



TRAINING BULLETIN

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

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"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"

As one of the world's largest cities, Los Angeles is composed of many different communities, each with its own life-style and individual crime problems. In order to respond to varying law enforcement needs throughout different parts of the City, the Department has organized available resources to provide the highest level of service possible. Among these resources is the deployment of individual officers to the field as "L-units" to enhance patrol operations. However, there are some important tactical considerations for L-units, especially during vehicle pullovers. This training bulletin was developed to provide an overview of tactics and safety techniques during vehicle pullovers for officers assigned to work alone.

Generally, vehicle pullovers are divided into three types: "Traffic Enforcement," "Crime Investigation" and "High Risk." Because it is impossible to cover every possible pullover situation a patrol officer may encounter, the procedures described in this bulletin are "general" guidelines only. At times it may become necessary to vary these procedures to adjust to particular or unique circumstances. Because any vehicle pullover has the potential for becoming a high-risk stop, based on the actions or statements of the occupants, officer safety is foremost.

PREPARATION

When assigned to the field as an L-unit, officers can expect to draw on every aspect of training, experience and safety skills learned throughout their careers. To be effective in this role, officers must first be mentally prepared, exercise self-discipline, use good tactics and practice teamwork. And, in addition to their normal field equipment, it is recommended that officers assigned to work alone also take a shotgun, taser, print kit and two radios. Body armor should be worn during any field assignment.

Planning ahead is a vital part of working alone. Partner officers discuss tactics and how they will work as a team to resolve field situations either as a "contact" or a "cover" officer. As an L-unit, an officer should think through various situations and anticipate how to resolve them. Working alone requires some adjustments to tactics and field procedures. The following guidelines should be used by officers working an L-unit to conduct vehicle pullovers.

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE PULLOVERS*Initial Procedures:*

- * Ensure there is reasonable suspicion/probable cause for the pullover.
- * Record the license plate number and a short description of the vehicle by utilizing the radio, MDT or notepad.
- * Check the license plate through SVS and AWWIS. Use the radio if the MDT is not available or if the use of the MDT is hazardous while driving your vehicle.
- * When practical, wait for the license plate information prior to initiating the vehicle pullover.
- * Close the distance to the violator's vehicle just prior to activating the emergency lights.
- * Know your location and direction of travel.
- * Maintain observation of the vehicle occupant(s).
- * Prior to the pullover, when multiple occupants are in the violator's vehicle, evaluate and determine if an additional police unit is needed.

Location of the Stop:

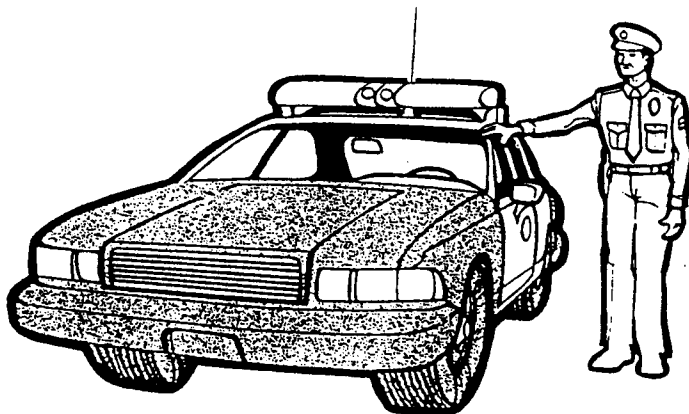
- * Notify Communications of your location.
- * Attempt to stop the vehicle at a legal location, out of the flow of traffic.
- * Be aware of potential avenues of escape such as a nearby alley.
- * Avoid stopping in front of or near locations where hostile crowds may gather.
- * At night and when possible, choose a familiar area with advantageous lighting conditions.
- * Avoid areas with buildings which have reflective windows that may take away your tactical advantage.
- * If necessary, utilize the public address system to direct the violator to where you want him/her to stop.

Pullover Procedures:

- * When close enough to control the stop, and when you are at a suitable location, activate the emergency lights. Daytime vehicle pullovers should include the use of the highbeams as you would during darkness.
- * Offset to the left approximately half the width of the patrol vehicle and approximately one patrol vehicle length behind the violator's vehicle.
- * Place the patrol vehicle in "Park" and set the parking brake. Officers have the option of whether to leave the engine running and turning the front wheels to the left or not.

Approach:

- * Evaluate the scene and remain alert. Attempt to observe the driver's actions. Unlock your front passenger door and lay the microphone on the seat. Always take your radio when you exit.
- * If the driver's action(s) cause you to sense danger, do not approach. Request an additional unit to respond to your location and inform them of the situation. Remain at your vehicle, behind cover. Order the occupant(s) of the vehicle to remain inside with their hands clearly visible. Upon arrival of the second unit, order the violator to exit the vehicle and direct him/her to a safe area out of the flow of traffic.
- * Remain alert to oncoming traffic while exiting the patrol vehicle and use caution during your approach. If the driver appears to be reaching for paperwork, be alert. Wait until the movement stops. If the driver's hands are not visible, politely ask the violator to put them on the steering wheel. A courteous demeanor is essential for a successful interview, but you should remain alert.
- * You may choose to approach on either the left or right side of the violator's vehicle (see figures 1 and 2, pages 8 & 9). Avoid walking between the patrol vehicle and violator's vehicle. Ensure the trunk is closed and scan the rear seat of the violator's vehicle for additional occupants or possible weapons.
- * If the driver exits the vehicle as you approach, direct the driver to a safe location out of the flow of traffic. If there are additional occupants inside the vehicle, position the driver between you and their vehicle.



The Interview:

- * Minimize exposure by standing just to the rear of the violator's door or door post. If approaching from the passenger side, stand just to the rear of the front passenger door.
- * Remain aware of oncoming traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian.
- * Return to the passenger side of the patrol vehicle without exposing your back to the violator.
- * If a citation is to be issued, complete it from behind the open passenger door of the patrol vehicle. Be aware of other cover which may be nearby. Do not sit inside your vehicle while completing the citation.
- * When using the MDT for checking Driver's License status etc., adjust your rearview mirror so that you can see approaching pedestrian traffic. Anytime you have a concern for officer safety, use the radio rather than the MDT.
- * After the citation has been completed, treat the reapproach to the violator as an entirely new traffic stop. Do not assume that a formerly cooperative violator will continue to remain cooperative.
- * After returning to your patrol vehicle, if necessary, assist the violator back into the flow of traffic.

