

Pursuit Analysis 2021

This document is to report 2021 pursuit information, conduct a comparative analysis against recent years on a variety of pursuit aspects, offer suggestions on how to improve decision-making during pursuit driving by Auburn Officers, and to identify areas where EVOC training can be enhanced.

Commander Mike Hirman

AUBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT

2021 PURSUIT ANALYSIS

The information in this analysis was obtained from Spillman Incident Reports, CAD dispatch, Supervisors' Reports of Pursuits, along with corresponding Pursuit Critiques.

The current procedure for collecting data on pursuits is outlined below and in the Auburn Police Department Policy Manual, Chapter 307.

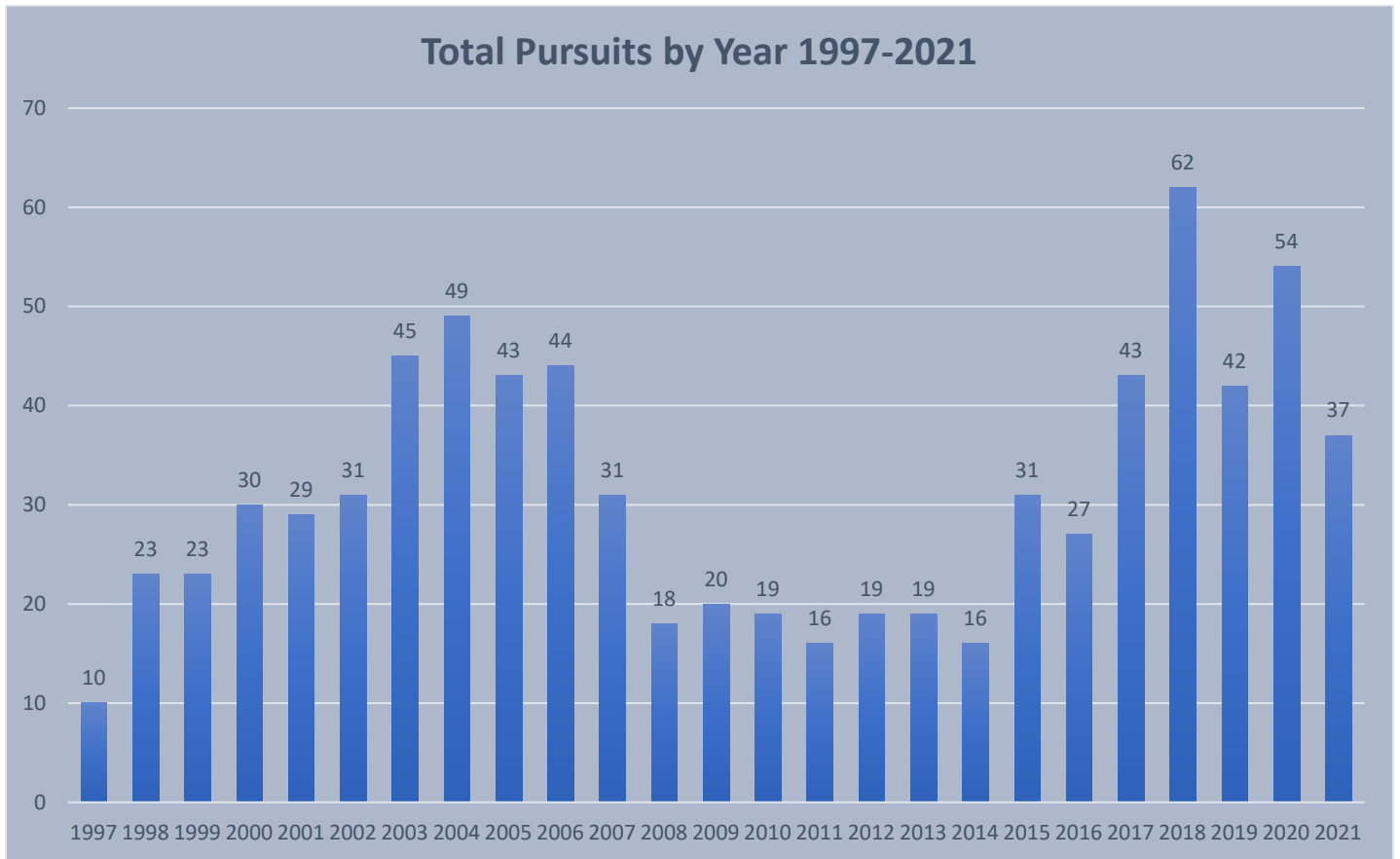
Vehicle Pursuit Reporting

1. Immediately following pursuits, patrol supervisors are responsible for completing a *Supervisory Report of Pursuit* through Blue Team. This report is forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. All pursuits are documented in this manner and reviewed for this analysis.
2. Once the Office of Inspectional Services logs the report, it is then available to the EVOC coordinator for the purposes of data collection, annual analysis, evaluating and/or recommending changes to the pursuit policy, and identifying potential training opportunities.
3. Following the pursuit, at the next opportunity, the patrol supervisor conducts a *Pursuit Critique* and forwards it along with the *Supervisor's Report of Pursuit*. Oftentimes, this occurs immediately following the pursuit. The purpose of the critique is to identify those aspects of the pursuit that went well and those that could be improved. It is also designed to determine whether the pursuit met the policy manual guidelines, or whether it deviated outside the guidelines. If the pursuit deviated outside of policy, a determination should be made as to whether this deviation was acceptable. If it was acceptable, the EVOC coordinator can then determine whether or not a policy modification is in order.

