

2020

# Pursuit of Motor Vehicles Analysis



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## Overview

This overview of the 2019 Plano Police pursuit review will be a complete analysis of the department's policies/procedures and statistical data surrounding pursuit driving. The goal is to identify potential policy revisions to limit risks while engaged in a pursuit and overall continue to improve safety within the community.

The Professional Standards unit (PSU) is responsible for maintaining completed pursuit reviews. PSU gathers and reports statistical data regarding these and various other incident types to the Chief of Police. The PSU End of Year report includes statistical data of any problem areas identified, which may indicate a need for further training or an adjustment of written directives or procedures.

## The Decision to Pursue

A pursuit review is completed and reviewed by the involved employee's chain of command for each pursuit that department members engage in, as defined by Administrative Directive 107.002. The review is to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the tactics employed as well as the level of adherence to policy.

Pursuant to Administrative Directive 107.002 - Pursuit Driving, when an offender flees from an officer, the officer is faced with the decision whether to pursue the offender. The officer must act quickly in his/her decision to pursue. The timing of this determination is critical to the officer's obligation to ensure the safety of not only the parties involved, but also the community in which they serve.

## Annual Statistical Pursuit Summary

In 2019, 89 officers were involved in 37 pursuit incidents. This number has increased since 2018 where 59 officers were involved in 21 pursuit incidents and in 2017, there were 51 officers involved in 25 pursuits. Through recent evaluation of the 2019 pursuit statistical data, chain of command decided that 8 pursuits were out of policy resulting in 14 documented counseling reports.

**2019 Quarterly Pursuit Review**

<b>Disposition</b>	<b>Jan/Mar</b>	<b>Apr/Jun</b>	<b>Jul/Sep</b>	<b>Oct/Dec</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Out of Policy</b>	0	1	5	2	8
<b>Within Policy</b>	7	10	3	8	28
<b>Still Active</b>	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total:</b>	7	11	8	11	37

In 2019 an accident occurred during 6 pursuits (16%) which is an increase from the 5 pursuits (24%) related accidents that occurred in 2018. One pursuit involved injury to the officer. There was 1 incident (3%) in which there was injury to a citizen.

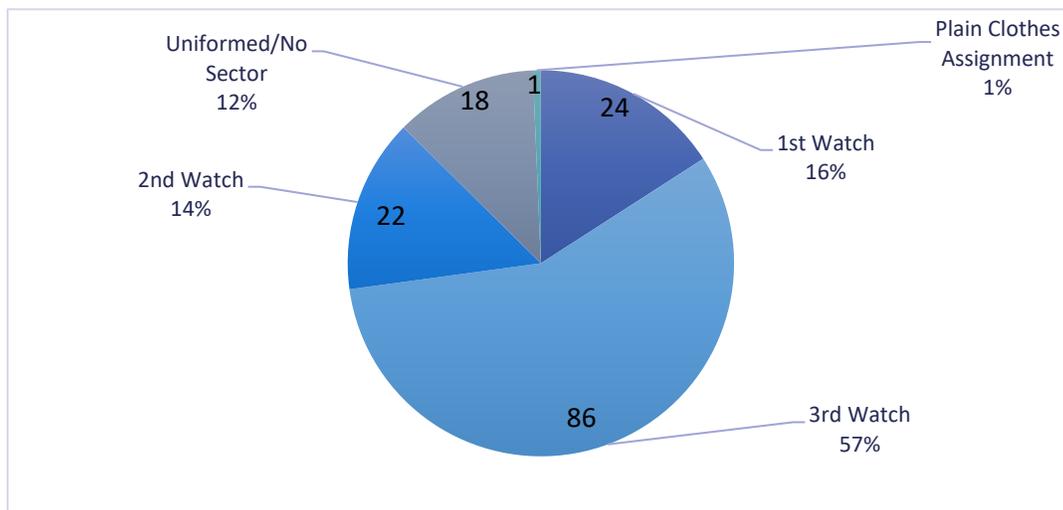
The distance covered in most pursuits was 01-04 miles (15 pursuits – 41%), followed by less than 1 mile (8 pursuits – 22%), followed by 05-09 miles (8 pursuits – 22%), followed by 10-14 miles (3 pursuit – 8%) and 15 miles of more (3 pursuits – 8%).

The time of day for most pursuits was 2001-2359 (10 pursuits – 27%), followed by 1601-2000 (9 pursuits – 24%), followed by 1201-1600 (7 pursuits – 19%), followed by 0000-0400 (7 pursuit – 19%), and then 0801-1200 (3 pursuit – 8%) and 0401-0800 (1 pursuit – 3%).

