

CULVER CITY POLICE

GENERAL ORDER

10/23/2024

2024-13

TO: ALL SWORN PERSONNEL

FROM: THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SUBJECT: STARCHASE POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

This General Order was created to notify all department personnel regarding the new StarChase Policy.

STARCHASE PURSUIT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

The StarChase system allows an officer to remotely affix a GPS tracking device to a pursued (or about to be pursued) vehicle using an air pressure system to discharge the tracker from the front of a StarChase-equipped patrol car to the suspect vehicle. Once the tracker is affixed, its location can be tracked by an employee (StarChase Monitor) who is trained on how to use the system, using an electronic device through a web-based application. The use of the StarChase system can greatly enhance community safety for community members, officers, and suspects by mitigating the risks of pursuits. While StarChase will not eliminate pursuits completely, it can reduce the number of pursuits, and enhance safety during actual pursuits, while also increasing the ability for officers to apprehend suspects, recover stolen vehicles, recover stolen property, and recover other evidence of crimes.

REQUIRED TRAINING TO OPERATE STARCHASE EQUIPMENT:

Training on all aspects of StarChase shall be conducted by a certified StarChase Trainer and made available to all officers authorized to use StarChase. The training shall include:

- A. This policy and all other applicable policies.
- B. The importance of vehicle safety and protecting the public.
- C. StarChase operational procedures.
- D. StarChase deployment procedures.
- E. The authority to use and application of the mapping program via www.starchase.com.

F. Officers shall demonstrate proficiency in affixing a tag onto a vehicle.

Only personnel who have successfully completed department-approved training may use StarChase and/or log in to the StarChase system to monitor a deployed StarChase tag.

The Personnel and Training Sergeant shall ensure that all personnel who are authorized to use StarChase have been properly trained and certified and, when necessary, are retrained as necessary.

The Personnel and Training Sergeant shall ensure that all personnel who have been authorized to use StarChase receive recertification training every two years.

AUTHORIZED USE OF STARCHASE:

Deployment of the StarChase system may be done prior to the attempted stop or during the pursuit of any violator when the officer reasonably believes that a suspect, who has been given an appropriate signal to stop by a law enforcement officer, is attempting to evade them.

In addition, StarChase may also be deployed under the following circumstances:

- A. Prior to the attempted stop of any violator for a felony offense.
- B. When a violator is driving in a non-hazardous manner, but willfully failing to yield to emergency lights and siren.
- C. With approval from the watch commander or supervisor, StarChase can be deployed on vehicles involved in certain misdemeanor crimes that pose a threat to public safety such as but not limited to: Driving Under the Influence (DUI), Sexual battery, Assault, Criminal Threats, Domestic Violence, and Weapons possession.

Prior to deployment officers should make every attempt to:

- A. Advise dispatch of the impending use and provide them with their patrol vehicle number.
- B. Provide a detailed description of the suspect vehicle.
- C. Provide a detailed description of all occupants of the vehicle, if known.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

Except as specified below, officers shall use their own judgment regarding affixing a StarChase tag upon a vehicle and do not need prior approval from a supervisor:

- A. All safety decisions related to the discharge of a StarChase tag shall be evaluated by the operator prior to deployment. While supervisors may direct or approve the deployment of a StarChase-equipped patrol car in a pursuit and/or the discharge of a tag, the actual discharge of the device will be evaluated by the operator prior to deployment. The safety of officers, uninvolved persons, and persons inside the target vehicle shall be considered prior to deployment.

Some safety factors include:

1. Whether the officer can safely maneuver close enough to the suspect vehicle to come within the targeting range, as outlined in the StarChase training.
2. Whether any circumstance would indicate the device would not work (e.g.- weather conditions, suspect vehicle weaving, motorcycle, etc.).

3. StarChase-equipped patrol cars, with approval from a supervisor or watch commander, are authorized to respond to join a pursuit for potential use of the device.

B. StarChase tags will be deployed in accordance with training:

1. For the purpose of clarity of communications, radio traffic should identify the device as "StarChase". StarChase equipment in the patrol vehicle will only be operated by officers who have been trained in its use.

2. Once the StarChase tag has been successfully deployed, pursuing vehicles should generally terminate the pursuit and track the suspect vehicle from a safe distance with due regard for public safety.

3. StarChase GPS tracking tags shall only be monitored after a suspect vehicle actively flees from law enforcement. The StarChase GPS tracking tags will only be monitored for short-term tracking purposes during exigent circumstances (vehicle fleeing from law enforcement) and shall not be used for any type of long-term tracking purposes.

4. Officers will maintain constant communication with the StarChase Monitor for speed, direction, and location updates of the suspect vehicle.

5. The Field Supervisor or Watch Commander will coordinate with the StarChase Monitor to direct appropriate resources and officers to locations to apprehend the suspect(s).

6. No officer who is driving a moving patrol car should access the StarChase Monitor data, as this creates an unnecessary hazard.

C. Tactical Considerations:

1. The StarChase tag will not normally be deployed in the following situations unless the suspect poses a substantial safety risk to the public:

(a) Suspect vehicle is driving during heavy rain.

(b) Suspect vehicle is driving on exceptionally rough terrain.

(c) Suspect is operating a motorcycle.

(d) When pedestrians are between or in close proximity to the suspect vehicle and the StarChase-equipped vehicle.

D. In addition to the normal pursuit reporting procedures required by policy, Officers who use the StarChase system shall report all tag deployments.

1. Officers should make every attempt to retrieve any GPS tracking dart that is deployed unsuccessfully. If a GPS tracking dart is used to track a vehicle during a pursuit, the GPS tracking dart shall be removed from the suspect vehicle as soon as practical. Officers should include the GPS tracking dart serial number in their police report.

2. Supervisors shall ensure that the Activity Detail Report from the StarChase mapping website is attached to the related crime report.

3. Officers and/or Field Supervisors will be responsible for notifying the Watch Commander to issue replacement GPS tracking dart(s) on StarChase-equipped vehicles following a deployment.

DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION:

The Special Operations Bureau Captain is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of StarChase data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with Department procedures. All StarChase data downloaded to the AWS cloud-based system should be stored for no longer than 30 days. Thereafter, StarChase data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the cloud based system and booked into evidence.

The StarChase vendor will store the data (data hosting) and ensure proper maintenance and security of data stored in their data towers. The StarChase vendor will purge their data at the end of the 30 days of storage.

Restrictions on the use of StarChase Data:

Information gathered or collected, and records retained by the StarChase vendor will not be sold, accessed, or used for any purpose other than legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS:

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Culver City Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored StarChase data shall be processed in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) All StarChase data downloaded to the mobile workstation shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date, and time.
- (c) Persons approved to access StarChase data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relates to a specific criminal investigation or Department-related civil or administrative action.
- (d) StarChase data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes only.
- (e) Every StarChase Detection Browsing Inquiry must be documented by either the associated Culver City Police case number or incident number, and/or a reason for the inquiry.



Troy Dunlap
Assistant Chief of Police