrations. The visible presence or deployment of canines for crowd control purposes is prohibited in peaceful demonstrations. Canines may be used for explosive detection or similar security sweeps at such gatherings.
- 3.8.3 Force may be used against specific individuals in a crowd for lawful purposes in accordance with the other provisions of this Policy. Restrictions apply to the use of certain types of force in a crowd as follows:
- (a) OC spray:
    - (1) may be used against specific individuals who are active resisters, threatening assailants or active assailants as defined in Section 3.3 above;
    - (2) shall not be used where bystanders would be unreasonably affected; and
    - (3) shall not be used against passive resisters, or indiscriminately against groups of people.
  - (b) CEDs:
    - (1) may be used against specific individuals who are threatening assailants or active assailants as defined in Section 3.3 above;
    - (2) may be used only when the individual can be accurately targeted; and
    - (3) shall never be fired indiscriminately into crowds.
  - (c) Less-lethal ammunition:
    - (1) may be used during civil disturbances only against specific individuals who are threatening or active assailants; and
    - (2) shall not be used during a civil disturbance against groups of individuals.
- 3.8.4 Force may be used against groups of people only if authorized by the Incident Commander (IC) and only when other means of gaining compliance with lawful directives have been attempted and shown to be ineffective or are not feasible.
- 3.8.5 High-volume OC delivery systems are designed for, and may be used in, civil disturbances against groups of people engaged in unlawful acts resulting in, or creating an immediate risk of, bodily injury or significant property damage.
- 3.8.6 CS (2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile) chemical agents are primarily offensive weapons that shall be used with the utmost caution. Thus, CS:
- (a) may be deployed only by specially trained individuals who are part of a special tactical unit authorized to deploy such agents;



- (b) may be deployed only with the specific and express approval of the IC;
- (c) may be deployed defensively to prevent injury when lesser force options are either not available or would likely be ineffective; and
- (d) may be deployed only after an announcement is made and when avenues of egress are available to the crowd.

3.8.7 Canines shall not be deployed against a crowd, except to respond to a threat of death or serious bodily injury to a member of the public or to an officer.

3.8.8 CN (phenacyl chloride) shall not be used in any instance.

## Core Principle Four

**Duty to Use Deadly Force Only as an Absolute Last Resort and Duty to Avoid Actions Which Create a Substantial Risk of Death or Serious Bodily Injury.** Deadly force shall only be used as an absolute last resort and in strict compliance with this Policy. Other actions by law enforcement that create a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury must be avoided or employed only under the strictest of conditions.

**4.1 Deadly Force.** Deadly force is force that an officer uses with the purpose of causing, or that a reasonable officer knows creates a substantial risk of causing, death or serious bodily injury. Discharging a firearm constitutes deadly force, unless the discharge occurred during the course of a law enforcement training exercise, routine target practice at a firing range, a lawful animal hunt, or the humane killing of an injured animals.

**4.2 Types of deadly force.** Deadly force includes the following potentially lethal actions:

- (a) applying a chokehold, carotid artery restraint, or similar technique that involves pressure on the neck;
- (b) sitting, kneeling, or standing on a person's chest, back, or neck for a prolonged period of time;
- (c) intentionally driving a vehicle at or in the direction of a person with the intent to strike the individual; and
- (d) using a baton or other weapon to intentionally strike an individual in the head or neck area.

**4.3 Requirements to use deadly force.** Strict requirements must be met before an officer may use deadly force. There are, however, occasions when deadly force is necessary to protect officers and the public. An officer may use deadly force only when the officer reasonably believes that such action is immediately necessary to protect the officer or another person from imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury. Officers must adhere to the following:

- (a) as discussed in Core Principle Three, when feasible, officers shall attempt to de-escalate situations, issue verbal warnings, or use non-lethal force with the goal of resolving encounters without using deadly force;
- (b) officers shall not use deadly force if a reasonably available alternative will avert or eliminate an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury and achieve the law enforcement purpose safely;
- (c) when feasible, prior to using deadly force the officer shall identify themselves as a law enforcement officer and give a clear verbal warning to the suspect that the officer will use deadly force; and

- (d) officers shall not use deadly force when the use of deadly force creates a substantial risk of injury to innocent persons.

**4.4 Force to apprehend a fleeing suspect.** In addition to all of the requirements in Section 4.3, an officer may only use deadly force to apprehend a fleeing suspect in the rare case when the suspect's escape would create an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or a member of the public if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.

**4.5 Prohibited uses of deadly force.** There are specific circumstances in which the use of deadly force is prohibited. In general, officers may not discharge their weapons or use other deadly force, as outlined above, in the following manner:

- (a) to signal for help;
- (b) to issue a warning shot;
- (c) to prevent property damage or loss;
- (d) to prevent the destruction of evidence. For example, under no circumstances shall an officer use a chokehold, or any lesser contact with the neck area, in order to prevent the destruction of evidence by ingestion; or
- (e) against a person who poses a threat only to themselves and not to others.