2021 Pursuit and Comparative Analysis

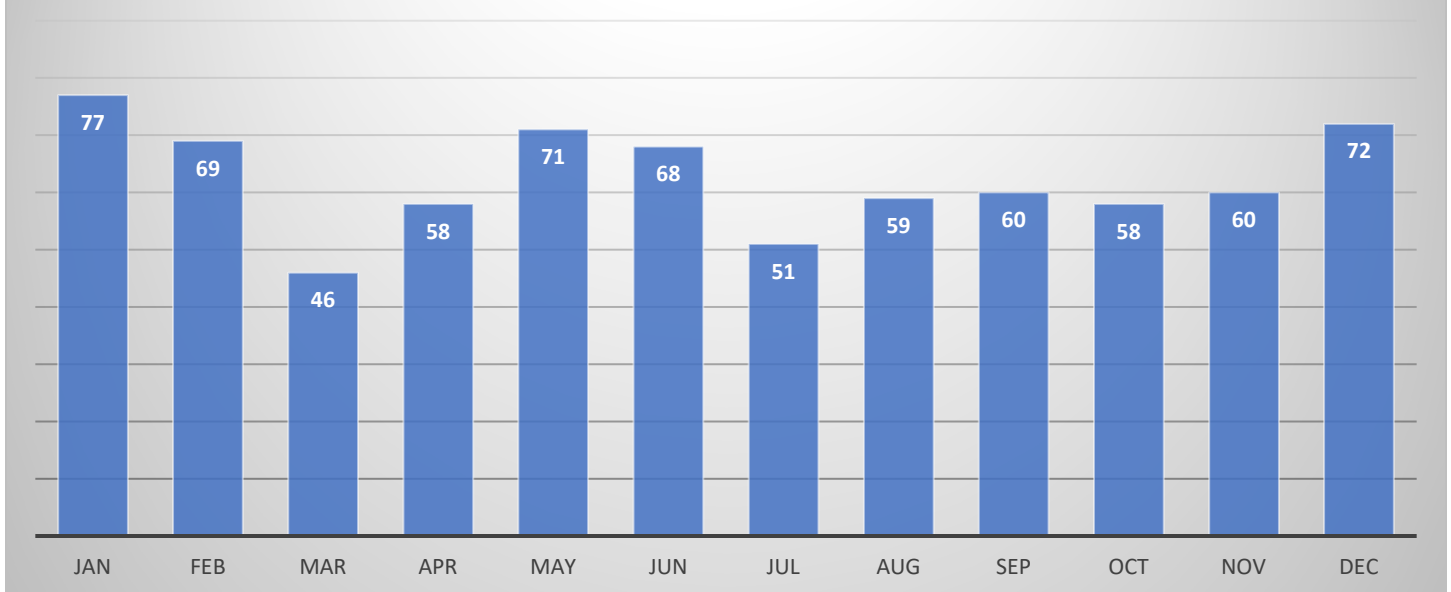
Following is a collection of key charts and tables that cover vehicle pursuits by type, time of day, tactical intervention and more. In addition, key observations for each category are provided.

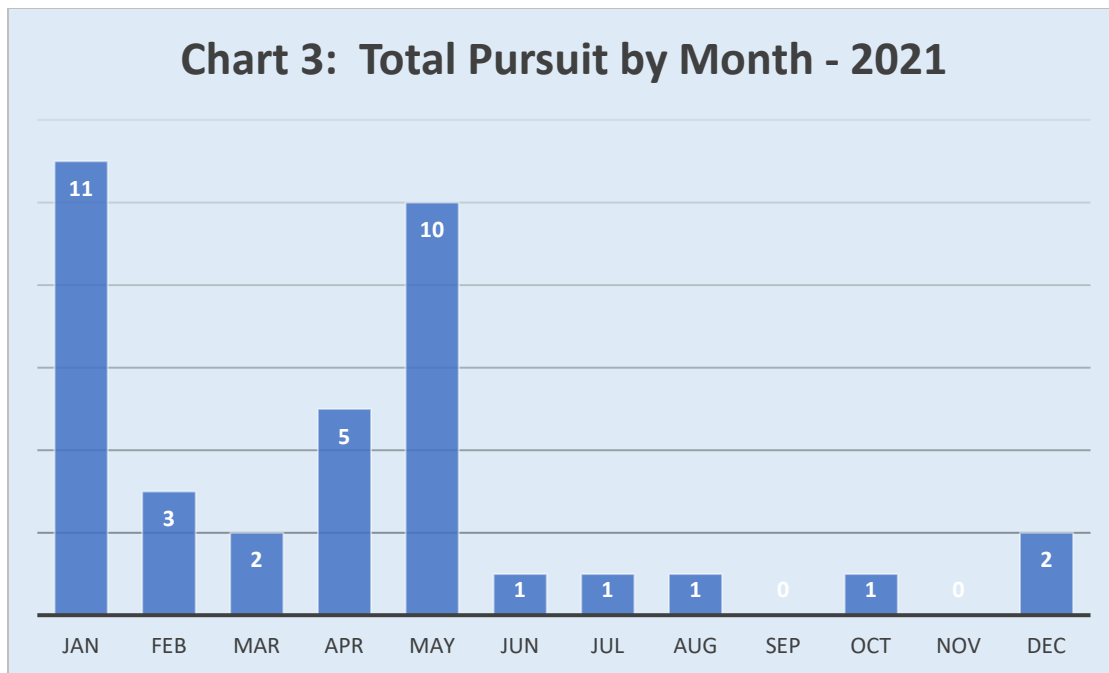
Chart 1. Total Pursuits by Year



Observations: There was a 31% decrease in the number of pursuits from 2020.

