



[Click here to go back to search results.](#)

Chico Enterprise-Record (Chico, CA)

January 29, 2002

Article ID: 10312262D1AB9DC8

Teen still critical; some details of pursuit revealed

ELEANOR CAMERON - Staff Writer

Kristina Priano, the 15-year-old Champion Christian School student injured in a traffic collision last Tuesday, was still listed in critical condition Monday.

The Chico teen was riding in a Ford Windstar minivan when it was struck by a stolen RAV 4 driven by an unlicensed 15-year-old runaway. The teen driver was charged with driving a stolen vehicle and evading a peace officer causing injury. Both are felony charges.

The accident at East Fifth and Palm avenues occurred either during a "code 3" pursuit by Chico police, or just after it was broken off. Details aren't available as the incident is under investigation.

A code 3 response involves the lights and sirens most people are familiar with.

"The pursuit lasted a total of two minutes," said Chico police Lt. Mike Weber.

The pursuit began on West Eighth Avenue. The RAV 4 was followed into the dark, poorly paved roads in the east avenues neighborhood between Mangrove Avenue and The Esplanade.

"The department recognizes it is a high-risk situation," Weber added. "We feel comfortable that the officers have good judgment. The last thing officers want is for anyone to get hurt."

Weber did reveal the officers were not alone in their decision-making. A supervisor was in the dispatch center and advised officers to break off the pursuit if speeds got too high.

The conditions officers must consider before hitting the lights are clear. Code 3 can be used when a situation involves potential serious injury, to prevent a violent crime, or "will enhance the likelihood of apprehending a fleeing felony suspect."

The driver of the RAV 4 fell into the last condition when officers encountered the vehicle.

The regulations also state the officers are not obligated to continue any pursuit.

"The officer is not forcing the driver to drive the way they do in a pursuit," Weber added. "Some put the pedal to the metal."

Weber said "Lt. **Rucker** and I have spoken with the family. We let them know if there is anything we can do for them to let us know." He added that tragedy has had an effect on officers in the department. "We can only pray that she gets better."

(c) 2002, 2004 Chico Enterprise-Record. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Media NewsGroup, Inc. by NewsBank, Inc.