



FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GENERAL ORDER

Effective Date: May 9, 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends: GO# 023 dated 07/10/24	Number: 023
Subject: Vehicle Apprehension		
Distribution: All Sworn and Communications Center	CFA Standards: 14.05M A-K; 18.10M FLA-TAC Standards: FCAC Standards:	

I. Scope & Purpose: This General Order (GO) establishes policy for Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Deputies who engage in motor vehicle apprehensions. It also provides for an administrative review of circumstances involving vehicle apprehensions, including the judgment exercised by all involved Sheriff's Office members.

II. Discussion:

A. The goal of the FCSO is the protection of life and property. The circumstances under which Deputies may engage in motor vehicle apprehensions is restricted and regulated. Motor vehicle pursuits and apprehension of criminals are necessary law enforcement procedures and are often dictated by the actions of the driver. Therefore, whenever a motor vehicle apprehension is conducted, techniques listed herein should be utilized with an emphasis to limit the exposure of risk to the citizens and members.

B. Vehicle Apprehension: [14.05M A] [CFA 18.10M]

1. Deputies are authorized to engage in a vehicle apprehension in an effort to detain suspects who demonstrate violence or pose an immediate specific continuing threat to public safety. Therefore, Deputies may engage in a vehicle apprehension if one of the following conditions exist:
 - a. There is reasonable belief the suspect committed or attempted to commit a forcible felony as defined in FSS 776.08 as treason, murder, manslaughter, sexual battery, carjacking, home-invasion robbery, robbery, burglary, arson, kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, aggravated stalking, aircraft piracy, unlawful throwing, placing, or discharging of a destructive device or bomb, and any other felony which involves the use or threat of physical force or violence against any individual. The intentional striking of an occupied emergency vehicle by the subject vehicle is an aggravated battery and constitutes an imminent threat of physical harm to the public.
2. A Supervisor may authorize a vehicle apprehension when there is a reasonable belief that pursuing the fleeing vehicle is necessary to prevent the death or serious bodily injury to any person.

III. Forms:

- Vehicle Apprehension Form

FCSO Form # PATL-082

IV. Definition:

- A. Attempt to Stop - An initial effort made to lawfully stop a moving vehicle.
- B. Vehicle Apprehension - An active and continuing effort by a Deputy Sheriff in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend the occupant(s) of a moving vehicle, which fails to stop after a reasonable time, a reasonable distance, increases speed or takes other evasive action. Deputies attempting to catch up to a vehicle that has not displayed any evasive action is not considered a vehicle apprehension under this policy.
- C. Emergency Vehicle (Unit) - Any authorized police vehicle equipped with a siren and emergency lights which meet the requirements of Chapter 316, Florida Statutes.
- D. Primary Vehicle Apprehension Unit - Generally the emergency unit which initiates the vehicle apprehension or any emergency unit that assumes control of the vehicle apprehension as the lead vehicle.
- E. Second and Third Vehicle Apprehension Units - Emergency units which trails the Primary Unit at a safe distance and which are available to assume the primary role or assist the Primary Unit if the fleeing vehicle is stopped.
- F. Assist Units - Additional emergency police vehicles, other than the primary and two secondary units, are designated as assist units. They are to remain alert to the direction and progress of the vehicle apprehension and may position themselves at strategic sites along the probable vehicle apprehension route or on parallel roadways for response to any emergencies that may develop and/or prevent civilian vehicle or pedestrian traffic from interfering in the vehicle apprehension.
- G. Forcible Felony under this General Order is defined by FSS. 776.08

V. Procedure:

- A. Responsibilities of the Primary Vehicle Apprehension Vehicle. [CFA 14.05M B]
 - 1. Deputies will immediately notify Communications when a vehicle apprehension has begun, and will at a minimum provide the following the information:
 - a. Their radio identification number and "10-31".
 - b. The location, speed and travel direction of the fleeing vehicle.
 - c. A description and license plate number, if known, of the fleeing vehicle.
 - d. Charges against the driver or articulate exigent circumstances and the reasonable belief that the continuing conduct of the violator presents an immediate and life threatening danger to the community.
 - e. The number of suspect/s (occupant/s) in the vehicle.
 - f. Amount of vehicle and/or pedestrian traffic.
 - g. Weather conditions.
 - h. Road conditions.
 - 2. Responsibility for compliance with this GO rests directly with the Primary Unit, until directed otherwise by a Supervisor.