**4.6 Deadly force against individuals in a moving vehicle.** Strict additional requirements must be met before an officer may use deadly force against a driver or passenger of a moving vehicle. Moving vehicles create tremendous risk to officers engaged in enforcement operations, particularly officers attempting to arrest fleeing suspects. Officers must abide by the following guidelines:

- (a) during such operations, officers shall never intentionally position themselves in the path of a moving vehicle or a vehicle that is likely to move;
- (b) officers shall make every effort to move out of the path of a vehicle in order to maintain their safety;
- (c) officers shall not grab onto moving vehicles or the drivers or occupants of moving vehicles. If a vehicle begins to move while an officer is engaged with the driver or an occupant, the officer shall, if feasible, disengage from the contact with the driver or occupant to avoid being dragged, carried, or struck by the moving vehicle; and
- (d) while any firearm discharge entails some risk, discharging a firearm at a moving vehicle entails an even greater risk to innocent persons and passengers because of the risk that the fleeing suspect may lose control of the vehicle. Due to this greater risk, and considering that firearms are not generally effective in bringing moving vehicles to a rapid halt, an officer shall not fire at the driver or occupant of a moving vehicle, unless no other means are available at the time to avert or eliminate the danger and one of the following circumstances exists:

- (1) when there is imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person, created by a person in the vehicle using means other than the vehicle, such as when shots are being fired from the vehicle; or
- (2) when the suspect is driving their vehicle toward persons other than the officer in a manner creating an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury, such as in a terrorist attack; or
- (3) when the officer is being dragged or carried by the vehicle, cannot disengage from the vehicle, and is in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury.

**4.7 Shooting from a moving vehicle.** Strict additional requirements must be met before an officer may shoot from a moving vehicle. Every discharge of a firearm by an officer creates risk to the public and to other responding officers. Firearms discharges from moving vehicles by law enforcement officers have proven to be inaccurate and ineffective, generally creating unacceptable levels of risk. Due to these risks, law enforcement officers shall not discharge a firearm from a moving vehicle except in the following extraordinarily rare circumstance:

- (a) when the suspect is driving a vehicle toward persons other than the officer in a manner creating an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury, such as in a terrorist attack; and
- (b) no other means are available at that time to avert or eliminate the danger.

**4.8 Limitations on vehicular pursuits.** Vehicular pursuits present officers with difficult decisions that involve balancing the duty to enforce the law and apprehend violators with the risks created by pursuing motor vehicles, often being operated at high speeds by irresponsible drivers in densely populated areas. The decision to pursue a motor vehicle must be objectively justifiable after giving due consideration to a number of factors. Although impossible to create a policy that addresses every potential scenario, officers and supervisors shall conduct vehicular pursuits only within the parameters outlined in Addendum B of this Policy. Due to the risks to both officers and the public, supervisors are expected to exercise an enhanced level of control over vehicular pursuits.

**4.8.1** Vehicular pursuits shall only be initiated if the pursuing officer reasonably believes that:

- (a) the violator has committed, or is engaged in a conspiracy or attempt to commit, a crime enumerated in Section 3.2(a) of Addendum B; or
- (b) the violator poses an imminent threat to the safety of the public or other police officers. This determination shall be made based upon the violator's actions or operation of the vehicle prior to the initiation of the attempted motor vehicle stop. The violator's subsequent actions, including speeding or evasive driving during the pursuit itself, although often supporting the criminal charge of Eluding, N.J.S.A. 2C:29-2(b), shall not constitute an authorization to initiate or continue a pursuit.

- 4.8.2 There shall be a strong presumption against the initiation of vehicular pursuits based solely upon motor vehicle violations. Officers involved in vehicular pursuits must immediately notify both the supervisor and police communications, state the reason for the pursuit, and provide the information required by Addendum B of this Policy.
- 4.8.3 Vehicular pursuits shall be monitored by a supervisor and shall be terminated if directed to do so by a supervisor, or if the supervisor has not affirmatively authorized the continuation of the pursuit after being notified and given an opportunity to assess the situation.

## Core Principle Five

**Duty to Intervene and Report.** Every officer, regardless of rank, title, seniority, or status, has an affirmative duty to take steps to prevent any use of force that is illegal, excessive, or otherwise inconsistent with such policies, regulations, and laws, if possible, before a fellow officer uses excessive, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate force. Every officer has a duty to immediately report any improper use of force.

- 5.1** **Duty to intervene.** A law enforcement officer's duty to intervene is rooted in the commitment to protect public safety at all times. Interventions that prevent improper use of force will lead to fewer citizen complaints, fewer officer disciplinary matters, higher morale, and a healthier working environment. Preventing misconduct preserves the integrity of all officers and the law enforcement profession as a whole. Intervening to prevent improper use of force can assist fellow officers by preventing them from engaging in conduct that may be illegal, inappropriate, and in violation of this Policy.
- 5.2** Thus, all officers who observe another officer about to use force that is illegal, excessive, or otherwise inconsistent with this Policy must, if feasible, do whatever they can to interrupt the flow of events before the fellow officer engages in an improper use of force. Officers can serve each other and the public by simply saying or doing the right thing to prevent a fellow officer from resorting to force illegally or inappropriately.
- 5.3** Officers shall use signaling, verbal intervention, or physical intervention, if necessary, to stop any improper use of force. It is important to note that the duty to intervene does not stop at one officer. It is the responsibility of all officers to ensure use-of-force compliance. If officers observe a situation where another officer is attempting to intervene in an improper use of force, officers shall assist in that effort.
- 5.4** **Duty to report illegal and inappropriate uses of force by other officers.** Any officer who observes or has knowledge of a use of force that is illegal, excessive, or otherwise inconsistent with this directive or department policies must (a) notify a supervisor as soon as possible and (b) submit an individual written report to a supervisor before reporting off duty on the day the officer becomes aware of the misconduct
- 5.5** Law enforcement agencies, supervisors, and officers are prohibited from retaliating in any form against an officer who intercedes in or reports illegal or inappropriate uses of force.
- 5.6** Every department shall establish a written policy which requires intervention and protects officers who intervene from retaliation or other negative consequences. The departmental policy shall be consistent with this Policy and all applicable laws. Reporting procedures must comply with *Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures*. See AG Directive 2020-7.

