

2020 Pursuit Analysis

PURPOSE

This report presented to Command to provide information relating to motor vehicle pursuits for the calendar year 2020. The data and analysis presented is intended to identify potential trends and provide information as to the circumstances under which pursuits, and the decisions therein, occur. This report is intended to present information that is useful in determining if the pursuits are meeting organizational objectives and Command intent, while recognizing these events are of significant interest to the community.

DATA ANALYZED

Each pursuit was analyzed for multiple criteria including length of pursuit, time of day of pursuit, reason for the pursuit, how the pursuit was terminated, collisions related to pursuit and how many pursuits resulted in injury to any party.

In addition to previous years' data points, this year a look back at some other potentially relevant data was also conducted. Added to the analysis was a comparison of the pursuit data against the activity level of the agency. Metrics used to determine this were items such as number of police incidents, number of case reports generated, number of arrests, traffic stops and personnel strength. The intention with including this data for 2020, as well as comparing the same metrics against data going back through 2016, is that trends that appear should be balanced and analyzed against other potentially influential factors for any given segment of time.

FINDINGS

Total Vehicle Pursuits for Kent Police officers in 2020 was 116. For reference, there were 118 pursuits in 2019 and 118 in 2018. This indicates roughly a flat trend of pursuit occurrence over those three years. Given the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as public protests facing police agencies, this report has significant dissimilarities from prior years' reports.

A review of the data in this report indicated that Kent officers are carrying out the department's Mission of Aggressively Fighting Crime, While Serving with Compassion and doing so within the law and policy the vast majority of the time.

Reason for Pursuit

The majority of pursuits, 59%, were initiated for a traffic related offense in 2020. This indicates officers are looking for, and finding, traffic related infractions and crimes and these observations are the single biggest contribution to the number of pursuits initiated. It would be a generalization to say felonies are more serious than misdemeanors in the case of traffic related offenses due to the great danger to the public that can potentially arise from a traffic misdemeanor such as a DUI. However, it is likely worth further analysis to determine what some of the actual outcomes of what on the surface appear to be pursuits for what could be considered a relatively low-level crime.

REASON		
TRAF INF	31	27%
TRAF MISD	30	26%
TRAF FEL	7	6%
CRIM MISD	7	6%
CRIM FEL PROP	26	22%
CRIM FEL PERS	12	10%
SUSP CIRCUM	3	3%

Time of Day

The time of the day was divided into traditional day shift hours, swing shift hours and graveyard, however between the hours of 0800 and 0100 crews overlap. Therefore, this information should not be read as reflecting the habits of specific crews, only time of day. There are many factors that impact pursuits including volume of traffic, types of crimes being committed, special emphasis patrols that tend to occur at night, and weather conditions that should be considered.

0000-0600=29 (25%)

0600-1200=20 (17%)

1200-1800=29 (25%)

1800-0000=38 (33%)

The analysis of time of day pursuits as compared to prior years indicates that more pursuits occurred in the "daytime" or the hours between 0800-1800. For example, in 2019, 31 pursuits started during those hours where in 2020, 49 pursuits were recorded during those same hours. These numbers are likely related to traffic decreases from the COVID pandemic where WSDOT traffic mobility data indicated there were far less vehicles on the roadway for a large portion of the year. Further analysis may indicate that officer's decision to pursue was significantly influenced by the presence of other drivers in 2020.

Terminations

69 (59%) pursuits were discontinued by officers or supervisors with officers self-terminating 43% of the time. This is an increase in self-terminated pursuits from 2019 when it was 32% of the time, or an 11% increase in self-terminations.

Officers terminated their own pursuits for suspect actions that endangered the public, losing sight of the suspect vehicle and the type of crime or infraction not being serious enough to continue. Overall, the officers showed good analysis skills and made sound judgement in this area.

Officer discontinued	50
Supervisor discontinued	19
Suspect Gave Up	7
Collision	16
PIT	11

Collisions

The total number of pursuits involving a collision= 29 (25%)

Injuries

No Injuries Involved= 92 (79%)

Injuries Involved = 24 (21%)

The breakdown of those injuries by involvement:

Injuries to Officer= 3

Injuries to suspects= 14

Injuries to 3rd parties= 7

A significant majority of pursuits did not involve a collision or any injury however it is clear that pursuits are one of the most dangerous forms of police activity with a one in five chance of injury for 2020.

Length of Pursuit

68 pursuits, or 59%, were two miles long or less. 85 pursuits, or 73%, were four miles long or less. It is a generally accepted fact that the longer the pursuit the higher the potential for a collision to occur. The average length of a Kent pursuit involving a collision was 3.24 miles for 2020.

Of note, our longest pursuit of 35.8 miles ended with the suspect losing control and going into a ditch. Although this was not counter as a collision it easily could have been considered one and due to the length of the pursuit would have changed the number of the average length of pursuits resulting in a collision.

Less than .3 miles	7
.3 to .5 miles	12
.6 to 1 mile	20
1.1 to 2 miles	29
2.1 to 4 miles	17
Over 4 miles	31
Total	116

Longest distance pursuit= 35.8

Shortest distance pursuit= .1 miles

Average distance of pursuit= 3.304 miles

New data and years' past comparison

Below are some additional datapoints and metrics that were added to potentially provided additional context in evaluating potential trends that are not part of the Pursuit Report form or the Pursuit Analysis database.

