TACOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Intra-Departmental Memorandum



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| **TO:** | Donald Ramsdell  Chief of Police | **ASB #:** 19-006 |
| **FROM:** | Lieutenant Dwayne Joseph  Support Services Division | **DATE:** February 11, 2019 |
| **THROUGH:** | Captain Fred Scruggs  Division Commander  Assistant Chief Ed Wade  Administrative Services Bureau Commander | |
| **SUBJECT:** | **2018 PURSUIT ANALYSIS REPORT** | |

The Tacoma Police Department uses the IAPro/BlueTeam database to track all Department incidents, to include Vehicle Pursuits. Each vehicle pursuit is reviewed and evaluated by a field Supervisor, a Shift Commander, and the Patrol Captain.

According to the 2018 End of the Year Preliminary Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities Report, there were 144 total fatalities in the United States last year. Traffic-related fatalities increased 9% from 2017, with 50 officer fatalities. Of the 50 deaths, 32 officers were killed in crashes involving another vehicle; 14 officers were struck while outside of their vehicle – a 56% increase over the 9 officers struck and killed in 2017; and 4 officers were killed in motorcycle crashes.

Of the 32 vehicle crashes, 16 were single-vehicle crashes – a 14% increase over the 14 single-vehicle crashes in 2017. Of the 16 single-vehicle crashes, 7 of the officers were responding to a call for service or as backup to another officer at the time of the crash; 4 officers were on patrol; 3 officers were involved in a vehicle pursuit; 1 officer was attempting to make a traffic stop; and 1 officer was driving to training at the time of his single-vehicle crash.

Of the 14 officers struck and killed while outside their vehicles, 3 officers were on a traffic stop; 2 officers were intentionally struck while responding to burglaries; and 1 officer was struck and killed in each of the following circumstances: supervising an inmate road crew, serving a warrant, providing crowd control, assisting a disabled motorist, removing debris from the roadway, responding to a vehicle crash, investigating a prior vehicle crash, assisting a motorist after the motorist was involved in a minor vehicle crash, and while deploying spike sticks. Of the 4 motorcycle crashes, 2 officers were on a funeral escort, 1 officer was involved in the pursuit of a suspect, and 1 officer was on patrol. © NLEOMF END OF WATCH.

The Tacoma Police Department recognizes that under [RCW 46.61.035](http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=46.61.035) (see RCW for legislative language in its entirety), Officers have the legal right and duty to apprehend offenders who flee from the police and present a threat to the public. However, Department members will only engage in pursuits when the necessity to apprehend the violator outweighs the danger posed to the public. Every Department member engaging in a pursuit must be able to articulate what conditions were present that justified the pursuit.

Tacoma Police policy defines a vehicle pursuit as an active attempt by an Officer to apprehend a suspect who willfully fails to immediately bring his or her vehicle to a stop, and drives in a reckless and evasive manner while attempting to elude a pursuing police vehicle.

The following analysis of the 2018 Vehicle Pursuits is based on information retrieved from the IAPro database.

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| **Pursuits** | **2018** |
| Total Pursuits | 12 |
| Number of officers involved | 41 |
| Most frequent hours 2001-0800 | 9 |
| Policy Compliant | 10 |
| Policy Non-Compliant | 2 |
| Pending | 0 |
| Accidents during pursuit | 9 |
| Injuries: Officer | 0 |
| Injuries: Suspects | 3 |
| Injuries: Third Party | 0 |
| Traffic Offense-Criminal | 1 |
| Felony | 7 |
| Misdemeanor | 1 |
| Assist Outside Agency | 4 |

There was a total of 12 pursuits that took place within the City of Tacoma for 2018. Four of those pursuits were assisting other agencies such as the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department (PCSD) and the Washington State Patrol (WSP).

**Initial Violation:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Assist outside agency | 2 | 17% |
| Felony-person | 7 | 58% |
| Misdemeanor | 1 | 8% |
| Traffic – criminal | 1 | 8% |
| Traffic – non-criminal | 1 | 8% |

All 12 vehicle pursuits were entered into BlueTeam and reviewed by Department supervisors. Ten out of the 12 TPD pursuits were deemed to be within Department policy. The two incidents that were not within Department guidelines were:

1. Officer observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed and attempted to stop it.
2. Officer assisted WSP with a vehicle pursuit.

Neither pursuit met the criteria for initiation/continuation of a pursuit.

Nine of the 12 vehicle pursuits (75%) took place on clear days/nights.

There was no in-car camera video available in any of the 12 pursuits.

**Event that Concluded the Pursuit:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Handed over to another agency | 1 | 8% |
| PIT Maneuver | 3 | 25% |
| Suspect stopped vehicle | 2 | 17% |
| Suspect vehicle crashed | 5 | 42% |
| Suspect vehicle eluded pursuit | 1 | 8% |

Two vehicle pursuits (17%) were where the suspect stopped on its own accord. In three vehicle pursuits (25%), the officers used the PIT Maneuver. Five suspect vehicles crashed (42%), and one suspect vehicle eluded the pursuit.

**ANALYSIS**

The number of pursuits that the Department was involved in increased from 4 in 2017 to 12 in 2018. That was an increase of 300%.

None of the pursuits were terminated in 2017, and one was terminated in 2018.

Of the 12 vehicle pursuits, one occurred on day shift, three occurred during swing shift, and eight occurred during graveyard hours, to include swing shift/graveyard shift overlap.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Shift | 2017 | 2018 |
| Day Shift | 0 | 1 |
| Swing Shift | 1 | 3 |
| Graveyard Shift  (including Swing Shift overlap) | 3 | 8 |
| **Total** | **4** | **12** |

**Annual Review of the Department’s Vehicle Pursuit Policies and Reporting Procedures (CALEA 41.2.2)**

During the annual review of all vehicle pursuits, the Department’s current policies and procedures were reviewed to include the reporting procedures. At this time the Department is in compliance and we have reviewed our pursuit policy and reporting procedures. All annual training needs have been addressed. There is no need to make changes at this time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In 2018, the Department continued to provide departmental training that is required per CALEA. The Department also provided Driver Training (EVOC) in collision avoidance and backing for the administration and Investigations Bureau. The Department will be providing PIT training to Operations personnel. The Department will continue to monitor accidents involving on-duty police employees and address the current hazards of driving police vehicles. The Department must continue to monitor why the increase of pursuits are taking place and why more take place on the graveyard shift.

DJ:man