



## Yuma County Sheriff's Office

Subject: EMERGENCY DRIVING	POLICY NO: 601.1-601.5
DISTRIBUTION: Patrol	NO. PAGES: 5
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2021 REVISION DATE: November 1, 2026	
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: None	

### 601.1 PURPOSE:

This Policy provides guidelines for the safe operation of police vehicles by Sheriff's Office ("Office") officers during emergencies, with the primary concern for the lives and safety of members of the community and officers. Officers who employ emergency driving techniques will comply with the provisions of the Arizona Traffic Code, A.R.S. § 28-624.

### 601.2 POLICY:

This Office permits emergency driving techniques to be employed by officers, provided that an emergency exists, or a vehicle pursuit is in progress. Officers **must** observe the emergency protocol set forth in this Policy.

### 601.3 DEFINITIONS:

**A. Authorized Emergency Vehicle:** A police vehicle equipped with:

1. Fully operational lighting in accordance with A.R.S. § 28-624(B); and
2. Fully operational siren in accordance with A.R.S. § 28-624(C).

**B. Emergency:** An emergency, as it relates to this Policy, is defined as a **life-threatening situation or a violent crime in progress. Emergency Driving:** The operation of an authorized emergency vehicle with **mandatory** use of lights and siren by a law enforcement officer, in response to a potentially life-threatening situation or a violent crime in progress, at a speed above the posted speed limit and/or in disregard of traffic control devices or statutes governing the movement of motor vehicles.

**C. Pursuit:** Any attempt by a law enforcement officer, operating an authorized emergency vehicle employing lights and siren, to apprehend a driver and/or occupant(s) of a moving vehicle when the driver is aware of that attempt and is resisting apprehension.

**D. Traffic Enforcement Driving:** Driving that involves the apprehension of traffic violators.

**E. Traffic Enforcement Driving:** Driving that involves the apprehension of traffic violators.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

November 1, 2021

**601.4 PROCEDURES:****A. Emergency Response Driving:**

1. The following conditions must simultaneously exist for officers to exercise emergency response driving privileges as set forth in A.R.S. § 28-624:

- a. The vehicle driven must be an authorized emergency vehicle;
- b. The unit must be responding to a potentially life-threatening situation or violent crime in progress;
- c. A siren must be sounded continuously and emergency lights activated at all times; and
- d. Dispatch will be advised of the emergency driving.

2. The decision to engage in emergency response driving will be discretionary with each officer.

- a. Officers must have sufficient information to justify the decision to drive or continue to drive under emergency conditions and will continuously evaluate the risk versus the benefit of doing so and will be able to articulate the same.


3. When engaging in emergency response driving in accordance with A.R.S. § 28-624(B), an officer may:

- a. Proceed past a red light, stop signal or stop sign only after slowing down or stopping as necessary for safe operation, when all traffic has yielded the right-of-way or stopped in response to the emergency vehicle.
- b. When an officer uses center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach a controlled intersection (i.e., a traffic light or stop sign), he/she will slow down or stop as necessary for safe operation before entering the intersection, even with a green light.
- c. When engaging in emergency response driving, an officer **shall not** pass any vehicle on the right.
- d. Officers will exercise due caution on approaching any intersection.

4. Officers may disregard regulations governing the direction of movement, only after stopping or slowing as necessary for safe operation.

5. When initiating or continuing to engage in emergency response driving, officers will consider:

- a. Traffic volume
- b. Time of day
- c. Type of crime in progress
- d. Distance from event or incident
- e. Potential hazards to officers and the public

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021

- f. Road and weather conditions
- g. Visibility

6. Use of Emergency Lights and Sirens:


- a. When operating authorized emergency vehicles under emergency response driving conditions, officers will use emergency lights and siren.
  - i. Officers may choose to deactivate the emergency lights and/or siren when approaching the emergency location to avoid alerting suspects.
  - ii. The use of emergency lights alone is **not** emergency response driving and requires the observance of all speed limits and traffic laws.

