

TACOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Intra-Departmental Memorandum



TO: Avery L. Moore
Chief of Police

ASB #: 23-005

FROM: Lieutenant Gary J. Roberts *GJR*
Internal Affairs Section

DATE: February 21, 2023

THROUGH: Captain Eric Scripps *ES*
Support Services Division Commander

Assistant Chief Crystal Young-Haskins *CYH*
Administrative Services Bureau Commander

SUBJECT: 2022 PURSUIT ANALYSIS REPORT

The Tacoma Police Department uses the IAPro/BlueTeam database to track Department incidents, to include Vehicle Pursuits. Each vehicle pursuit is reviewed and evaluated – first by a field supervisor, then by a Shift Commander, and finally by the respective Division Captain.

The Tacoma Police Department recognizes that under [RCW 46.61.035](#) (see RCW for legislative language in its entirety), officers have the legal right and duty to apprehend offenders who flee from the police and present a threat to the public. Every Department member engaging in a pursuit must be able to articulate what conditions were present that justified the pursuit.

Tacoma Police Policy defines a vehicle pursuit as an active attempt by an officer to apprehend a suspect who willfully fails to immediately bring his or her vehicle to a stop and drives in a reckless and evasive manner, while attempting to elude a pursuing police vehicle.

In mid-2021, the State of Washington enacted legislation (House Bill 1054) that placed restrictions on law enforcement Vehicle Pursuits and other tactics statewide (see House Bill 1054 and [RCW 10.116.060](#) for legislative language in its entirety). At that time, the Department conducted legal update training to ensure Department members were aware of the State's new legislation and that the Department's Policy reflected the legislation.

Our Department Policy is in line with the State of Washington's legislation. Our Department Policy requires supervisory approval to initiate a pursuit. Our policy limits officers from initiating a pursuit to incidents where there is probable cause to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed, or is committing, a violent offense or sex offense, or the person poses an imminent threat to the safety of others, and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered to be greater than the safety risks of the vehicular pursuit under the circumstances (see TPD Policy P3.2.3.A for complete language).

"To create a safe and secure environment in which to live, work, and visit by working together with the community, enforcing the law in a fair and impartial manner, preserving the peace and order in our neighborhoods, and safeguarding our constitutional guarantees."

The following analysis of the 2022 Vehicle Pursuits is based on information retrieved from the IAPro database.

Pursuits	2020	2021	2022
Total Pursuits	9	1	20*
Number of officers involved	19	3	59
Most frequent hours	0001-0200 2	2201-2400 1	1401-1600 5
Policy Compliant	8	1	18
Policy Non-Compliant	1	-	-
Pending	-	-	1
Deemed to be Unfounded as a Pursuit	n/a	n/a	1*
Injuries: Officer	-	-	-
Injuries: Suspects	-	-	1
Injuries: Third Party	-	-	1

All the pursuits in 2022 took place within the City of Tacoma. One pursuit involved another police agency – the Federal Way Police Department.

Reason Initiated:

	2020		2021		2022	
Assist outside agency	1	11%	-	-	1	5%
Felony – Person	7	78%	1	100%	18	90%
Felony – Property	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traffic – Criminal	-	-	-	-	1	5%
Traffic – Non-Criminal	1	11%	-	-	-	-

The 2022 pursuits were entered into BlueTeam and reviewed by Department supervisors. Of the 20 pursuits, 18 were deemed to be Within Department Policy.

*One pursuit was reviewed by the officer's chain-of-command and determined to have been "Unfounded" as a pursuit, (22PUR-0001). Initially, the pursuit was thought to be outside of policy and a complaint against the officer was generated (22COM-0001). The complaint was investigated by the officer's supervisor. In reviewing the supervisor's complaint investigation, the Bureau Commander wrote, *"I reviewed the associated statements and reports. I do not concur that this was a pursuit. I conclude that PPO Stephenson was attempting to conduct a traffic stop and the suspect continued on for 1 block after running a red light and crashed. PPO Stephenson was attempting to catch up to the vehicle to run it's license plate when the suspect vehicle conducted a traffic violation. At no time was there a clear opportunity to conclude that the subject would not comply with the traffic stop before the collision."* Both the Division Commander and the Bureau Assistant Chief found the complaint to be "Not-Sustained," and the pursuit was given a finding of Unfounded by the Bureau Chief.