B. Responsibilities of the Second and Third Units. [CFA 14.05M C]

1. The Second and Third Unit, upon joining the vehicle apprehension, shall immediately notify Communications of their identity. If practical, the Second Unit should assume radio communications responsibility for the Primary Unit.
2. The Second and Third Unit should maintain a safe distance from the Primary Unit, but be close enough to render assistance.
3. Should the Primary Vehicle Apprehension Unit become disabled, the Second Unit will become the Primary Unit and the Third Unit will assume the responsibilities of the Second Unit.
4. Only three units are authorized to be directly behind the pursuing vehicle.

C. Supervisor Responsibilities. [CFA 14.05M F]

1. The on-duty Watch Commander or District Supervisor has responsibility for continuing or terminating all vehicle apprehensions. Watch Commanders or Supervisors shall assert control of the vehicle apprehension by monitoring and directing specific units into or out of the vehicle apprehension, re-designating primary, secondary, and back-up units, approving or ordering alternative tactics, or terminating the vehicle apprehension, if appropriate. This Watch Commander or Supervisor shall acknowledge the pursuit over the primary radio channel.
2. Upon being notified of a vehicle apprehension, the Watch Commander or Supervisor shall verify the following factors:
 - a. The circumstances which initiated the vehicle apprehension.
 - b. No more than the necessary number of units are to be involved in the vehicle apprehension.
 - c. The correct radio channel is being used.
 - d. Aviation support is requested.
 - e. Any potential inter-jurisdictional law enforcement agencies are notified.
3. That the following duties are being executed by the Communications Section, [CFA 14.05M E]
 - a. A Communications Specialist is designated to monitor the vehicle apprehension.
 - b. "Emergency radio traffic" has been initiated.
 - c. Ensure the immediate Supervisor and appropriate Commander are aware and an administrative notification made in accordance with GO #530.
 - d. The Communications Specialist is provided with information that includes the radio identification numbers of the primary and support units.
 - e. Locations or changes in vehicle apprehension directions are routinely updated.
 - f. Record checks are handled as quickly as possible.
 - g. Information provided by pursuing units is repeated as necessary.
 - h. The status availability of aircraft and K-9 units is known.
 - i. Establish a common radio channel when vehicle apprehensions have or are likely to cross jurisdictions.
 - j. Monitor the vehicle apprehension until it has been terminated.

D. Operational Tactics.

1. Considerations of Vehicle Apprehensions. [CFA 14.05M A]

- a. Factors to be considered before beginning a vehicle apprehension include:
 - i. The area in which the vehicle apprehension is occurring;
 - ii. The time of day;
 - iii. Suspects' vehicle speed and driving style;
 - iv. Road conditions;
 - v. Weather Conditions;
 - vi. Traffic Conditions.

2. Method of Vehicle apprehension. [CFA 14.05M D]

- a. No more than three (3) units will engage in the actual vehicle apprehension.
- b. All emergency equipment including sirens will be used.
- c. A caravan of unassigned units is prohibited.
- d. Deputies should not follow a suspect vehicle the wrong way on a divided roadway, and should use extreme caution if the suspect vehicle proceeds the wrong way on any other roadway.
- e. Pursuing units will maintain a reasonable and safe following distance.
- f. Only those vehicles equipped with emergency lights and sirens may engage in vehicle apprehensions.
- g. Unmarked vehicles and SUVs may be used in a vehicle apprehension at the Deputy's discretion. It is recommended that these vehicles only be involved in vehicle apprehensions until the arrival of a marked patrol vehicle.
- h. Deputies on motorcycles and bicycle patrol are not authorized to engage in a motor vehicle apprehension.
- i. The initiating vehicle apprehension unit may relinquish primary vehicle apprehension position to neighboring city/county law enforcement officers when crossing jurisdictional boundaries. [CFA 14.05M B]
- j. Deputies will terminate a vehicle apprehension if they lose radio contact with Communications.
- k. When aerial surveillance is available, the air crew will notify Communications.
- l. When feasible, the aircraft becomes responsible for communicating the progress of the vehicle apprehension, but only after communication is established between the air and ground units confirming the transfer of this responsibility.
- m. At that time, all pursuing units will break away from the vehicle apprehension and allow the suspect vehicle adequate distance.

