



Town of Lexington

Police Department

Subject: Stop Sticks	
Reference: 41.2.3	
Effective Date: 12-1-2011	Review Date: Annually
By Order of: Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police	

Policy & Procedure

41S

StopTech, Ltd. is the exclusive distributor of STOP STICK®. The following guidelines are an edited version of their power point presentation.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The utilization of tire deflation devices by law enforcement agencies has proven to be a safe technique in combating the dangers of police pursuits. Although these devices do not stop pursuits, they slow them down considerably. This is an important factor in reducing the dangers of a pursuit to members of the public, the officers involved and the person being stopped. The lower the speed during a pursuit, the more manageable the situation is.

The Lexington Police Department authorizes the use of tire deflation devices, but does not generally authorize maneuvers that involve boxing in, heading off, roadblocks or vehicle contact, for the specific purpose of stopping fleeing motor vehicles. This determination is based upon the following:

- These tactics create an inherently dangerous situation for police officers, the suspect(s) and other individuals using the roadway;
- These tactics, in situations not requiring deadly force, arouse unfavorable public opinion and exposes the Department to potential civil or criminal liability;
- Lexington's size, proximity to major highways, and residential nature makes these tactics difficult to be safely used; and
- The Lexington Police Department generally does not have sufficient personnel, equipment or other resources available to implement these tactics.

41S-Stop Sticks

There are many types of tire deflation devices; the Lexington Police Department has chosen to use STOP STICK ©. The company (Stoptech, Ltd.) was founded in 1993 and has had thousands of successful deployments with a hit ratio over 98%.

It is the policy of the Lexington Police Department to deploy tire deflation devices when:

1. The operator of a vehicle knowingly fails to stop when signaled to do so by officers, or if not stopped presents a clear and imminent risk to the safety of citizens. [41.2.3(a)]
2. There is communication between the pursuing unit (police unit following the subject vehicle) and the officer who will deploy the tire deflation device. This communication between pursuing officer and the deploying officer specifically discusses the place, time and intent to deploy the deflation device.
3. The officer deploying the tire deflation device (an officer ahead of the pursued vehicle in position to put the device into it's path) has been trained in its use and believes that the device can be deployed safely. [41.2.3(c)]



Photo by Stoptech, Ltd. 365 Industrial Dr., Harrison, Ohio 45030

DEFINITIONS

A. Definitions

1. Pursuing Unit: An authorized police vehicle that is the first vehicle behind the pursued vehicle.

2. Deploying Officer: The officer who is responsible for the notification, deployment and retrieval of the Stop Sticks.

PROCEDURES

- A. Deployment [41.2.3(b)]
 1. Officer safety is a primary concern; if the device cannot be deployed safely then they shall not be used.
 2. STOP STICKS are not used on vehicles with fewer than four wheels including motorcycles, as there is a potential for roll over.
 3. Site selection for deployment shall be based on the following:
 - a. A location that is safe for Officers,
 - b. A location with less traffic volume,
 - c. A safe geographic location; the device shall not be used at intersections, in curves, in areas with a steep embankment, or other areas that may risk injury to the suspect or others, or in areas frequented by pedestrians,
 - d. Deployment must be on a hard surface,
 - e. The location should limit opportunity for the suspect vehicle to avoid hitting the Stop Sticks.
 4. **During deployment, NEVER wrap the cord around your hand or any body part.**
 5. Deploy STOPS STICKS consistent with training. [41.2.3(c)]
- B. Communications: When a vehicle is fleeing and the decision has been made to use Stop Sticks the cruiser deploying the Stop Sticks should only deploy the Stop Sticks after the pursuing officer has been informed of the deployment location and has acknowledged the information.



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C. Pursuit Officer

1. The pursuing officer shall proceed cautiously when approaching the deployment area and adjust his/her vehicle speed as necessary:
 - a. To allow time for the deploying officer to remove the device from the roadway;
 - b. Because the fleeing vehicle may decrease speed rapidly as its tires deflate;
 - c. To respond to sudden evasive or unpredictable maneuvers by the fleeing vehicle.
2. The pursuing officer can increase his/her speed if necessary after the deploying officer signals it is safe to do so or after having cleared the deployment area.

D. Recovery

1. The deploying officer must remove the device from the roadway as soon as the suspect vehicle passes.
2. Once removed from the roadway the deploying officer should place the deployed Stop Sticks in the trunk of the cruiser.

E. Disabling a Vehicle Prior to Pursuit

1. There are situations where it is prudent to disable a vehicle with the device before making a suspect aware of police presence and before a pursuit begins. Such use is likely to constitute a seizure so both State and Federal Constitutional requirements must be taken into consideration.
2. The device may be utilized in situations to stop or disable a vehicle without first signaling or otherwise ordering the suspect to stop in order to maintain safety, the following are examples of such instances:
 - a. Incidents of known stolen cars;
 - b. Suspects are wanted on dangerous felony arrest warrants or charges such as murder, armed robbery and rape;
 - c. Incidents where it is best to get a suspect out of a disabled vehicle such as a hostage or kidnapping situation.

F. Body Functions and Reactions

1. During a pursuit, the body receives an “adrenaline rush” due to the heightened anxiety and emotion; this has an affect on body functions and reactions.
2. Physiological Factors
 - a. Heart Rate increases;
 - b. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid;
 - c. **Fine motor skills may diminish;**
 - d. **Vision is affected where one may develop “tunnel vision” on task or threat only; and**
 - e. **Auditory blockage.**
3. During deployment, an officer must be alert to and control the affects of an adrenaline rush. Fine motor skills are needed to use the cord reel. Tunnel vision and auditory blockage can place an officer in a dangerous position. You must remain aware of your entire surroundings.

G. Documentation and Review

1. After each deployment, whether successful or not, the deploying officer should notify dispatch as soon as possible with the following information. This information will be documented by dispatch with a journal note.
 - a. Exact location of deployment;
 - b. Number of tires punctured;
 - c. Approximate distance traveled by target vehicle after puncture;
 - d. Any problems during deployment or retrieval;
 - e. Any collateral damage.
2. The Patrol Supervisor or Commanding Officer in his absence shall investigate and report on any injuries or the damage to a vehicle other than the suspect’s vehicle. **[41.2.3 (d)(e)]**
3. The deploying officer shall submit a written report in all situations in which Stop Sticks are deployed. **[41.2.3 (e)]**

4. After the incident has ended, an administrative review will be scheduled involving the Chief of Police or a designee, supervisors, and all officers involved. Post-incident analyses will help the Department prepare for future incidents. In addition, Department officials will be made aware of critical incidents which require their attention and which may become the subject of inquiry. [41.2.3 (e)]

H. Storage

1. Each marked cruiser shall have a set of Stop Sticks stored in the trunk.
2. The sticks shall be placed in the mounted carrier with the strap handles facing out.



Photo of Lexington Cruiser, taken by John Mazerall

I. Maintenance Requirements of Deploying Officer

1. After a Stop Stick has been hit or damaged it is no longer fully functional and should be replaced. Used Stop Sticks shall be left with the Commanding Officer for repair or replacement by the Mechanic.
2. If deployed in wet weather but not damaged the sticks should be dried prior to replacement in the storage tray.
3. Care should be used not to overload the trunk of each cruiser to avoid damaging the stored sticks.
4. Any concerns about Stop Stick maintenance should be recorded on the officer's Cruiser Check Sheet and brought to the attention of the Commanding Officer or Patrol Supervisor.