INVESTIGATIVE VEHICLE PULLOVERS

Unless you are investigating an unoccupied or abandoned vehicle, it is recommended that an additional unit be requested to the location when conducting an Investigative Pullover. The seriousness of the crime involved, number of occupants in the vehicle and the type of vehicle (i.e., a van) are among the factors that should be considered **prior** to conducting the pullover.

Initial Procedures:

- * The initial procedures for making an Investigative Vehicle Pullover are the same as those described for a Traffic Enforcement Vehicle Pullover (see page #2).
- * Maintain visual contact with the vehicle occupant(s).
- * If an additional unit has been requested, wait for it to arrive prior to making the pullover. Inform Communications of the location and type of investigation when the stop is made.
- * An Investigative Pullover may become a High Risk Vehicle Pullover at any time. Be prepared to react appropriately!

Choosing a Stop Location:

- * Avoid conducting a pullover near locations where there may be large numbers of curious pedestrians (schools, apartment buildings, warehouses, etc).

Pullover Procedures:

- * Follow the procedures for a Traffic Enforcement Vehicle Pullover (see page #2) however, the distance behind the suspect vehicle should be increased to two patrol car lengths and, offset the patrol vehicle approximately half the width of the suspect vehicle (see figures #3-6).
- * The second patrol unit's position may be to the left, right, parallel or slightly angled (figures 3-6).
- * Environmental factors at the location of the pullover will determine the feasibility of having the second unit positioned to the right of the primary patrol unit.
- * If the second unit is a two-officer unit, that unit is to be the primary unit and will affect the investigative pullover.

Approach:

- * Your approach will be based on the type of crime that is suspected and the number of occupants present in the vehicle.
- * If the additional patrol unit at the scene is an L-unit, the "contact" and "cover" officer concept should be utilized to conduct the investigation.
- * Communications between all officers prior to, and during the investigation, is vital to prevent confusion.

Removal of Suspects:

- * Do not approach or remove the occupant(s) of the suspect vehicle alone, wait until the arrival of an additional unit.
- * Should the driver of the suspect vehicle abruptly stop prior to the arrival of an additional unit, maintain a position of cover and order the occupants(s) to remain inside the vehicle with their hands clearly visible.
- * When circumstances indicate the need to remove the occupant(s) from the suspect vehicle, remain behind cover.
- * Order each occupant out, one at a time, to an advantageous position for you and the cover officer.
- * When possible, have all the occupant(s) exit from the same side of the suspect vehicle.
- * Use clear, concise commands that are easily understood to avoid unnecessary apprehension.

- * **Prior** to making contact with the occupant(s) who have exited, if you are the primary unit or contact officer, check the suspect vehicle's trunk to verify that it is latched, then cautiously check the interior of the suspect vehicle to ensure that there are no other occupants.

HIGH RISK VEHICLE PULLOVERS

High Risk Vehicle Pullovers **should not** be conducted by an L-unit. High risk situations are not necessarily "felony" situations. For example, a "Man with a Gun" situation may only be a misdemeanor. However, because of the likelihood of a violent confrontation, the tactics employed should be identical to that used to handle a felony situation. Without a "cover" officer, an L-unit is at a distinct disadvantage. You may, as an L-unit, discover an occupied vehicle involved in a high risk incident. The following guidelines should be utilized.

High Risk Guidelines:

- * If the suspect vehicle is moving, follow it at a safe distance.
 - * Advise Communications of the circumstances and request appropriate back-up and an Air Unit to intercept the vehicle.
 - * If the arriving back up unit is an A-unit, the vehicle pullover is to be conducted by the A-unit. You, as an L-unit, become their back up (see figure #7 and #8).
 - * Should the back up unit be another L-unit, communicate and coordinate your vehicle pullover tactics and procedures **prior** to making the High Risk Vehicle Pullover.
 - * If the suspect vehicle abruptly stops prior to the arrival of a back up unit, take a position of cover and order the occupant(s) of the vehicle to remain inside with their hands clearly visible. Do not approach!
 - * Should the occupant(s) flee, broadcast information describing the suspect(s), direction of travel, and the suspected crime committed. Establish a perimeter and coordinate the responding units.
- * **ONE OFFICER FOOT PURSUITS ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED!**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- * An officer assigned to work as an L-unit should ensure that a radio is taken each time the officer exits the patrol vehicle.
- * While working alone, pay attention for possible weapons or contraband being thrown from a vehicle prior to a vehicle stop.
- * Make a habit of disengaging the seatbelt just before the patrol vehicle stops. Left-handed officers should be especially careful to ensure access to their sidearm while belted in. Be prepared to secure the seatbelt should the vehicle suddenly drive away.
- * Although you may be investigating a vehicle which appears to be abandoned, approach cautiously and be alert for possible signs of an ambush or setup situation.
- * If the vehicle you stop is a van, the distances between vehicles described in the previous pages remains the same. However, do not offset the patrol vehicle during a van stop. Your patrol vehicle should be positioned directly behind the van which affords you a view of possible exiting by occupant(s) from either side of the van (see figure #9).
- * If you are initially assigned to the field as a two officer unit, but your partner is called away to court or other duties, you must notify Communications of your new status as an L-unit.
- * The gender, age, size, and behavior of an arrestee must be considered before providing transportation as an L-unit. If the patrol vehicle is equipped with a safety barrier between the front and rear seats, the arrestee must be placed in the rear seat for transportation.
- * When participating in a high risk pullover, consider directing a unit to provide traffic control.
- * Back up units responding to a vehicle pullover where it is not possible to offset the primary patrol vehicle may have to position the back up vehicles as shown in figure #10. At night, the headlights of the back up unit(s) should be turned off to avoid interfering with the primary unit at the scene.