Chart 2: Total Pursuits by Month 1997-2021

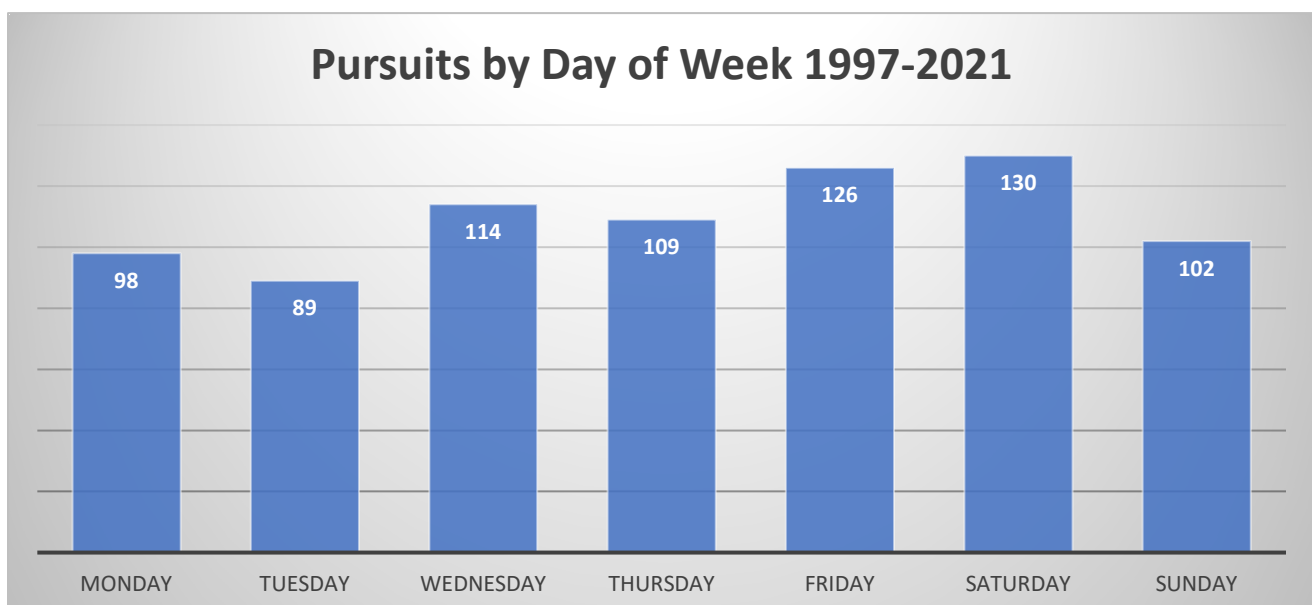




Observations: Chart 2: There is no significant trend in the cumulative number of pursuits by month. January, February, May and December have the highest number of pursuits since keeping records in 1997. The months with the lowest number of pursuits are March and July.

Chart 3: Due to new legislation and policy changes in 2021, there was a significant decrease in the number of pursuits after May. In fact, whereas in the first five months of the year Jan-May, there were 31 pursuits. The final seven months, (June-Dec) only produced a total of six pursuits.

Chart 4. Pursuits by Day of the Week 1997-2021

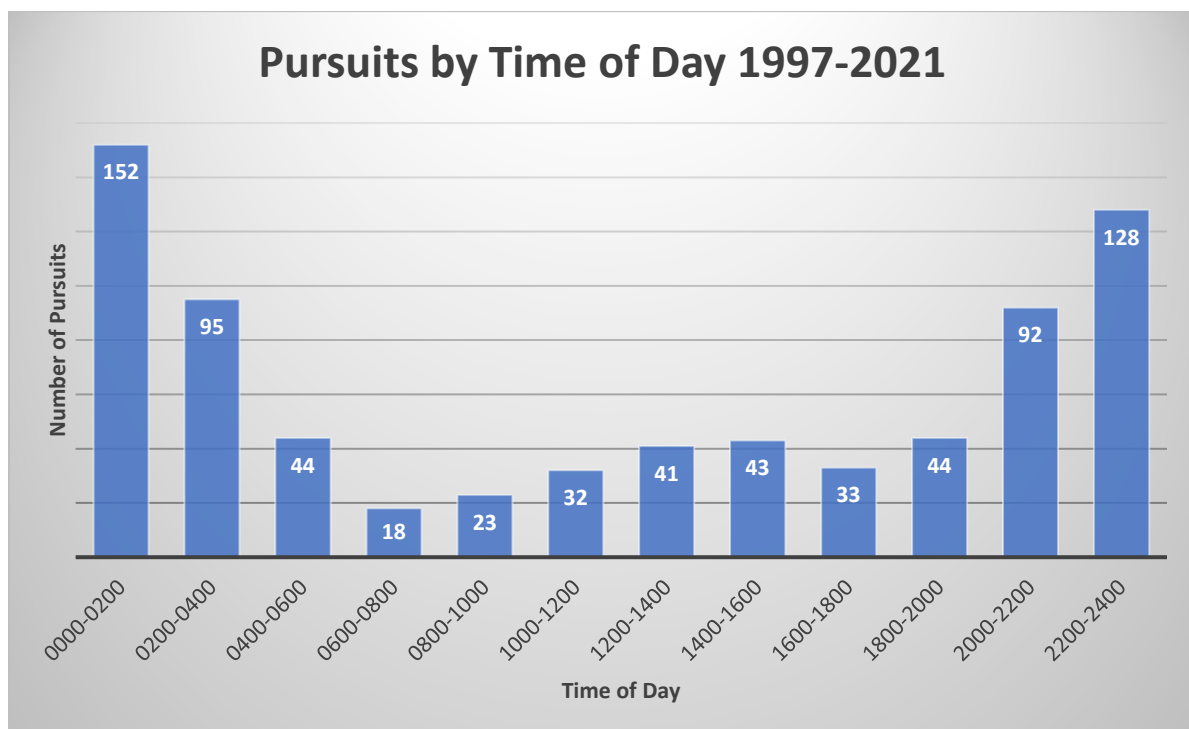


Observations:

- ❖ Weekends typically have more pursuits.
- ❖ In 2021, Tuesday had the fewest number of pursuits (2) and Monday, Thursday, and Saturday had the highest number of pursuits (21).



