



City of Battle Ground Police Department

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Mike Fort

From: Lt. Kim Armstrong

Date: 4/9/2020

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Subject: 2019 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

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

There were 4 pursuits in 2019 by the Battle Ground Police Department. It should be noted that 6 pursuit reports were completed and reviewed but 2 of the pursuits involved second officers who also completed pursuit reports on the same incident. This is an increase from 2 pursuit incidents in 2018.

3 of the pursuits were initiated for violent felony crimes and 1 pursuit was initiated for a misdemeanor traffic violation (reckless driving). Two of the three pursuits initiated for violent felony crimes were originally initiated by outside agencies and Battle Ground officers assisted.

No officers or suspects were injured and no damage to non-suspect property as a result of a pursuit.

Analysis of Vehicle Pursuits

The analysis of our pursuit data shows a 100% increase in pursuits compared to the previous year (from 2 to 4). All pursuits were reviewed by a first line supervisor, lieutenant and the Chief of Police. All pursuits were found to be within policy, law and best practices. Battle Ground Police Department officers appear to be exercising good judgement in knowing when they can initiate a pursuit. Only one pursuit was terminated by the officer. The officer stated the risk to the public to continue the pursuit did not outweigh the benefit of apprehending the suspect. Based on the data, it is clear that Battle Ground officers and supervisors 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 2020 with the smaller agencies and with the assistance of the Clark County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, our department should continue to provide an annual review of our pursuit policy which is scheduled in the fall to coincide with the regional EVOC training. The policy review is conducted via PowerDMS and is also reviewed as part of the EVOC training.