

# Police pursuits

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This module does not cover the pursuit of pedal cycles.

A police driver is deemed to be in pursuit when a driver/motorcyclist indicates by their actions or continuance of their manner of driving/riding that:

- they have no intention of stopping for the police, and
- the police driver believes that the driver of the subject vehicle is aware of the requirement to stop and decides to continue behind the subject vehicle with a view to either reporting its progress or stopping it

When a situation falls within the definition of a pursuit, officers need to decide whether a pursuit is justified, proportionate and conforms to the principle of least intrusion. Pursuits may be spontaneous or part of pre-planned operations.

The [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023) contains a menu of tactical options for pursuit prevention and resolution (this link is only available via College Learn).

## Police pursuits

### National decision model

The [national decision model \(NDM\)](#) is used by the police service to assist operational officers, planners, advisers and commanders to manage their response to a situation in a reasonable and proportionate way. The NDM must be applied when consideration is being given whether to pursue a vehicle, and continually evaluated during the pursuit. The NDM provides a framework for recording command decisions and the rationale behind them.

### Pursuit prevention

Pursuit activity and use of pursuit tactics are likely to place members of the public and police officers under a significant degree of risk. Wherever possible, trying to prevent a pursuit from taking place must be a primary consideration.

Officers authorised in pursuit and incident managers must give due regard to the purpose and justification of actions and decisions of a pursuit. The key consideration is to ask is this pursuit necessary, balanced against threat, risk and harm for which the subject driver is being (or about to be) pursued?

If the decision is made to engage in a pursuit because it is in the public interest to protect life, prevent or detect crime, or to apprehend an offender, then it must be conducted with proportionality and due regard for the circumstances. It is important that the risks, topography and continuing surroundings are calculated to justify legitimacy of actions. Officers should not place undue pressure on themselves or risk public safety beyond their capabilities or those of the vehicle they are driving.

To mitigate risk of engaging in, or continuing, a pursuit, officers and pursuit managers must continually ask themselves the following questions.

- What is the nature of the incident or circumstances to which I am now responding or authorising a pursuit response?
- Is a pursuit a proportionate action?
- Do my actions, purpose and objective to stop or prevent further or continuing criminal actions justify the potential risks to life or property?
- Do I have reasonable information or intelligence to indicate that using alternative tactics is preferable to a pursuit?
- Can I plan a different strategy to apprehend the subject driver in the future which is unlikely to compromise evidential requirements?
- Can resources and tactics be used in alternative, preventive ways, to avoid a pursuit taking place?

Before engaging in, or authorising, a pursuit, officers and managers must be familiar with [pursuit considerations](#).

## Pre-emptive tactics

These are tactics which can be used to prevent a pursuit from taking place. An officer(s) may find themselves behind suspect vehicles and drivers in the normal flow of traffic. The driver of the suspect vehicle may remain unaware of the police interest or decide to continue driving normally in the hope the officer's presence is coincidental. During this period, there is time to consider the use of preventive and pre-emptive tactics. Where preventive or pre-emptive actions are clearly proportionate to the intelligence available, their use is preferable to pursuit.

## Pre-planned operations

Pre-planned operations refer to situations where the potential for a pursuit is foreseen. If the proposed future actions of the police carry a foreseeable risk of pursuit and there has been time to develop a strategy, identify tactics and produce contingency plans, any such pursuit is regarded as a pre-planned operation.

The degree of pre-planning and depth of preparation depends on the length of time available before engagement, or the distance a vehicle is followed before suspects become aware of a police presence and a pursuit ensues.

Pre-planned authority must be sought from appropriately placed supervisors deemed suitable for that role by the local force, examples include force incident managers (FIMs), persons in overall charge of the operation or the principal decision maker. Tactical advice should always be sought in the planning process for operations that carry a foreseeable risk of pursuit. Options to prevent the pursuit developing and the use of [air support](#) are primary considerations when formulating the operational plan.

Additional advice regarding unattended suspect vehicles can be found in the [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023). This link is only available via College Learn.

## Spontaneous pursuits

These occur when the actions of the suspect driver in deciding to flee are triggered by the presence of a police vehicle, and there is no prior warning or sufficient time to develop a specific strategy and plans, regardless of whether or not the officer made an initial requirement for the vehicle to stop.