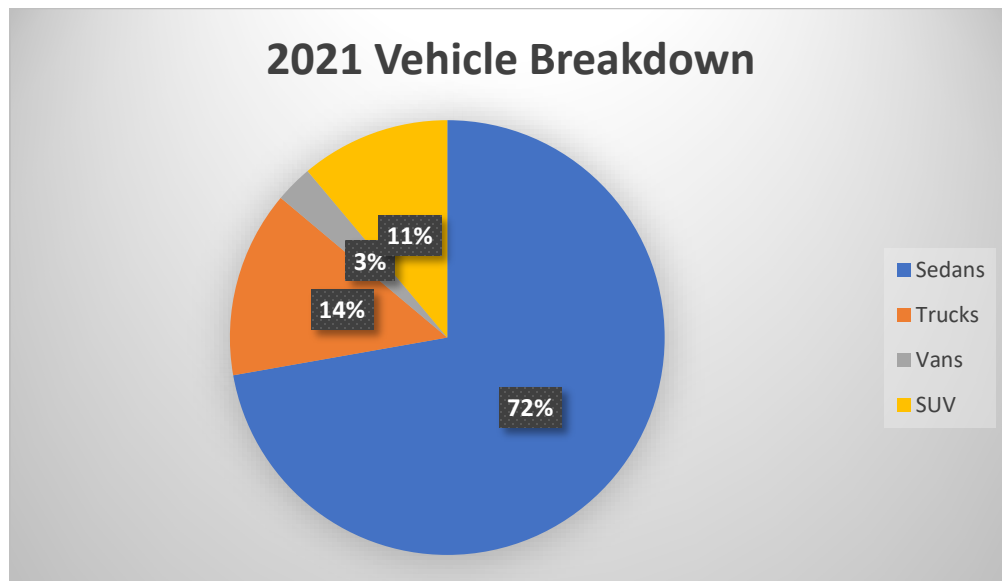
Chart 5. Pursuits by Time of Day (1997-2021)



Observations:

Pursuits in Auburn primarily occur between 2000 hours and 0400 hours. The time period between the hours of Midnight and 0200 has the highest frequency of pursuits. There are several possible explanations for this. During this time there are favorable traffic conditions. The ratio of officers versus citizens on the road is greatest at this time, and Auburn crime data indicate the criminal element is more active between these hours. With the exception of the afternoon rush hour, this is reflective of the APD workload and staffing distribution. Patrol staffing deployment between these hours is increased as this period correlates with the hours of the highest calls for service.

Chart 6. Pursuits by Vehicle Type



Observations:

Sedans make up the vast majority of cars initiating pursuits.

Chart 7.

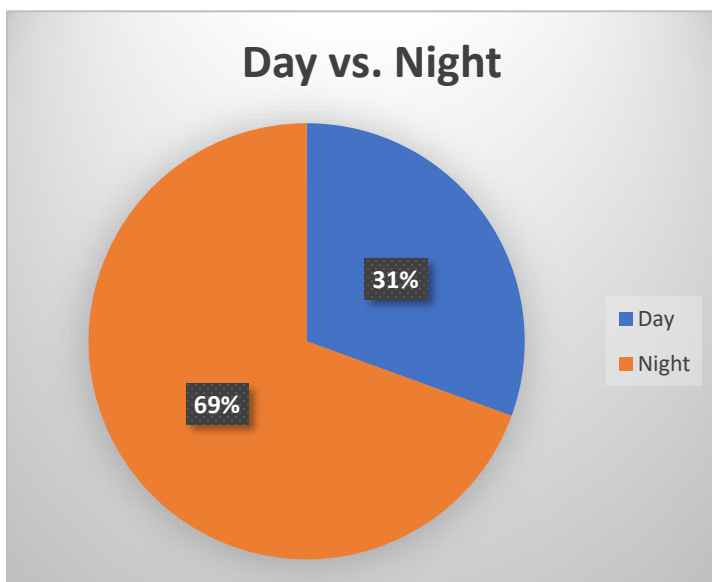
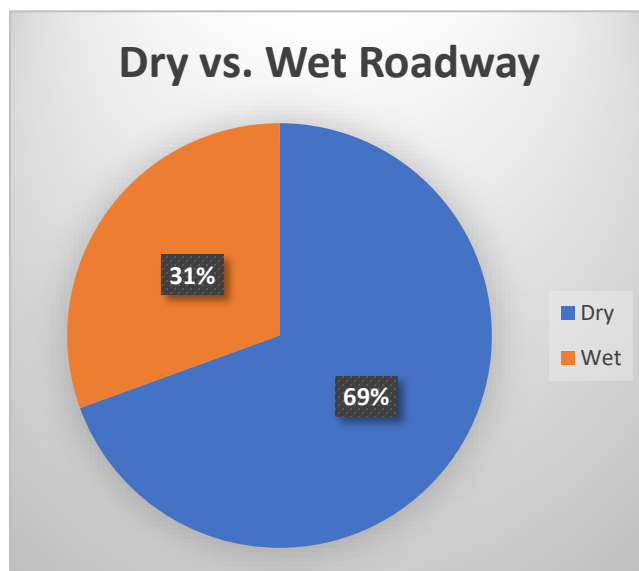
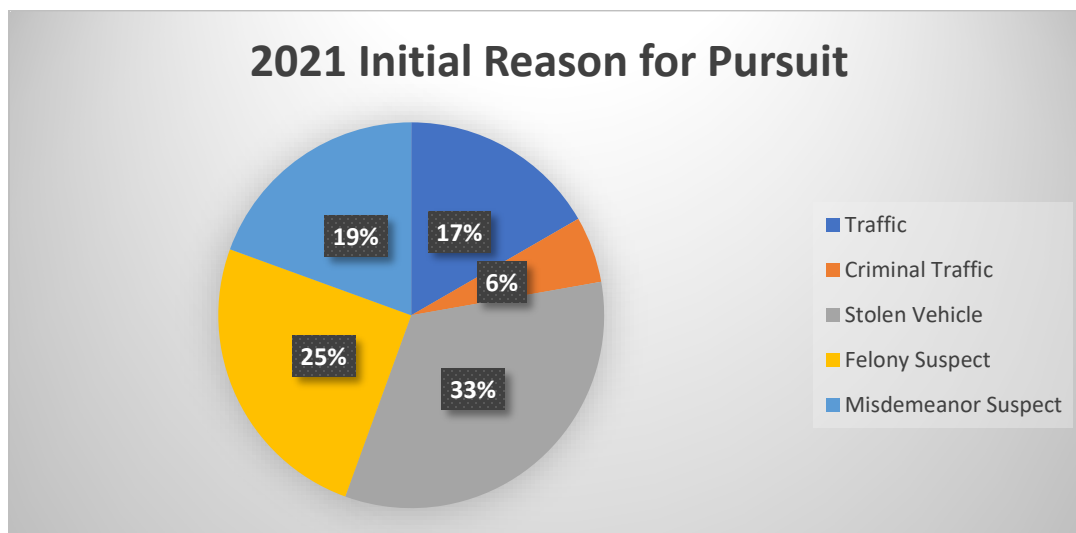


Chart 8.



