

AIR SUPPORT DIVISION

ORDER NO. 9
8.2.2

December 12, 2001

TO: All Air Support Division Personnel

FROM: Commanding Officer, Air Support Division


SUBJECT: CLEARING OF INTERSECTION DURING PURSUITS

The issue of "clearing intersections" by the air unit for ground personnel involved in pursuits has become the subject of recent discussion. It is realized that Air Support Division (ASD) personnel have the best intentions when broadcasting cross-traffic status of approaching intersections to ground personnel involved in pursuits.

Effective immediately, ASD personnel are reminded NOT to encourage pursuing police vehicles through intersections by broadcasting that intersections are clear of cross-traffic. Department Manual Volume, 1/555.25, HELICOPTER ASSISTANCE, states in part, "The air unit shall advise the ground units of road hazards or any unsafe conditions. Overall control of the pursuit shall remain with the primary ground unit and the ground supervisor."

This matter has been discussed in detail. Practically speaking, the main issues against such practice, notwithstanding the policy are as follows: Clearing the intersection in advance based on speed does not allow for changing conditions at the time pursuing vehicle arrives at the intersection, i.e., the intersection that was cleared, suddenly is not. Speed and distance of the pursuit create reaction time issue for pursuing officers. Communications by the air unit may or may not always be heard by the primary and secondary units. Furthermore, recent digital radio issues and distractions inside the police vehicle exacerbate this issue. A myriad of factors impact what may seem like a safe practice, but in reality is not.

The final responsibility for safely operating a police vehicle, code-3, while engaged in a pursuit is that of a driver. The driver is required to make judgements throughout the pursuit, including safely proceeding through intersections. Traffic advisories broadcast by ASD personnel in order to assist primary and secondary pursuing unit drivers is appropriate.



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