

Foot Pursuits



Zero Officers Killed or Injured



Foot Pursuits

Alexandria, Virginia

A plain clothes officer was on foot in the courtyard of an apartment complex looking for a wanted subject. Once spotted, the suspect fled on foot. The officer pursued the suspect and was closing the gap when he hit a knee high chain that was set up between two posts to restrict vehicle traffic. All of the arteries in the officer's leg were severed. He underwent several surgeries to try and save his leg but unfortunately none were successful. The officer's right leg was amputated as a result of the injury.



Foot Pursuits

Dekalb County, Georgia

Officers attempted to stop a vehicle after witnessing an apparent drug deal. The suspect pulled behind a building and fled on foot. The officers pursued the suspect and lost sight of him as he turned a corner. As the officers came around the same corner, the suspect opened fire striking one of the officers in between the side panels of his ballistic vest fatally wounding him.



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Portland, Oregon

Officers pursued a wanted suspect who fled on foot in a residential neighborhood. They gave chase into the overgrown backyard of the residence where they became separated by a hedge. The victim officer was shot at close range with a .380 caliber semiautomatic handgun in the hand, leg and fatally in the sternum just above the collar of his protective vest.



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Reading, Pennsylvania

Officers responded to a fight in progress call with possible gunshots fired. The victim officer located the suspect and after a brief conversation, the suspect fled on foot. The officer pursued. As the officer was about to tackle him, the suspect, while running, turned and fired four shots from a .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun fatally wounding the officer.



Foot Pursuits

- **Defining the Problem:**
 - Officers become complacent about the dangers inherent in chasing suspects on foot and develop a false sense of security
 - Officers fail to develop a plan of action other than arresting the suspect
 - Officers often do not recognize that suspects can turn threatening or be leading them into prearranged traps



Foot Pursuits

- Contributing Factors:
 - Lack of departmental training
 - Lack of departmental policies regarding foot pursuits



Foot Pursuits

- IACP Model Policy
 - Officer and public safety must be the overriding consideration in deciding whether or not to initiate or continue a foot pursuit
 - Consider Alternatives
 - Note Risk Factors
 - Identify when not to pursue
 - Tactical Considerations



Foot Pursuits

- **Supervisor Responsibilities**
 - Monitor field performance, ensure foot pursuits are within policy using good judgment
 - Terminate foot pursuits where it is deemed that the danger to the officer or public outweigh the necessity for immediate apprehension
 - Debrief officers and provide appropriate realistic training on identified issues



Foot Pursuits

- **Collinwood Case Study**
 - Created a Foot Pursuit Policy
 - Implemented bi-annual training on foot pursuits for all officers
 - Results:
 - Immediate difference in how officers handled foot pursuits
 - Reduction in officer injuries



Foot Pursuits

- **Tips for Surviving Foot Pursuits**
 - Always radio dispatchers and advise of location, reason for pursuing, and direction of the chase
 - Ensure suspects who flee from vehicles do not have accomplices in the car who may attack from behind
 - Take vehicle keys with them to avoid having the suspect circle back and steal the car



Foot Pursuits

- **Tips for Surviving Foot Pursuits**
 - Wait for backup if it is believed the suspect is armed
 - Try to follow in the same general path as the suspects so that the suspects discover any hidden obstacles
 - Remain cautious, in control, and alert for additional threats and other changes in the situation