



Poulsbo Police Department

Honor * Integrity * Teamwork * Professionalism

Ron Harding, Chief of Police

2020 Use of Force and Vehicle Pursuit Analysis

USE OF FORCE

The Poulsbo Police Department reviews every use of force. When an officer uses force, it is documented in their report and a supervisor is notified. The supervisor will review all related documentation, review body camera video, and interview involved parties when necessary. The supervisor will complete a policy review, which is forwarded through the Chief to ensure the actions of the officer hold true to current law, policy, and best practice.

In 2020, the Poulsbo Police Department documented and reviewed eight incidents requiring officers to use force.¹ Of the eight, all eight were found to be within policy.

Use of Force: Type of Force	
Physical Control	6
Taser: Probe deployment	
Taser: Contact deployment	
OC/Chemical	
Impact Weapons (Baton)	
Personal Strikes	*1
Impact Munitions (Bean Bag)	
Vascular Neck Restraint	
Vehicle	1
Firearm	
<i>*(1) Accidental hand strike when pulling away</i>	
Total	8

Use of Force by Ethnicity	
Caucasian	8
African American	0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0
Asian	0
Hispanic	0
Unknown/Other	0
Total	8

¹ Poulsbo Police Department Policy - §300 - Use of Force

Use of Force by Gender	
Male	7
Female	1
Unknown	0

Use of Force - Associated Factors	
Intoxicated/Drugs	3
Mental Health	5

Use of Force - Call Types	
Officer Initiated Contact (car stop)	0
Misdemeanor Crime Response	4
Felony Crime Response	2
Other Response (i.e. mental health)	2

		Treatment			
Use of Force Injuries		Injuries (visible or complaint of pain)	On scene Aid	Hospital	Deceased
Suspect	1	1			
Officer	3	2	1		

Additional Notes/Trends:

- There were a total of 8 uses of force for 2020, down from 12 in 2019²
- Poulsbo Police Officers responded to 8,403 calls for service³
- Percent of 2020 incidents in which force was used: 0.095%

ANALYSIS:

The way we analyze and evaluate all uses of force is critical. It assists in developing training plans, ensuring accountability of our employees, and most important, it builds trust between our department and the community.

In 2020, we maintained focus on training as an agency. Some of the training directly related to the use of force included: Daily Training Bulletins on policy, defensive tactics (OC Spray and Baton), Less-lethal training (Taser & 40mm re-certification), handgun and rifle qualifications, and classroom lectures on the use of force, deadly force, and the expectations for our employees.

²2019 Use of Force Analysis

³Kitsap 911 – 2020 Law Enforcement Activity Report

In 2020, we had a total of eight uses of force. This was roughly a 40% decrease from 2019. One incident resulted in minor injury to the suspect (no hospitalization required). Three incidents resulted in minor injury to the officers. The remaining four uses of force had no reported injuries.

Most applications of force (6 of 8) involved officers using physical control (taking uncooperative suspect to the ground). This is a tactic used to control aggressive or uncooperative suspects so they can be taken into custody.

The use of force listed as “vehicle” was the officer placing their front push bars onto the suspect’s stopped front driver side fender to stop the suspect vehicle from fleeing once again.

The use of force listed a “personal strike” was incidental contact during the arrest of a suspect in which the officer was pulling away to defend themselves from suspect attack. It was documented by the officer as a use of force out of an abundance of caution. Again, no injuries were reported by the subject.

There were no significant trends noted as part of this analysis.

DISPLAYS OF FORCE

The Poulsbo Police Department takes a conservative approach in our documentation and review of all uses of force. This includes documenting any time an officer displays force, such as pointing a firearm or Taser at a suspect, without any other physical force being applied. Our intent is to emphasize the impact of our decision-making process and to promote an understanding of the significance of our actions, even when physical force is not used.

There were 4 “displays of force only” in 2020. In each of the cases, they were unrelated to any of the uses of force analyzed in this report. All were found to be consistent with state law and department policy.

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 siren.

Poulsbo Police Department Policy §307 – Vehicle Pursuits

- 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 and officer’s emergency signal to stop.

Our policy allows officers to initiate a pursuit when it is reasonable to believe that a suspect, who has been given an appropriate signal to stop by a law enforcement officer, is attempting to evade arrest or detention by fleeing in a vehicle. There are numerous factors for the officer and supervisors to consider such as the risk to community safety should the suspect escape, and whether other methods would be safer and more effective.

All pursuits are reviewed by a supervisor and command staff to ensure they hold true to the law, policy, best practice and department expectations.

In 2020 the pursuit policy was modified to restrict pursuits when there is no supervisor on duty. Officers are not allowed to initiate a pursuit if there is no supervisor on duty unless the offense is a violent felony or the officer can articulate the risk to the public was greater than the inherent dangers of a pursuit.

Pursuit Statistics	
Day	
Night	5
Within Policy	4
Policy Violation	1

Reasons for Pursuit	
Traffic Violation	4
Misdemeanor	
Felony	1
Other Activity	

Concluding Events	
Discontinued by Officer	2
Discontinued by Supervisor	
Collision	2
Stop Stick	1
Vehicle Voluntarily Stopped	

ANALYSIS:

The analysis of our vehicle pursuits in 2020 shows the same number of pursuits as occurred in 2019 (5). Four of the pursuits were determined to be in policy, one was determined to be out of policy. In two of the five pursuits, officers used their judgement and discretion and self-terminated the pursuit after balancing the risk to the public of continuing the pursuit versus the need to apprehend the suspect.

All pursuits occurred during the night shift hours (6:00 p.m. through 6:00 a.m.) Only one pursuit involved the application of a “stop stick” pursuit intervention device. One stopped because of collision by the suspect and one was stopped by utilizing a PIT maneuver.

The pursuit found to be out of policy resulted in verbal and written counseling for the officer. It also resulted in the modification of policy mentioned above.

Ron Harding
Chief of Police