



Risk Management Solutions



Summer 2019

A Quarterly Newsletter of the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division

The Dangers of Police Foot Pursuits

By Terry Sanders • Police Safety Consultant • AMIC/MWCF

Better a thousand times careful than once dead. ~ Proverb

In our Loss Control Division as Police Risk Managers we run annual work-related claims and events for both the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund (MWCF) and the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC). This process includes identifying and categorizing police officer duty related injuries. These injury categories are typically comprised of: Traffic Accidents, Vehicle Pursuit Crashes, Arrest Encounters, Exposures, Training Injuries and Foot Pursuits. Other various injuries are reviewed as well, however; most duty-related injuries involve these six categories. We meet annually with our police chiefs to review all injuries and to make recommendations to reduce their losses.

Foot Pursuits

Even though foot chases result in a high number of officer related injuries there is little training or written policy addressing the issue. Officers in Alabama are required to complete Vehicle Pursuit training as part of the curriculum at the police academy. Departments have written Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) covering vehicle pursuit situations but very few have written procedures covering foot pursuits. Foot pursuits as well as vehicle pursuits are without exception dangerous situations for police officers. Both can have, and at times *will* have, deadly consequences. In preparation for this article, a quick Google search located the following four recent news headlines where officers were injured during foot chases:

- Two police officers injured during foot chase in South Austin – Chicago
- Boston cop struck by car during foot chase, hospitalized
- Baltimore police officer struck by vehicle during foot chase
- Killeen police officer and suspect injured during foot chase

You could Google police foot chases any given day and get these same results.



Officer body camera photo of a foot pursuit provided by the Bay Minette Police Department

Safety Tips

The following excellent safety tips are pointed out in the *PoliceOne* article “Who’s chasing who? Safety tips for foot pursuits” written by Ron Martinelli, PhD: *What officers may not know about the suspect they are chasing include:*

- *What if anything they may be wanted for.*
- *If they are armed.*
- *What the suspect’s fighting skills are.*
- *If the suspect is in better physical shape than the officer.*
- *If the suspect is psychotic.*
- *If the suspect is under the influence of drugs — such as powerful stimulants, or PCP.*
- *Where the suspect may be taking the officer to — such as an area of ambush.*
- *If there are other suspects the officer is not aware of who can aid the suspect.*

Officers need to remember that while they are catching up to a suspect, they are also reducing the “reactionary gap” between themselves and the suspect. Reactionary gap is the distance between the officer and suspect, compared to the officer’s ability to defensively react to something the suspect might do. Shorten the distance and the officer shortens his/her reaction time. This is almost always dangerous for the officer.

continued page 3

Municipal Pool Safety

By Stephanie Southerland • CMC • CPM • Loss Control Rep • AMIC/MWCF

The USA Swimming Foundation reports that nearly 90 children younger than 15 years old drowned in a pool or spa from January through May 2018, and every year about 19 children drown during the July 4 holiday.

The National Safety Council presented the following statistics:

- 74% of drowning incidents for children younger than 15 between 2015 and 2017 occurred in residential locations
- Boys younger than 15 die from drowning at twice the rate as girls
- 351 children younger than 15 died in pools and spas in 2015

Safety First

It is of the utmost importance to ensure the safety of your citizens who enjoy your municipal pool. All swimming pools should have adequate fencing to discourage unauthorized access. There should be no overhanging vegetation or excess growth around fencing. There should be no gaps or holes in the fence that would allow entry. On the outside of the fence, signs indicating “No Unauthorized Access” may aid in deterring unauthorized persons.

All pool rules should be posted at each entry into the facility. Other signage, such as “No Diving” and “No Running” should be posted on the deck.



Diving rules should be posted at the diving board. Only one diver should be allowed on a diving board at a time.

Diving boards, slides and ladders should be inspected daily. All diving boards should be washed daily to eliminate any scum, which can cause a slip and fall. A first aid kit and other emergency equipment should be stored in the office. Backboards should be readily accessible to lifeguards.

