


DIVISION OF FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

February 13, 2019

TO: All Personnel

FROM: Colonel Gene S. Spaulding, 
Director

SUBJECT: StarChase Written Directive

This memorandum shall serve as a written directive governing the use of the StarChase GPS Pursuit Management System (StarChase) by members of the Florida Highway Patrol. This directive is intended to provide instruction to personnel who are assigned a patrol vehicle equipped with StarChase on the appropriate deployment and use of the technology for law enforcement and public safety purposes. This written directive shall be in effect until replaced by FHP Policy, and shall incorporate the procedures and definitions provided in FHP Policy 17.05 and the following:

- **StarChase GPS Pursuit Management System (StarChase)** – a vehicle-mounted compressed-air system containing two GPS tracking tags. The StarChase system is controlled and deployed via an operator's console mounted inside the patrol vehicle and has a target laser with up and down elevation aiming control. The system can also be deployed via a remote key FOB (remote control).

StarChase is designed to decrease the number of pursuit-related incidents by reducing the amount of time members are actively involved in pursuit operations. The StarChase compressed-air launcher deploys a Global Positioning System (GPS) embedded projectile (tag), which adheres to a suspect's vehicle and transmits its location every few seconds. A real-time mapping program enables monitored tracking from MCTs and regional communication centers (RCC) until the vehicle/suspect is intercepted.

The StarChase GPS tracking tag will only be deployed for the purpose of apprehending a fleeing vehicle. The system shall not be used for extended surveillance, intelligence-gathering purposes or a failure to stop situation as defined in FHP Policy 17.05. The system shall only be deployed when the member reasonably believes a felony has been, is being, or will be committed and the deployment of the system constitutes less of an immediate threat to public safety, law enforcement, and/or the offender than a pursuit.

- The Director or Director's designee shall authorize which patrol vehicles may have StarChase installed and which department personnel or vendors may install or modify StarChase equipment within a patrol vehicle.
- Only members who have been trained in the operation of the StarChase system will be authorized to deploy the system pursuant to this directive.
- The collection and use of any data originating/generated by the StarChase system shall conform with this written directive.

- All StarChase deployments shall occur as outlined by training.
- All records regarding StarChase training shall be sent to the Chief Training Officer for inclusion in the member's training file.
- If a pursuit is initiated in a location that has StarChase equipped patrol vehicles, the pursuing member or a supervisor shall inquire whether a StarChase unit is available.
- The decision to authorize a StarChase equipped patrol vehicle to join a pursuit in progress shall take into account the proximity of the unit to the pursuit and the likelihood that the unit will be able to intercept the fleeing vehicle.
- Supervisors, or the senior member involved if a supervisor is not available, shall monitor and direct units participating in a StarChase involved event. The regional duty officer shall monitor and inform all members of the location and direction of the fleeing vehicle.
- When the StarChase GPS tracking tag has been successfully deployed, pursuing members shall notify the RCC. Once the RCC or directing member confirms an active signal, pursuing members should, unless immediate apprehension is warranted, back away from the suspect vehicle, disengage their lights and siren, and follow the prompts from the monitoring supervisor and/or RCC.

After the deployment of the StarChase system and following the conclusion of the event, the GPS tracking tag shall be removed from the vehicle as soon as the situation safely allows. A pursuit report shall be completed and indicate the StarChase deployment in the "Outcome" section using the "other" box. The member deploying the StarChase GPS tag shall document the event with the offense incident report.

While supervisors may direct or approve the deployment of the StarChase system, safety decisions related to passing other involved vehicles and the actual deployment of the device rest solely upon the operating member whose decisions must take into account the safety of members, uninvolved persons, and persons inside the fleeing vehicle. Deploying members shall operate their vehicle in a safe and prudent manner at all times. Safety considerations may include but are not limited to:

- Whether the member can safely maneuver the patrol vehicle close enough to the suspect vehicle to be within targeting range.
- Whether any circumstance would indicate the device would not work (e.g. weather conditions, suspect vehicle weaving, etc.).

The StarChase system shall not be authorized for use on motorcycles, mopeds or ATVs under any circumstance.

Sharing of real-time GPS data with other law enforcement partners during an incident for the specific purpose of aiding in the apprehension of an actively fleeing subject is permitted. Departmental personnel should only disclose GPS data obtained by the technology to law enforcement personnel for official use and only with a legitimate investigatory need during an active event.