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Traffic Enforcement Approach

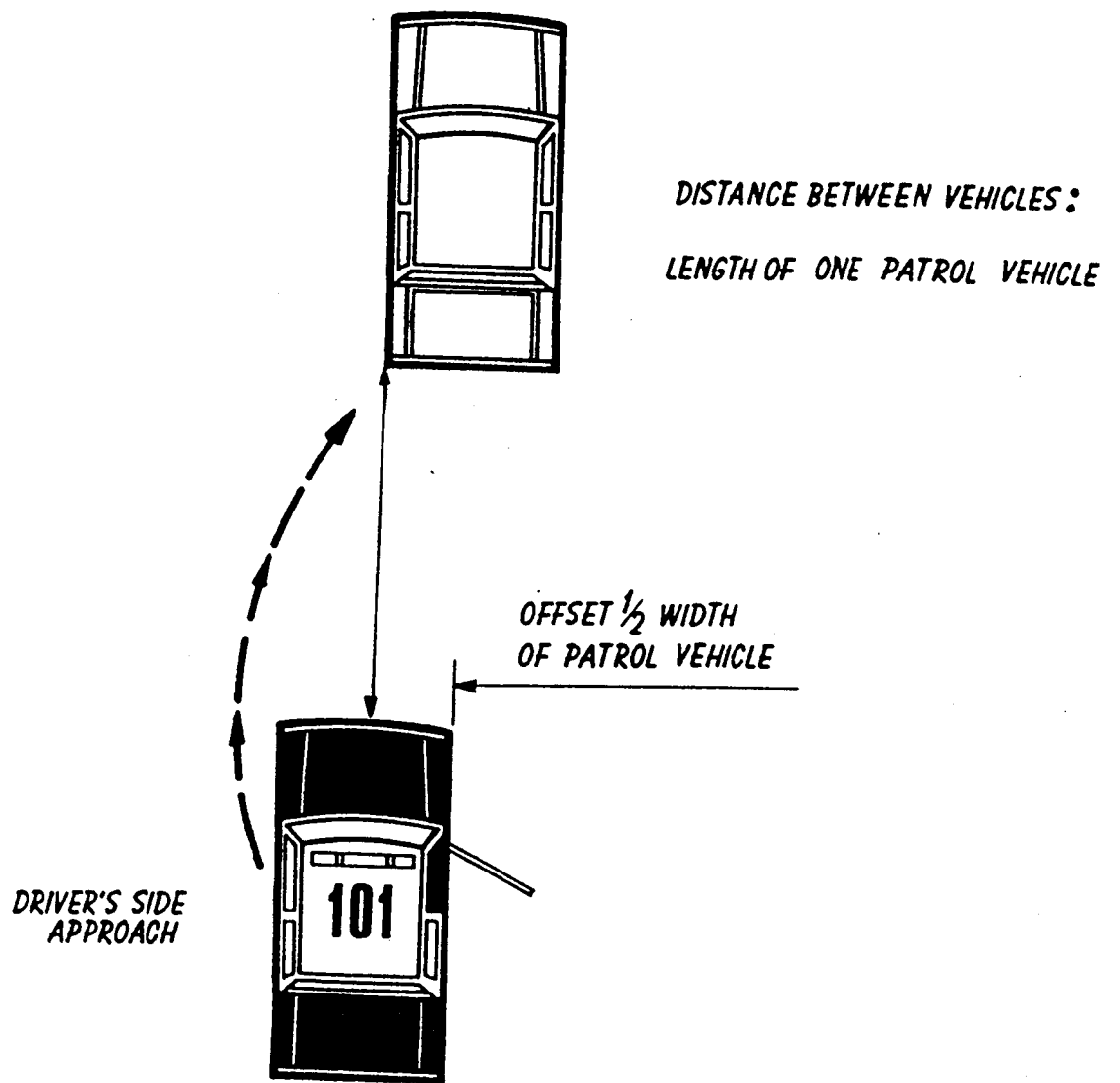


FIGURE #1

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Traffic Enforcement Approach (Option)