The day of the week when most pursuits occurred was Sunday with 9 pursuits - 24%, Saturday and Tuesday with 7 pursuits – 19%, Friday and Thursday with 5 pursuits – 14%, Monday with 3 pursuits – 8% and Wednesday has the least amount with 1 pursuit – 3%.

Comparisons by Watch indicated that 86 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Watch officers were involved in a vehicle pursuit (57% of all officers involved in pursuits), 24 - 1<sup>st</sup> Watch officers were involved in a vehicle pursuit (16% of all officers involved in pursuits), 22 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Watch officer were involved in a vehicle pursuit (14% of all officers involved in pursuits), 18 – Uniformed/No Sector officers were involved in a vehicle pursuit (12% of all officers involved in pursuits), 1 – Plain Clothes Assignment officer was involved in a vehicle pursuit (1% of all officers involved in pursuits).

### 2019 Officer Vehicle Pursuits by Watch



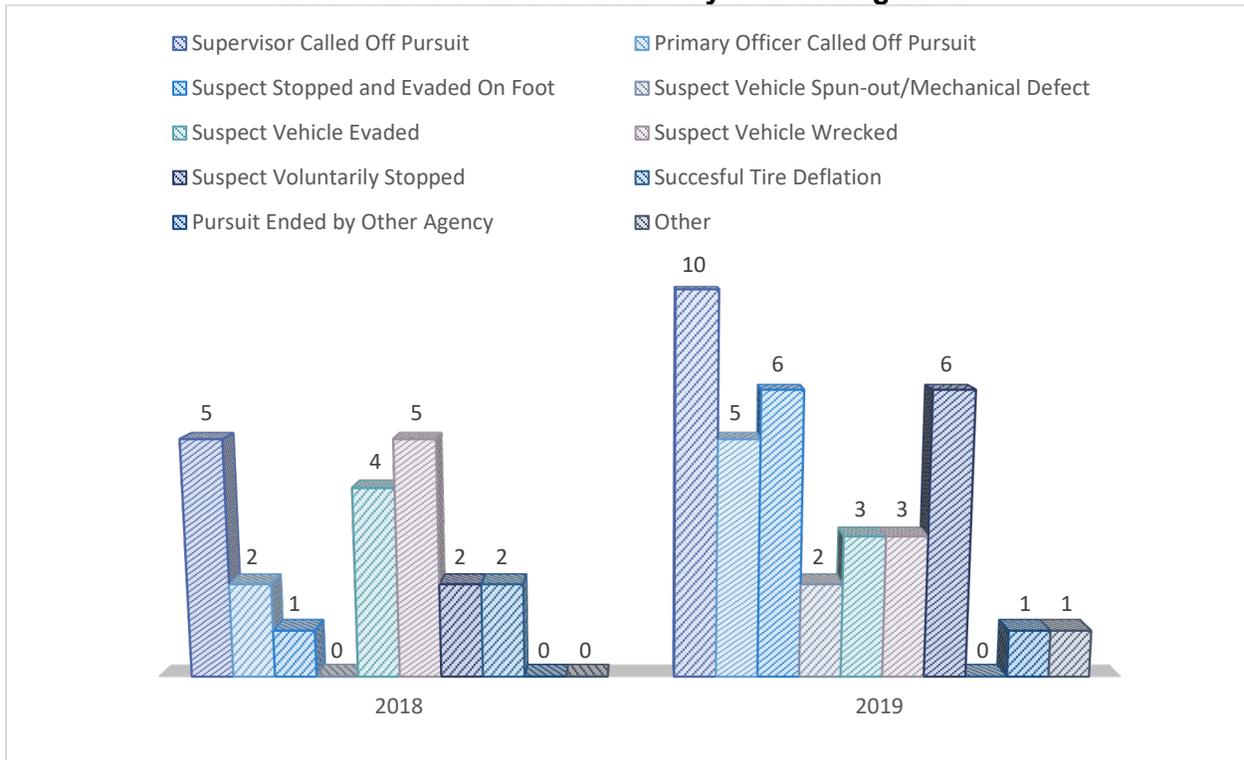
The 2019 breakdown of beginning locations for pursuits was: 13 in A Sector (35%), 8 in B Sector (22%), 5 in C Sector (14%), 8 in D Sector (22%), and 3 Out of City Limits (7%). The ending locations were: 6 in A Sector (16%), 5 in B Sector (14%), 5 in C Sector (14%), 4 in D Sector (11%), and 17 Out of City Limits (45%).

