

OBJECTIVE 4.5 Identify factors to be considered when a law enforcement vehicle is involved in the termination of a vehicular pursuit using various physical intervention techniques (roadblocks).

INTRODUCTION

A roadblock may be defined as deliberate obstruction utilized by law enforcement officers for the specific purpose of controlling or terminating a targeted vehicle's movement on a selected roadway. It is imperative that officers involved in a roadblock fully comprehend the legal ramifications and operational considerations unique to this law enforcement task.

CONTENT

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Statutory Authority

Officers should consult their state statutes and local ordinances for any guidance they may provide.

2. Case Law

Officers should consult their local legal counsel for state and federal cases such as the United States Supreme Court case in *Brower v. Inyo County*, that apply to their jurisdiction and that provide guidance in pursuit activities.

AGENCY POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Agencies should have a policy that clearly governs the establishment and control of roadblocks. Each agency should rely on its state's statutes, court cases and legal counsel in the development of its policy.

Each officer should be thoroughly familiar with this policy. Officers and supervisors must comply fully with the established policy to ensure that they are within the legal authority to utilize the physical intervention techniques included within this objective, or any other physical intervention techniques they may choose to employ.

The policy should include the following considerations:

1. Human

a. Violator/Violation

- (1) Use of force continuum
- (2) Juvenile or adult (if known)
- (3) Type of violations that warrant a roadblock
- (4) Seriousness of the violation to determine if roadblock is justified

b. Officer

- (1) Number/availability of officers who can be used
- (2) Experience
- (3) Training
- (4) Attitude

c. Supervisor

- (1) Must be supervised
- (2) How much responsibility/authority
- (3) Multiple agency involvement

d. Telecommunicator/Communications

Primary assignment(s) of personnel

2. Environmental

- a. Site selection
 - (1) Terrain, highway configuration (number of lanes, intersections, exit ramps, hills, curves, etc.)
 - (2) Approach to roadblock, visibility, surprise, safety to violator, public and officers, site that provides sufficient space, avenues of escape (prevent and allow/control)
 - (3) Schools, playgrounds, residential, commercial establishments, industrial, urban v. rural considerations, shopping centers, business/downtown area
- b. Day/Night
- c. Weather
 - (1) Wet
 - (2) Snow
 - (3) Ice
 - (4) Wind
- d. Traffic conditions
 - (1) Rush hour traffic
 - (2) Special events (ball games, fairs, concerts) in the area
 - (3) Pedestrians
- e. Time lapse between the commission of the offense and its bearing on the justification for using a roadblock

3. Vehicle

- a. Violators

What type of vehicle the violator is operating

- (1) Car
 - (2) Motorcycle
 - (3) Semi-truck
 - (4) Other
- b. Officers

Type of vehicle is the officer's are operating

- (1) Car
- (2) Motorcycle
- (3) Special, etc. - unmarked v. marked, degree of warning equipment

TYPES OF ROADBLOCKS

Roadblocks will generally consist of two types, stationary and moving. The use of either type of roadblock will be to contain or terminate the movement of a specific vehicle on the roadway. This lesson plan will consider various types of roadblocks, their intent and how they should be configured.

1. Stationary

Stationary roadblocks generally consist of one or more types of physical device(s) used to control or terminate the movement of specific vehicles. The following are several recognized types of stationary roadblocks that may be employed:

- a. Electronic disabler
- b. Spike belts or rods - Used to deflate vehicle tires
- c. Barricades - Used to limit the direction of travel of oncoming traffic, slow and/or stop traffic

- d. Vehicles - Used as a blocking tool, suspect direction control device, warning device
- e. Aircraft - Used for searching, spotting and tracking the pursued vehicle

2. Moving

Moving roadblocks generally consist of one or more types of law enforcement vehicles attempting to control or terminate the movement of a specific vehicle. The following are several types of moving roadblock techniques and the type of law enforcement vehicles that may be employed:

- a. Boxing in
- b. Forcing off the road
- c. Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) - Specialized maneuver used to spin suspect vehicle around and off the roadway at low speeds
- d. Ramming - Specialized maneuver used to disable suspect vehicle

Any of these techniques can result in injury to officers as well as occupants of fleeing vehicles and must be carefully evaluated from both a legal and operational standpoint.

ROADBLOCK STRATEGY TO BE CONSIDERED**1. Cooperation with various law enforcement agencies**

Establish a plan with area agencies that can be implemented when a roadblock is necessary. Prior planning will assist in eliminating confusion, save time, and add to officer safety when a roadblock is instituted.

2. Centralized control is essential; there must be one command post and one official in charge. A common radio channel is very important.**3. Communication**

Prompt release of information to the officers and agencies involved is critical. Descriptions of the individual(s), vehicle(s), direction of travel, and type of crime committed are essential. There should be one central point of contact for information to be received and disseminated. This central contact should know exactly how many officers and agencies are involved so that subsequent information is relayed to everyone.

4. Each officer participating should have a map of the area with his/her position marked, as well as the other positions that are established.
5. Each officer should be briefed, if possible, on the plans concerning the roadblock with his/her responsibility clearly understood.
6. When emergency roadblocks are necessary, having an existing plan is very helpful. Otherwise, the official in charge must direct the officers and resources to their locations based upon the need and circumstances that exist at the time.

TERMINATION OF ROADBLOCKS

1. The supervisor in charge should determine when to discontinue the roadblock.
2. Roadblocks may continue for a few hours or for weeks, depending upon circumstances. If a roadblock continues past 2 - 3 hours, the official in charge should consider logistical support to continue its operation. Relief officers, food, water, rest rooms, lights, and public service announcements are essential to continued operations.

SUMMARY

A roadblock may be defined as deliberate obstruction utilized by law enforcement officers for the specific purpose of controlling or terminating a targeted vehicle's movement on a selected roadway. It is imperative that officers involved in a roadblock fully comprehend the legal ramifications and operational considerations unique to this law enforcement task.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

LECTURE WITH DISCUSSION

Use the suggested text as a guide for presentation to the class. Supplement this text with the statutory requirements and agency policy that affects the class. Further, the instructor may wish to review the IACP Sample Policy and encourage a student discussion of what may or may not work well in their respective jurisdictions with respect to the physical termination of a pursuit.

RANGE-PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Agencies that allow law enforcement interventions should train officers in their use. Practical exercises can be set up in mockup situations including even miniature vehicles that will sufficiently demonstrate the use of the various techniques discussed above.

RESOURCES AND AIDS

1. State statutes
2. Agency policies
3. Pursuit films and videos
4. 1996 IACP Sample Pursuit Guidelines

SUGGESTED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**STUDENTS**

1. Written responses to questions regarding factors to consider when attempting to use a physical intervention to terminate a pursuit
2. Responses to fact situations provided the student that will involve factors to consider when attempting to terminate a vehicular pursuit
3. Performance evaluation during a simulated pursuit termination training exercise

COURSE

1. Review of agency emergency/pursuit response data