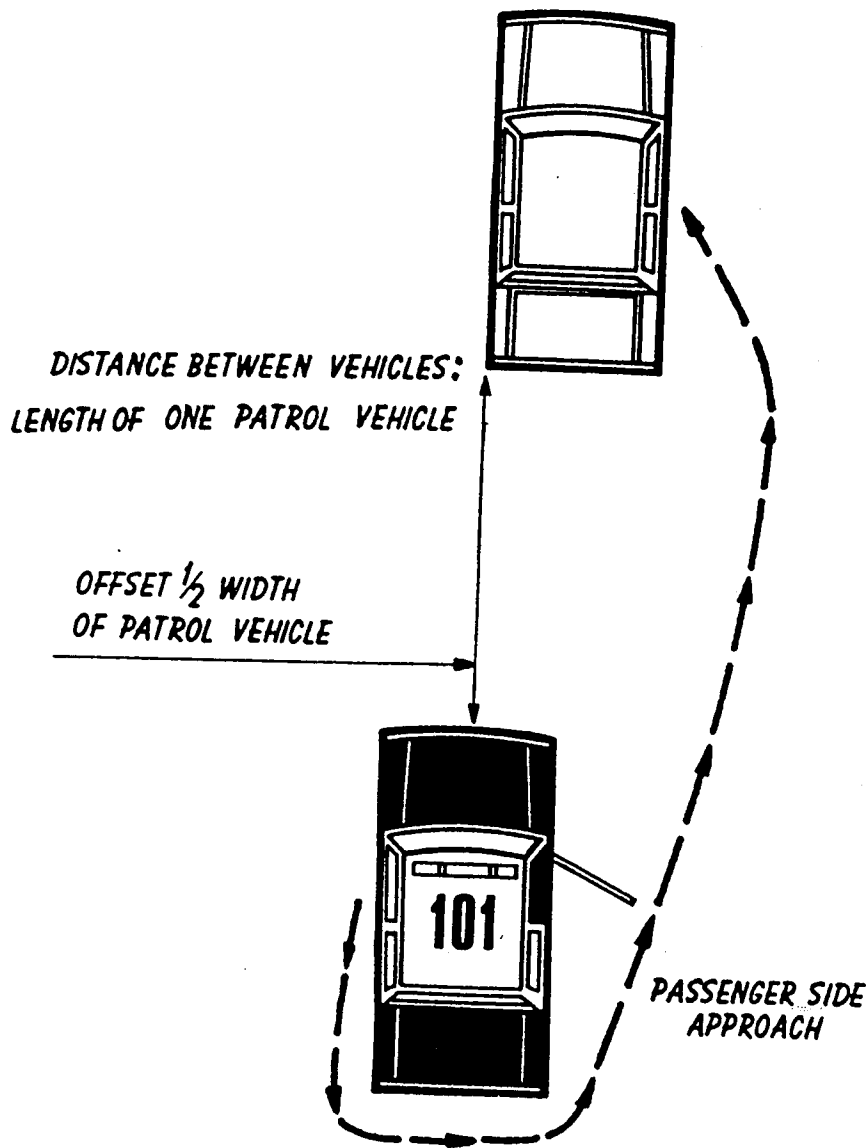


FIGURE #2

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Investigative Pullover

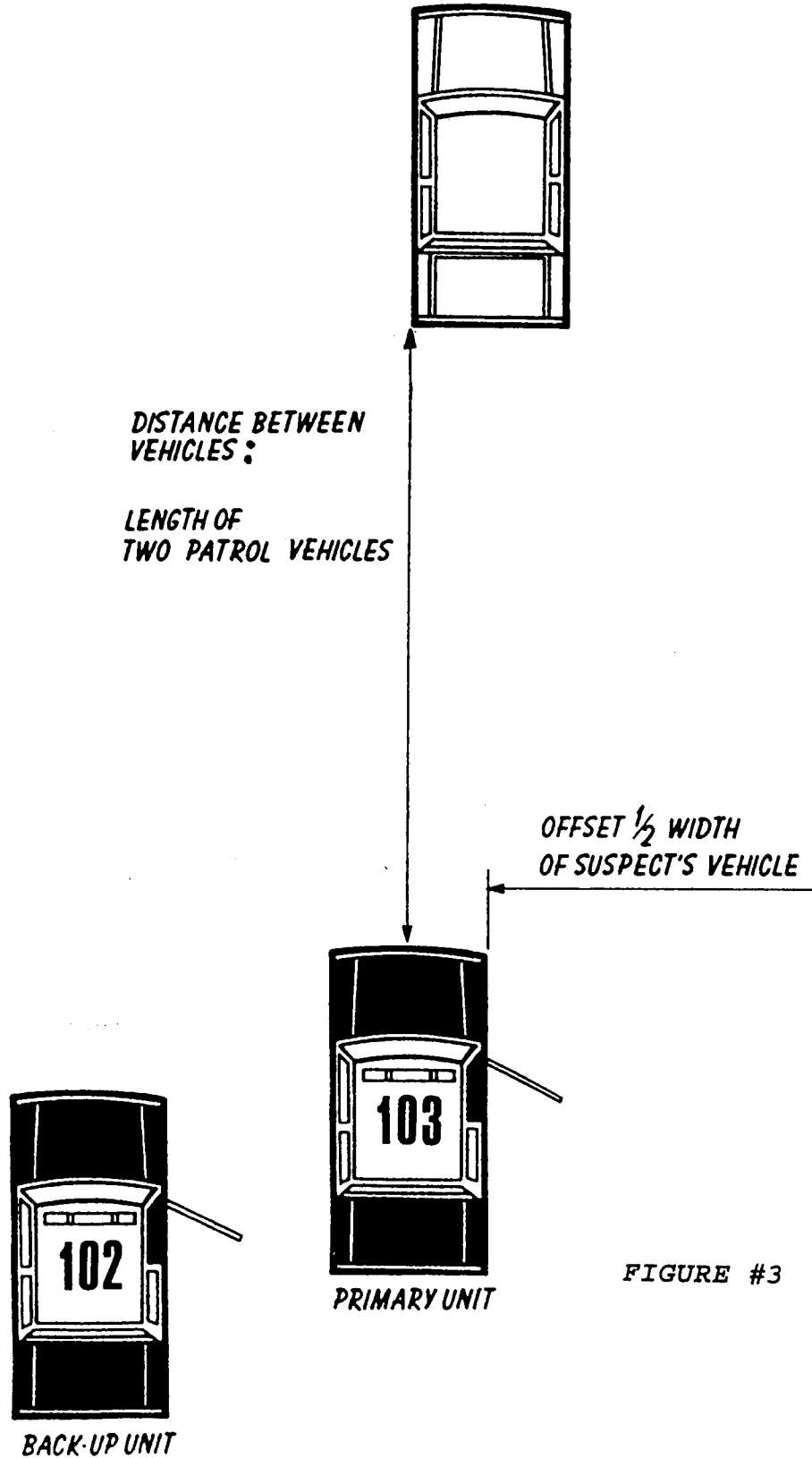


FIGURE #3

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Investigative Pullover (Option)