Observations: Most pursuits occur at night and on dry roadways. Historically, this is a stable trend for pursuits in Auburn.

Chart 9. *Initial Reason for Pursuits*

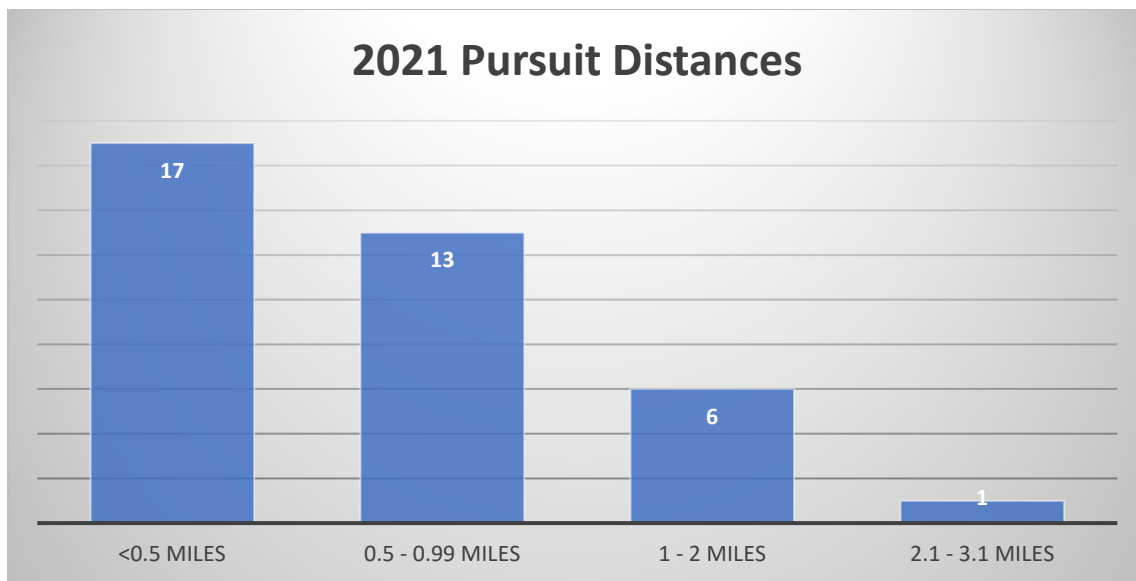


Observations:

- ❖ Definition: The *Initial Reason for Pursuit* refers to the crime or infraction observed by the officer that provided probable cause for the initial stop. The purpose for collecting this data is to show that officers often have only limited knowledge as to the underlying reasons why suspects are fleeing from them.

- ❖ In 2021, 17% of pursuits were initiated for traffic infractions. In 2020, 38% of pursuits fit this category.
- ❖ In 2021, although other crimes may have been present, more than half the time, 58%, officers knew they were chasing felony suspects for crimes other than eluding (stolen vehicle and felony suspects/warrants). In 2020, this category represented 44% of the pursuits.

Chart 10. Pursuit Distances

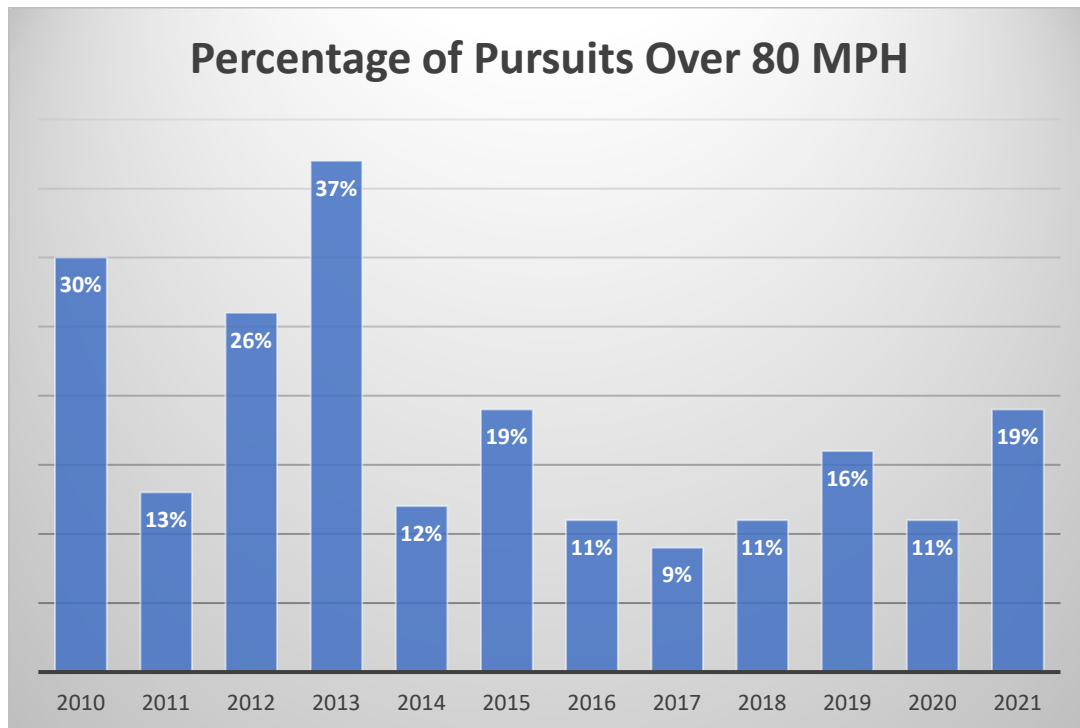


Observations:

- ❖ Chart 10 depicts the categorical distance of the 37 pursuits in 2021.
- ❖ In previous years, officers were reporting exact distances of pursuits. That changed in recent years when nearly all reports of pursuits were entered into Blue Team. This program only reports the distance by category. However, a rough estimate was still available. The hope is to reduce the length of pursuits such as in 2017, When average pursuit was less than one mile (0.94).
- ❖ In 2021 the total number of miles Auburn Officers pursued suspects was 24.52 miles, versus 32.153 miles in 2020. This was an average of 0.65, whereas in 2020 the 54 reported pursuits averaged 0.59 miles per pursuit. 2021 recorded the second lowest average distance.