### Initial phase

This is the period of a spontaneous pursuit before tactical resolution can be considered and actioned. Pursuit trained response drivers/motorcyclists with suitable vehicles may be authorised to continue by an appropriate member of staff from the control/communications room, but they have no authority to take an active part in tactical resolution. Tyre deflation systems may be used in the initial phase.

For further information see [Training](#).

## **Tactical phase**

This is the phase of an authorised pursuit, for which appropriate resolution tactics are available. It is commenced by, or taken over by, a tactical phase trained advanced driver in a suitable vehicle, with a pursuit commander identified. Once the pursuit moves into the tactical phase, tactical options for bringing the pursuit to a conclusion will be directed by the pursuit commander.

# **Pursuit management**

## **Authorisation**

Officers should seek authorisation for their decision to engage in a pursuit from designated control/communications room staff. The time available between recognising the need for action and the deadline for taking action may be too short to acquire the control/communications room authorisation. In such cases officers may self-authorise and justify the decision at a later time in line with the [NDM](#). No additional authority is required to move from the initial phase to the tactical phase.

## **Initial authorisation to conduct a pursuit**

Before requesting or granting authorisation for a pursuit, alternative action must be considered. There are a number of pursuit considerations which drivers and control/communications room staff must take into account when making this decision in line with the NDM.

Granting authorisation to pursue gives agreement in principle to use tactics set out in the tactics directory, with the exception of those which require authorisation from a senior officer.

Officers should inform control/communications room staff of their driving authority level, which police vehicle they are using, and give a description of the subject vehicle and occupants as well as

the direction of travel.

Where non-pursuit trained drivers and motorcyclists are permitted by their force to stop vehicles, they must inform control/communications room staff when it becomes evident that a vehicle is refusing to stop. At this point the situation falls within the definition of a pursuit, and non-pursuit trained drivers must discontinue immediately.

Initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists must immediately inform control/communications room staff of the circumstances when it becomes evident that a vehicle is refusing to stop. Authorisation to continue must be sought and, if granted, the driver may pursue in the initial phase only.

Tactical phase trained advanced drivers must immediately inform control/communications room staff of the circumstances when it becomes evident that a pursuit has commenced and seek authorisation to continue.

## Continued authorisation to pursue

Any changes to the dynamic risk assessment must be reported to [control/communications room staff](#) immediately. If the assessment highlights increased risk, the issue of proportionality must be reconsidered and current authorisations reviewed.

On receipt of updated information, an appropriately trained member of the control/communications room makes a decision on whether to allow continuation of the pursuit. Decisions must be recorded and relayed to the police driver.

Forces must have [tactical options](#) available to resolve a pursuit. Pursuits will not be authorised in the absence of tactical options for resolution.

When a subject vehicle has been resighted after a temporary loss, the authorisation in place is deemed to be continuous for the resumption of that pursuit following an updated dynamic risk assessment. This should be communicated to control/communications room staff immediately.

Where a pursuit has been discontinued or where a vehicle has been lost, it is necessary for a new authorisation, based on the latest intelligence and circumstances, to be in place to pursue again.

## Pursuit considerations

The following should be taken into account, in accordance with the [national decision model](#).

- The current level of risk posed by the pursued driver.
- Whether or not the suspect's identity is known.
- The seriousness of any known offence committed or suspected.
- The weight of intelligence as to whether the suspects are, or are likely to be, armed (see [Situational engagement of suspects](#)).
- Whether the driver is, or appears to be, a juvenile or whether it appears that other vulnerable persons are in the vehicle.
- The type of vehicle being pursued, for example, car or motorcycle.
- The current/anticipated route in respect of the time of day, road, weather, traffic, specific considerations such as schools, licensed premises or off-road terrain.
- The availability of tactical options.

Drivers must possess a sound knowledge of the considerations, as many short-duration pursuits may not allow time for specific guidance to be received from control/communications room staff.

Sometimes information regarding one or more of the pursuit considerations will be unavailable, or one or more of the considerations for continuance will not be met. Such situations should not automatically preclude the authorisation or continuance of a pursuit. Each pursuit must be considered on the information and intelligence at hand and measured against the considerations collectively. Decisions should be documented along with the rationale for them.

## Tactical options

The [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023) contains a menu of tactical options for pursuit prevention and resolution (this link is only available via College Learn).

Each force should ensure that the tactics approved for use in their area are formally risk assessed and represent a proportionate response to any set of circumstances their officers may encounter.