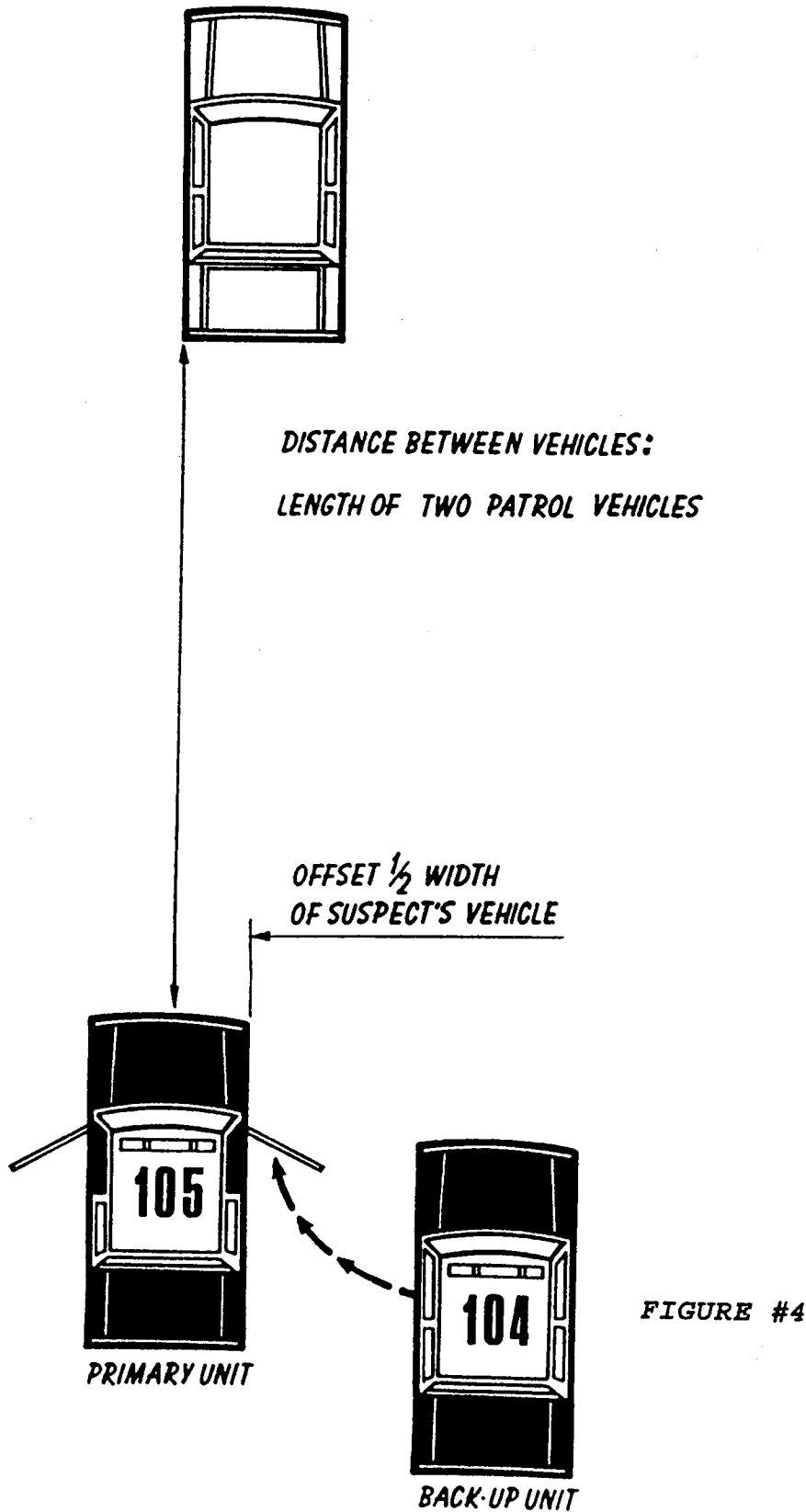


FIGURE #4

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Investigative Pullover (Option)

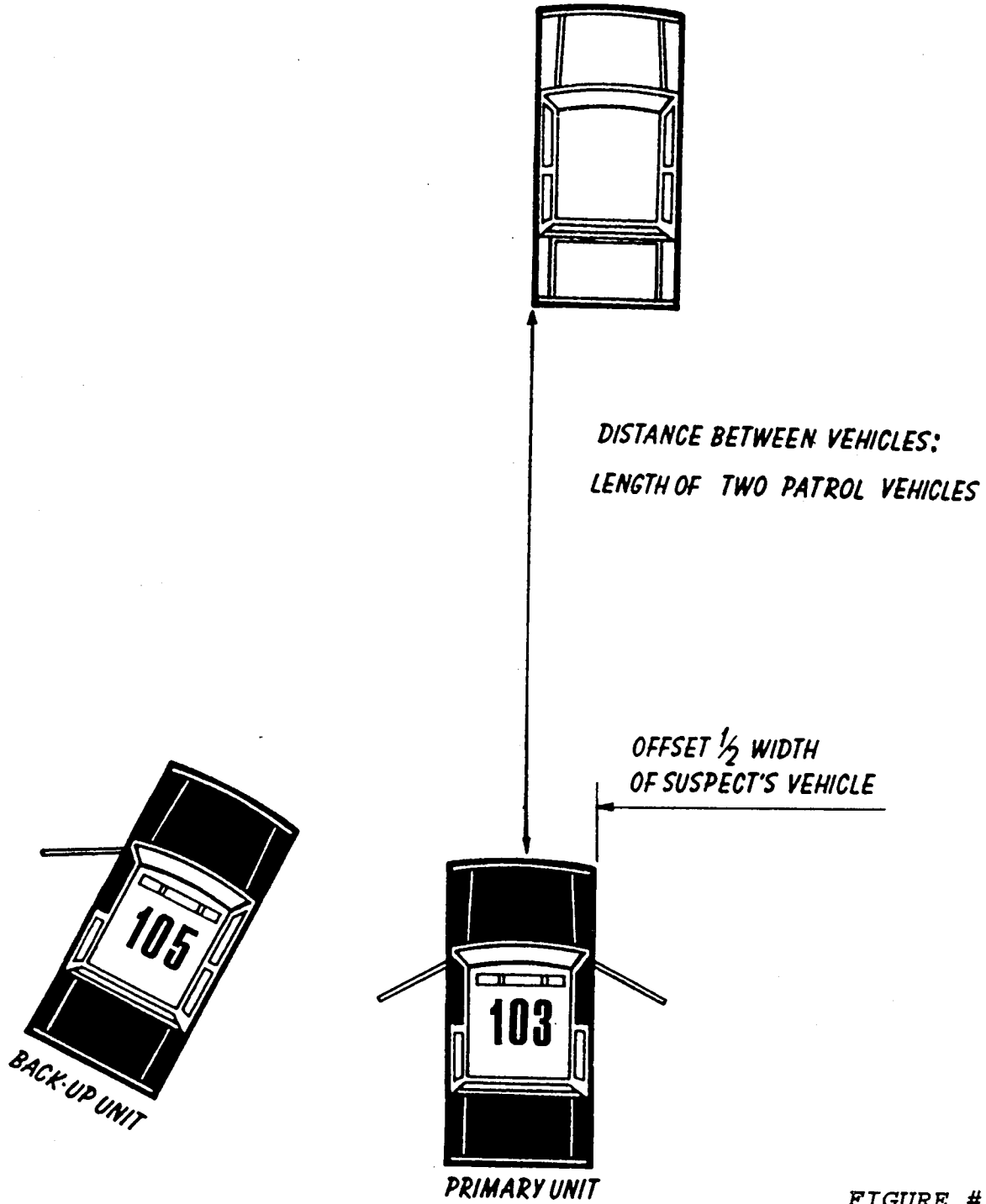


FIGURE #5

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Investigative Pullover (Option)