## Core Principle Six

**Duty to Render Medical Assistance.** After any use of force, and when the environment is safe, officers shall promptly render medical assistance to any injured person consistent with the officer's training and shall promptly request emergency medical assistance for that person, if needed or requested. Officers also have a duty to monitor individuals for potential medical intervention after any officer uses force.

- 6.1** An officer's duty to render medical assistance and monitor for potential medical intervention is particularly important following any use of force. When the force involves the use of OC spray, officers shall take immediate action to address the effects of the OC spray, consistent with training.
- 6.2** The duty to render medical assistance and monitor applies to all officers on scene and continues throughout any transportation and custody of the individual.
- 6.3** Officers shall pay particular attention to persons reasonably believed to be pregnant, children, the elderly, physically frail individuals, and those experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

## Core Principle Seven

**Duty to Report and Review Uses of Force.** Every use of force must be reported and receive a meaningful command level review as set forth in a written department policy that includes review by the law enforcement executive. The law enforcement executive shall also conduct an annual review and analysis of the overall use of force by the department.

- 7.1 Reporting.** Notification of fatal and serious bodily injury law enforcement incidents shall be made in accordance with AG Directive 2019-4. As soon as any local, county, or state law enforcement agency learns of a law enforcement incident as defined below, the agency shall immediately notify the County Prosecutor's Office for the county in which the incident occurred, who shall in turn immediately notify the Attorney General's Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) Director or their designee.
- 7.2** Law enforcement incidents are defined as:
- (a) any use of force by an officer resulting in death;
  - (b) any use of force by an officer resulting in serious bodily injury;
  - (c) any use of deadly force (including the discharge of a firearm as defined in Section 4.1) by an officer, regardless of whether such force resulted in injury;
  - (d) the death of any civilian during an encounter with an officer; and
  - (e) the death of any civilian while in the custody of law enforcement.
- 7.3** When an officer uses force as defined in Section 3 of this Policy and the result is not fatal, the officer shall complete a report in the Use of Force Portal established by the Attorney General's Office. The report shall be completed by the officer within 24 hours of the use of force, and preferably before the end the shift in which the force was used. If the officer who used force is unable to complete the report within 24 hours, it should be completed as soon the officer is able to do so, or by a supervising officer within 48 hours, in accordance with a written policy to be established by the department or agency.
- 7.4 Review of use of force.** Thorough and meaningful review of use of force incidents is vital to ensuring a positive law enforcement and community relationship.
- 7.5 Review of each individual use of force.** Every use of force must undergo the following procedures for a meaningful command level review pursuant to a written policy established by the law enforcement executive:
- (a) The meaningful command level review of the incident shall be undertaken by at least two levels of supervisors. These levels may include the immediate supervisor, internal affairs, training officers or command staff. At least one reviewer must be two



levels or more above the officer who used force. When the chief law enforcement executive of an agency uses force, the County Prosecutor's Office shall be notified and, consistent with this Policy, shall determine the process for the meaningful command level review of the incident, which may include staff from the County Prosecutor's Office.

- (b) The review shall include an examination of all available sources of information about the incident, including any video of the incident, reports, officer or other witness statements, medical records and records of injuries;
- (c) The review shall include an analysis of whether force was used in a non-discriminatory fashion to ensure officers are treating every person equally without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic;
- (d) The reviewing supervisors shall make a recommendation of what action, if any, should be undertaken, including commendation of the officer, policy changes, remedial training, administrative action, disciplinary action or, if appropriate, referral for criminal prosecution;
- (e) The law enforcement executive, or a command level officer no more than one rank below the law enforcement executive for departments with more than 100 officers, shall review each use of force investigation and approve or reject the recommendations of the supervisors who conducted the review. The law enforcement executive's decision, or the decision of the designee, shall be memorialized and retained in the use-of-force investigative file; and
- (f) After the review is completed, supervisory and/or training officers should examine and analyze the use of force incident, including any body-worn or other video evidence, with the officer as a training tool. This examination should analyze the circumstances that led to the use of force as well as the force that was used, so that the officer can gain insight into which tactics and decisions were effective and whether different tactics or decisions could have been used to improve the outcome.

**7.6 Annual review of overall department use of force.** The law enforcement executive shall also conduct an annual review of use of force incidents in their department. The review shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) analytical reports from the Attorney General's Use of Force Portal;
- (b) an audit of body worn cameras and other videos on a risk-based and randomly selected basis;
- (c) any internal affairs complaints; and

- (d) an analysis of the uses of force to ensure that force is being applied without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

**7.7** Based on that thorough review, the law enforcement executive shall determine whether changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment are appropriate. The law enforcement executive shall then provide a written report documenting the annual review to the County Prosecutor. Each County Prosecutor's Office and each statewide law enforcement agency shall make its report to the OPIA.