3. Roadblocks. [CFA 18.10M]

- a. Tactical roadblocks are authorized to prevent a vehicle from fleeing.
 - i. The use of tactical roadblocks will be authorized and implemented using the same criteria for vehicle apprehensions as stated above in II.B above.

- b. Commanders and their designees may, when warranted, close a road for approved traffic functions, active crime scenes, incidents related to all hazard emergencies and special events. This is not an inclusive list.
- c. Commanders and their designees may direct appropriately trained personnel to close roads.

4. Tire Deflation Devices. [CFA 14.05M G]

- a. Stop Sticks, Terminators, and Piranhas are the only approved tire deflation devices by the FCSO.
- b. Tire deflation devices will only be deployed by Deputies who have received agency approved annual training.
- c. Tire deflation devices should only be used in a safe manner without jeopardizing the safety of the Deputies involved or other persons.
- d. Deputies involved in the deployment of tire deflation devices should redirect civilian vehicle traffic away from the deployment area, when possible.
- e. Tire deflation devices shall not be used to apprehend motorcycles or other two-wheeled vehicles.
- f. Deputies should deploy Stop Sticks as a pursuit prevention measure. This technique may be used on vehicles suspected of being used in the commission of a crime. This preventative measure can be initiated prior to an apprehension attempt. Utilizing Stop Sticks as a preventative measure on a moving vehicle should be authorized prior to deployment by a Supervisor.
- g. Stop Sticks should be deployed in the roadway in advance of a moving vehicle.
- h. Deputies deploying Stop Sticks shall notify all units engaged in a vehicle apprehension of the location and deployment on the active radio channel used by the pursuing Deputies.
- i. Stop Sticks should be placed end-to-end without being interlocked, into the concealment sleeve with the attached cord reel.
- j. The sleeved unit can then be deployed as a single obstacle in the path of the fleeing vehicle.
 - i. Stop Sticks are equipped with a pull string that attaches to the end of the stop sticks or the sleeve;
 - ii. Having the pull string attached gives the Deputy the option of pulling a number of stop sticks from a concealed position into the path of the fleeing vehicle;
 - iii. Caution shall be used when employing this maneuver. The pull string must be placed flat on the surface of the roadway and shall not be held by the Deputy;
 - iv. The stop sticks must be pulled in place in sufficient time to allow the Deputy to release the pull string and to place oneself in a safe location.
- k. Deputies should deploy the Terminator and Piranha Tire Deflation Devices issued by the FCSO as a pursuit prevention measure. This technique may be used on stationary vehicles.
- l. Tire deflation devices are assigned to individual vehicles.
- m. If any portion of a tire deflation device becomes damaged, a replacement will be obtained as soon as possible.

- i. The Vehicle Apprehension Review shall identify the member(s) who deployed the tire deflation devices(s). The serial numbers of the damaged deflation devices shall be documented on FCSO Form# PATL-082, Vehicle Apprehension Form, within the designated stop stick serial number location. A copy will be forwarded along with the tire deflation devices to the Purchasing and Inventory Manager. The original will be attached to the Incident Report.

E. Terminating the Vehicle Apprehension. [CFA 14.05M H]

1. A decision to terminate a vehicle apprehension may be the most viable means of protecting property, the lives of the public, law enforcement officers, and suspects.
2. Deputies should discontinue a vehicle apprehension when circumstances dictate it is no longer justified or reasonable, or the road and driving conditions outweigh the immediate need for apprehension.
3. A vehicle apprehension will be terminated when:
 - a. The Deputy or Supervisor determines the level of danger outweighs the necessity of the vehicle apprehension.
 - b. The suspect's identity has been established to the point that later apprehension can be accomplished and he/she does not pose an imminent danger to the public.
 - c. The distance between the Deputy and the pursued vehicle is so great it becomes obvious that apprehension is unlikely.
 - d. Equipment failure makes it impractical or unsafe to continue the vehicle apprehension.
 - e. Radio contact is lost with Communications and/or the Supervisor.
 - f. The Deputy engaged in the vehicle apprehension no longer has a reasonable belief that the suspect is committing, has committed, or is attempting to commit a forcible felony.
- i. When a Deputy or Supervisor terminates a vehicle apprehension, all pursuing Deputies will turn off their emergency lights and siren and obey all traffic laws.