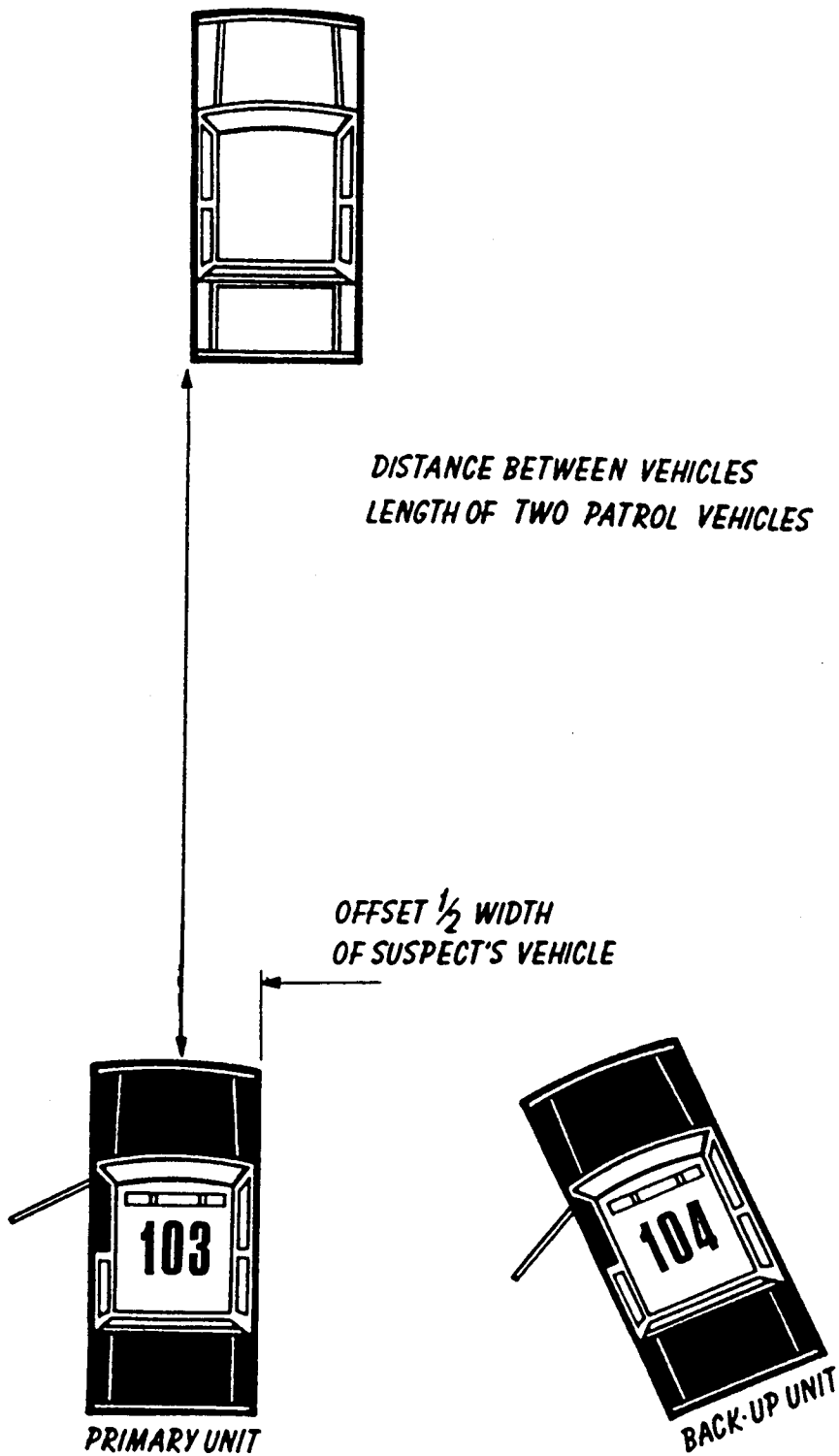


FIGURE #6

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
High-Risk Vehicle Pullover

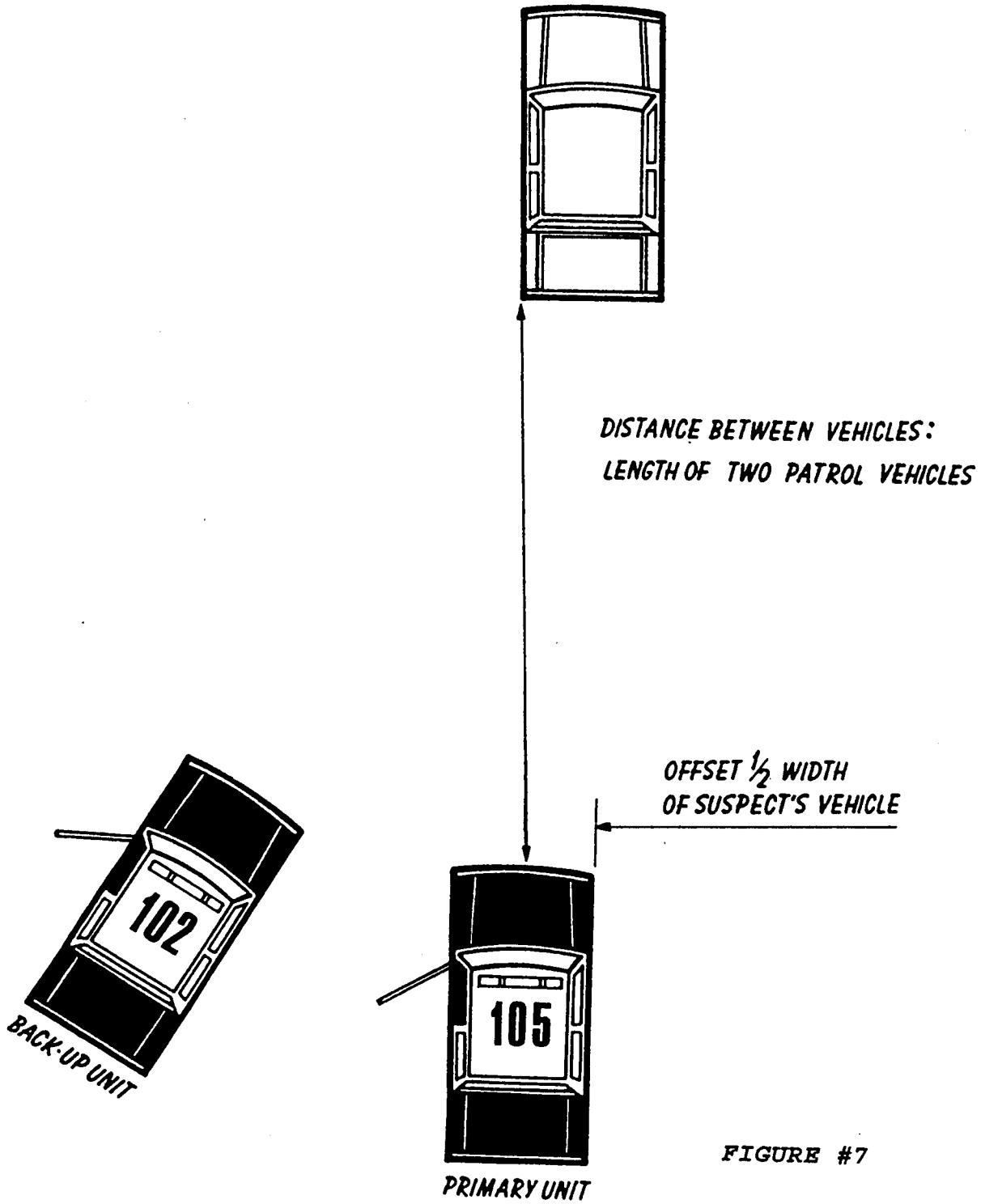


FIGURE #7

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
High-Risk Vehicle Pullover (Option)