# Use of Force Policy

## Addendum B

### Vehicular Pursuit Policy

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# 1 Purpose of Policy

- 1.1** The primary purpose of this policy is to secure a balance between the protection of the lives and safety of the public and police officers, and law enforcement's duty to enforce the law and apprehend violators. This Policy is intended to guide the circumstances under which officers may engage in vehicular pursuits. High-speed vehicular pursuits create a substantial risk of injury and fatalities. Over 10% of vehicular pursuits end up in accidents resulting in injuries or fatalities, including to officers, innocent third parties in vehicles unrelated to the pursuit, and pedestrians.
- 1.2** The pursuit policy was last updated in 2009. The policy succeeded initially in reducing the number of pursuits, injuries, and fatalities associated with them. However, after an initial decline, the number of pursuits has been increasing steadily since 2014. Since the policy was updated there have been almost 4,200 accidents during pursuits that resulted in over 2,800 injuries, including injuries to 625 law enforcement officers, 682 victims in third party vehicles, and 52 pedestrians. In that same period, there have been 59 fatalities associated with pursuits, including an officer, four third-party drivers, and eight pedestrians.
- 1.3** In recognition of this data and the substantial human costs associated with high-speed vehicular pursuits, this Policy further restricts the circumstances under which pursuits can be undertaken. The offenses for which officers may pursue suspects has been limited to only the most serious crimes. Significantly, most drug offenses have been removed from the list of crimes authorizing the initiation of a pursuit. This Policy creates a strong presumption against the initiation of pursuits for traffic violations and prohibits continuation of a pursuit based on the risk created by the speed or evasive driving of the fleeing suspect during the pursuit itself. It also requires greater oversight by supervisors, and mandates that a pursuit be terminated unless a supervisor affirmatively authorizes it to be continued.
- 1.4** Deciding whether to pursue a motor vehicle is among the most critical decisions made by law enforcement officers. It is a decision which must be made quickly and under difficult, often unpredictable circumstances. In recognition of the potential risk to public and officer safety created by vehicular pursuits, no officer or supervisor shall be criticized or disciplined for a decision not to engage in a vehicular pursuit or to terminate an ongoing vehicular pursuit based on the risk involved, even in circumstances where this Policy would permit the commencement or continuation of the pursuit. Likewise, officers who conduct pursuits consistent with this Policy will be strongly supported by the law enforcement community in any subsequent review of such actions.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 Authorized Tire Deflation Device.** A device designed and intended to produce a controlled deflation of one or more tires of a pursued vehicle and capable of operation consistent with criteria established in this Policy.
- 2.2 Boxing In.** The surrounding of a violator's moving vehicle with moving pursuit vehicles which are then slowed to a stop along with the violator's vehicle.
- 2.3 Divided Highway.** A road which includes a physical barrier between traffic traveling in opposite directions.
- 2.4 Heading Off.** An attempt to terminate a pursuit by pulling ahead of, behind, or toward a violator's moving vehicle to force it to the side of the road or to otherwise come to a stop.
- 2.5 Law Enforcement Officer.** Any person who is employed as a sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement agency, department, or division of those governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of persons violating the criminal laws of this State. The term law enforcement officer shall include sworn members of the New Jersey State Police, the Division of Criminal Justice and the Juvenile Justice Commission. It shall include State Correctional Police Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:154-4, County Correctional Police Officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:154-3, Special Law Enforcement Officers of all classes pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-146.8 et seq., Humane Law Enforcement Officers appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:22-14.1 or 4:22-14.4, Auxiliary Police Officers appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. App.A:9-45(c), and Constables appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:9-120. For purposes of this policy, the terms law enforcement officer, police officer and officer shall have the same meaning.
- 2.6 Paralleling.** Street Paralleling is driving a police vehicle on a street parallel to a street on which a pursuit is occurring. Vehicle Paralleling is a deliberate offensive tactic by one or more patrol vehicles to drive alongside the pursued vehicle while it is in motion.
- 2.7 Pursuit Driving.** Pursuit driving is an active attempt by a law enforcement officer operating a motor vehicle and utilizing emergency warning lights and an audible device to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving vehicle when the officer reasonably believes that the driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle and is resisting apprehension by increasing vehicle speed, committing traffic violations or otherwise attempting to elude the officer. It shall not constitute pursuit driving if the fleeing vehicle follows all traffic regulations after the officer activates the emergency warning lights and audible device (siren).

- 2.8 Pursuit Vehicles.** A Primary Unit is the police vehicle that initiates a pursuit or any unit that assumes control of the pursuit as the lead vehicle (the first police vehicle immediately behind the fleeing suspect). A Secondary Unit is any police vehicle which becomes involved as a backup to the primary unit and follows the primary unit at a safe distance.
- 2.9 Roadblock.** A restriction or obstruction used or intended for the purpose of preventing free passage of motor vehicles on a roadway in order to effectuate the apprehension of a violator. An avenue of escape is a gap in a roadblock which requires the violator to decrease the vehicle's speed to permit the violator to bypass the roadblock. A blocking vehicle is a motor vehicle, often a law enforcement vehicle, which is placed perpendicular to a roadway or angled in such a way as to create a roadblock.
- 2.10 Supervisor.** A police officer who, by virtue of rank or assignment, is responsible for the direction or supervision of the activities of other police officers.
- 2.11 Vehicle Contact Action.** Any action undertaken by the pursuing officer intended to result in contact between the moving police vehicle and the pursued vehicle.
- 2.12 Violator.** Any person who an officer reasonably believes (1) has committed, or is engaged in a conspiracy or attempt to commit, any crime of the first degree or one of the violent or serious crimes of the second degree enumerated in Section 3.2 of this policy, or (2) poses an imminent threat to the safety of the public or other police officers, as that threat is defined in Section 3.2 of this policy, set forth below.