Personnel strength - (This was the number of sworn personnel working for the agency on January 1st of the indicated year.)

	Number of Personnel	Pursuits	Average Pursuits/ Person
2016	141	62	.4397
2017	142	87	.6127
2018	146	119	.815
2019	151	118	.7815
2020	153	116	.758

Number of police incidents

	Incidents	Pursuits	Incident/Pursuit
2016	96703	62	1559.73
2017	95010	87	1092.07
2018	96894	119	814.24
2019	98502	118	834.76
2020	90518	116	780.33

Case reports

	Case Reports	Pursuits	Cases/Pursuit	Adjusted w/ Online reports
2016	20270	62	326.94	359.18
2017	19559	87	224.82	355.11
2018	18844	119	158.35	184.67
2019	18696	118	158.44	184.57
2020	16424	116	141.59	173.22

Note: Online case numbers for 2016 through 2020 were 1999, 2548, 3132, 3083 and 3669, respectively.

Arrests

	Arrests	Pursuits	Arrest/Pursuit
2016	4718	62	76.1
2017	5028	87	57.79
2018	4640	119	38.99
2019	5099	118	43.21
2020	3857	116	33.25

Traffic Stops

	Traffic Stops	Pursuits	Traffic Stop/ Pursuit
2016	8984	62	144.90
2017	7591	87	87.25
2018	9933	119	83.47
2019	11167	118	94.64
2020	7843	116	67.61

In an analysis of the additional data added to this report the increase in pursuits over the past five years appears to align with some other increases in "business level", but it is not evident that is the case in all the metrics. Due to variations in business dynamics inside the organization and public protests, as well as impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, caution should be exercised in efforts to identify trends from this data at this point. The data is only provided to give greater context to determine if it should be included going forward and if it is helpful in providing context.

Items of Note

There were two pursuits identified as being outside of policy in 2020.

Training Completed - During 2020 the EVOC instructors provided two main training opportunities. The first was a skills course that was constructed at the training center around the fire tower. The focus of this course was slow speed vehicle maneuvers that emphasized negotiating tight spaces and backing maneuvers. The second opportunity was PIT training at Pacific Raceways. This training certified several new officers and gave seasoned officers a chance to practice their skill in conducting safe, effective pursuit intervention techniques. It also reinforced vehicle pinning techniques to keep the pursuit from reinitiating.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a training analysis is provided to determine if there are training opportunities that could be used to ensure officer actions and trends in pursuits are in keeping with organizational objectives and Command intent. In addition, an administrative analysis is provided to determine if the report is providing relevant data as well identifying potential policy or procedure revisions, that are in keeping with organizational objectives and Command intent.

Training analysis

The training conducted in 2020 for EVOC was not impacted by the pandemic as much as other training in the department. In fact, EVOC training was added to the schedule with the cancellation of so many other events. In the past two years the EVOC team has provided training opportunities that are shorter duration and higher frequency than in the past. This has been possible through the utilization of local facilities such as our training center and Pacific Raceways. It is recommended in 2021 we continue to leverage these facilities and if possible, increase their frequency. Although there may be some additional costs associated to doing so, they are likely far outweighed by costs associated with a lack of training in such a high liability skill.

The City Risk Management Department has been key to offsetting these costs and in 2021 looks to have stepped up again by funding an instructor update class at Pacific Raceways. The skills learned at these updates have been very useful to the instructor cadre given the perishable nature of any psychomotor task.

Although local facilities have been key to effective and efficient training, the EVOC cadre also recognizes the benefit of variation and would suggest periodic use of the WSP facility in Shelton from time to time. The preliminary notion is two years training utilizing local facilities at a higher frequency and then using WSP every third year for a single, longer duration event.

The EVOC cadre will be undertaking an in depth look at the data in this report to support Command Intent with training going forward. The preliminary goal is to disseminate the information from this report and apply it to the next year's training. Additionally, the cadre will look to identify a long term EVOC training strategy for the next four-five years.

Administrative analysis

Collision data directly related to pursuits is captured in this document however, other driving related behavior regarding most collisions is left to separate review processes. It may be worthwhile to expand the scope of this document and its review parameters to capture other driving behaviors as there are likely corollaries in the data relating to vehicle operations that would aid Command in identifying trends.

Another potential blind area in this data that would assist in getting a more detailed analysis would be to undertake an effort to identify pursuits that never start due to officer discretion at the outset. Currently there is not a method to capture those instances where an officer takes some police action and the suspect flees in a vehicle, but the officer immediately decides not to pursue. This data could be critical to analysis but the means to capture it are not clear. It is recommended an effort be undertaken to collect this data for future analysis.


Lastly, the duration of pursuit is captured on the Pursuit Report Form but is not reflected in the tracking database and has not been reflected on prior year end analyses. Given that the duration of the pursuit is often one of the key factors in determining whether the pursuit is reasonable, it is not being sufficiently captured or analyzed.

Please feel free to forward questions or input with the foregoing to the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Chief Rafael Padilla


Date