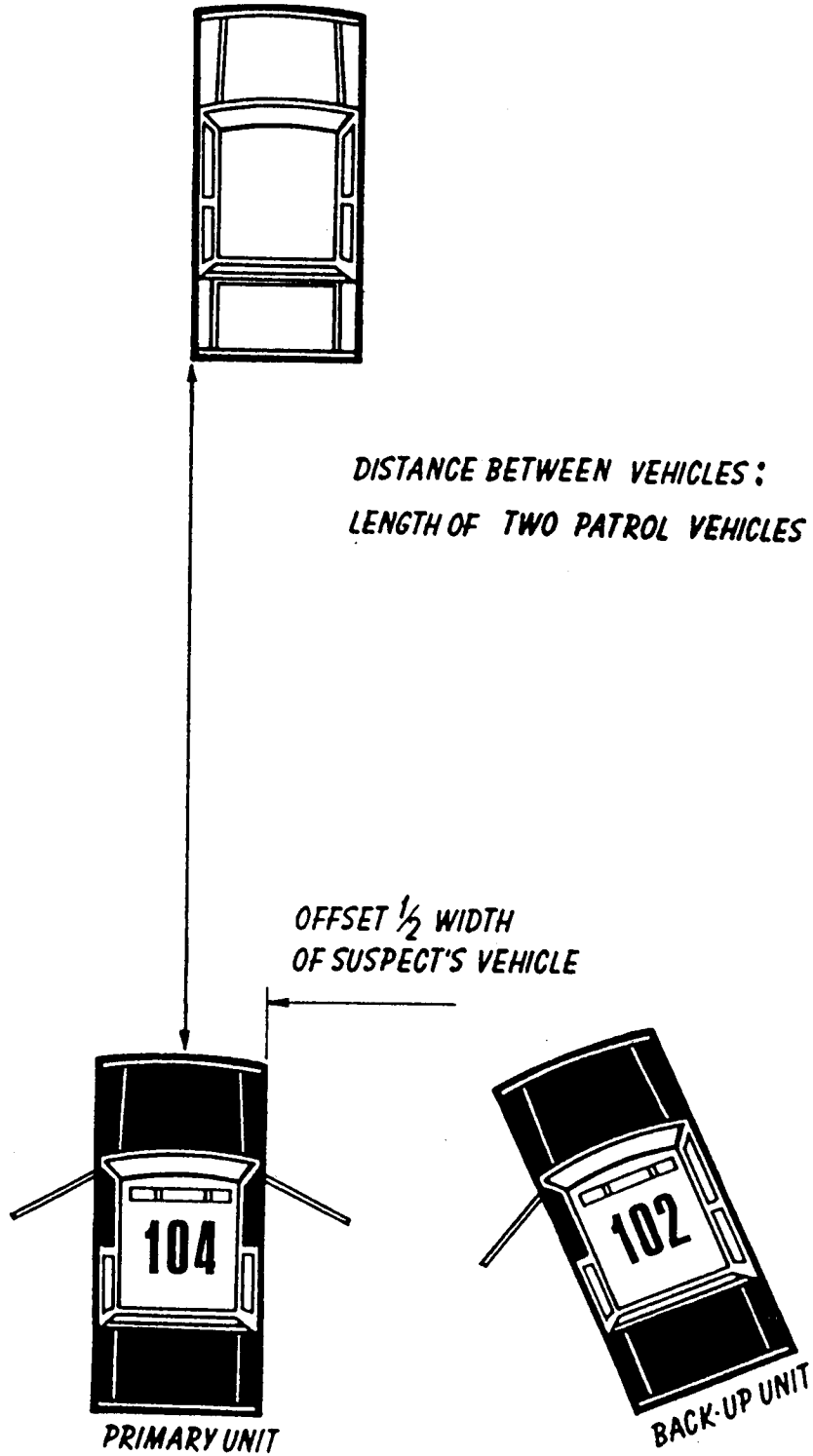


FIGURE #8

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"
Van Pullover

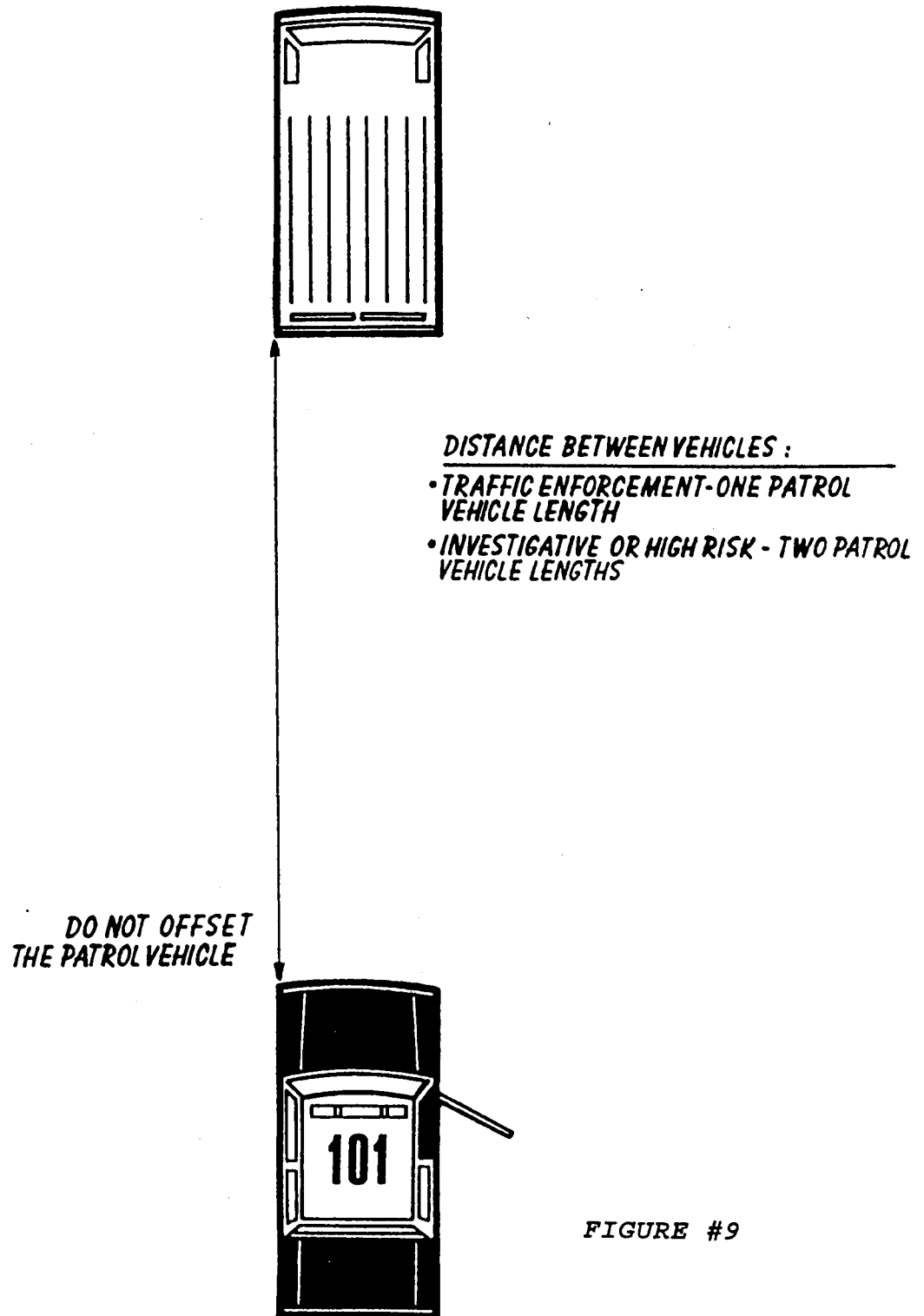


FIGURE #9

"L-UNIT VEHICLE PULLOVER TACTICS"

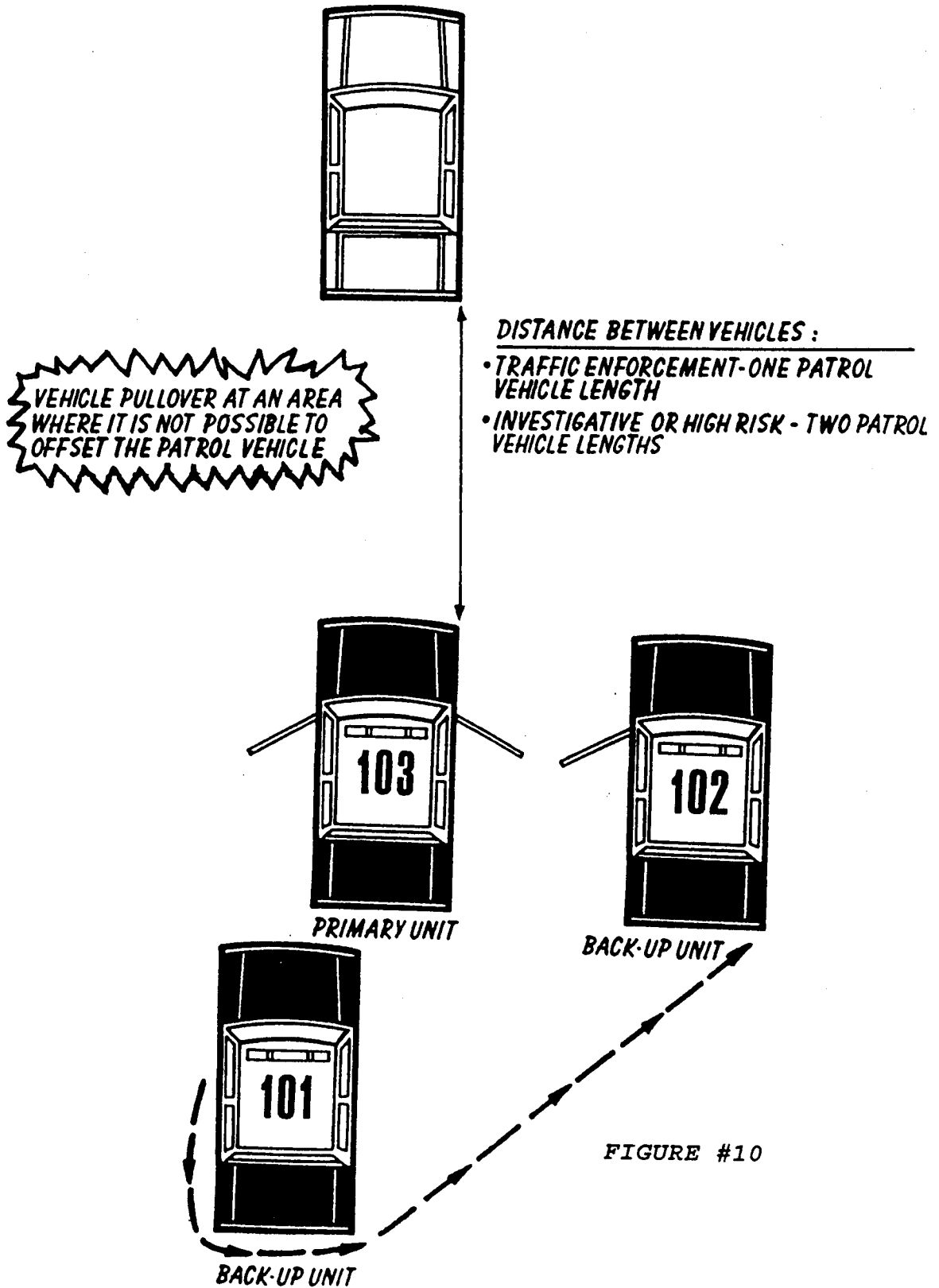


FIGURE #10

CONCLUSION

Conducting vehicle pullovers as an L-unit requires adjustments to tactics and officer safety skills. One must be self confident without becoming over-zealous and developing the unsafe attitude of "I can handle everything myself". Self discipline, the use of good tactics and teamwork are the keys to working successfully as an L-unit.