## 3 Deciding Whether to Pursue

**3.1** A law enforcement officer has the authority, at all times, to attempt the stop of any person suspected of having committed any criminal offense or traffic violation. When the violator does not submit to the officer's lawful authority and bring the vehicle to a stop, the officer must determine whether to pursue that violator by continuing to attempt to stop the violator utilizing pursuit driving as defined herein. The officer's decision to pursue should always be undertaken with an awareness of the degree of risk to which the officer exposes law enforcement and the community by engaging in a vehicular pursuit. The officer must always weigh the need for immediate apprehension against the risk created by the pursuit.

**3.2** A law enforcement officer may only pursue under the circumstances described in subparagraph (a) or subparagraph (b):

(a) when the officer reasonably believes that the violator has committed, or is engaged in a conspiracy or attempt to commit:

(1) any crime of the first degree, or

(2) one of the following violent or serious crimes of the second degree:

- a. Manslaughter, N.J.S.A. 2C:11-4;
- b. Vehicular Homicide, N.J.S.A. 2C:11-5;
- c. Aggravated Assault, N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1(b);
- d. Disarming a Law Enforcement Officer, N.J.S.A. 2C:12-11;
- e. Kidnapping, N.J.S.A. 2C:13-1;
- f. Luring/Enticing a Child, N.J.S.A. 2C:13-6;
- g. Human Trafficking, N.J.S.A. 2C:13-8;
- h. Sexual Assault, N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2;
- i. Robbery, N.J.S.A. 2C:15-1;
- j. Arson, N.J.S.A. 2C:17-1;
- k. Burglary, N.J.S.A. 2C:18-2;
- l. Escape, N.J.S.A. 2C:29-5;
- m. Possession of a Firearm, Explosive or Destructive Device for an Unlawful Purpose, N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4(a) through (c);
- n. Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Machine Guns and Handguns), N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5(a) and (b); or

(3) one of the following other crimes:

- a. Burglary of a Dwelling, N.J.S.A. 2C:18-2.  
Vehicular pursuits are authorized for the burglary of a dwelling. Vehicular pursuits are not authorized for the burglary of a commercial building,

motor vehicle, shed or any other structure described in N.J.S.A. 2C:18-1. Vehicular pursuits shall continue to be authorized for any burglary during which the actor is armed with a weapon or injures a victim (second degree burglaries). See Section 3.2(a)(2)(k);

- b. Theft of a Motor Vehicle, N.J.S.A. 2C:20-3; N.J.S.A. 2C:20-2(b)(2)(b). This Policy authorizes vehicular pursuits for theft of a motor vehicle until at least December 31, 2022. The Office of Public Integrity & Accountability has been directed to review the available data as of that date, including stolen vehicle trends, effectiveness of pursuits, and resulting accidents, and determine whether this provision should remain or be modified. Absent additional action, this provision will remain in force after December 31, 2022;
- c. Receiving Stolen Property (Motor Vehicle Only), N.J.S.A. 2C:20-7; N.J.S.A. 2C:20-2(b)(2)(b). This Policy authorizes vehicular pursuits for receiving stolen property (motor vehicle) until at least December 31, 2022. The Office of Public Integrity & Accountability has been directed to review the available data as of that date, including stolen vehicle trends, effectiveness of pursuits, and resulting accidents, and determine whether this provision should remain or be modified. Absent additional action, this provision will remain in force after December 31, 2022;
- d. Bias Intimidation, N.J.S.A. 2C:16-1.

- (b) when an officer reasonably believes that the violator poses an imminent threat to the safety of the public or other officers. An imminent threat exists when an officer reasonably believes that the actions of the violator are immediately likely to result in death or serious bodily injury to another person absent action by the officer. This determination shall be made based upon the violator's actions or operation of the vehicle prior to the initiation of the attempted motor vehicle stop. The violator's subsequent actions, including speeding or evasive driving during the pursuit itself, although often supporting the criminal charge of Eluding, N.J.S.A. 2C:29-2(b), shall not constitute an authorization to initiate or continue a pursuit.

**3.2.1** Pursuit for motor vehicle offenses is not authorized under Paragraph 3.2 unless the violator's vehicle is being operated so as to pose an imminent threat to the safety of the public or other officers and that threat is based on the violator's actions or operation of the vehicle prior to the initiation of the attempted motor vehicle stop. There shall be a strong presumption against the initiation of vehicular pursuits based solely on motor vehicle violations. Both supervisors and officers shall ensure that only in rare cases will a vehicular pursuit be initiated or continued for motor vehicle violations.

**3.3** In the event that one of the authorization requirements is satisfied, a pursuit shall not be automatically undertaken. An officer must still consider the following factors:

- (a) likelihood of successful apprehension;



- (b) whether the identity of the violator is known so that later apprehension is possible;
- (c) degree of risk created by pursuit:
  - (1) volume, type, speed and direction of vehicular traffic;
  - (2) nature of the area (residential, commercial, school zone, open highway, etc.);
  - (3) population density and volume of pedestrian traffic;
  - (4) environmental factors, such as weather and darkness; and
  - (5) road conditions (construction, poor repair, extreme curves, intersections controlled by traffic signals or signs, ice, etc.); and
- (d) police officer characteristics:
  - (1) driving skills;
  - (2) familiarity with roads; and
  - (3) condition of police vehicle.