- ❖ Also, in 2021 the shortest pursuit was (aside from those pursuits that were immediately terminated) was less than ¼ mile, while the longest pursuit was 3.1 miles.

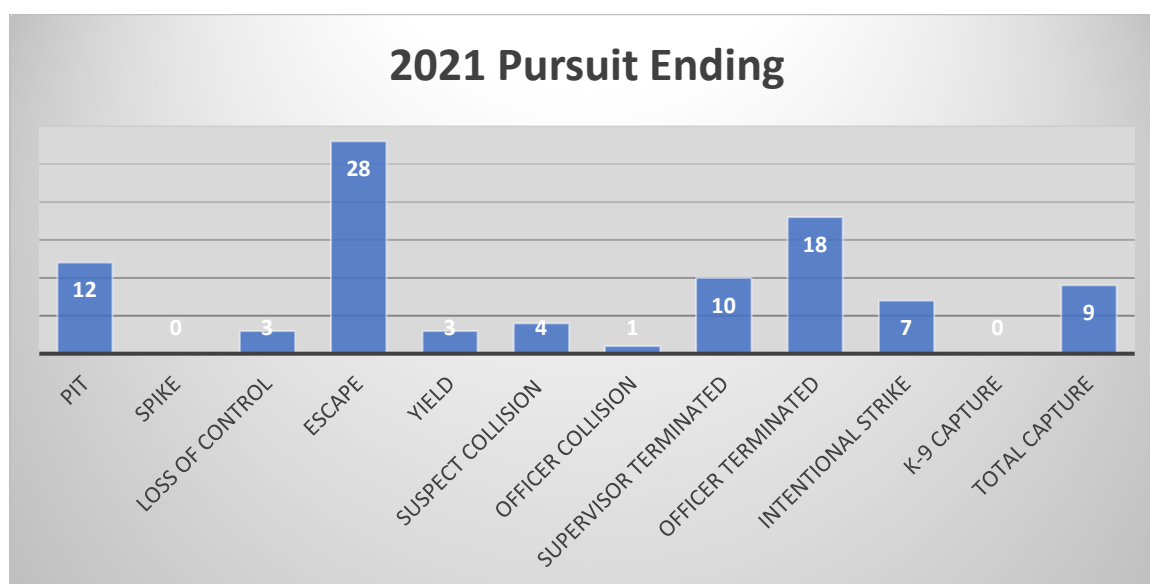
Chart 11. Pursuit Speeds (2010-2021)



Observations:

- ❖ Of significance to note is the percentage of pursuits during each year with sustained speeds at 80 MPH or greater. The reason for selecting this range of speeds is so officers understand the importance of ending pursuits as soon as possible. Furthermore, there is a correlation between high speeds, prolonged distance, and pursuits that end in a collision. The above chart shows the percentage of pursuits between 2012 and 2021 that were classified at speeds greater than 80 MPH. All years prior to 2014 combined averages of 32.5% over 80 MPH.
- ❖ Auburn Police pursuits over 80 MPH after 2013 have significantly decreased to a combined average of 13.5%.

Chart 12. Pursuit Ending



Observations:

- ❖ The above chart reflects how 2021 pursuits concluded. Some pursuits are represented by more than one category. For example, whereas 28 suspects escaped, some of them are represented under PIT and terminated. Of note, in 2021 75% (28) of the 37 pursuits were terminated either by a pursuing officer or the supervisor.
- ❖ The PIT maneuver was used 12 times. During some pursuits, PIT was performed more than once, after the suspect continued to flee.
- ❖ Officers did not have opportunities to use spike stripes in 2021. This is most likely because nearly all pursuits were terminated, or ended after a very short distance.
- ❖ Of the 37 pursuits in 2021, nine (9) pursuits ended in a capture of the suspect.

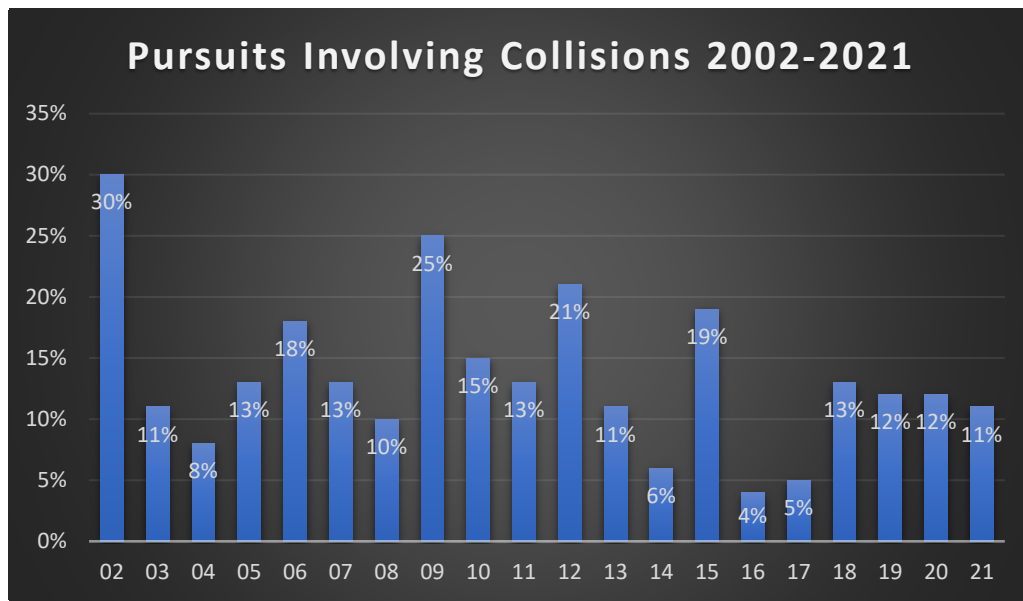
Chart 13. Officer Frequency 2021



Observations:

For training purposes, it is helpful to monitor the number of pursuits that individual officers initiate. For example, in years past, an officer who initiated far more pursuits than other officers prompted a review of the officer's practice. It was determined that this officer made a habit of turning on emergency equipment from long distances behind motorists. This possibly instilled confidence in the motorist to flee. After training, the following year when that officer turned on the emergency equipment directly behind the motorists, the frequency of pursuit was significantly reduced. In 2021, of the 37 pursuits, 18 officers initiated one pursuit, 5 officers initiated two pursuits, 1 officer initiated three pursuits, 1 officer initiated six pursuits. Each of the six pursuits from that officer were reviewed and no trends or training opportunities were noted. This officer is a very active officer working a very busy shift.

Chart 14. Pursuits Involving Collisions 2002-2021

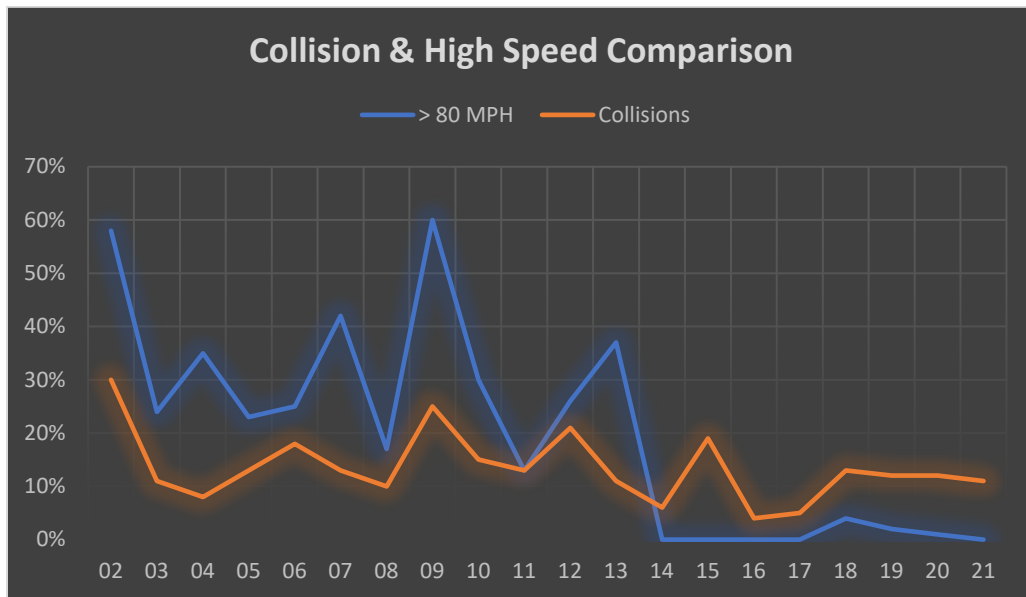


Observations:

- ❖ In 2021, there were four collisions (4) by suspects and one (1) by an Officer associated with a suspect collision. Injuries were minor with the exception of one. This was due to a suspect vehicle involved in a rollover by their own actions.



Chart 15. Collisions Vs. High-Speed Pursuits 2002-2021



Observations:

This chart depicts a possible correlation between the incidence of collisions and pursuits at speeds greater than 80 MPH, at least for most of the years shown. It is interesting to note that in years 2014-2017, there were no reported collisions involving speeds over 80 MPH. The minor collisions that did occur were at slower speeds. In 2019, there was only one collision in a pursuit where speeds reached 80 MPH. However, the collision occurred at a slower speed when the suspect collided with two police cars.

In 2021, again there were no collisions involved in pursuits with speeds greater than 80 MPH.

