



**Government of the United States Virgin Islands
Virgin Islands Police Department**



Policy and Procedure Manual

Series ROC	Effective Date March 30, 2011	Review Date Annually	Policy Number 3.10
Subject SPIKE STRIP			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces-
Chapter 3 - RULES OF CONDUCT			
References USE OF FORCE (3.1)			

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish use and reporting guidelines for the utilization of the Spike Strip.

II. POLICY:

Vehicular pursuit of fleeing suspects presents a danger to the lives of the public, officers and suspects involved in the pursuit. It is the policy of this Department to protect all persons' lives to the extent possible when enforcing the law. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Department to assist members in the safe performance of their duties.

To effect these obligations, it shall be the policy of the Department to regulate the manner in which the use of a spike strip is undertaken and performed.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Spike Strip: a tire-puncturing apparatus which can be placed on a road surface in front of a moving vehicle such as an automobile. A special spike is used to first penetrate the tire's surface and then embed a hollow quill in the tread of the tire such that the tire will deflate at a controlled rate, rather than causing a blowout and subsequent loss of control of the vehicle.

IV. DEPLOYMENT GUIDELINES:

The deployment of a spike strip on a moving vehicle during the course of a pursuit is considered a use of force and shall be used in accordance with the Department's Use of Force Policy and pursuit policy.

A spike strip will be deployed only with the approval of a Supervisor. Supervisory approval may be given via 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatch personnel.

The supervisor must give consideration to all available information and authorize the use of the spike strip only when in his/her opinion the use of the spike strip is necessary to bring a pursuit to an end.

A. No officer, or other department employee shall deploy a spike strip unless the following criteria are met:

- 1) The officer has received the designated training for deployment of the spike strip established by the Department's Training Bureau.
- 2) A sergeant or higher-ranking officer has authorized the deployment of the spike strip. Exceptions from a sergeant or higher-ranking officer's approval are justified when in the totality of the situation or the circumstances surrounding the pursuit presents additional risks that clearly outweigh prior approval of the deployment of a spike strip.
- 3) The officer deploying the spike strip must advise pursuing vehicles, by radio, that a spike strip will be used, where the spike strip will be used, and any officer-controlled lane restrictions established.

B. With prior authorization, a spike strip may be deployed in stationary vehicle situations for the following purposes:

- 1) To prevent a vehicle(s) from being moved by a suspect attempting to flee a scene.
- 2) To prevent movement of a vehicle that is, or possibly will be evidence.

C. When and where spike strips should not be deployed.

- 1) To terminate pursuits involving motorcycles, other two wheel vehicles, or any vehicle transporting flammable or hazardous materials
- 2) Roadways bounded by steep descending embankments.
- 3) Areas of special events or activities.

- 4) Curves or locations where the safety of oncoming traffic cannot be ensured (blind hills and curves).
- 5) Construction zones
- 6) Pedestrians in the immediate area.

D. Requests by outside agencies for the use or deployment will be at the discretion of the supervisor.

V. DEPLOYMENT PROCESS:

The spike strip will be maintained as per instructions and secured within the trunk as designed.

After removal from the trunk the spike will be deployed and secured in accordance with training and manufacturer's instructions.

Remove the spike strip immediately after it has been run over to allow police vehicles to proceed.

Spike strips are not waterproof and must be wiped dry before they are returned to their storage rack.

The damaged portion of a spike strip used to successfully stop a vehicle involved in a pursuit should be placed in evidence. The undamaged portion(s) of a spike strip may be returned to service.

VI. REPORTING REQUIRED:

The deployment of the spike strip must be documented with a 1A Incident Report and a Response to Resistance Form on the spike strip usage by the deploying officers, and a copy sent to the Training Division.

Additionally a Response to Resistance Form must be generated as per current Policy: Reportable Use of Force.

In the event the deployment of a spike strip results in a fatality, the spike strip will be turned over to the Forensic Unit as evidence in any ensuing investigation.

VII. REPLACEMENT:

All damaged spike strip not placed in evidence should be turned into the Training Division for replacement.

VIII. OFFICER SAFETY CONSIDERATION:

Officers must use discretion in the proper positioning of the police vehicle to ensure their safety.

- A. Whenever possible, officers should place their police vehicles out of sight of the approaching suspect vehicle in order to reduce the chance of spike strip avoidance by the suspect vehicle.
- B. The positioning of the police vehicle(s) must allow for a lane of traffic to remain open, across which the spike strip may be deployed.
- C. An officer shall remain outside his/her police vehicle when deploying a spike strip.
- D. After preparing the spike strip for deployment, the officer must take a safe cover position away from the point of contact between the suspect vehicle and the spike strip. Remember, officer safety is a priority.
- E. The officer should get a safe distance away from the spike strip, and when possible the cover position should be behind a fixed object and something other than just the police vehicle.



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