Pre-emptive, preventive and resolution tactics develop and evolve over time. Forces should add value to the tactics directory by feeding information regarding tactical innovation and improvement through the national police driving schools conference.

## Situational engagement of suspects

## Off-road pursuits

These are managed in exactly the same way as any other pursuit, and are subject to the same dynamic risk assessment and communication requirements. Officers are advised to consider the issue of proportionality and the likelihood of damage to vehicles before embarking on an off-road pursuit.

## Quad bikes and motorcycles

Engagement with quad bikes and motorcycles presents additional challenges to those involved in pursuit management. The acceleration and manoeuvrability of these vehicles make it difficult for officers to engage with the subject vehicle for sufficient time to develop and implement tactics. Furthermore, given the lack of physical protection provided by the vehicle, the vulnerability of the rider is a serious consideration. Motorcycle and quad bike pursuits clearly present higher risks for suspects than conventional vehicle pursuit. Only trained and authorised staff, in consideration of their current force policy, should engage in motorcycle and quad bike pursuits and tactics.

Where possible, it is preferable to use pre-emptive tactics to prevent motorcycle and quad bike pursuits. The use of tactics given in the [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023), including tyre deflation devices may be proportionate and necessary to mitigate risk to the public, officers and subjects (this link is only available via College Learn). It is accepted that the pre-emptive use of tactics carries some risk to rider(s), however, this risk is likely to be significantly lower than allowing the vehicle to be driven at speeds to avoid capture, regardless of the intention of the police to engage in a pursuit.

There may be a public interest in engaging motorcycles and quads in pursuits if the following circumstances apply.

- Where such vehicles are used to facilitate serious crime; or
- Where they are used repeatedly as the mode of transport for organised crime groups; or
- Where there is a need to minimise the risk to the public from criminality; and
- to secure public confidence in policing.

A pursuit may be justified, however, careful consideration must be given to the risks involved and the NDM must be applied in the decision making process. A plan must be developed to resolve the pursuit using tactics set out in the [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023) (this link is only available via College Learn).

## Armed pursuits

This refers to a vehicle pursuit involving subjects who pose a threat that meets the criteria for the deployment of authorised firearms officers (AFOs).

The deployment of AFOs should only be authorised where the officer authorising the deployment has reason to suppose that police officers may have to protect themselves or others from a person who is in possession of, or has immediate access to, a firearm or other potentially lethal weapon, or who is otherwise so dangerous that the deployment of armed officers is considered to be appropriate.

A pursuit will be declared an armed pursuit by an accredited tactical firearms commander (TFC) (usually the FIM) in line with the criteria for deployment of armed officers as defined in the [\*\*APP on Armed policing\*\*](#). Once an armed pursuit has been declared the TFC will take command of the incident.

Officers involved in armed pursuits should assist the FIM in making that decision by providing as much information as possible in relation to the nature of the threat and type of weapons the subject has available to them.

The TFC's decision to authorise an armed pursuit should be made only after the NDM has been applied and properly considered, balancing the risks of this with alternative options.

The TFC should take tactical advice from both an accredited firearms tactical advisor and a pursuit tactical advisor in order to develop options to deal with the pursuit.

### Unarmed staff in armed pursuits

The decision to use unarmed staff in an armed pursuit should be taken by the TFC once the NDM has been applied. An example of where the deployment of unarmed staff may be considered is when armed officers do not have the tactical capability or vehicles to safely pursue the subject vehicle.

The involvement of unarmed staff should be considered as a last resort, having considered their safety and the duty to protect the public.



The primary objective for unarmed officers is to maintain visual contact with the subject vehicle. Where directed by the TFC, they may also employ pursuit tactical options to bring the vehicle to a stop to assist armed staff dealing with the threat posed by the subject(s).

If a subject vehicle comes to a stop, officers should observe the '[stay safe principles](#)' and await the arrival of armed officers at the scene.

### **Armed staff in pursuits**

Armed officers may take part in an armed pursuit in line with their pursuit and firearms training, and make use of the range of tactics and firearms vehicle tactics.

## **Discontinuing a pursuit**

The decision to discontinue a pursuit can be made by:

- initial or tactical phase drivers
- control /communications room staff

Only pursuit trained drivers or managers should be considered suitably qualified and experienced to discontinue a pursuit, other persons in the pursuing police vehicles with knowledge supporting a discontinuance have an obligation to articulate this dynamically so an informed decision can be made by the pursuit tactical advisor, force incident manager or control room supervisor.

