

*It is the policy of the Independence Police Department to conduct vehicular pursuits as safely as possible, keeping the safety of the public as our highest priority. Our policy on Vehicle Pursuits (No. 1994-026) states that officers involved in any type of emergency operation of a police vehicle must continually question whether the seriousness of the circumstances or violation justifies a speed in excess of the posted speed limit.*

*Many vehicles that fail to stop for police officers are, in fact, not pursued. Officers use discretion when deciding whether or not to pursue a fleeing vehicle. The policy states that pursuits for traffic violations or for misdemeanors will be avoided or terminated if they pose unnecessary risk to life or property and any pursuit will be discontinued when there clearly is excessive danger to anyone. The Independence Police Department truly recognizes the dangers that exist during vehicle pursuits. Any loss of life or serious injury sustained as a result of a fleeing suspect's reckless acts is tragic. With that in mind, we have sought out and deployed measures to end them more quickly. These measures include Stop Sticks, StarChase, and the assistance of KCPD's helicopter unit.*

*When a vehicle pursuit has begun, the officer continually evaluates the importance of continuing while weighing the risk to public safety versus the need to apprehend the suspect(s). Of the 250 vehicle pursuits last year, 145 (58%) were discontinued (terminated) due to public safety concerns. This is mostly done when the suspect's driving becomes dangerous and the risk of continuing the chase outweighs the reward of taking him or her into custody. Each pursuit is monitored by a supervisor and then reviewed and scrutinized when concluded to ensure that officers adhered to department policy.*

*Police officers also look for alternatives to initiating pursuits, when situations allow, including requesting a KCPD helicopter to observe the vehicle until it is stopped so the suspect can be taken into custody, deployment of Stop Sticks or StarChase prior to initiating a vehicle stop or by safely boxing in the vehicle at an intersection, parking lot or other locations.*

*In an effort to avoid or quickly end pursuits but still adhering to our responsibility of arresting criminal suspects, IPD was the first in the KC metro area to deploy the StarChase system. This device allows an officer to remotely affix a GPS tracking device to a pursued or about to be pursued vehicle. Once the tracker is affixed, its location can be tracked using a computer and the pursuit can be discontinued. In 2017, the StarChase device was deployed 47 times and Stop Sticks were deployed 66 times. Due to costs, not all IPD vehicles are equipped with this device.*

*In 2017, a total of 133 suspects were apprehended as a result of vehicle pursuits, 92 from pursuits that were not terminated and 41 who were apprehended after the pursuit was terminated (K9 track, area check, etc.). 33% of these suspects were charged with Stolen Auto and 32% of them were charged with a Felony or had a Felony Warrant. Without a policy that hold criminal's accountable for their actions, these suspects would not have been apprehended.*

*There was a 17% decrease in the amount of vehicle pursuits from 2016 to 2017 (from 301 to 250).*

*In consideration of serving the greater good of the community, the Independence Police Department's pursuit policy allows for the apprehension of criminals, while still listing sufficient restrictions to maintain the highest level of safety to the public that is possible under the circumstances. The Independence Police Department is dedicated to keeping public safety as its highest priority and continues to seek improved ways to better serve the citizens of Independence.*