If the bottom of the pool cannot be seen, the pool should be closed – if a child was missing in the immediate area, you wouldn’t know if they were at the bottom of the pool. There could be items in the pool that would cause damage to your system. It is *imperative* that the bottom of the pool can be viewed year-round.

Lifeguards

Lifeguards need to be prepared, focused and ready to respond to emergencies. Lifesaving equipment, including rescue tubes, backboards, first aid kits, gloves and artificial respiration barrier masks should be inspected daily, marked clearly and kept within reach of the lifeguard. It is a good idea for the lifeguards to wear packs that have barrier masks, gloves and bandages so they have these items readily accessible.

Providing shade, sunglasses, sunscreen, hats, and water will help lifeguards be more alert. Sun and dehydration make for poorer concentration and vision. Breaks should be provided as part of their rotations. For example, some facilities have lifeguards stationed for 30 minutes, then rotate positions and guard the pool for 20 minutes. Then for 10 minutes each hour the pool is cleared. Some facilities can rotate the lifeguards in and out of the office. Regular breaks keep the lifeguards mentally prepared for emergencies. This allows them to focus on the task when they are on duty, which is watching the water.

Every pool, every lake and every warm summer day holds the possibility of new, fun summer experiences. All you need to add is your undivided attention.



Pool Safety Campaign

The National Safety Council (NSC) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission are encouraging everyone to keep water safety top of mind and reduce child drowning in pools and spas. The Pool Safety campaign reminds everyone to follow five simple steps to stay safer in and around water. Take the pledge today for pool safety, at work and at home.

I pledge that I will...

- Designate a water watcher every single time children in my care are in or near the water.
- Make sure my kids know how to swim.
- As a parent or guardian, learn CPR.
- Always remove portable pool ladders when not in use.
- Ensure all permanent pools have a proper fence and gate and safer drain covers.

Emergency departments treat about 6,400 pool and spa injuries in children younger than 15 every year. While drowning deaths peak among one and two-year old children, drownings continue to be the second leading cause of preventable death through age 15. According to NSC research, 353 people ages 5 to 24 drowned in 2017.

Portions of this article were taken from www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/drowning and our website, www.losscontrol.org. Please refer to: Reference Documents, Swimming pools.

Police Foot Pursuits cont.

Foot pursuits as well as vehicle pursuits are without exception dangerous situations for police officers. Both can have, and at times *will* have, deadly consequences.



The same rule should be considered in foot pursuits as in vehicle pursuits. If you know the identity of the suspect you can always execute a warrant later. Officers must also consider their physical condition. If you live a sedentary lifestyle and, at a moment's notice, you put your body in motion at full speed, the question is not if you will get an injury but how serious will the injury be!

Clint Eastwood put it best when he said: "A man's got to know his limitations". Even trained athletes with proper equipment, warm ups and stretches routinely injure their upper legs, knees, lower legs and ankles while running.

Resources

A well written procedure on Foot Pursuits can also serve as an excellent training outline. **Standard Operating Procedure should include the following:**

- Factors to consider in deciding whether to engage in a foot pursuit
- Officers responsibilities
- Supervisors responsibilities
- Foot Pursuit Coordination when two or more officers are involved
- Guidelines and Restrictions

A sample Foot Pursuit Standard Operating Procedure can be downloaded at www.losscontrol.org (Search "PSOP-002" on the Reference Documents pages). Also, an excellent training video can be accessed online at: www.policeone.com/Officer-Safety/videos/283260519-Reality-Training-5-key-foot-pursuit-tactics/. In addition, the Loss Control Safety DVD Library offers 9.122 – "Foot Pursuits/America's Most Wanted" also via losscontrol.org.