Staff must discontinue a pursuit as soon as the risk becomes disproportionate to the reasons for undertaking it, or where no tactics are available.

Once a pursuit has been discontinued:

- all relevant information must be recorded
- all involved ground units and authorities disengage and, where applicable, turn off emergency equipment and resume normal patrol speeds
- incident data recorders (IDR) should be activated manually (where fitted)
- authorisations, including those for deployment tactics, are automatically withdrawn

Any decision to discontinue the deployment of air support is a separate issue from the decision to withdraw ground units.

## Analysing pursuits

When managing pursuits forces must establish briefing and debriefing protocols and appoint an individual to be responsible for recording and analysing all pursuits. Notes should be made of decisions and actions taken during all pursuits and any conclusions reached during debriefings. The analysis should include a review of:

- the deployment of pre-emptive options
- operational outcomes
- good practice (submitted to the pursuit working group)
- compliance with this module
- the impact on the human rights of individuals

## Vehicles used for pursuits

Vehicles considered suitable for the initial phase include:

- marked cars fitted with audio and visual warning equipment which have been deemed suitable for use in pursuit
- unmarked cars fitted with audio and visual warning equipment driven by advanced drivers and deemed fit for use in the tactical phase
- police response motorcycles fitted with audio and visual warning equipment

Vehicles considered suitable for the tactical phase include:

- marked cars fitted with audio and visual warning equipment which have been deemed fit for use in tactical phase pursuit
- unmarked cars fitted with audio and visual warning equipment driven by tactical phase trained advanced drivers and deemed fit for use in tactical phase pursuit (forces should consider replacing unmarked vehicles with suitably marked vehicles at the earliest opportunity due to the limitations of using unmarked vehicles in pursuit)

All vehicles that are likely to be involved in pursuits should be equipped with a radio system capable of communicating with control/communications room staff and recording real-time evidence.

The use of marked 4x4 sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and marked personnel carriers available to response drivers are not recommended in pursuit situations. Where chief officers deem it operationally necessary to use specific vehicles, these must be limited to the initial phase and their deployment formally risk assessed with written documentation available for inspection.

Where circumstances dictate, it is acceptable for advanced performance value (PV) 4x4 SUVs to be used in pursuits by advanced drivers who are familiar with the performance and handling characteristics of such vehicles. The type of circumstances they could be used in include motorway patrol or pre-planned operations where the resource is deemed necessary.

## Prohibited vehicles

Use of the following is prohibited due to a clear and foreseeable potential to increase the dangers associated with vehicle pursuit.

- Unmarked vehicles which do not have audio and visual warning equipment fitted, including hired and personal vehicles.
- Motorcycles ridden by non-response-level motorcyclists.

## Recording real-time evidence

All those involved in a pursuit must consider the need to provide evidence of:

- any criminal activities occurring during the pursuit
- the decision-making processes involved in conducting the pursuit during the initial phase, together with any further decisions to allow the pursuit to continue

Advice offered by the pursuit tactical advisor should also be recorded for future reference. This can be done using control/communications room voice recording systems and/or other forms of official electronic or paper systems such as incident logs and pocket notebooks.

It is highly desirable in pursuit situations to use vehicles fitted with IDR/driver and vehicle data management systems (DVDMS), together with visual recording equipment, for evidential purposes. Such vehicles should be deployed to take part in pursuits where possible.

Visual recording equipment must:

- be properly maintained and used during pursuits and emergency responses
- not be switched off prior to or during pursuit activities
- be in working order, if not, force reporting procedures should be followed and repairs undertaken at the earliest opportunity

If a pursuit ends in a serious collision, accurate information will need to be available for investigators. The actions of the police drivers are a focal point of post-incident investigations. Accounts from the driver, passenger and independent witnesses are vital to investigations, as are traditional techniques and findings from collision reconstruction units.

## IDR/DVDMS

The accuracy and inherent independence of information automatically recorded by retrofit, dedicated IDRs or other DVDMS is of great value to investigators of post-pursuit incidents. DVDMS also provides the opportunity to both manage and supervise vehicle usage and driver behaviour. Forces should work towards a situation where all operational vehicles used in pursuit and response are fitted with IDR or DVDMS-type devices.

## Training

Persons performing any role in pursuit management must be trained to the standards set out by the College of Policing. This includes control/communications room staff, [pursuit tactical advisors](#), FIMs and [air support](#) personnel. Drivers must be qualified within the terms of current National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) approved national training standards.