Lastly, one pursuit is pending a finding as it is related to an officer-involved shooting, (22PUR-0003).

The Department is in the process of acquiring in-car dash cameras, a transformation and transparency standard set forth in City of Tacoma Resolution #40622. In 2022, however, our vehicles were not equipped with them.

Body worn camera (BWC) videos are associated with 16 of the pursuits that were reviewed by supervisors. The four pursuits that do not have associated BWC video available were conducted by our Special Investigation Section who at the time did not have body worn cameras. Special Investigations is in the process of getting outfitted with complete BWC systems for their officers.

Event that Concluded the Pursuit:

	2020		2021		2022	
Terminated/Canceled	2	22%	-	-	4	20%
PIT Maneuver	3	33%	-	-	4	20%
Stop Sticks	-	-	-	-	1	5%
TPD vehicle collision	-	-	-	-	0	-
Suspect stopped vehicle	1	11%	1	100%	2	10%
Suspect vehicle crashed	2	22%	-	-	5	25%
Suspect vehicle eluded pursuit	1	11%	-	-	4	20%

Five of the 20 Vehicle Pursuits (25%) concluded when the suspect vehicle crashed. In one incident, the suspect vehicle crashed into the center median of the roadway. In four of the pursuits, the suspect vehicle crashed into uninvolved vehicles. One of those, however, was ultimately determined by the Bureau chain-of-command to be “Unfounded” as a pursuit. That “Unfounded” pursuit (22PUR-0001) was left as a pursuit in this analysis since that was its original classification in IAPro. None of the collisions involved serious injuries to suspects or uninvolved community members.

Some minor damage can be expected to police vehicles being used as a tool regarding the Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT); however, no police vehicles were involved in a collision during these pursuits. No officers were injured during any of these pursuits.

ANALYSIS

Patterns and Trends

In 2022, the number of pursuits the Department was involved in rose from the prior two years – from 9 in 2020, 1 in 2021, to 20 in 2022.

Two of the pursuits in 2020 were terminated by officers compared to four in 2022. The only pursuit in 2021 concluded by the suspect stopping on their own.

Pursuits in 2022 occurred during every shift, with the most (seven) occurring during the Day/Swing Shift overlap hours.

- Day Shift: 0600-1600 hours
- Swing Shift: 1300-2300 hours
- Graveyard Shift: 2000-0600 hours

Shift	2020	2021	2022
Day Shift	1	-	2
Day/Swing Shift Overlap	1	-	7
Swing Shift	2	-	2
Swing/Graveyard Shift overlap	1	-	6
Graveyard Shift	4	1	3
Total	9	1	20

No pursuits took place on a Wednesday. A pursuit took place on every other day of the week, with the most (six) occurring on Tuesdays.

In 2022, the City of Tacoma investigated a record number of homicides along with other violent crimes. Several of these pursuits involved members of our investigation teams obtaining probable cause for the arrest and locating of subjects wanted in connection to homicides. One pursuit (22PUR-003) concluded with an officer-involved shooting. In that case, the subject survived and is in custody while the criminal process proceeds. Due to it being related to an officer-involved shooting, that pursuit is pending a finding.

Annual Review of the Department's Vehicle Pursuit Policies and Reporting Procedures

During the annual review of all Vehicle Pursuits, the Department's current Policies and Procedures were reviewed. The Department Pursuit Policy (P3.2.2) is in compliance with state law. Also in 2022, annual training needs were addressed to include EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operations Course) Cadre Development training for EVOC instructors; EVOC training for Non-Operations personnel; and PIT training, as needed (typically for newly hired officers).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2023, the Department will continue to provide departmental training that is required per CALEA and as needed for State legislative changes. This will include EVOC training for the Administrative Services Bureau and the Investigations Bureau in the first half of the year, and EVOC training for the Operations Bureau and Special Investigations in the second half of the year. The Department will continue to monitor collisions involving on-duty police employees and address the specific training needs identified with involved Department members as well as with all members, if trends are identified. Throughout 2023, the Department will also continue with the process of converting all Policies and Procedures into the Lexipol format. The conversion to Lexipol will help with the timeliness of any changes or addendums that need to be made.

GJR:man