The "Below 100" initiative that started in 2010 has worked hard to keep police officer deaths below 100 annually. One of the five tenets of this program is: "Remember: Complacency Kills! Just because you have been involved in several foot chases keep in mind the next one could go deadly wrong. Know your abilities, your surroundings and seriously consider what you are chasing a suspect for." www.policeone.com/Officer-Safety/articles/3531874-Whos-chasing-who-Safety-tips-for-foot-pursuits/

Defining Moment

Confined Spaces

Confined spaces are areas in the workplace that are difficult to get into and out of. Many of these spaces have an increased risk of exposure to serious physical injury from entrapment, engulfment, heat stress, biological hazards and hazardous atmospheres. Examples of these spaces include valve pits, underground vaults, tanks, lift stations, pump stations and sewer manholes. A confined space is defined as any enclosure with these characteristics:

- Has restricted means for entry and exit
- Is large enough for an employee to enter and perform work
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy

Once it has been determined that a confined space exists, a further determination must be made as to whether it is also classified as a **Permit Required Confined Space**. For this designation, only one of the following four characteristics is necessary:

1. It contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere
2. It contains material that could engulf the entrant
3. The internal space is configured in such a way that the entrant could fall, become wedged, and/or asphyxiated
4. It contains any recognized serious safety or health hazard

2019 Loss Control Summer Seminars

All AMIC and MWCF members are encouraged to increase their understanding of the scope of risk management practices for public entities by attending one of our Loss Control Seminars this summer. **These will be held in Muscle Shoals (Aug. 20), Northport (Aug. 21), Orange Beach (Aug. 28) and Montgomery (Aug. 29).** The cost for the seminar is \$20 per person. Lunch will be provided.

Topics at the Seminars will include:

- **Dog Bite Prevention**
- **Social Media: Ally or Adversary**
- **Top 10 Workers Comp Claims and Prevention Measures**
- **Safety is Not a Game**
- **Beyond the Surface: The Effects of Safety Go Deep**

Deadline to register is one week prior to each event. *The seminars have been approved by the Alabama League of Municipalities for up to 4 (four) Basic, Advanced or Emeritus credit hours in the Certified Municipal Officials (CMO) program.*

To register for the Summer Seminars, go to www.losscontrol.org/summer-seminars

2019 SKIDCAR Schedule

Through an advanced, computer-controlled driver training vehicle known as the SKIDCAR System, trainees learn how to react quickly and safely to a range of hazardous driving conditions. Training is conducted throughout the state at a minimal cost. Visit www.losscontrol.org for more information.

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|------------|-------------------------|
| Demopolis | July 16 – 26 |
| Decatur | August 6 – 16 |
| Fultondale | August 27 – September 6 |
| Ozark | September 24 – 27 |
| Saraland | October 15 – 25 |
| Fayette | November 5 – 8 |



Register and pay online at www.losscontrol.org!



Loss Control Division

P.O. Box 1270 • 535 Adams Avenue • Montgomery, AL • 36102

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Presorted Std.
U.S. POSTAGE
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Montgomery, AL
PERMIT NO. 340

Summer Safety DVDs

- 5.032 Right-Of-Way Mowing Safety
- 5.053 Landscaping Equipment: Safety and Maintenance
- 5.077 Distracted Driving: Real Accidents, Real Stories
- 5.078 Distracted Driving: Real Accidents, Real Stories 2
- 7.089 Working Safely in Hot Environments
- 7.097 Heat Stress: Staying Healthy, Working Safely
- 7.105 Groundskeeping Safety: Dealing with Bugs & Critters
- 7.106 Groundskeeping Safety: Be A Pro!
- 7.107 Heat Stress for Public Employees: Seeing Red
- 7.108 Protecting Your Feet: Learning Your ABC's
- 7.110 A Practical Approach to Ladder Safety
- 7.118 Safety Procedures for Lawn Mower Operators
- 7.119 Landscape Power Tool Safety
- 7.120 Hedge Trimmer Safety
- 7.121 Video Guide to Chainsaw Safety
- 9.122 – Foot Pursuits/America's Most Wanted

Video/DVD requests to: **Sonya McCarley** at: **334-262-2566**
sonyam@alalm.org or FAX at **334-262-2809**

Need Help Filing Work Comp Claims?

For step-by-step instructions, visit:

www.almwcf.org

Employment Practices Law Hotline

1-800-864-5324

Through a toll-free Employment Practices Law Hotline, members can be in direct contact with an attorney specializing in employment-related issues. When faced with a potential employment situation, the hotline provides a no-cost, 30-minute consultation.

www.losscontrol.org