Staff likely to have a role in pursuits should be aware of the airwave communication methodology (see [Airwave Interoperability Manual v2.3](#). To access this link, authorised users need to be logged into College Learn).

Competence should be recorded in driver training documentation. Control/communications room staff and other personnel advising on pursuits should have their level of training appropriately recorded. Training includes dealing with red mist and developing a positive attitude during pursuits.

Police drivers should not be authorised to pursue if they are unable to meet the required level of competence during training.

All staff involved in managing pursuits should receive refresher training every two to three years.

## Red mist

This is a term used to describe a complex emotional situation affecting the state of mind of drivers who can become so focused on an objective or outside influence that their ability to accurately assess driving risk is severely reduced.

Persons engaged in pursuit management must be equipped to identify indications of red mist in themselves and others and take appropriate actions. Such actions may involve removing themselves from the situation, changes in the roles of individuals, calling a specific unit off a pursuit or discontinuing the pursuit itself.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists

Initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists must follow the [initial authorisation to conduct a pursuit](#) procedure and request tactical phase trained advanced drivers to assist.

Control/communications room staff may direct initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists to support a pursuing vehicle, in order for the resource to assist at the stop or abandonment of the subject vehicle.

During the initial phase, initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists must:

- convey information regarding the circumstances and direction of the pursuit, so that control/communications room staff can properly organise and deploy appropriate resources
- risk assess the situation and provide information to control/communications room staff regarding pursuit considerations
- drive in accordance with their level of authority and personal capability, avoiding increased risk
- pass control to a tactical phase trained advanced driver as soon as possible

Initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists should not become involved in any vehicular attempt to stop the subject vehicle in a pursuit. This does not preclude suitably qualified and authorised officers from deploying tyre deflation systems and/or acting as a feeder vehicle.

## Tactical phase trained advanced drivers

These drivers have the same responsibilities as initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists. They are also responsible for:

- dynamically risk assessing the pursuit and providing accurate information to control/communications room staff
- identifying themselves, or a suitably qualified radio operator, as the pursuit commander, once appropriately placed
- driving in accordance with training and personal capabilities to manage risk levels
- requesting additional resources and suggesting tactical options as appropriate

## Pursuit commander

This role is not rank based and is undertaken by the person most appropriately placed and equipped to make necessary tactical decisions. The pursuit commander is an appropriate officer within one of the pursuing tactical phase vehicles, responsible for executing tactics and maintaining communication during the management of a pursuit. They should clearly identify themselves as such to all officers engaged in the pursuit, and to control/communications room staff.

## Control/communications room staff

These staff are responsible for:

- locating the appropriate talk groups on dispatcher terminals and being aware of the patching procedures
- coordinating radio communications during the pursuit
- informing the control/communications room supervisor of the start of a pursuit at the earliest opportunity
- approving initial and continued authorisation for pursuit at the earliest opportunity, if a supervisor is not immediately available
- constantly risk assessing activity, based on information and intelligence received
- identifying and assigning tactical phase trained advanced drivers in a suitable vehicle to take the pursuit commander role where initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists have initiated a pursuit
- mobilising, deploying and coordinating resources in support of those directly engaged

- identifying, advising and guiding deploying and controlling units (including [air support](#)) during the pursuit
- receiving and recording all incoming information from the pursuing vehicle, including the reasons leading to a particular action being taken and any other options considered

## Control/communications room supervisor

In addition to providing support and advice to the operator engaged with the pursuit, the control/communications room supervisor is responsible for:

- the overall control of the pursuit
- constantly risk assessing the activity, based on information and intelligence received
- approving initial and continued authorisation for pursuit, at the earliest opportunity
- ensuring that tactical phase trained advanced drivers in suitable vehicles have been assigned to a pursuit and can respond within a timeframe that balances operational need with the potential for harm, where initial phase trained drivers/motorcyclists have been authorised to conduct initial phase pursuit
- identifying and agreeing a pursuit commander
- considering the current level of authority in light of incoming information (dynamic risk assessment process, and sources of intelligence) and advice from an appointed pursuit tactical advisor
- ordering additional units to assist if necessary

The control/communications room supervisor should also ensure that forces are notified when a pursuit is approaching force boundaries and provide them with information regarding any tactical authorisations previously given and current.