F. Inter-Jurisdictional Vehicle Apprehensions. [CFA 14.05M I]

1. Out-Bound Vehicle apprehensions.
 - a. If a vehicle apprehension appears to be continuing outside Flagler County, the pursuing Deputy will instruct Communications to notify the other jurisdiction into which the vehicle apprehension is entering and request their assistance.
 - b. Notifications should include:
 - i. Nature of offense/reason for vehicle apprehension;
 - ii. Number of suspects in the pursued vehicle;
 - iii. Number of units currently involved;
 - iv. Direction of travel and the suspect's description;
 - v. Any special conditions or considerations.
 - c. If assistance is granted from the other agency, a unit from that jurisdiction should assume the Primary Unit position, if practical, once the vehicle apprehension has

entered their jurisdiction. The primary pursuing Flagler County Unit should then continue as a secondary unit at a safe distance behind the new primary unit.

- d. Responsibility for continuing or terminating a vehicle apprehension should transfer to the other jurisdiction.
- e. If the vehicle apprehension is terminated by the other jurisdiction's primary unit, the Flagler County unit will also terminate the vehicle apprehension.
- f. If the other jurisdiction does not grant assistance to the FCSO, the Supervisor must re-evaluate the need to continue the vehicle apprehension based upon existing conditions including geographic knowledge of the area.
- i. If the decision is to continue the vehicle apprehension, Communications will continue to inform other affected jurisdictions and request their assistance.
- g. If the other jurisdiction requests the pursuing Flagler County unit to discontinue the vehicle apprehension in view of public safety concerns, the Flagler County unit will terminate the vehicle apprehension.
- h. Deputies continuing a vehicle apprehension outside Flagler County will adhere to the policies of the FCSO.

2. In-Bound Vehicle Apprehensions.

- a. Deputies shall not become involved in another agency's vehicle apprehension unless clearly and specifically directed to assist by an FCSO Supervisor.
- b. Assisting with a vehicle apprehension that enters Flagler County will depend upon the methods used by the pursuing agency and if reasons and road conditions for the vehicle apprehension comply with this General Order. If those methods do not appear to meet with this policy, FCSO Deputies will not become involved in the vehicle apprehension except to protect innocent drivers and pedestrians from unwittingly becoming involved.
- c. FCSO Supervisors may request the pursuing agency terminate a vehicle apprehension due to public safety considerations.

G. Vehicle Apprehension Report. [CFA 14.05M J]

1. The Vehicle Apprehension Review Form and general Incident Report shall be completed after every vehicle apprehension. This includes vehicle apprehensions that directly involve Flagler County Deputy Sheriffs.
2. The Vehicle Apprehension Report Form shall be completed by the Deputy who conducted (or who was directly involved in) the vehicle apprehension and shall be submitted to a reviewing Supervisor before going off-duty.
3. The Vehicle Apprehension Review Form, along with any recommendations, shall be signed by the approving Supervisor and forwarded through the Deputy's chain-of-command to the Division Chief for review.
4. Any vehicle apprehension that has resulted in injury or damage to property shall be brought to the attention of the affected Division Chief who will forward a copy of all reports to the General Counsel as soon as possible.
5. The Division Chief shall ascertain if the circumstances of the vehicle apprehension are in compliance with this GO. If the Division Chief determines the vehicle apprehension was not in compliance with this GO, the Report will be forwarded to the Chief of Staff with

a recommendation for corrective action. A pursuit in violation of this GO shall be handled in accordance with GO 019 Formal Discipline.

H. Miscellaneous.

1. If any FCSO vehicle is functionally damaged during a vehicle apprehension, it will be removed from service and inspected by the County Fleet Maintenance before it is returned to service.
2. By January 15th of each year, the CPD Chief or designee in conjunction with the Training Unit Manager or designee, will submit to the Sheriff via the chain-of-command an analysis, including patterns and trends of the previous year's vehicle apprehensions. The analysis will also include any recommendations to change FCSO directives, policies, procedures or training for all sworn and New Hire Academy. [CFA 14.05M J, K]



RICK STALY
Sheriff