



**NEWSLETTER**  
SPRING EDITION 2011

# HIGH SPEED VEHICULAR PURSUIT POLICIES RECEIVE EXTENSIVE REVIEW BY THE VIRGINIA CRIME COMMISSION



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2011

# Vehicular Pursuit Policies Reviewed

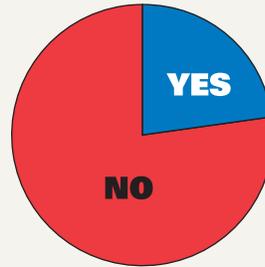
A recent study by crime commission staff of 109 of 134 Virginia law-enforcement agencies showed that 89 percent had written pursuit policies. Richmond, Henrico and other area police departments have a regional pursuit policy.

The commission's survey released last month found that the 1,227 pursuits reported by Virginia law-enforcement agencies in 2009 averaged: five minutes in length, 4 miles in distance and a speed of 72 mph. Most pursuit speeds ranged from 41 to 80 mph while one in seven pursuits range from 141 to 160 mph.

The majority of the policies recommend ending pursuits: when the risk of the pursuit outweighs the benefit of apprehension; in cases of poor weather, traffic or road conditions; when the suspect has been identified; or when equipment malfunctions in the officer's vehicle.

## RESULTS FROM VSI'S ONLINE POLL ON PURSUITS

Should Virginia pass a law limiting the speed of law enforcement vehicles during a pursuit?



**NO: 77%**  
**YES: 23%**

Virginia law exempts emergency vehicles from prosecution for violating traffic laws if the vehicle is used in the performance of public services, is operated under emergency conditions and has activated lights and sirens — all while having “due regard

for the safety of persons and property.”

More than 90 percent of agencies said they have at least some ability to communicate with other jurisdictions during a chase, and 85 percent have a written policy addressing pursuits that start in their jurisdiction that lead into another jurisdiction.

Ignoring a signal to pull over can be considered eluding police and earn a driver a misdemeanor or felony conviction depending on the circumstances.

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## Motorcycle Safety

Before you head out of your driveway, a few safety reminders are worth going over. To make sure your motorcycle is ready to go after winter storage, check all fluid levels, check tire pressures, and add some fresh gas. Charge up the battery, and hit the start button. With a well maintained motorcycle, this is about all that's necessary if you did your proper maintenance before winter storage.

When you head out on the road this spring, be aware. Know what's going on around you and give yourself enough space to safely navigate around dangers. Even in good weather in the middle of summer a motorcycle is almost invisible to cars. Motorcycle riding is one of the best ways to experience what our country has to offer. Be sure you enjoy it safely.



# HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY SAFE

We encourage you to take an active role in making your community safe by familiarizing yourself with some basic crime prevention tips to help minimize your chances of becoming a victim. Be aware of your surroundings and remain vigilant about you and your family's personal safety.

Remember, it only takes a moment for a dishonest person to seize an opportunity presented to him or her to commit a crime.

*How can you help?*

- Be alert
- Get to know your neighbors
- Check in on your elderly neighbors
- Get to know your Sheriff, deputy sheriffs and/or police officers in your area
- Get involved in the Neighborhood Watch Program
- Report suspicious activity — call 911
- Be a good witness — write down suspect and vehicle descriptions

## Virginia Automobile Fatalities Lowest in over 40 Years!

A recent report indicates that Virginia automobile accidents were at their lowest point since 1966. In fact, 2010 marked a 30 percent drop since 2007 of fatality deaths. Much of this decline is attributed to increased seat-belt use and of course stringent enforcement of traffic laws by Virginia's law enforcement officers.

The Virginia Highway Safety Office, as well as the state police and local law enforcement, have been working together to enforce programs such as "Click it or Ticket" seat belt use enforcement, "Operation Air, Land, and Speed," a speed reduction and enforcement plan, and "Checkpoint Strikeforce," which discourages drunk driving through media and law enforcement outlets. With your ongoing support, we'll continue to work toward improving the safety of Virginia drivers.

## SPRING TIME IS THE IDEAL TIME FOR PICKPOCKETS

Spring is definitely in the air.

Spring, in addition to ushering in wonderful weather and a resurgence of Cherry Blossoms to the great Commonwealth, also heralds in crowded theme parks, busy fairs, crammed concerts, teeming airports, and jam-packed rail stations.

And all of these events and situations present ideal surroundings for pickpockets. So here are a few **PICKPOCKET PREVENTION TIPS** to ensure you or your loved one will not be an easy target of someone looking for a quick payoff:

1. Don't show money or valuables in public. For men, carry your wallet in your front trouser pockets, or buttoned or zippered pockets. For women, do not carry your wallet in your purse.
2. Be aware of your surroundings, especially in crowded places. Pickpockets are counting on you paying more attention to everything else except for your wallet or purse.
3. Never pat your pocket to see if your wallet is there. This just lets the pickpocket know the exact location of your valuables.
4. Don't carry valuables in a backpack or fanny pack.
5. For women, use a purse that is difficult to open. A purse with a zipper or snaps is best.
6. Never leave your purse unattended on a store counter or in a grocery shopping cart.

**PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM  
VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
JOHN W. JONES**



On behalf of all of us at Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, I hope you and your family are eager to welcome the return of spring to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Of course many Virginia residents and their families will be taking to the roadways, enjoying the change of season, and exploring all of the wonderful family-oriented events, parks, and scenery Virginia has to offer.

So I encourage drivers to be extra vigilant and courteous, especially as this time of year brings many out-of-state visitors to our area.

This is also an ideal time for pickpockets and scam artists to target individuals for an easy payoff. So just be extra aware of your surroundings and use common sense if you're at an event that draws large crowds.

As always, to continue to be effective at combating crime, we need your help. And so I urge you to support local law enforcement efforts by reporting crimes and suspicious activity when you see them so that we can do our very best to keep this community a safe place to work, play, live, and raise our families.

It is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI. And to better serve you and other state-wide residents, I urge you to please complete the enclosed VSI Member Survey and return it today. If you have any concerns about crime prevention efforts in your community, I urge you to contact your Sheriff's office.

I deeply appreciate your continued support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones".

John W. Jones, Executive Director  
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701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706  
Richmond, VA 23219

**REMINDER: Scholarship  
Application Deadline  
Approaching**

One of the many benefits the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute offers to in state students is our scholarship program. This award — which is funded by generous VSI supporters like you — is granted to full-time or part-time students majoring in criminal justice and attending a Virginia state college or university. Last year alone, our Scholarship Committee awarded 61 scholarships to Virginia's youth.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from our website or picked up in your local Sheriff's office. In addition to the application, students must submit SAT scores (freshman applicants only), transcripts, and an essay. A full list of application materials can be found at [www.vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship](http://www.vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship). Applications are due May 1, 2011.



**We Want to Hear from You ...**

*Drop us a note, give us a call, or send us an email.*



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solicit donations by telephone.***