The causes reported by officers for initiating pursuits were Stolen Vehicle in 12 pursuits (33%), Possible Driving While Intoxicated in 7 pursuits (19%), Felony Offense in Progress in 5 pursuits (14%), Class C Traffic Violation Only in 3 pursuits (8%), Suspected Misdemeanor Offender in 3 pursuits (8%), Class A or B Misdemeanor not DWI in 2 pursuits (5%), Suspected Felony Offender in 2 pursuits (5%), Other in 2 pursuits (5%), and Known Felony Suspect in 1 pursuit (3%).

Ten pursuits ended because the supervisor called off the pursuit, 6 ended as a result of suspect stopped and evaded on foot, 6 ended as a result of suspect voluntarily stopped, 5

ended as a result of primary officer called off pursuit, 3 ended as a result of suspect vehicle evaded, 3 ended as a result of suspect vehicle wrecked, 2 ended as a result of suspect vehicle spun-out/mechanical defect, 1 ended as a result of pursuit ended by other agency, and 1 ended as a result of other. The figure below depicts data on pursuits by concluding or terminating event for the years 2018 and 2019.

**2019 Officer Vehicle Pursuits by Concluding Event**



When a report is submitted through BlueTeam the originator of the report forwards the report through the chain of command. With each routing of the report, comments are submitted for the next level in the chain to read and assess. Some of the most prevalent factors in the out of policy pursuits were high speed of officer and not initiating emergency lights and sirens.

There was a significant increase in the number of vehicle pursuits during 2019 compared to 2018. For a better look into the specific violations of the pursuit policy, we went through the individual remarks from chain of command. While doing this we were able to establish some common trends.

**Five Year Vehicle Pursuit Trend and Percent Change**

Incident Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% Change Compared to 2018
Vehicle Pursuit	35	20	25	21	37	+76%

Out of the 8 that were not within policy, 4 pursuits contained comments from the chain regarding lack of experience, the officer being a “rookie”, that this was the officer’s first pursuit and it was an unfamiliar situation and/or their act in pursuing the vehicle was an unintentional violation of policy.

While we did notice a substantial increase in the amount of vehicle pursuits in 2019, the number that resulted in a disposition of “out of policy” is fairly reasonable. Although we can’t determine any particular reasoning for the influx of pursuits, we did recognize that 24 recruits were hired in 2019. This may be a point of interest throughout the year when evaluating the frequency of pursuit training and policy review for newly hired officers.

## Post Pursuit Reporting

A pursuit review is completed and reviewed by the involved employee’s chain of command for each pursuit that officer is engaged in, as defined by Administrative Directive 107.002. The review is to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the tactics employed as well as the level of adherence to policy. It will be the responsibility of the primary pursuit unit to complete an Incident Report to document each pursuit. A Vehicle-Pursuit Report shall be completed by designated Command and reported via chain of command to the Division Commander. One Vehicle-Pursuit Report shall be completed per pursuit. If more than one officer is involved in a pursuit, each officer's name shall appear in the report. Pursuit Review cover Reports shall be reviewed by each member of the chain of command and forwarded, with recommendations regarding the appropriateness of the pursuit, to the Division Commander of the affected employee.

Each member of the chain of command should review official reports and recordings related to the incident to facilitate their review of the incident. The Division Commander will determine whether the pursuit occurred in a manner consistent with policy and if disciplinary action is appropriate. Any incident involving death or serious bodily injury to any person will be reviewed by the Chief of Police who will make the final determination.

## Training

Currently, our Training Unit provides pursuit driving scenarios to all recruit officers during initial recruit training. Refresher pursuit driving training is provided to officers during scheduled in-service training every other year. Additional driving training is provided as needed based on changes in law/policy and/or the need for additional training. On opposite years, a defensive driving or similar driving course is taught during in-service training. Every year during in-service training, this Administrative Directive regarding pursuit driving is thoroughly reviewed.

## Recommendations

The 76% increase in vehicle pursuits during 2019 has caused us to take a step back and assess our current pursuit administrative directive. As a result of policy review, we believe the pursuit definition should be modified. As it stands, the definition is unclear. This is apparent throughout the BlueTeam comments from the chain of command when they are considering aspects such as violator speed, driving behavior, and length of time for officers to catch up to the violator, or for the violator to come to a stop. This causes confusion not only for documentation purposes, but for officers and supervisors who are involved in these dynamic situations.

## Conclusion

It is the objective of this department to provide thorough and effective policies that allow our officers to have a complete and clear understanding of our expectations. Vehicle pursuits pose a serious threat to the parties involved as well as the community. It is the officer's duty to weigh the risks and benefits before deciding to engage in a pursuit.

The Plano Police Department prides itself on our relationship with the community and will continue to uphold our values and mission to the citizens of Plano as we continue to evolve and make constructive adjustments to our policies and procedures.