**3.4** The pursuing officer shall terminate the pursuit under the following circumstances:

- (a) if instructed to do so by a supervisor;
- (b) if a supervisor has not affirmatively authorized the continuation of the pursuit after being notified and given an opportunity to assess the situation;
- (c) if the officer believes that the danger to the pursuing officers or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the violator;
- (d) if the violator's identity is established to the point where later apprehension may be accomplished and where there is no imminent threat to the safety of the public or police officers;
- (e) if the pursued vehicle's location is no longer known or the distance between the pursuing vehicles and the violator's vehicle becomes so great that further pursuit is futile;
- (f) if there is a person injured during the pursuit and there are no police or medical personnel able to render assistance;
- (g) if there is a clear and unreasonable danger to the police officer or the public. A clear and unreasonable danger exists when the pursuit requires that the vehicle be driven at excessive speeds or in any other manner which exceeds the performance capabilities of the pursuing vehicles or police officers involved in a pursuit; or
- (h) if advised of any unanticipated condition, event, or circumstance that substantially increases the risk to public safety inherent in the pursuit.

**3.5** When a vehicular pursuit is terminated, officers shall immediately cease all emergency vehicle operations, including turning off all emergency warning lights and audible devices (sirens), and disengaging from the violator's vehicle.

## 4 Role of the Pursuing Officer

- 4.1** The decision to initiate and/or continue a vehicular pursuit requires weighing the need to immediately apprehend the violator against the degree of risk to which the officer and others are exposed as a result of the pursuit.
- 4.2** Upon the initiation of a pursuit, the pursuing officer shall immediately activate all emergency lights, siren, headlights, motor vehicle recorder (MVR), if equipped, and body worn camera (BWC), if equipped.
- 4.3** Once the pursuit has been initiated, the primary unit must immediately notify communications and a supervisor, providing as much of the following information as is known:
- (a) reason for the pursuit;
  - (b) direction of travel and designation and location of the roadway;
  - (c) traffic conditions;
  - (d) presence of pedestrians;
  - (e) identification of the violator's vehicle (year, make, model, color, vehicle registration number, and other identifying characteristics);
  - (f) information on the identity of the driver, if known;
  - (g) number of occupants;
  - (h) the speed of the pursued vehicle; and
  - (i) other information that may be helpful in deciding whether to terminate the pursuit or in resolving the incident.
- 4.4** The pursuing officer shall have a continuing duty to update the supervisor and communications on the above information as the incident develops.

## 5 Vehicular Pursuit Restrictions

- 5.1** No pursuit shall be conducted under the following circumstances:
- (a) in a direction opposite to the flow of traffic on a divided highway or a one-way street;  
or
  - (b) in a police vehicle in which an individual who is not a law enforcement officer is either the driver or passenger.
- 5.2** There shall be a strong presumption against the initiation or continuation of vehicular pursuits in areas where pedestrians are located or in areas of high density vehicular traffic.
- 5.3** No more than two police vehicles (primary unit and secondary unit) shall become actively involved in a pursuit unless otherwise specifically directed by a supervisor.
- 5.4** A motorcycle officer may initiate a pursuit, but will relinquish primary unit status immediately upon the participation of a marked police vehicle.
- 5.5** An unmarked police vehicle will not participate in a vehicular pursuit unless it is equipped with an emergency light and an audible device. The unmarked car shall relinquish primary unit status immediately upon the participation of a marked police vehicle.
- 5.6** To diminish the likelihood of a pursuit, an officer intending to stop a vehicle for any violation of the law shall, when possible and without creating a threat to public safety, close the distance between the two vehicles prior to activating emergency lights and an audible device. Officers shall recognize that, while attempting to close the distance and prior to the initiation of a pursuit and the activation of emergency lights and an audible device, they are subject to all motor vehicle laws governing the right of way (e.g., N.J.S.A. 39:4-91 and -92). While closing the distance between the two vehicles, officers shall activate the motor vehicle recorder (MVR) and body worn camera (BWC), if equipped and activation is possible without activating emergency lights.
- 5.7** Throughout the course of a vehicular pursuit, pursuing officers shall not attempt to overtake or pass the violator's moving vehicle.
- 5.8** During the course of a pursuit and when approaching an intersection controlled by traffic signals or signs, or any other location at which there is a substantially increased likelihood of collision, the operator of any pursuit vehicle shall, prior to entering the intersection, reduce the vehicle's speed and control the vehicle so as to avoid collision with another vehicle or pedestrian. The officer shall observe that the way is clear before cautiously proceeding through the intersection. At all other times including an attempt to close the distance prior to the initiation of a pursuit and upon the termination of a pursuit, officers

shall observe the applicable laws governing the right of way at intersections and other locations.

- 5.9** Officers involved in a pursuit shall not engage in vehicle paralleling.
- 5.10** There shall be no street paralleling along the route unless the pursuit passes through a patrol's assigned area. A patrol that is parallel-street-pursuing shall not join or interfere with a pursuit and shall stop all pursuit-related activity at the boundary of its assigned area.
- 5.11** Boxing-in or heading-off a violator's moving vehicle is permitted only under extraordinary circumstances. These tactics substantially increase the risk inherent in the pursuit and shall only be employed:
  - (a) at low speeds; and
  - (b) with the approval of a supervisor; or
  - (c) in response to an imminent threat to the safety of the public or a police officer.
- 5.12** Roadblocks must only be employed as a last resort in circumstances where deadly force would otherwise be justified.
  - (a) the use of a roadblock must be authorized by a supervisor;
  - (b) at no time will a roadblock be established until all pursuing police vehicles are made aware of the roadblock and its location and have acknowledged this awareness;
- 5.12.1** Once a roadblock has been established and a vehicle or barricade has been positioned in the roadway, there shall be:
  - (a) adequate distance to see the roadblock;
  - (b) an avenue of escape; and
  - (c) no one in the blocking vehicle(s).
- 5.13** Officers involved in a pursuit shall not engage in any vehicle contact action except as a last resort to prevent imminent death or serious injury to the officer or another person where deadly force would otherwise be justified.
- 5.14** Officers shall not discharge a firearm against the driver or passenger of a moving vehicle except in the limited situations permitted under Section 4.6 of the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy.
- 5.15** Officers shall not discharge a firearm from a moving vehicle except in the limited situations permitted under Section 4.7 of the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy.

