


<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GENERAL ORDER</b></p>	<p>SUBJECT: <b>VEHICLE STOPPING TECHNIQUES</b></p>		<p>NUMBER: <b>505</b></p>
	<p>EFFECTIVE DATE: <b>September 2, 2022</b></p>	<p>REVIEW: <b>September, 2025</b></p>	
<p>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY</p>			<input type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised 02-12-22
<p>ACCREDITATION STANDARDS</p>	<p>CALEA: 1.3.1, 41.2.3, 41.2.4</p>	<p>VLEPSC: ADM.05.01, ADM 05.02, ADM 05.03, OPR.01.10</p>	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for all officers when making the decision to utilize vehicle stopping techniques.

II. POLICY

The Fairfax County Police Department holds the highest regard for the sanctity of human life; therefore, all officers must exercise good judgement when deciding to use any vehicle stopping technique against a non-compliant motorist. The Code of Virginia requires all officers to drive with due regard for the safety of others; thus, officers should only utilize a vehicle stopping technique in those instances where, given the totality of the circumstances, there is an immediate need to apprehend a fleeing offender to preserve public safety. All officers, to include monitoring supervisors and commanders, have a duty to intervene and should recommend to other officers involved in pursuits that they not use a vehicle stopping technique if doing so would not be objectively reasonable under the circumstances.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Deadly Force: Any level of force that is likely or intended to cause death or serious injury to another.
- B. Medical Treatment: Any action taken by Emergency Medical Services (EMS), personnel approved by the Fairfax County Police Department's Office of the Medical Director (OMD), or medical facility personnel, to medically assess an individual or physically mend an injury (e.g. dress a wound, stitches, etc.) resulting from the use of a vehicle stopping technique.

- C. Objectively Reasonable: The level of force that is appropriate when analyzed from the perspective of a reasonable officer possessing the same information and faced with the same set of circumstances. Objective reasonableness is not analyzed with the benefit of hindsight, but rather accounts for the fact that officers must make rapid and necessary decisions regarding the type and amount of force to be used in tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving situations.
- D. Piranha Tire Deflating Device: A compact device containing spikes designed to be placed behind or in front of the tire of a stationary vehicle for the purpose of deflating the tire should the vehicle become mobile.
- E. Precision Immobilization Technique: A vehicle stopping technique that involves the intentional act of using a police vehicle to physically force a fleeing vehicle from its course of travel to immobilize it.
- F. Probable Cause: Facts and circumstances which, taken together with rational inferences therefrom, would lead a prudent individual to believe that a crime or traffic violation is being, or has been, committed, and that a particular person committed it.
- G. Rolling Roadblock: A vehicle stopping technique involving officers who are positioned in front of, behind, and alongside a vehicle to gradually reduce its speed in a coordinated manner and eventually bring it to a stop.
- H. Serious Injury: Any injury which creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or prolonged hospitalization, impairment of the functions of any bodily organ or limb, or any injury that attending medical personnel deem to be potentially life-threatening. The Duty Officer or their designee shall determine when an injury resulting from the use of a vehicle stopping technique is to be designated as a serious injury.
- I. Stationary Roadblock: A vehicle stopping technique involving the use of stationary vehicles on a roadway that is designed to prevent the free passage of a pursued motor vehicle to apprehend the fleeing driver and/or any passengers.
- J. Stop Stick Tire Deflating Device: A plastic sleeve containing multi-directional spikes designed to be deployed from the side of the road for the purpose of deflating the tires of a fleeing vehicle.
- K. Tactical Vehicle Intercept: A vehicle stopping technique advanced team tactic that utilizes a designed, coordinated, and intentional deployment of police vehicle intended to minimize the possibility of vehicle movement or escape and ultimately immobilize a suspect vehicle.

- L. Vehicle Incident: Whenever a police vehicle makes contact with another vehicle, object, or person as a direct result of the intentional actions of an officer. Vehicle incidents do not include the Precision Immobilization Technique or Tactical Vehicle Intercept.
- M. Vehicle Stopping Technique: The use of a department police vehicle to apprehend a motorist during a vehicle pursuit or specialized operation.

