

A settlement has been reached in a lawsuit against Arkansas State Police by a woman whose car a trooper intentionally caused to crash. An attorney for the plaintiff says part of the agreement involves a change in policy about when officers will use what's called a Precision Immobilization Technique. That's when police strike a fleeing car in a way that causes it to spin out of control, ending a pursuit. Attorney Andrew Norwood says the plaintiff didn't feel she was in a safe location to pull over alongside concrete barriers on U.S. 67. He said it's rare to get a law enforcement agency to make this kind of change.

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“...change that policy.”

He says the agreement calls for a PIT maneuver to only be used when a state trooper believes the action is objectively reasonable to protect a third person or an officer from death or serious physical injury. When Trooper Rodney Dunn attempted a traffic stop for speeding in July 2020, video from his dashboard camera shows Janice Harper slowing down and turning on her hazard lights, which Norwood says was intended to show she was looking for a safe place to pull over. After several minutes, the trooper forced Harper's car to crash. Norwood says Harper is still battling psychological trauma from the incident.

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“...is so egregious.”

He says additional training will include showing state troopers the video as an example of what not to do. Harper will also receive \$150-thousand dollars. A state police spokesman says the settlement has not been finalized.