

210. USE OF ROADBLOCKS/STOP STICKS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS



RICHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

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Authority: Chief Jay Henthorne

NOTE: This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines on the use of roadblocks in emergency situations.

II. POLICY

The use of roadblocks constitutes the use of deadly force and is appropriate only as defined under Minnesota Statute 609.066.

III. DEFINITIONS

ROADBLOCK: Any method, restriction, or obstruction utilized or intended for the purpose of preventing free passage of motor vehicles on a highway in order to affect the apprehension of an actual or suspected violator in a motor vehicle.

FIXED ROADBLOCK: A full or partial roadblock established at a fixed point.

MOVING ROADBLOCK: Use of one or more moving vehicles to block the roadway and prevent approaching vehicles from continuing or the boxing in of a vehicle.

STOP STICKS: A hollow spike tire deflation device which is deployed as a non-contact intervention tactic. Stop Sticks are designed to provide a means to penetrate and deflate the tires of a moving vehicle in a manner that will avoid a catastrophic failure of the penetrated tire thus ensuring the safest possible means of reducing the mobility of a vehicle.

PIRANHA: A compact, easy-to-deploy version of the Stop Stick. Piranhas are a very effective tire-deflation device and provide added control during operations where potential for subject flight is anticipated.

IV. PROCEDURE

AUTHORITY TO APPROVE ROADBLOCK

Roadblocks **shall not** be implemented without the express approval of supervisory and/or command officers and only if the use of deadly force would be authorized. Upon notification of a situation that may warrant the use of a roadblock, the duty supervisor or commanding officer should evaluate all information to determine if the use of deadly force would be authorized.

A decision to erect a roadblock is a decision to use deadly force. The issues of safety and deadly force should be considered for each occupant of the suspect vehicle, the officers, and unsuspecting bystanders.

The duty supervisor should, if possible, assume command at the scene of the roadblock.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Communications Center and the pursuing vehicles shall be notified of the location of the roadblock.

Officers **shall not** remain in the police vehicles that are being used to construct a roadblock.

Roadblocks **shall** be clearly visible at a distance sufficient to enable approaching vehicles to stop safely.

An avenue of escape **shall** be provided.

A reasonable system of warning to motorists approaching the roadblock **shall** be in operation prior to the closing of the highway. Use emergency red lights, flares, or other suitable means to provide adequate warning to approaching traffic.

The Department stresses that roadblocks constitute a last resort in stopping a fleeing violent felon.

General Blocking Techniques

The general position of the patrol vehicle is at a 45-degree angle to the traffic flow. No person **shall** be allowed to remain inside a vehicle used to block the roadway. The officer should remain mobile and allow an avenue of escape should the suspect attempt to drive through or around the roadblock.

Moving Roadblock

Moving roadblocks may only be used when authorized by the commanding officer or duty supervisor. A moving roadblock may only be used when the pursued vehicle is traveling at slow speeds. Room should be left for safe passage of oncoming vehicles.

STOP STICKS- ACTIVE PURSUIT

Stop Sticks may be used to assist in de-escalating the pursuit as well as terminating the pursuit. Officers may use the device to assist in ending a pursuit that is creating unnecessary risks to the motoring public or to stop a dangerous felon. Care should be given in determining when and where to place these devices. Stop Sticks are only used with the knowledge and authorization of the shift supervisor and/or a command officer.

Officers may not use the device unless they have been trained in its use. Training shall address the following issues:

- 1) Department policy regarding pursuits; and
- 2) Policy and use of the device.

The Stop Sticks must be carried in the Officer's squad. Issues to be considered when deploying the device are:

- 1) Road conditions (before after the deployment site).
- 2) Traffic conditions.
- 3) The ability to communicate with other agencies.
- 4) Whether apprehension can be made at a later date.
- 5) Whether continued pursuit could present harm to the public.
- 6) The Officer's ability to obtain protective shelter from the violator.

