

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: SPECIAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: SO1802
SUBJECT: STARCHASE PURSUIT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		
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REVISIONS CONTINUED:		DISTRIBUTION: B, C (3,6,9)

I. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide personnel who are assigned responsibilities associated with the deployment and use of the StarChase Pursuit Management System with instructions on when and how this technology may be used for law enforcement and public safety purposes.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the St Joseph Police Department that duly trained and authorized agency personnel may deploy StarChase when such use is appropriate in the performance of their official duties. The deployment and use of StarChase shall conform to the policy provisions provided herein.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. StarChase:** A pursuit reduction technology containing a miniature GPS module encased in a tracking projectile/tag deployed from a fixed air pressure launcher mounted on a marked patrol vehicle.
- B. StarChase Monitor:** The Communications Center Operator assigned to track the GPS data of a StarChase tracker once the tracker has been affixed to a target vehicle.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Overview:

The StarChase pursuit management system allows an officer to remotely affix a GPS tracking device to a fleeing vehicle, or vehicle likely to flee, using an air pressure system to discharge the tracker from the front of the StarChase equipped patrol car to the suspect vehicle. Once the tracker is affixed, its location can be tracked by a Communications Center Operator (StarChase Monitor) using a computer with an internet connection.

B. Training:

1. StarChase tags will be deployed in accordance with training and this Special Order.
2. StarChase equipment in the patrol vehicle will only be operated by officers who have been formally trained in its use by approved department instructors.

C. Deployment:

1. Properly trained officers assigned the StarChase system are authorized to use the system in the performance of their duties to track and apprehend suspects and their vehicles that are attempting to elude law enforcement (traffic stops, pursuits, etc.)
 - a. Absent or in conjunction with a reasonable belief that a violent/dangerous felony has been committed or attempted, officers trained in and operating a StarChase equipped vehicle may make a reasonable effort to deploy a GPS tag to a vehicle attempting to elude the officer, provided conditions allow for a safe attempt.
 - b. Without a reasonable belief that a violent/dangerous felony has been committed or attempted, officers will immediately discontinue the attempt to tag the fleeing vehicle if it is unlikely the StarChase deployment will be successful or if it is too dangerous to attempt a deployment.
 - c. An on-duty supervisor will monitor and may also terminate the deployment attempt when it is determined an effort to deploy the StarChase system is no longer reasonable and the dangers of a continued effort outweigh the known circumstances.
2. Unless the suspect poses a substantial risk to the public StarChase should not be deployed in the following circumstances:
 - a. During heavy rain;
 - b. While driving on exceptionally rough terrain;
 - c. When the suspect vehicle is a motorcycle, ATV, Scooter or similar vehicle carrying a rider; or
 - d. When pedestrians are between or very near the suspect vehicle and the StarChase equipped vehicle.
3. Once the StarChase tag has been successfully deployed, pursuing vehicles should normally drop back significantly from the suspect vehicle unless otherwise directed by a supervisor. Consideration may be given toward the danger presented by allowing the suspect to abandon the vehicle and flee on foot.
4. Shadowing and paralleling will be authorized after a StarChase deployment but those units doing so will be designated by a supervisor. Any unit shadowing or paralleling a StarChase tagged vehicle will do so only after notifying and receiving specific permission to do so from a supervisor.
5. Officers may deploy a StarChase tag on a vehicle prior to an attempted car stop if the vehicle is suspected to have been involved in a felony crime, or when other factors indicate a substantial likelihood that the vehicle may flee after an attempted stop.

6. When it is determined that a StarChase device will be affixed to a vehicle that is currently not being pursued (i.e.; occupied stolen auto, occupants wanted, etc.), every effort will be made to affix the StarChase device prior to an officer activating any emergency equipment.
7. StarChase equipped patrol cars, **with approval from a supervisor**, are authorized to respond with emergency equipment to join a pursuit for potential use of the device.
 - a. Unless directed otherwise, the StarChase equipped vehicle will join the pursuit at the rear of authorized pursuing vehicles until cleared to pass.
 - b. Once a StarChase equipped vehicle joins a pursuit, it becomes an authorized unit as it relates to the number of authorized pursuing vehicles.
 - c. StarChase equipped vehicles may pass other pursuing vehicles only when deemed safe and only with specific permission from the unit to be passed. Permission is to be sought and acknowledged one passing at a time. Officers driving the StarChase equipped vehicle will identify which side of the overtaken vehicle they will pass.
8. All safety decisions related to the discharge of a StarChase tag rest with the operating officer. While supervisors may direct or approve the deployment of a StarChase equipped patrol car in a pursuit and/or the discharge of a tag, safety decisions related to passing other involved vehicles and the actual discharge of the device rest solely upon the operating officer whose decisions must take into account the guidelines contained in GO0014 "Standard Police Vehicle Operations" and GO0018 "Vehicle Pursuits". In accordance with policy, the safety of officers, uninvolved persons and persons inside the pursued vehicle shall be considered. The following decisions are specifically included:
 - a. Whether the officer can safely maneuver close enough to the suspect vehicle to come within target range;
 - b. Whether the officer can safely pass any other vehicle involved in the pursuit; and
 - c. Whether any circumstance would indicate the device would not work (e.g. weather conditions, suspect vehicle weaving, etc.)

D. Communications:

1. For clarity of communications, radio traffic should identify the device as "StarChase."
2. Officers deploying a StarChase tag will notify the Communications Center before deployment if possible or as soon as possible after deployment.
3. The Communications Center will assign a StarChase Monitor who will advise the deploying officer when the tag is up and transmitting data.
4. Officers will maintain constant communication with the StarChase Monitor for speed/direction/location updates of the suspect vehicle
5. A Supervisor will coordinate with the StarChase Monitor to direct resources and officers to appropriate locations to apprehend the suspect.
6. No officer who is driving a moving patrol car will access the StarChase Monitor data as this creates an unnecessary hazard.

7. Unless approved by a supervisor StarChase location updates will not be given by anyone other than the designated StarChase Monitor in the Communications Center.

E. Reporting:

1. In addition to the normal pursuit reporting procedures required by policy, officers who use the StarChase system will report all tag deployments using form SJP0010.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date