## Pursuit tactical advisor

The pursuit tactical advisor must meet current tactical pursuit and containment training standards, and should have sufficient operational experience of pursuit situations to be able to dynamically interpret policy and advise a course of action for persons currently involved in a pursuit. Under no circumstances during a pre-planned pursuit operation should the tactical advisor be directly involved as a crew member in a pursuing vehicle. They should also not be the first line communicator or the managing control/communications room supervisor.

During spontaneous pursuits, it is highly desirable to use a tactical advisor who is not directly involved as a crew member in a pursuing vehicle. They should also not be the first line communicator or the managing control/communications room supervisor. If however this is not possible, other tactical advisors may be considered. Forces should clearly identify persons deemed suitable to act as pursuit tactical advisors, and ensure there is 24-hour operational availability.

Tactical advice may be provided in real-time as part of the communications loop, using personal force radio equipment or as part of the control/communications room based team managing the event.

## Specific tasks

During a [spontaneous pursuit](#), the tactical advisor:

- provides advice to the pursuit commander and/or control/communications room staff
- works with firearms tactical advisors during armed pursuits
- provides operational support to crews of pursuing police vehicles
- monitors incoming commentary
- considers the range of [tactical options](#) available and makes suggestions

During a [pre-planned operation](#), the tactical advisor:

- takes part in the operational planning process
- assists the decision-making process
- provides information for the preparation of any documented risk assessment
- suggests the range of tactical options available
- where time constraints allow is present in the control/communications room during the operation, to assist staff

## Communications

All pursuits must be controlled through a force control/communications room or equivalent.

Only plain language and nationally agreed terms should be used in radio transmissions and commentaries. See appendix B of the [tactics directory](#) (updated November 2023) (this link is only available via College Learn).



Double-crewed vehicles should be used in pursuits where possible. This leaves the police driver free to concentrate on their driving and tactic development, while the radio operator delivers the information required to other participants and [control/communications room staff](#) by verbal commentary.

Where more than one vehicle is engaged in a pursuit and the second vehicle is double-crewed, it may be helpful if the second vehicle provides the commentary, allowing the crew of the first vehicle to concentrate on the actual pursuit.

Decisions and actions should be included in the commentary and be recorded with control/communications room voice-recording facilities.

## Cross-border pursuits

When a pursuit is close to a force boundary, the adjoining force must be informed at the earliest opportunity. The authority to continue or discontinue the pursuit transfers to the [control/communications room staff](#) of the new force as soon as the boundary is crossed.

The use of tactics will automatically be transferred and it is for the receiving force to make decisions regarding the continuance of that authorisation. Appropriate local/regional protocols should be established to address these circumstances.

For further information see [Airwave Interoperability Manual v2.3](#). To access this link, authorised users need to be logged into College Learn.

## Use of police dogs

Consideration should be given to the early deployment of a dog unit to the locality of a pursuit. The resource may then be deployed rapidly at the stop or abandonment of the subject vehicle.

Once a location has been selected for the stop, particularly when using tyre deflation systems, the benefits of deploying a dog unit directly to the area must not be overlooked.

Dog units must not be directly involved in the pursuit unless they meet the criteria for involvement as either [initial phase trained drivers](#) or [tactical phase trained advanced drivers](#) in a suitable vehicle.

For further information see [police dogs APP](#).

## Air support

This should be deployed in pursuit situations wherever possible, and at the earliest opportunity.

Air support offers the police a valuable and effective operational option which reduces potential dangers by:

- allowing ground units to increase the distance between themselves and the subject vehicle, thus reducing pressure in the mind of the suspect driver as he or she makes decisions
- vastly reducing the perception of the driver of the subject vehicle that their continued risk taking can be successful

Air support can also assist with pursuit commentary. It is not, however, considered to be in pursuit of the subject vehicle or its occupants.

If a pursuit is discontinued, air support will not automatically be withdrawn. The aircrew may continue to gather evidence by monitoring the progress and behaviour of the subject vehicle and its occupants.

## Fatal collisions resulting from pursuit activity

Where a fatal or life-changing injury has resulted from a police pursuit, an investigation must be carried out. During the investigation, it will be necessary to state:

- why the pursuit was undertaken and what alternatives (if available) were declined
- what the objectives of the pursuit were
- feasible options at various stages of the incident
- decisions reached
- outcome and learning points from debriefs

For further information see [Post-incident procedures following death or serious injury APP](#) and [Investigating road deaths](#).

## Tags

Roads policing