PROCEDURE

- 1) The officer with the Stop Sticks should not attempt to overtake and pass a suspect in order to deploy the Stop Sticks.
- 2) The Stop Stick shall not be used in locations where geographic configurations increase the risk of injury to the suspect, e.g. on roadways with curves or at locations where the safety of proceeding or opposing traffic cannot be assured. Deployment locations should have adequate sight vision in all directions to enable the officers deploying the device to observe and react to the pursuit and other traffic.
- 3) The officer deploying the Stop Sticks should place the police vehicle at a location favorable to the proper operation of the equipment so the patrol car can be utilized as protection from the fleeing

vehicle. If possible, an immovable physical object should be sought as protective cover for the deploying officer.

- 4) Officers must make every effort to avoid collateral damage to individual's property that could result from the target vehicle's impact with Stop Sticks.
- 5) When possible the device should be placed on the opposite side of the appropriate roadway, with the towrope across the roadway.
- 6) All agencies involved in the pursuit shall be advised via radio that the device is in place. Officers should increase their following distance behind the suspect vehicle to a point where they can safely avoid striking the device and stop other traffic.
- 7) As the vehicle approaches, the Stop Sticks should be pulled onto the roadway directly into the vehicle's path. The Stop Sticks may be tossed into the vehicle's path if time does not permit placement and use of the towrope. Officers are not to hold onto or step on the towrope at any time. Officers should be holding the towrope reel in a low position to the ground so that they can pull the device out of the path of approaching squad cars.
- 8) The device shall be removed from the road immediately after the suspect vehicle passes the site.
- 9) Assisting officers will prevent traffic from entering the target roadway and redirect civilian traffic on the target roadway away from the deployment area.
- 10) After utilizing Stop Sticks, the Officer must submit a Special Incident Report

Stop Sticks **shall not** be used to stop the following types of vehicles unless the continued movement of the fleeing vehicle would result in an unusual hazard to others and the use has the prior approval of a supervisor:

- 1) Any vehicle transporting a hazardous material.
- 2) Any passenger bus or van transporting passengers.
- 3) Any vehicle that would pose an unusual hazard to innocent persons.

Under no circumstances will the device be used to disable any vehicle with less than four wheels.

STOP STICKS-PURSUIT PREVENTION

Piranhas may be used on parked vehicles to avoid the potential for a pursuit to start when officers have information that the driver of the parked vehicle may flee in the vehicle. It is the responsibility of the officer deploying the piranhas to maintain security of the device and the safety of the public. The officer deploying the device is responsible for ensuring that the piranha is removed immediately after the threat is diminished. Care should be given in determining when and where to place these devices. Deploying officers should give verbal commands to the driver that a tire deflation device has been deployed, and advise other officers of the device deployment.

The Piranha must be carried in the Officer's squad. Issues to be considered when deploying the device are:

- 1) Road conditions (before after the deployment site).
- 2) Traffic conditions.

PROCEDURE

- 1) Officers must make every effort to avoid collateral damage to individual's property that could result from the target vehicle's impact with a Piranha.
- 2) The device shall be removed from the road immediately after the suspect vehicle passes the site.
- 3) Assisting officers should attempt to redirect civilian traffic on the target roadway away from the deployment area.
- 4) After utilizing the Piranha, the Officer must submit a Special Incident Report.

After deployment, the device should be examined for damage. If the piranha is deployed and used, the officer that deployed the device shall notify the shift supervisor. The Patrol Section Lieutenant should be notified of any required repairs.

Piranhas shall not be used to stop the following types of vehicles unless the continued movement of the fleeing vehicle would result in an unusual hazard to others and the use has the prior approval of a supervisor:

- 1) Any vehicle transporting a hazardous material.
- 2) Any passenger bus or van transporting passengers.
- 3) Any vehicle that would pose an unusual hazard to innocent persons.

Under no circumstances will the device be used to disable any vehicle with less than four wheels.


Officers may not use stop sticks or piranha's unless they have been trained in their use. Training shall address the following issues:

- 1) Department policy regarding pursuits; and
- 2) Policy and use of the devices.

Assisting Other Agencies:

Generally, Stop Sticks and Piranhas may be used to assist another agency, either inside or outside our jurisdiction if a Richfield Supervisor authorizes the use of the device.

By Order Of:



Chief of Police