



City of Battle Ground Police Department

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Mike Fort

From: Lt. Kim Armstrong

Date: 02/07/2021

Subject: 2020 Analysis of Battle Ground Police Vehicle Pursuits

RCW 46.61.024-Attempting to elude a police vehicle

Any driver of a motor vehicle who willfully fails or refuses to immediately bring his or her vehicle to a stop and who drives his or her vehicle in a reckless manner while attempting to elude a pursuing police vehicle, after being given a visual or audible signal to bring the vehicle to a stop, shall be guilty of a class C felony. The signal given by the police officer may be by hand, voice, emergency light, or siren. The officer giving such a signal shall be in uniform and the vehicle shall be equipped with lights and sirens.

BGPD Policy 200-04 Pursuit/Attempt to Elude Definition

An attempt by an officer in an emergency vehicle to apprehend a fleeing suspect in a motor vehicle who is actively attempting to elude apprehension. The officer must have a reasonable suspicion that the subject is aware of the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle. Attempt to elude is defined as any driver of a motor vehicle that drives his vehicle in a manner indicating a wanton or willful disregard for the lives or property of others while fleeing a pursuing police vehicle, after being given a visual or audible signal to bring the vehicle to a stop

BGPD Policy 200-04.30 VEHICLE PURSUITS

Pursuits other than those authorized by this policy are specifically prohibited. The primary considerations when determining whether to initiate, discontinue or terminate a vehicle pursuit or to conduct an emergency response, are public safety and the safety of officers. All personnel shall balance the necessity for immediate apprehension against the danger to life and property inherent in pursuit situations and situations requiring an emergency response.

BGPD Pursuit Review Process

A three level review takes place to analyze each pursuit to ensure they hold true to the law, to Battle Ground Police Department policy, and to best practice.

BGPD Pursuit Statistics and Trends

	2019	2020	Concluding Events	2019	2020
Total number of pursuits	4	0	Pursuits discontinued by officer	0	0
Day pursuits	3	0	Pursuits discontinued by sergeant	0	0
Night pursuits	1	0	Collision with a fixed object	1	0
Pursuits ruled "within policy"	4	0	Stop stick	1	0
Pursuits ruled "outside of policy"	0	0	Vehicle voluntarily stopped	2	0

There were no pursuits in 2020 by the Battle Ground Police Department. This is a significant decrease from 4 total pursuits in 2019.

Analysis of Vehicle Pursuits

The analysis of our pursuit data shows a 100% decrease in pursuits compared to the previous year (from 4 to 0). A slight decrease would be understandable due to the fact that officers responded to 4,142 less calls for service in 2020 than in 2019.

Our pursuit review process has not changed. All pursuits still require a review by a first line supervisor, a lieutenant and the Chief of Police.

I did a search of our report management system for case type "Elude" and located two cases that demonstrate our officers' understanding of our pursuit policy:

Case 20000797 involved an attempt by the officer to stop a suspect of a property crime. The officer activated his emergency lights and siren and the suspect vehicle began to pull over and then suddenly sped away at a high rate of speed, going into on-coming lanes of traffic. The officer recognized a pursuit would not be authorized under policy and articulated the danger to the public. The officer shut off his emergency lights and sirens, pulled over to the side of the road and notified dispatch he was discontinuing his attempt to stop the vehicle.

Case 20001269 involved a theft that had just occurred at Walmart where the responding officer spotted the suspect vehicle leaving Walmart. The officer activated her emergency lights and siren and the vehicle sped away, ran a stop sign and almost caused a collision. The officer made the appropriate decision not to pursue and stated she pulled over and shut down her emergency lights and siren. Based on the data, it is clear that Battle Ground officers understand the intent, guidelines and restrictions of the pursuit policy.

Recommendation

Based on this analysis, our pursuit policy is effective and I do not have any recommendations for revisions at this time. Our department should continue to participate in EVOC training as planned for 2021 with the smaller agencies and with the assistance of the Clark County Sheriff's Office. I could find no record of a review of our vehicle pursuit policy in PowerDMS for 2020. The policy review is usually conducted in conjunction with EVOC training which did not take place in 2020 due to Covid

restrictions. I recommend an annual review of our pursuit policy be created in PowerDMS with a yearly expiration to ensure the policy is reviewed each year regardless of EVOC taking place.

Our pursuit report form is still in a handwritten form and has not yet been revised to an electronic format. I recommend our pursuit form be revised to an electronic format with review sections similar to what is on our use of force report form. I would like to work with the sergeant overseeing traffic and traffic safety for suggested revisions.



Reviewed by Mike Fort, Chief of Police

2-17-21
Date