## 6 Authorized Tire Deflation Devices

- 6.1** Law enforcement agencies may choose to utilize authorized tire deflation devices during the course of a vehicular pursuit. Agencies that choose to employ this strategy may only utilize devices authorized by this Policy. As with all operational decisions made during the conduct of a vehicular pursuit, the use of such devices is subject to the assessment of inherent risk balanced against the need to apprehend a fleeing offender.
- 6.2** To be authorized for deployment and use under the vehicular pursuit policy, the tire deflation device must be capable of the following:
- (a) producing a controlled deflation of one or more tires of a pursued vehicle;
  - (b) being deployed or activated immediately before the pursued vehicle drives over it, and removed or deactivated immediately after the pursued vehicle drives over it; and
  - (c) allowing the officer to remain a safe distance from the roadway at the time of deployment or activation.
- 6.3** Prior to the deployment and use of an authorized tire deflation device, the law enforcement agency shall do the following:
- (a) modify its vehicular pursuit policy to provide for the proper use of the authorized tire deflation device; and
  - (b) train all officers in the use of the authorized tire deflation device, which training must include practical, hands-on operation of the authorized tire deflation device.
- 6.4** The following are circumstances under which an authorized tire deflation device may be deployed:
- (a) an authorized tire deflation device may be utilized only after supervisory approval;
  - (b) an authorized tire deflation device shall not be used to stop motorcycles, mopeds, or similar vehicles;
  - (c) the authorized tire deflation device should not be used in locations where specific geographic features (e.g., sharp curves, alongside of rivers, steep embankments, etc.) increase the risk of serious injury to the officer, violator, or public;
  - (d) deployment locations should have reasonably good sight distances to enable the officer to observe the pursuit and other traffic as it approaches; and
  - (e) the officer deploying the authorized tire deflation device should not attempt to overtake and pass a high-speed pursuit in order to position the device.
- 6.5** Procedures for deployment of the authorized tire deflation device:
- (a) the officer deploying the authorized tire deflation device should do so from a position of safety;

- (b) the officer deploying the authorized tire deflation device should be in position to allow sufficient time for deployment;
- (c) the supervisor must coordinate the efforts of all law enforcement units involved in the pursuit;
- (d) the communications operator shall notify all units of the location of the authorized tire deflation device deployment;
- (e) the officer operating the authorized tire deflation device should take a position of safety as the pursued vehicle approaches;
- (f) the officer shall deploy or activate the authorized tire deflation device immediately before the pursued vehicle arrives at the point where it would impact the device;
- (g) the officer shall remove or deactivate the device immediately after the pursued vehicle goes over the authorized tire deflation device; and
- (h) the officer should immediately notify communications if the pursued vehicle impacted the authorized tire deflation device, if the officer observed any signs of deflation, and the direction and operation of the pursued vehicle after the impact.

**6.6** The use of an authorized tire deflation device shall be reported on a Vehicular Pursuit Report in the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal.

## 7 Role of the Supervisor

- 7.1** Upon being notified or becoming aware of the pursuit, the supervisor shall decide as quickly as possible whether or not the pursuit shall be permitted to continue and shall broadcast that decision over the police radio channel by declaring “pursuit authorized” or “terminate pursuit.” In addition, if the supervisor decides to authorize the pursuit, the supervisor shall broadcast the underlying reason for authorizing the pursuit (e.g., “Pursuit authorized for armed robbery suspect.”).
- 7.2** The supervisor shall permit a pursuit to continue only under the following circumstances:
- (a) There is a reasonable belief that the violator has committed, or is engaged in a conspiracy or attempt to commit, any crime enumerated in Section 3.2 of this Policy;  
or
  - (b) There is a reasonable belief that violator poses an imminent threat to safety of the public or other police officers. This determination shall be made based upon the violator’s actions or operation of the vehicle prior to the initiation of the attempted motor vehicle stop. The violator’s subsequent actions, although often supporting the criminal charge of Eluding, N.J.S.A. 2C:29-2(b), shall not constitute an authorization to initiate or continue a pursuit. See Section 3.2(b) of this Policy.
- 7.3** The supervisor shall order a pursuit terminated at any time if he or she concludes that the danger to the pursuing officer(s) or the public outweighs the necessity for immediate apprehension of the violator.
- 7.4** The supervisor shall order the pursuit terminated if the suspect’s identity is established to the point where later apprehension may be accomplished and where there is no imminent threat to public safety.
- 7.5** In recognition of the overall population density and volume of vehicular traffic in this State, and the increased risk attendant to prolonged vehicular pursuits, a supervisor shall order the termination of any pursuit of protracted duration unless the supervisor determines that further pursuit is justified to respond to an imminent threat to public safety.
- 7.6** The supervisor shall ensure, for the duration of the pursuit, that this Policy and agency procedures are followed by all officers.