#### IV. GENERAL

- A. Vehicle stopping techniques may be used during vehicle pursuits or other events by officers whenever it is objectively reasonable to do so under the circumstances. Officer(s) deploying vehicle stopping techniques must be able to clearly articulate the need to utilize a vehicle stopping technique against a fleeing driver. Instances where vehicle stopping techniques may be effective include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Effecting a lawful arrest.
  - 2. Preventing escape from lawful custody.
  - 3. Defending oneself or another from injury or assault.
- B. Only those vehicle stopping techniques approved by the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy shall be utilized by officers unless it becomes necessary for officers to protect themselves or others from the threat of imminent death or serious bodily injury and the officer's tools or training have not worked or would ultimately prove to be unsuccessful. In these instances, the officer may turn to other options to save themselves or another person if it would be objectively reasonable to do so under the circumstances.
- C. Access to medical treatment shall be provided to any individual who complains of injury, has obvious injuries, or who requests medical attention as the result of the use of a vehicle stopping technique. Officers are not permitted to compel any person, whether in custody or not, to receive medical treatment.
- D. The following are Department approved vehicle stopping techniques:
  - 1. Piranha Tire Deflating Device
  - 2. Rolling Roadblock

3. Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT)
4. Stationary Roadblock
5. Tactical Vehicle Intercept (TVI)
6. Vehicle Incident

V. TIRE DEFLATING DEVICES

- A. Use of the Stop Stick Tire Deflating Device is prohibited by any member of the Department.
- B. The Piranha Tire Deflating Device may be used only in accordance with [SOP 11-040 Stakeout/Surveillance](#). Only those officers trained and approved to use the Piranha Tire Deflating Device may deploy them in the field.

VI. ROLLING ROADBLOCK

- A. Only those officers who are trained and approved by the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy to utilize a rolling roadblock shall be permitted to use them in accordance with their training.
- B. Officers are prohibited from using rolling roadblocks whenever an occupant in a vehicle is known to be in possession of a firearm, or where the speed of the vehicle is so excessive that the probability of control is severely diminished.
- C. Prior to executing a rolling roadblock, all participating officers should coordinate their respective actions via police radio until the vehicle is stopped.

VII. PRECISION IMMOBILIZATION TECHNIQUE

- A. Only those officers who are trained and approved by the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy to utilize a Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) shall be permitted to use them in accordance with their training.
- B. Generally, officers should avoid utilizing PIT at speeds greater than forty-five (45) miles per hour absent exigent circumstances to reduce the potential risks to themselves and others. Officers should also be mindful of the potential dangers of weather, traffic, and roadway conditions as well as fixed objects, bridges and overpasses, school and work zones, pedestrians, and other vehicles, etc. before electing to utilize a PIT.

- C. PIT shall not be used on vehicles with two or three wheels, or all-terrain vehicles (motorcycles, scooters, three and four-wheelers, etc.)
- D. Only department approved pursuit-rated vehicles may conduct a PIT.
- E. Officers are strictly prohibited from using or attempting to use PIT outside of the jurisdictional confines of Fairfax County for any reason(s). Any use or attempted use of the PIT in these circumstances will be investigated by IAB in coordination with the jurisdiction where the PIT occurred.

#### VIII. STATIONARY ROADBLOCK

- A. Only those officers who are trained and approved by the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy to utilize a stationary roadblock shall be permitted to use them in accordance with their training.
- B. Stationary roadblocks are highly dangerous to both officers and the community. As such, they may only be used with supervisor approval in situations where:
  - 1. An officer has probable cause to believe that an individual committed a violent felony as defined in [General Order 504](#), Vehicle Pursuits; **and**
  - 2. All other means to effect an arrest have been exhausted, are not feasible, or would ultimately prove unsuccessful; **and**
  - 3. The individual's escape poses an imminent threat of death or serious injury to the officer or others.
- C. Officers shall request and obtain supervisor approval via the police radio before seeking to establish a stationary roadblock. Supervisors shall respond and take immediate command of any proposed stationary roadblocks.
- D. Before authorizing a stationary roadblock, a supervisor shall evaluate whether the use of a stationary roadblock is objectively reasonable under the circumstances, the number of personnel needed to implement the roadblock, all traffic, roadway, environmental, and pedestrian conditions at the site of the roadblock, and further assess whether there is sufficient time to provide reasonable warning to other motorists at the location of the roadblock.
- E. Stationary roadblocks must be clearly visible and not intentionally blind the vision of oncoming motorists through the use of directed cruiser lighting. Sufficient distance must be provided for the approaching violator to safely come to a stop.

