



Poulsbo Police Department

Honor * Integrity * Teamwork * Professionalism

Ron Harding, Chief of Police

2023 Use of Force and Vehicle Pursuit Analysis

12/11/2023

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 to current law, policy, and best practice.

In 2023, the Poulsbo Police Department documented and reviewed 10 incidents that resulted in some form of forcing being applied to a suspect.¹ Of the 10, 9 were within policy.

Use of Force: Type of Force ²	
Physical Control	2
Taser: Display/Probe deployment	2
Taser: Contact deployment	0
OC/Chemical	0
Impact Weapons (Baton)	0
Personal Strikes	1
Impact Munitions (Bean Bag)	0
Vascular Neck Restraint	0
Vehicle	0
Firearm Display	5
Total ²	10

Use of Force by Ethnicity	
Caucasian	7
African American	2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0
Asian	1
Hispanic	0
Unknown/Other	0
Total	10

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

² May be Multiple/Type Use of Force Per Incident

Use of Force by Gender	
Male	7
Female	3
Unknown	0

Use of Force – (Other Response)	
Intoxicated/Drug Use	1
Mental Health	1

Use of Force - Call Types	
Officer Initiated Contact (car stop)	1
Misdemeanor Crime Response	1
Felony Crime Response	8
Other Response	0

		Treatment			
Use of Force Injuries		Injuries (visible or complaint of pain)	On scene Aid	Hospital	Deceased
Suspect	1	1	1		0
Officer	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Notes/Trends:

- There were a total of 10 uses of force for 2023, down from 21 in 2022¹
- Poulsbo Police Officers responded to approximately 13,000 calls for service in 2023, a 38% increase from 2022²

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 2023, 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), handgun and rifle qualifications, and classroom lectures on the use of force, deadly force, and the expectations for our employees.

In 2023, the Poulsbo Police Department used force to apprehend a suspect 10 times. 1 suspect had non incapacitating injuries and ambulance crews treated the subject. One use of force was outside policy due to the officer pointing his firearm at the subject momentarily during a high-risk contact. The officer received remedial training regarding the policy for displaying weapons during the arrest process.

¹2023 Use of Force Analysis

²Kitsap 911 – 2023 Law Enforcement Activity Report

Most applications of force (7 of 10) involved officers using a display of either a taser or a firearm as the means to take a suspect into custody. This is a tactic used to discourage aggressive or uncooperative suspects so they can be placed in handcuffs without the use of physical force such as a takedown.

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. We intend 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.

VEHICLE PURSUITS

RCW [10.116.060](#) : Vehicular pursuit.

(1) A peace officer may not engage in a vehicular pursuit, unless:

(a)(i) There is probable cause to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a violent offense or sex offense as defined in RCW [9.94A.030](#), or an escape under chapter [9A.76](#) RCW; or

(ii) There is reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a driving under the influence offense under RCW [46.61.502](#);

(b) The pursuit is necessary for the purpose of identifying or apprehending the person.

(c) 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; and

(d)(i) Except as provided in (d)(ii) of this subsection, the officer has received authorization to engage in the pursuit from a supervising officer and there is supervisory control of the pursuit. The officer in consultation with the supervising officer must consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit. The supervisor must consider the justification for the vehicular pursuit and other safety considerations, including but not limited to speed, weather, traffic, road conditions, and the known presence of minors in the vehicle, and the vehicular pursuit must be terminated if any of the requirements of this subsection are not met;

(ii) For those jurisdictions with fewer than 10 commissioned officers, if a supervisor is not on duty at the time, the officer will request the on-call supervisor be notified of the pursuit according to the agency's procedures. The officer must consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit, the justification for the vehicular pursuit, and other safety considerations, including but not limited to speed, weather, traffic, road conditions, and the known presence of minors in the vehicle. The officer must terminate the vehicular pursuit if any of the requirements of this subsection are not met.

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(2) A pursuing officer shall comply with any agency procedures for designating the primary pursuit vehicle and determining the appropriate number of vehicles permitted to participate in the vehicular pursuit and comply with any agency procedures for coordinating operations with other jurisdictions, including available tribal police departments when applicable.

(3) A peace officer may not fire a weapon upon a moving vehicle unless necessary to protect against an imminent threat of serious physical harm resulting from the operator's or a passenger's use of a deadly weapon. For the purposes of this subsection, a vehicle is not considered a deadly weapon unless the operator is using the vehicle as a deadly weapon and no other reasonable means to avoid potential serious harm are immediately available to the officer.

(4) For purposes of this section, "vehicular pursuit" means an attempt by a uniformed peace officer in a vehicle equipped with emergency lights and a siren to stop a moving vehicle where the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be aware that the officer is signaling the operator to stop the vehicle and the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be willfully resisting or ignoring the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle by increasing vehicle speed, making evasive maneuvers, or operating the vehicle in a reckless manner that endangers the safety of the community or the officer.

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 legally but willfully failing to yield to an officer's emergency signal to stop.

Our policy only allows officers to initiate a pursuit under the new legal restrictions noted above. 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.

ANALYSIS:

There were no police pursuits initiated by the Poulsbo Police in 2023. New restrictions on patrol officers under RCW 10.116.060 were followed throughout the year.

Ron Harding

Chief of Police

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