## 8 Role of Police Communications

- 8.1** The communications operator shall do the following during a vehicular pursuit:
- (a) immediately notify a police supervisor of a pursuit in progress if a supervisor has not already been otherwise notified;
  - (b) keep the supervisor apprised of the duration and progress of the pursuit; and
  - (c) obtain from the pursuing officer any information listed in Section 4.3 of this Policy that was not initially provided by the pursuing officer.
- 8.2** When possible, a police supervisor shall determine whether there is a need to assume control over and coordinate pursuit related communications.
- 8.3** All law enforcement agencies shall establish procedures to ensure that radio channels remain open for pursuit related transmissions and that all necessary information is made available to officers involved in the pursuit.

## 9 Reinstating Pursuits

- 9.1** Reinstatement of any previously terminated pursuit shall be undertaken consistent with the authorization criteria for originally initiating a pursuit.

## 10 Interjurisdictional Pursuits

- 10.1** The original pursuing jurisdiction shall provide timely notification of a pursuit in progress to any other jurisdiction into which the pursuit enters. Notifying another jurisdiction that a pursuit is in progress is not a request to join the pursuit. The pursuing agency shall advise if assistance is necessary. Whenever the pursuing officers are unfamiliar with the roadways and terrain of the jurisdiction into which the pursuit has entered, the pursuing agency shall, when possible, seek the assistance of, and be prepared to relinquish the pursuit to, the other agency.



## 11 Vehicular Pursuit Reporting

- 11.1** All law enforcement officers who operate law enforcement vehicles in vehicular pursuit situations shall complete a report in the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal. The report shall be completed by the officer within 24 hours of the vehicular pursuit and preferably before the end the shift in which the pursuit occurred. If the officer involved in the pursuit is unable to complete the report within 24 hours, it should be completed as soon the officer is able to do so, or by a supervising officer within 48 hours in accordance with a written policy to be established by the department or agency.
- 11.2** Vehicular pursuits resulting in the death or serious bodily injury of any civilian shall be handled in accordance with Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2019-4. As soon as any local, county, or state law enforcement agency learns of a vehicular pursuit that resulted in death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, the agency shall immediately notify the County Prosecutor's Office for the county in which the incident occurred, who shall in turn immediately notify the Attorney General's Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) Director or their designee.

## 12 Vehicular Pursuit Review

**12.1** Thorough and meaningful review of vehicular pursuit incidents is vital to ensuring the safety of law enforcement officers and the public. Every vehicular pursuit must undergo the following procedures for a meaningful command-level review pursuant to a written policy established by the law enforcement executive:

- (a) The meaningful command-level review of the incident shall be undertaken by at least two levels of supervisors. These levels may include the immediate supervisor, internal affairs, training officers, or command staff. At least one reviewer must be two levels or more above the officer who engaged in the vehicular pursuit;
- (b) The review shall include an examination of all available sources of information about the incident, including any video of the incident, recordings of 911 calls and police radio transmissions, reports, officer or other witness statements, medical records, or records of injuries;
- (c) The reviewing supervisors shall make a recommendation of what action, if any, should be undertaken, including policy changes, remedial training, disciplinary action, administrative action, or, if appropriate, referral for criminal prosecution; and
- (d) The law enforcement executive, or a command level officer no more than one rank below the law enforcement executive for departments with more than 100 officers, shall review each vehicular pursuit investigation and approve or reject the recommendations of the supervisors who conducted the review. The law enforcement executive's decision, or the decision of the designee, shall be memorialized and retained in the vehicular pursuit investigative file.
- (e) Vehicular pursuits that are determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy, or agency policy, shall be forwarded quarterly by municipal and county agencies to the County Prosecutor's Office for review. The reports shall be forwarded within 30 days of the end of each quarter. Vehicular pursuits involving statewide law enforcement agencies, or county prosecutor's office personnel, that are determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy, or agency policy, shall be forwarded quarterly to the Director of the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability or their designee for review. The reports shall be forwarded within 30 days of the end of each quarter.

**12.2** The law enforcement executive shall conduct an annual review of all vehicular pursuit incidents in their department. The review shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) analytical reports from the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal;
- (b) an audit of BWCs and other videos on a risk-based and randomly selected basis;
- (c) any internal affairs complaints; and
- (d) an analysis of vehicular pursuits to ensure that they are being conducted without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

- (e) an analysis of all pursuits determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General’s Use of Force Policy, or agency policy, and the steps taken to address the non-compliance.

**12.3** Based on that thorough review, the law enforcement executive shall determine whether changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment are appropriate. The law enforcement executive shall then provide a written report documenting the annual review to the County Prosecutor for that department. Each County Prosecutor’s Office and each statewide law enforcement agency shall make its report to the Attorney General’s Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA).

## 13 Training

- 13.1** The Division of Criminal Justice, by June 21, 2021, shall develop a training program to explain the requirements of this Policy as they pertain to state, county, and local law enforcement agencies and officers. Such program shall be made available through the NJ Learn System or by other electronic means.
- 13.2** All state, county, and local law enforcement agencies shall provide training to all officers regarding the provisions of this policy before December 31, 2021.
- 13.3** All officers shall attend in-service vehicular pursuit training annually.
- 13.4** Vehicular pursuit training shall consist of knowledge of applicable statutes, familiarization with statewide police pursuit policy and departmental procedures, decision making skills, and the use of an authorized tire deflation device if employed by the agency.

## 14 Individual Agency Policies

- 14.1** Nothing in this policy prohibits state, county and municipal law enforcement agencies from adopting policies that impose additional restrictions on vehicular pursuits or that impose more extensive training or reporting requirements.