- F. Stationary roadblocks shall not be used on overpasses and/or bridges, on streets with heavy vehicle or pedestrian traffic, in active school or work zones, or in areas where visibility is limited (ex: sharp roadway curves and/or grades, or during periods of inclement weather).
- G. Officers shall establish a reasonable avenue of escape for any uninvolved vehicles at the location of the stationary roadblock.
- H. Only Fairfax County owned vehicles may be used for a stationary roadblock.
- I. The Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) shall be notified by police radio of the existence and precise location of any stationary roadblock.

IX. TACTICAL VEHICLE INTERCEPT

- A. Only those officers assigned to the Special Operations Division, the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit, the Fugitive Tracking and Apprehension Team, and the Auto Crimes Enforcement Squad (including supplemental officers when acting under the command and control of these entities), who have been trained and approved for the use of tactical vehicle intercepts (TVI) may use them in accordance with their training.
- B. No employee of the department may train another officer in TVI unless directly authorized to do so by the Director of the Criminal Justice Academy.

X. VEHICLE INCIDENT

- A. Vehicle incidents may be used whenever an officer must use their vehicle in a manner solely designed to protect life, property, or control a situation that is not previously accounted for in this General Order.
- B. Any instance in which a vehicle incident is used as an intended application of force by an officer in a manner that is likely to cause death or serious bodily injury to another will be considered a use of deadly force. Accordingly,
  - 1. Vehicle incidents shall not be used unless objectively reasonable under the circumstances. The officer must believe, based upon the totality of the circumstances known at the time, that imminent death or serious injury to themselves or another individual exists and that all other force options (see [General Order 540](#), Use of Force), to include other vehicle stopping techniques, are not feasible or have already proven to be ineffective.
  - 2. Vehicle incidents may never be used to apprehend fleeing misdemeanants.

3. Vehicle incidents may be used to apprehend fleeing felons **only** where the officer has (1) probable cause to believe that the person committed a violent felony, (2) all other means to effect an arrest have been exhausted, and (3) the offender's escape poses a significant and immediate threat of death or serious injury to either the officer or another.

#### XI. VEHICLE STOPPING TECHNIQUE NOTIFICATIONS

- A. Any officer who uses a vehicle stopping technique shall promptly inform their on-duty supervisor who must respond to the scene. The responding supervisor shall review all circumstances surrounding the use of a vehicle stopping technique and immediately notify the Duty Officer of the occurrence of any use of a vehicle stopping technique that results in death, injury, or the rendering of medical treatment to any involved individual.
- B. The Duty Officer will determine if an injury is to be designated as a serious injury and if so, notify the appropriate bureau commander(s).
- C. The Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) and Police Liaison Commander (PLC) shall notify the following entities whenever the use of a vehicle stopping technique results in serious injury or death to any individual:
  1. Operations Support Bureau and/or the Major Crimes Bureau
  2. Internal Affairs Bureau
  3. Administrative Support Bureau
  4. Director of the Public Affairs Bureau
  5. Incident Support Services
  6. All affected Department Command Staff members
  7. The Chief of Police, or designee

#### XII. VEHICLE STOPPING TECHNIQUE INVESTIGATIONS

The use of a vehicle stopping technique shall be investigated as follows:

A. **Death or Serious Injury to Any Individual**

1. The Operations Support Bureau's Crash Reconstruction Unit (CRU) and the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) shall have investigative authority. The investigative format shall include an IAB administrative investigation and CRU criminal investigation if warranted. The investigation shall be conducted in accordance with [SOP 12-045](#). Photographs, video, and any audio recordings pertaining to the investigation will be taken by the investigative authority and preserved within the case file. The collection of evidence shall be performed at the direction of the lead CRU detective. Any vehicle involved in the deployment of a vehicle stopping technique that results in death or potential loss of life to any individual shall be left in the same condition it was when it was utilized.

**NOTE:** In instances where a vehicle incident is an intended use of deadly force, the investigative authority will be the Major Crimes Bureau (MCB) and the IAB with the assistance of CRU as necessary and investigated in accordance with [SOP 12-045](#), Investigation of Deadly Force Deployment and Police Affiliated Critical Incidents.

