



## **COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT**

TO: CHIEF OF POLICE GEOFF JONES

FROM: SGT. SCOTT ALPERS, INTERNAL AFFAIRS

REF: ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF MOTOR VEHICLE PURSUITS 2020

DATE: 03/29/2021

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The following report was completed for compliance with the CALEA standards regarding Pursuits of Motor Vehicles (41.2.2). The CALEA standard is as follows:

A written directive governs pursuit of motor vehicles, to include:

- Evaluating the circumstances;
- Defining the criteria under which pursuit can be initiated;
- Initiating unit/personnel responsibilities;
- Designating secondary unit's responsibilities;
- Specifying roles and restrictions pertinent to marked, unmarked, or other types of police vehicle involvement in the pursuit;
- Assigning telecommunicator's responsibilities;
- Describing supervisor's responsibilities;
- Specifying when to terminate pursuit;
- Specifying authority to terminate pursuit;
- Engaging in inter- and intra-jurisdictional pursuits involving personnel from the agency and/or other jurisdictions;
- Requiring a written report and an administrative review of each pursuit;
- Conducting a documented annual analysis of pursuit reports, to include a review of policy and reporting procedures, approved by the agency CEO;
- Documented initial training on the agency's pursuit policy; and
- Documented annual review of the pursuit policy by all sworn personnel.

This report will include a review of the Columbia Police Department's vehicle pursuit reporting procedures as well as the 74 vehicle pursuits that occurred in 2020.

### **Reporting:**

Columbia Police Department Policy 314.9, Vehicle Pursuits, outlines the reporting requirements for members of the department after engaging in a vehicle pursuit. Vehicle pursuits are documented via Blue

Team software. After documentation is entered, vehicle pursuits undergo a three-level review. The department member's first-line supervisor, a Watch Commander, and a Bureau Commander will conduct a preliminary review of the pursuit and determine if the pursuit was "proper" or "improper" under policy. The Bureau Commander will determine if the facts surrounding the incident warrant further investigation. If the Bureau Commander requests an investigation, the incident is forwarded to the Internal Affairs Unit. If other violations of policy outside of 314 are discovered, they are included in the investigation.

If a pursuit is deemed proper in the preliminary review, no further action is taken on the incident. Generally, vehicle pursuits are reviewed independently of other aspects of an event such as use of force or citizen complaints. There is no reporting mechanism in place for involvement in the pursuits of other jurisdictions.

Due to this department's CALEA self-assessment process, Policy 314 was reviewed and revised to include the following CALEA standards requirements:

- A documented annual analysis of pursuit reports, to include a review of the pursuit policy and reporting procedures;
- Documented initial training in vehicle pursuits for all new hires; and
- A documented annual review of pursuit policy by all sworn personnel.

Because vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous to all involved as well as the public, our pursuit policy exceeds these requirements and calls for biannual training which includes a review of the pursuit policy and a test to demonstrate the transfer of knowledge.

#### Analysis / Conclusion:

In 2020, Officers of the Columbia Police Department engaged in 74 motor vehicle pursuits. During 2020, 44 or 60.27% of the vehicle pursuits occurred between 2000 hrs and 0359 hrs (8:00 pm – 3:59 am.)

Of the 74 pursuits, twenty-one (21) were terminated by the pursuing officer, eight (8) were terminated by a supervisor, twenty-five (25) concluded with the suspect stopping, two (2) concluded with the suspect eluding police, two (2) concluded by an officer using "Stop Sticks", three (3) were transferred to another agency, three (3) were terminated for public safety reasons and nine (9) resulted in the suspect vehicle crashing. Pursuits were initiated for both felonies, misdemeanors and ordinance violations. A total of forty (40) pursuits ended with arrests, two (2) with no arrests, one (1) with no arrest, but driver identified and twenty one (21) with no arrest and no known driver.

Sixty-eight (68) pursuits were initiated within the Columbia city limits and six (6) pursuits were started outside the Columbia city limits. Fifteen (15) pursuits concluded outside of the Columbia city limits. Eight (8) pursuits resulted in property damage to uninvolved vehicles, suspect vehicles, patrol vehicles and/or other property. Zero (0) pursuits resulted in the injuries to an occupant(s) of a suspect vehicle. No officers reported injuries as a result of the vehicle pursuits.

Fifty-one (51) of the pursuits were found to be "proper" and eighteen (18) were found to be "improper." At the time of this report, five (5) pursuits were being reviewed or being investigated as an internal investigation.

In analyzing the "improper" pursuits, the majority were terminated at the intervention and direction of a supervisor following the policy in place at the time. A short analysis of the "improper" pursuits follows:

<b>Tracking Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason Improper</b>	<b>Result</b>
VP2020-0003	01/13/2020	Speed, charges	Counseling, performance log
VP2020-0005	01/10/2020	Location, time of day	Remedial training
VP2020-0009	01/26/2020	Speed, charges	Counseling, performance log
VP2020-0010	02/11/2020	Pursuit conclusion	n/a
VP2020-0020	05/15/2020	Driving behavior	Performance log
VP2020-0023	05/26/2020	Driving behavior	Performance log, verbal warning
VP2020-0024	06/15/2020	Driving behavior	Remedial training
VP2020-0027	07/10/2020	Driving behavior	Suspension
VP2020-0030	07/26/2020	Speed	Counseling
VP2020-0038	08/26/2020	Driving Behavior	Performance log
VP2020-0045	09/24/2020	Driving Behavior	Suspension
VP2020-0049	10/05/2020	Driving Behavior	Remedial Training, performance log
VP2020-0051	10/13/2020	Pursuit reasoning, speeds	Performance log
VP2020-0058	11/09/2020	Driving Behavior	Performance Log, counseling
VP2020-0060	11/11/2020	Pursuit reasoning	Performance log, remedial training
VP2020-0062	11/22/2020	Need to apprehend	Verbal warning, remedial training
VP2020-0067	12/14/2020	Speeds	Coaching, remedial training
VP2020-0070	12/21/2020	Driving Behavior, Need to apprehend	Counseling, performance log

Twelve (11) of the eighteen (18) improper pursuits (or 61%) were initiated for an ordinance or misdemeanor violation. These pursuits are highlighted. Seven (7) officers were involved in multiple pursuits that were found improper in 2020.

Motor vehicle pursuits by Columbia Police Department Officers in 2020 increased 14.06% from the previous year. Forty-five (45) or 61.64% of all pursuits were for misdemeanor or traffic violations, while twenty-eight (28) or 38.36% were for felony charges. Officers must always weigh the need for apprehension against the safety of the public, the offender and themselves.

Motor vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous. The risks of a vehicle pursuit can lead to unintended consequences for the general public, officers and occupants of vehicles involved in pursuits. In 2020, there were no injuries during motor vehicle pursuits.

A majority of officers who were found improper, we found improper due to their driving behavior. The driving behavior of the officer is one that can be dictated by policy, training and discipline. Officers of this department should be held to a higher standard when operating their patrol vehicle in emergency and

non-emergency situations. Proper supervision, training and discipline are effective in the decision making of officers, prevention of injuries to those involved in pursuits and apprehension of suspects. The discipline from the improper pursuits ranged from verbal counseling / coaching to suspension. The majority of the officers received a performance log.