**B. Traffic Enforcement Driving:**

1. Officers are expected to make reasonable efforts to apprehend traffic violators.
2. Officers will weigh the necessity to apprehend the traffic violator against the level of risk presented to the officer and the general public.
3. Officers may disregard regulations governing traffic movement, as outlined in A.R.S. § 28-624, only when it can be done safely.
4. If a traffic violator refuses to stop after a reasonable distance after emergency lights and siren have been activated, officers will evaluate the need to:
  - a. Discontinue following the violator and return to service
  - b. Declare a pursuit.

**C. Pursuit Driving:** The Office's primary concern in pursuit situations is the protection of the lives and safety of all citizens and officers. During pursuit situations, officers **shall** comply with the provisions of A.R.S. § 28-624. Pursuit driving **does not** relieve officers from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor does it offer the officer immunity from violations of the Arizona Revised Statutes, Traffic and Criminal Codes, Title 28 and 13.

1. General Guidelines governing **all** vehicle pursuit situations:
  - a. No more than two (2) marked vehicles will be involved in the immediate pursuit without a supervisor's approval.
  - b. The pursuit supervisor may authorize additional secondary units, as necessary.
  - c. The primary unit and the back-up unit in a pursuit **will not** travel in a tandem posture at any time during the pursuit. The back-up unit will follow at a distance to allow himself/herself to take appropriate evasive action as a result of actions taken by other traffic in the area.
  - d. Other police vehicles **will not** become directly involved in the pursuit unless specifically authorized and directed by a supervisor.

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021

e. Vehicles **will not** participate in pursuits when occupied by a prisoner, suspect, complainant, witness, civilian observer, or any other person not on duty as a peace officer (this does not include Sheriff's Office personnel).

f. Officers operating a motorcycle or unmarked vehicle shall only initiate a pursuit under exigent circumstances.

g. Motorcycles and unmarked vehicles may become involved in a pursuit only if they are equipped with emergency lights and siren.

h. Motorcycles and unmarked vehicles initiating a pursuit must abandon the pursuit as soon as marked units are available to take over the pursuit.

2. Prohibited Actions: Officers **will not**:

a. Proceed the wrong way on any freeway, freeway frontage road, divided highway or one-way street.

b. Overtake, drive next to, ram or force suspect vehicles off the roadway unless lethal force is justified.

c. Block the roadway.

3. Initiation of a Pursuit: Pursuit is justified only when the officer knows or has reasonable grounds to believe that:

a. The suspect presents a clear and immediate threat of death or serious injury to others;

b. The suspect has committed or is attempting to commit a serious felony involving actual or threatened death or serious physical injury; or

c. When the necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the pursuit.

**No officer shall pursue a fleeing vehicle solely for a traffic violation or non-violent misdemeanor unless the manner of operation of the vehicle poses an immediate threat to the public. Flight from an officer during an attempt to make a traffic stop will not justify a pursuit on its own merit.**


4. Primary Unit:

a. The first unit to become involved in a vehicular pursuit will be designated the primary unit.

b. The primary unit **shall immediately** notify dispatch of the following information:

(i) The officer unit identifier;

(ii) The statement **"IN PURSUIT"**;

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021

- (iii) The location, direction of travel and speed of the suspect vehicle;
- (iv) Traffic conditions in the area of the pursuit;
- (v) The offense for which the suspect is wanted;
- (vi) A description of the vehicle being pursued;
- (vii) The number of occupants in the vehicle being pursued; **and**
- (viii) Information regarding hazards to officers.

c. The primary unit **shall** maintain radio contact with dispatch by providing updated information as to the status of the pursuit.

5. Secondary Unit:


- a. The second unit in a pursuit will become the secondary unit.
- b. The secondary unit **shall**:
  - (i) Operate the vehicle with emergency lights and siren activated at all times during the pursuit.
  - (ii) Advise dispatch that the unit is participating in the pursuit as a secondary unit.
  - (iii) Assume the primary position if the primary unit is unable to continue the pursuit.

