



Milwaukee Police Department

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Jeffrey B. Norman
Chief of Police

(414) 935-7200

May 7, 2026

Leon Todd
Executive Director
Fire and Police Commission

Dear Executive Director Todd:

On April 27, 2026, you provided the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) with a memo formally requesting changes to MPD's Vehicle Pursuit Policy, SOP 660, and the Video Release Policy, SOP 575 as per a resolution from the Fire and Police Commission (FPC). This resolution recommends that the Milwaukee Police Department or the Common Council modify Milwaukee Police Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 660 – Vehicle Pursuits and Emergency Vehicle Operations. In its current form, SOP 660 permits department members to engage in vehicle pursuits when the member knows or has probable cause to believe, among other things, that a vehicle is engaged in reckless driving, including reckless driving observed before the initiation of a traffic stop or after an attempted stop. This resolution recommends that SOP 660 be modified to prohibit department members from engaging in vehicle pursuits for reckless driving that is observed after an attempted traffic stop. The resolution also recommends that SOP 660 be modified to explicitly provide that if the continuation of a vehicle pursuit for reckless driving increases the danger to the public, the department member shall terminate the pursuit.

The resolution further recommends that the Milwaukee Police Department or the Common Council modify Milwaukee Police Department SOP 575 – Video Release Policy, by adding vehicle pursuits involving death or great bodily harm to the categories of incidents requiring release of video evidence.

While MPD appreciates the FPC's thorough analysis and recommendations, it is not inclined to revise SOP 660 at this time. Additionally, before making any determination regarding potential changes to SOP 575, MPD is seeking an opinion from the City Attorney's Office.

SOP 660 has undergone numerous revisions, many of which have been discussed recently in both FPC meetings and Common Council Public Safety and Health Committee sessions. MPD recognizes the wide range of public perspectives regarding when pursuits should or should not occur. We take all of this feedback seriously and regularly evaluate our pursuit policy accordingly.

In determining the most appropriate pursuit policy, MPD considers:

- Public comment during FPC;
- Best practices as per IACP, MCCA and PERF;
- Review of other similarly sized jurisdiction policies;
- Public comment and input via community discussions at Districts (i.e., Crime and Safety meetings);
- Feedback from the Common Council, Administration, and intergovernmental partners;
- Comprehensive reviews of vehicle pursuits by the Vehicle Pursuit Committee.

On October 16, 2025, MPD provided a presentation on vehicle pursuits to the FPC. That meeting included more than an hour of public comment, during which community members also shared feedback on MPD's vehicle pursuit policy.

In addition, in October, Patrol Bureau District Commanders were directed to gather community input on the pursuit policy during their regular meetings and conversations with their district residents.

All Captains submitted this input to the Executive Command Staff. That feedback is as follows:

District 1: Conducted discussions with District constituents, one on one discussions. Overall, D1/s assessment was that constituents understood need for pursuits and stopping pursuits could impact reckless driving.

District 2: Had a discussion at the November D2 Crime and Safety meeting (with approximately 30-40 attendees). Feedback was the majority of constituents wanted to ensure MPD conducted pursuits safely, but felt the current policy was sound.

District 3: Did a formal presentation on the history of pursuit policy and current policy at their October Crime and Safety meeting. Community feedback reflected both concern and understanding; D3 assessment was that overall, the community acknowledged the necessity of pursuits in situations but encouraged continued exploration of partnerships, technology and policy strategies to reduce their frequency and risk while still addressing reckless driving.

District 4: Did presentation at their October Crime and Safety meeting. Captain requested attendees to provide feedback regarding pursuits/pursuit policy. Twenty-nine attendees. Overwhelming response was MPD should continue to pursue; attendees were in favor of the current policy.

District 5: Captain stated community feedback in D5 was that community opinions divided. A frequent question raised was related to drones and other technologies to enhance pursuit safety, and recommendations to use pit maneuvers. D5 constituents were mostly in favor of pursuing stolen and reckless vehicles, but a minority did express restrictions.

District 6: D6 stated no one at October crime and safety discussed pursuits.

District 7: D7 relayed that reckless driving is a major concern of D7 residents, and that there have been no criticisms regarding the current pursuit policy.

MPD executive leadership held numerous internal discussions regarding potential changes to SOP 660. These discussions were informed by current vehicle pursuit data, public concerns shared at the FPC meeting, input gathered from the districts, and best practices.

On November 24, 2025, SOP 660 in its current form was internally approved by MPD, and the amended SOP 660 was published February 6, 2026. The updated policy included the following modifications:

Adding the following as an updated model policy from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for Vehicle Pursuits:

- Adding officers should take into consideration elevated risk vehicles when initiating or continuing a pursuit.
- Adding officers should take into consideration if there are minor passengers present when initiating or continuing a pursuit.
- Adding officers should take into consideration the Airborne Assessment Team when initiating or continuing a pursuit.
- Adding officers must provide information to the dispatcher about the existence of firearms, overt threats of force, or other unusual hazards during the vehicle pursuit.
- Adding members will not face disciplinary action for deciding to terminate a pursuit if in their opinion the risk of pursuing outweighs the risk to public safety, other department members, and/or the suspect.
- Adding additional requirements in addition to vehicle speed for officers when initiating a vehicle pursuit for reckless driving.
- Adding the third or additional units may assist with a high-risk vehicle contact at the conclusion of a pursuit.

MPD believed that these additional precautions added would further balance the interests of those who were in favor of the policy and those who were opposed to the policy in its current form. This updated policy has now been in effect from February 6 – present (approximately three months), which is a very insignificant amount of time to review the efficacy of these changes.

MPD acknowledges that additional FPC discussions, community feedback, and information related to pursuit policies have been shared since the most recent changes were implemented. However, at this time, MPD intends to maintain its current policy and will continue to evaluate its effectiveness moving forward.

MPD is not prepared to state a position on potential modifications to SOP 575 until the City Attorney's Office provides guidance on any legal issues that may arise, including those related to claims against the City, or liability associated with releasing pursuit-related video when MPD is not directly involved in the action that caused great bodily harm or death. When an MPD pursuit results in a direct crash, the event is classified as a critical incident, and relevant video footage is released in accordance with SOP 575. However, this request pertains to situations in which an individual chooses to flee from MPD, and their actions result in great bodily harm or injury. In some cases, MPD dashboard or body worn cameras footage does not provide relevant video of the incident itself, as MPD is not directly involved.

Additionally, MPD seeks clarification from the City Attorney's Office on whether adding this category of incident would constitute a new policy or a modification of existing policy. MPD will request a legal opinion on this matter before submitting a formal response to the FPC. Therefore, we respectfully request a postponement of issuing a formal position until the legal review has been completed.

Please know that MPD values the recommendations and input of our oversight board. MPD recognizes that there is always room to improve our service to the community, and often, your input certainly assists in creating those improvements. Thank you for your recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey B. Norman', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey B. Norman
Chief of Police