

## VEHICLE PURSUITS / ELUDING

**Vehicle Pursuit** - An event involving one or more law enforcement Officers attempting to apprehend a suspect, who is attempting to avoid arrest while operating a vehicle by using high-speed driving or other evasive tactics, such as driving off a highway, turning suddenly, or driving in a legal manner but willfully failing to yield to an Officer's emergency signal to stop.

**Attempting to Elude** - Refers to the actions of a vehicle operator who, after being given a visual or audible signal to bring the vehicle to a stop, fails or refuses to immediately stop the vehicle and drives in a reckless manner while attempting to elude a uniformed officer operating a pursuing police vehicle that is equipped with emergency lights and siren (RCW 46.61.024).

It is the policy of the Gig Harbor Police Department to weigh public safety first when determining whether to pursue a suspect. Pursuit and other driving training are regularly conducted in the classroom and at the driving course. During 2021, the Gig Harbor Police Department pursued seven vehicles. Each incident was examined and determined to be within policy.

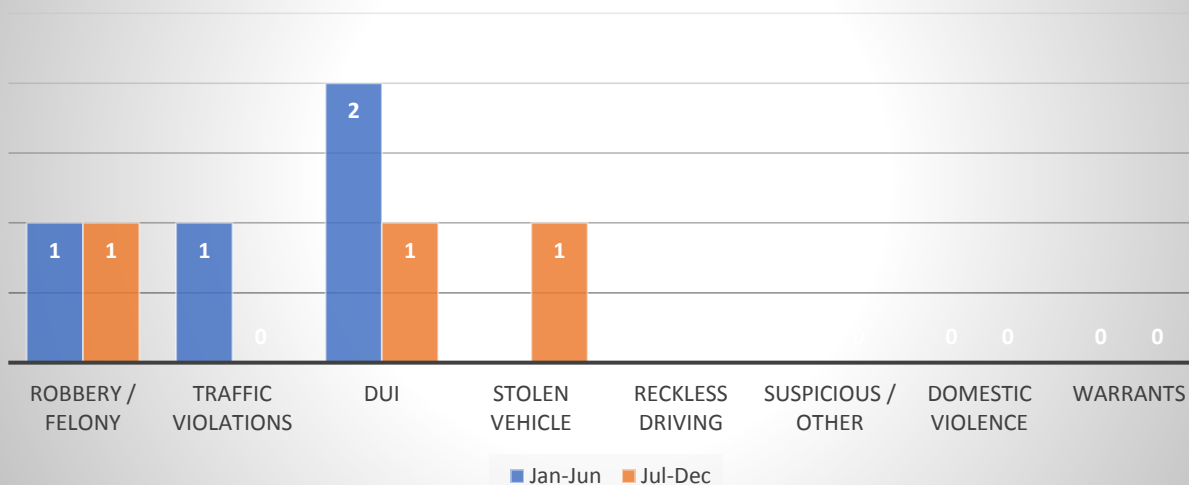
On July 25, 2021, the Washington State Legislation enacted legislation that changed when an officer may engage in a vehicular pursuit. The officer must have **probable cause** that a person in the vehicle committed or is committing a violent offense, sex offense, escape, or other offense where the public safety risks of failing to apprehend are greater than allowing the suspect to escape OR the officer must have reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a driving under the influence offense under RCW 46.61.502. Reasonable suspicion of driver impairment should be articulated from observations that occur before the initiation of a pursuit. The pursuit must also be necessary for the purpose of identifying or apprehending the person and supervisory approval must be obtained to engage in a pursuit.

The dates listed below are divided into two categories. Those events which occurred before July are depicted in blue, those which occurred from July forward are depicted in orange.

## 2021 PURSUIT STATISTICS GIG HARBOR POLICE



## 2021 PRECIPITATING EVENTS FOR PURSUITS GIG HARBOR POLICE



### Review and Analysis of Vehicle Pursuits – 2021

All pursuits are reviewed by first level supervisors and then command staff to ensure they comply with law, policy, and best practice.

In 2021, seven pursuits occurred with three occurring after the new police reform laws were implemented. There were four pursuits prior to July 2021. All pursuits during 2021 were determined to be within policy.

After a thorough review, the department determined that officers routinely and appropriately terminated pursuits once the risk outweighed the need for apprehension and when the pursuit did not meet standards.