

The Georgia Department of Public Safety's pursuit policy is derived from state and federal law, judicial rulings, dedicated training, and sound principles of law enforcement. The policy is recognized as proportionally responsive to the rise of criminal behavior enhanced by the use of vehicles on the roads of this State, such as street racing, aggressive driving, and excessive speeding.

Because the Georgia Department of Public Safety was established as an assisting agency, local law enforcement agencies regularly call upon Troopers and MCOs to respond and assist with pursuits they are involved in. They rely on the extensive driver and due regard training afforded our officers. Likewise, because the main function of the Georgia State Patrol and the Motor Carrier Division is traffic enforcement, whereas with many local agencies, working traffic is a small portion of their overall duties, local agencies need and seek help from this State agency.

It is important to note that the Troopers/MCOs of the Georgia Department of Public Safety do not initiate pursuits; they initiate traffic stops. A driver initiates a pursuit by failing to comply with the officer's lawful demand and fleeing from the intended traffic stop. The importance of the driver's responsibility to stop for law enforcement cannot be overlooked or over-emphasized. This is the one act that would alleviate all pursuits and use of force encounters-compliance. Should the law not be proportionally enforced on those who do not comply, criminals are unchecked, and crime escalates disproportionately and to the detriment of law-abiding citizens.

There is a direct correlation between a decrease in policing and an increase in crime. During the COVID pandemic of 2020, Georgia saw an increase in illegal street racing, roadway takeovers, and other crimes due to decreased policing. In response to this increase in crime, Governor Kemp directed the Georgia Department of Public Safety to begin crime suppression details in the Atlanta metro area in partnership with local law enforcement and other public safety agencies. **Thus far, crime suppression details have produced 78,195 traffic stops resulting in 1,095 reckless driving charges, 1,665 DUI charges, 487 drug arrests, the apprehension of 1,126 wanted persons, 45 of which were wanted for murder, 577 guns recovered, 268 of which were stolen, 3,578 vehicles impounded with 943 stolen vehicles recovered and involvement in 1,537 pursuits.**

Procedures that take place after a pursuit ensure that each pursuit receives appropriate information gathering, independent vetting by experienced officers, and unbiased analysis of its own unique fact pattern. The policy and procedures are designed to affect a continuous and critical review of our pursuits and the actions of our troopers and officers.

Procedures are listed below:

- Troopers/Motor Carrier Officers (MCOs) involved in a pursuit must complete an incident report, including the pursuit section. A supervisor must approve the incident/pursuit report.
- The Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team (SCRT) and the Office of Professional Standards respond to the scene of pursuits involving a crash or the use of a Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) resulting in serious injury or death. The command adjutant reviews the investigative reports prepared by SCRT and dashcam video footage.

- After collecting the appropriate information, a member of the Trooper/MCO's Troop/Region Command completes a pursuit critique. The critique consists of the following people: pursuing Trooper/MCO, a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) from the post or region, and a Troop/Region Officer.
- During the critique, the video footage captured by the dash camera is reviewed, and the Trooper/MCO's actions are analyzed, often frame by frame. Policy and due regard violations are documented on a Pursuit Critique Report. Once completed, the Troop/Region Officer forwards the Pursuit Critique Report to the command adjutant for review. Corrective action can be taken by the NCO, Troop/Region Commander, or the adjutant, depending on the severity of the infractions. Disciplinary action can consist of anything from a verbal warning, up to and including dismissal.
- If a pursuit involves the crash of a department patrol vehicle, an NCO must investigate. The investigation findings go before a Crash Review Board to determine whether the crash was preventable. A command adjutant vets the Crash Review Board's determination and imposes corrective action when appropriate. Note: A Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) maneuver receives no crash review because it involves intended contact with the violator's vehicle.
- The Georgia Department of Public Safety cannot comment on any incident involving a pending criminal matter, claim for damages, or current civil litigation.

The Georgia Department of Public Safety prepares an Annual Pursuit Report from that year's data collected from departmental pursuits. The Annual Pursuit Report provides charting of the statistical data.

The Georgia Department of Public Safety routinely reviews its policies and makes needed modifications to align with changes in the law, and updates in equipment, training, staffing, and technology.

Troopers and Motor Carrier Officers each complete 104 hours of driver training and additionally complete required annual pursuit liability and due regard training. The driver training consists of basic emergency vehicle operations and high-speed driving, which includes operating in a simulated urban environment and at night. They are also trained in using the PIT maneuver. The Department of Public Safety's mission is highway safety. It therefore ensures that its officers have in-depth training and acquired skills that allow them to determine and affect safe pursuits and bring criminals to justice. We explore technological advancements related to pursuits and will continue to do so.

Every life is precious, and any life lost during the course of ensuring public safety is tragic and heartbreaking. The Department of Public Safety protects Georgians by ensuring our members use good judgment and act within the bounds of policy and law. Our pursuit policy states that actions must be "objectively reasonable." We then have a formal process to ensure that each pursuit is reviewed and that each Trooper's/MCO's actions are objectively reasonable and in line with state law and department policy. The Georgia Department of Public Safety takes significant steps to control our Trooper's/MCOs actions during pursuits. We cannot, however, control the actions of criminals who flagrantly choose to

violate the law, flee from our officers, and put the public at risk. However, we vow to hold them accountable for their actions and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.