2. The IAB commander shall review the administrative investigation and forward it to the appropriate bureau commander.

B. **Non-Serious Injuries, Refusal of Medical Treatment, or No Injury**

1. The on-duty supervisor shall have investigative authority in consultation with CRU as needed. The administrative investigation shall be documented in the current Internal Affairs Records Management System describing the incident, type of vehicle stopping technique used, extent of any injuries, and type of medical treatment provided. Photographs of injuries, video, and any audio recordings pertaining to the investigation will be collected by the investigative authority and maintained in the case file.
2. The on-duty supervisor shall forward all investigative reports and the administrative investigation to their respective division commander for review and dissemination.

XIII. **DOCUMENTING ACTIONS**

A. **Officer Responsibilities**



1. Any officer involved in a vehicle stopping technique shall document their actions in a clearly worded incident report or supplement in the current Record Management System (RMS). Officers must specifically note the vehicle stopping technique(s) used, the articulated necessity for use, and the notified supervisor in their reports. If an involved officer is unable to document their actions, the documentation responsibility shall be determined by a supervisor or commander.

**B. Supervisor Responsibilities**

1. The responding supervisor shall ensure that any utilized vehicle stopping technique is properly documented in an incident report or supplement.
  2. The supervisor shall complete a detailed report in the current Internal Affairs Records Management System in a timely manner after deployment of the vehicle stopping technique. Where a supervisor believes that a vehicle stopping technique was not in compliance with department policy or training, that supervisor shall promptly notify their commander of their findings.
  3. All completed vehicle stopping technique administrative investigations shall be forwarded to IAB and any appropriate commanders.
- C. Where any vehicle stopping technique used by an officer results in death or serious injury to any person, the actions of all directly involved officers shall be documented in accordance with [SOP 12-045](#).
- D. Any medical treatment performed to an individual after a vehicle stopping technique shall be documented in the incident report. Officers shall note whether the injuries occurred as the result of the utilized vehicle stopping technique, or whether the injuries were pre-existing.
- E. Documentation of a vehicle stopping technique that necessitates a criminal investigation shall be coordinated between the respective commanders of the Operations Support Bureau and IAB in accordance with [SOP 12-045](#).

**XIV. TRAINING**

- A. Initial training on this policy will be provided and documented by the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy.
- B. Supervisors are to review this policy with their officers annually, which should include table-top exercises and debriefs of the usage of any vehicle stopping technique(s).

- C. Every three (3) years, all sworn officers shall receive Criminal Justice Academy training and demonstrate proficiency in any approved vehicle stopping techniques contained within this General Order that they are authorized to use. The Director of the Criminal Justice Academy shall maintain an authorized list of vehicle stopping techniques (and authorized officers) as approved by the Chief of Police.

XV. LEGAL REFERENCES

- A. [Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-817](#). Disregarding signal by law-enforcement officer to stop; eluding police; penalties.
- B. In 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court stated in [Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1 \(1985\)](#), that the use of deadly force solely to prevent the escape of a felony suspect, is constitutionally unreasonable where the suspect poses no immediate threat to the officer or general public because the harm resulting from failing to apprehend the suspect does not justify the use of deadly force to do so. Where an officer has probable cause to believe that a suspect poses a significant threat of serious physical harm, either to the officer or others, it is not constitutionally unreasonable to prevent escape by using deadly force.
- C. In [Brower v. County of Inyo 489 U.S. 593 \(1989\)](#), the United States Supreme Court ruled that “a seizure occurs when governmental termination of a person’s movement is effected through means intentionally applied,” and that roadblocks constitute seizures because they are intended to force suspects to stop by physical force if a voluntary stop does not occur. Thus, a roadblock is analyzed as a Fourth Amendment seizure, and it must be objectively reasonable.
- D. In 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of [Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386 \(1989\)](#), defined the “objective reasonableness” standard. The “reasonableness” of a particular use of force must be judged from the “objective” standard of a “reasonable” officer on the scene, and it must take into allowance the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force necessary in a particular situation.
- E. In [Scott v. Harris, 550 U.S. 372 \(2007\)](#), the United States Supreme Court ruled that “a police officer’s attempt to terminate a dangerous high-speed car chase that threatens the lives of innocent bystanders does not violate the Fourth Amendment, even when it places the fleeing motorist at risk of serious injury or death.”

General Order 505 becomes effective on the above date and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:



Chief of Police

APPROVED BY:



County Executive