

# General Order

## Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

November 17, 1987

NO.

600-34

REFERENCE:

Supersedes all prior departmental directives on this subject

**SUBJECT: HIGH-RISK VEHICLE APPROACHES**

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to decrease the likelihood of injury to both officers and citizens resulting from the need to apprehend high-risk suspects that are contained in a vehicle.

### 1 BACKGROUND

The Houston Police Department has identified two situations that pose a particularly high risk to both officers and citizens:

- a. Vehicle approaches by officers attempting apprehension of armed or possibly armed suspects
- b. Vehicle approaches by officers subsequent to a fresh pursuit where some, or all of the occupants, remain inside the vehicle.

Armed suspects in a vehicle have a superior tactical position with respect to officers attempting an approach. In addition, the approaching officers' line-of-sight may be disrupted by window tinting or the vehicle itself. The inability to view the occupants of a vehicle poses an extreme hazard to approaching officers as well as vehicle occupants.

### 2 HIGH-RISK VEHICLE APPROACH SITUATIONS

High-risk vehicle approach situations are when suspects in a vehicle are being confronted by officers and:

- a. Suspects are believed to possess deadly weapons.
- b. Suspects are believed to have been involved in criminal activity involving the use of deadly weapons.
- c. As a result of having engaged officers in fresh pursuit, as defined by General Order 600-4.

### 3 PROCEDURES

In the above situations officers will adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. Attempt to establish verbal communications with suspects, while maintaining a position of advantage.
- b. If verbal communications can be established, have the suspects exit the vehicle one at a time, using verbal commands.
- c. Each suspect should be secured before others are made to exit the suspect vehicle.

It is obvious that, on many occasions, the actions of HIGH-RISK suspects will not allow officers to maintain a position of advantage or establish verbal communications (i.e., when suspects flee on foot). The HIGH-RISK suspects' actions will dictate whether or not this policy can be used to enhance safety. If HIGH-RISK suspects refuse to comply with verbal commands given by officers maintaining a position of advantage (i.e., flee on foot), officers should then use their own discretion to make the apprehension in accordance with existing departmental procedures. The officers must have a back-up unit before attempting the arrest of HIGH-RISK suspects who refuse to exit a vehicle. A supervisor will make all scenes where a suspect's refusal to exit a vehicle has required the use of a back-up unit.



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Chief of Police