**D. Responsibilities of Communications/Dispatcher:**

- 1. The dispatcher **shall**:
  - a. Notify a supervisor of the pursuit location, route of travel, vehicle description and the reason for the pursuit.
  - b. Move all non-priority traffic to a separate radio channel.
  - c. Notify adjoining jurisdictions when the pursuit approaches their boundaries.
  - d. After the pursuit has been terminated, advise all units to resume routine radio traffic.

**E. Supervisor Responsibilities:**

- 1. The supervisor will oversee the pursuit until its termination.
- 2. The supervisor **shall**:
  - a. Verify the reason for the pursuit follows policy and the pursuit is justified.
  - b. Order the termination of a pursuit if, in the supervisor's judgment, the level of danger outweighs the necessity of apprehension.
  - c. Advise the dispatcher to notify adjoining jurisdictions if a pursuit is terminated and the suspect continues to flee.

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021

- d. Ensure that a complete and proper investigation of the incident is conducted and submit a Pursuit Review Packet to the area Commander.

#### **F. Responsibilities of CART:**

1. All collisions resulting from emergency driving will be investigated by a member of CART.
2. If the collision resulting from emergency driving occurred within another jurisdiction, members of the CART will conduct a “secondary investigation” in conjunction with the agency having jurisdiction.

#### **G. Other Jurisdictions Involved in a Pursuit:**

1. When another agency in pursuit enters the County’s jurisdictions, officers **will not** become involved in the pursuit **unless all of the following applies:**
  - a. The other agency requests that County units assist or take over the pursuit.
  - b. Involvement in the pursuit is approved or directed by a supervisor.
  - c. The original reason for the pursuit conforms to Office policy.

**H. Crossing State Lines:** A pursuit will continue across state lines **only** if the people being pursued have committed or are suspected of committing a felony using deadly force or which felony caused bodily harm to another. The pursuit **shall** be abandoned as soon as marked units in the adjoining jurisdiction are available to take over the pursuit.

**I. Use of an Aircraft:** When an authorized aircraft is involved, the following guidelines will be used:


1. When the aircraft advises that the suspect vehicle is in view, all units will turn off their emergency lights/sirens, obey all traffic laws and make every effort to move to a position where they can no longer be seen by the suspect.

**J. Terminating Pursuits:** When an officer or supervisor decides to terminate a pursuit, the pursuing units will:

1. Slow the vehicle, pull to the side of the road or other safe location and stop.
2. Turn off emergency lights and siren.
3. Notify dispatch that they have stopped the vehicle, have terminated the pursuit and provide dispatch with the officer’s location and the suspect vehicle’s last known location, direction of travel and speed.

#### **K. Documentation:**

1. The primary unit shall be required to complete a report regarding the pursuit in addition to any other reports generated for other criminal activity.

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021

2. All personnel involved in the pursuit will be required to complete a supplement to the pursuit report.

**L. Pursuit Review:**

1. A review will be made of all pursuits initiated by or participated in by Office personnel to determine the following:

- a. If the pursuit was necessary;
- b. If the pursuit was within Office policy;
- c. If there are any training needs to be addressed; and
- d. If there are any policy changes that need to be considered.

2. The pursuit supervisor shall prepare a Pursuit Review Packet and complete the Supervisor Pursuit Checklist.


3. The Pursuit Review Packet shall then be forwarded, via the chain of command, to the Captain. The packet shall be reviewed and approved at each level.

4. Any pursuit determined to be in violation of this policy shall be referred to the Office of Professional Responsibility for investigation.

5. Upon completion of the review, the Pursuit Review Packet shall be forwarded to the Office of Professional Responsibility for filing.

**601.5 AMENDMENT:**

This policy is subject to amendment, revision or rescission, as required.

Approved:   
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff  
Date: November 1, 2021