Chart 16. Suspect Gender

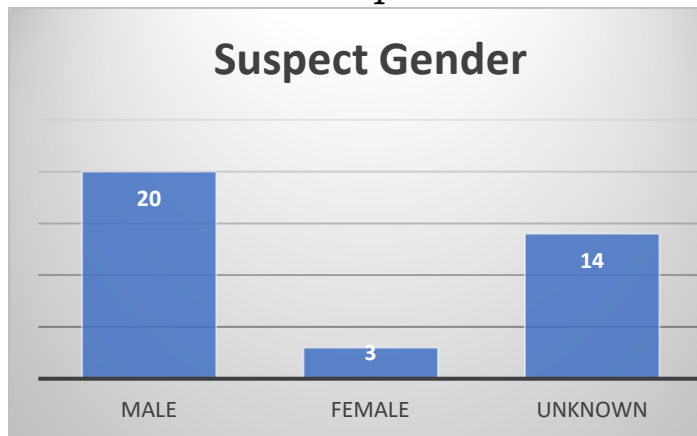


Chart 17. Suspect Age

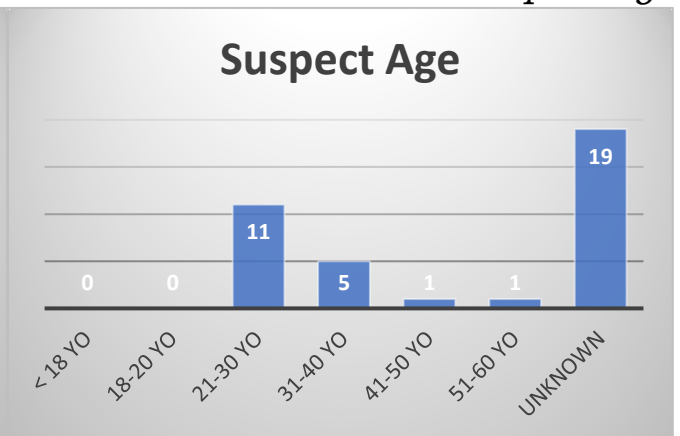
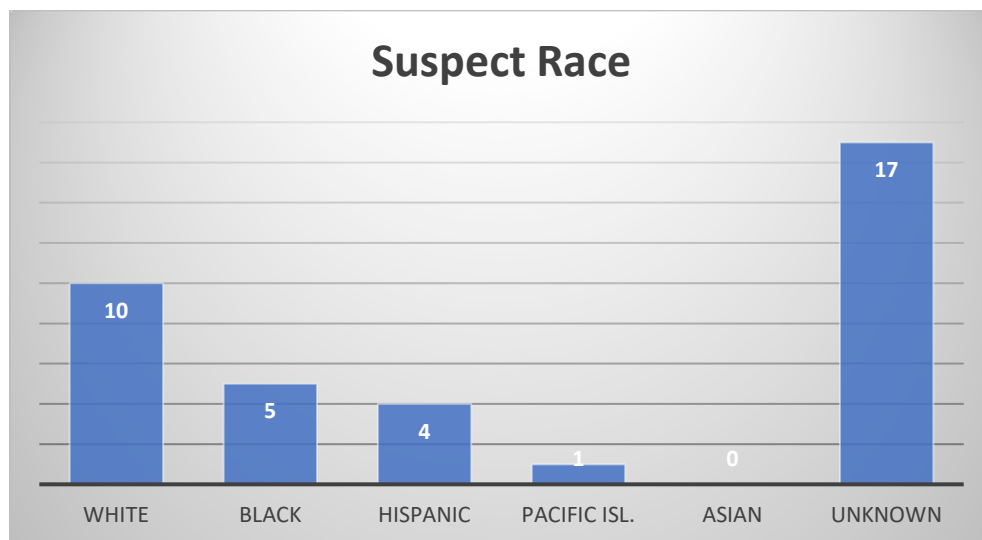


Chart 18. Suspect Race



Observations:

- ❖ Of the known suspects in 2021 pursuits, they were primarily white males between the ages of 21-30 years old.
- ❖ Not all suspects are identified or captured. Due to the higher probability of pursuits occurring at night, and the fact that most pursuits are terminated, it is difficult for officers to obtain these characteristics.

Summary:

- 1) The number of pursuits in the City of Auburn tends to fluctuate like other crimes reported. 2008-2014 were recorded as low years with averages in the teens. The next five years (2015-2019) there was a significant increase in the number of pursuits. 2020 has the second most pursuits recorded in a calendar year, and the highest recorded captures of any prior year. In 2021, however, due to significant legislative actions, discretionary police practices were removed and nearly all incidents of pursuits ceased. To date, there continues to be modifications to police practices.
- 2) In the years leading up to 2021, the average length of pursuits had drastically declined. This was due to a change in the department pursuit policy of not engaging in pursuits for minor crimes. In addition to this change, this had likely contributed to the increase in the number of pursuits as many suspects are aware of the “No Chase Policy”. Again, in 2021, considerable legislative changes prevented officers from pursuing nearly all violators.
- 3) In terms of what the officers knew at the time each pursuit was initiated, over half (58%) of all pursuits in 2021 were initiated for felony violations: stolen vehicles, or other felony suspect actions.
- 4) The Auburn Police Department has a highly efficient method of capturing pursuit data for subsequent analysis and training. The department should continue evaluating what information should be captured, and how that information should be recorded.
- 5) There are ongoing discussions pertaining to the modification of the pursuit policy to allow for greater discretion of officers and supervisors on pursuits for minor crimes. There are always underlying reasons why suspects flee from the police. We do not know the extent of the reasons for motorists to flee, such as warrants, weapons violations, and other felonies. As mentioned in #4 (above), the “real” reasons suspects are fleeing should be recorded on those suspects who are captured.

- 6) Supervisors appear to be involved in monitoring the 2021 pursuits. Officers appear to be on board with what is expected in terms of what is allowed and what pursuits are prohibited. This year 38 of 54 pursuits (75%) were terminated by the Officer or supervisor. 18 pursuits were terminated by Officers, while 10 pursuits were terminated by supervisors. This is commendable for both supervisors and Officers.
- 7) Three pursuits in 2021 fell outside of policy. Two of these pursuits fell outside policy because the officers did not terminate in a timely manner. No discipline was issued on these pursuits because they were initiated during a transitional period between legislative actions. A third pursuit was outside of policy when a supervisor was involved in the pursuit and several tactics fell outside of training. Discipline was issued on this supervisor.

Training

For many years, EVOC training consisted of eight hours for each officer, every three years. During the eight hours, the officer received training in the Pursuit Policy, vehicle placement, auto-cross, high speed tactical driving, pursuit scenarios, and the Pursuit Immobilization Technique (PIT).

For the past two years, there was a slight change. In order to capture officer attention, EVOC training was shortened to four hours of intensive high speed, PIT, and scenario-based training. At least one third of all commissioned officers received pursuit driving and pursuit scenario training. The officers also received refresher training in the PIT maneuver. EVOC instructors have the officers continue to perform high speed training and the PIT maneuver until both the officer and instructor are confident that the officer is thoroughly familiar with these techniques. The intent of training at Pacific Raceways is to get more officers through this critical high risk – low frequency training, and on a more frequent basis. This is even more important now that this critical task is less frequent.

The EVOC coordinator and several instructors review department pursuits and collisions. A determination is made to consider additional training for the officers that are found to be involved in preventable collisions.

There is currently a push to provide basic EVOC training to new recruits to give them this important training prior to annual training in October. During April 2021, we were able to provide six recruits introductory EVOC Training.

In the event the pursuit policy is modified, supervisors will need to prioritize EVOC training during patrol briefings, and to ensure they closely monitor each pursuit.

