

Milwaukee Police Department Pursuit Policy Overview

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/mpdAuthors/SOP/660-VEHICLEPURSUITSANDEMERGENCYVEHICLEOPERATIONS1.pdf>



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 660: ***Vehicle Pursuits and Emergency Vehicle Operations***

- * Occupant Violent Felonies
- * Vehicle used or taken in violent felony
- * Vehicle or occupant are a clear and immediate threat to safety of others (i.e., shots fired from vehicle)
- * Drug dealing ONLY when related to substantive or long-term investigation (not just hand to hand observation)
- * Reckless driving/fleeing

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 660

FACTORS OFFICERS MUST CONSIDER BEFORE ENGAGING IN PURSUIT

- * Seriousness of offense
- * Necessity of pursuit
- * Density of traffic, pedestrians
- * Physical location (i.e., school zone)
- * Road conditions
- * Lighting/visibility
- * Weather and environment
- * Officer training/experience
- * Performance capacity of pursued vehicle
- * Presence of other persons in pursued vehicle
- * Any and all other risks

2024 CITY OF MILWAUKEE FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION VEHICLE PURSUIT REPORT

Leon Todd, Executive Director



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an independent review of all vehicle pursuits conducted by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) during the year 2024. The goal is to provide the public with an objective measure of the frequency and circumstances of vehicle pursuits engaged in by MPD officers. Vehicle pursuits have been characterized by the United States Department of Justice as “possibly the most dangerous of all ordinary police activities.”¹ Given the inherent risk of high-speed reckless driving to both the public and officers, these police actions are generally under heightened scrutiny. Against that backdrop, this report is intended as a factual, informational, and unbiased tool for the public and policymakers to reference when examining this important topic.

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityFPC/Reports/Vehicle-Pursuit-Reports/2024-Vehicle-Pursuit-Report.pdf>

Review of Pursuit SOP is ongoing. Most recent change:

An additional note was added to 660.20(C)(4) on June 3, 2024, which limited pursuits for drug dealing to only incidents in which the observed drug dealing is directly related to a substantive drug investigation or long-term investigation. The note further provides that MPD members can still initiate pursuits if the suspect flees while driving in a reckless manner or for a “refusal to stop” pursuit. In February 2025 the SOP was updated to provide for the formation of a police/citizen Vehicle Pursuit Committee to “conduct periodic comprehensive reviews of all vehicle pursuit issues affecting the department.”

Summary

In 2024, MPD engaged in 957 vehicle pursuits, an 11% decrease compared to the 1,081 pursuits engaged in during 2023. As in 2023, the majority of the vehicle pursuits in 2024 were initiated in response to reckless driving (605 pursuits, 62.4% of the total compared to 64.8% in 2023).

The number of non-pursuit incidents in 2024 was 29% lower than in 2023 (1,327 v. 1,886), which was 24% lower than in 2022.

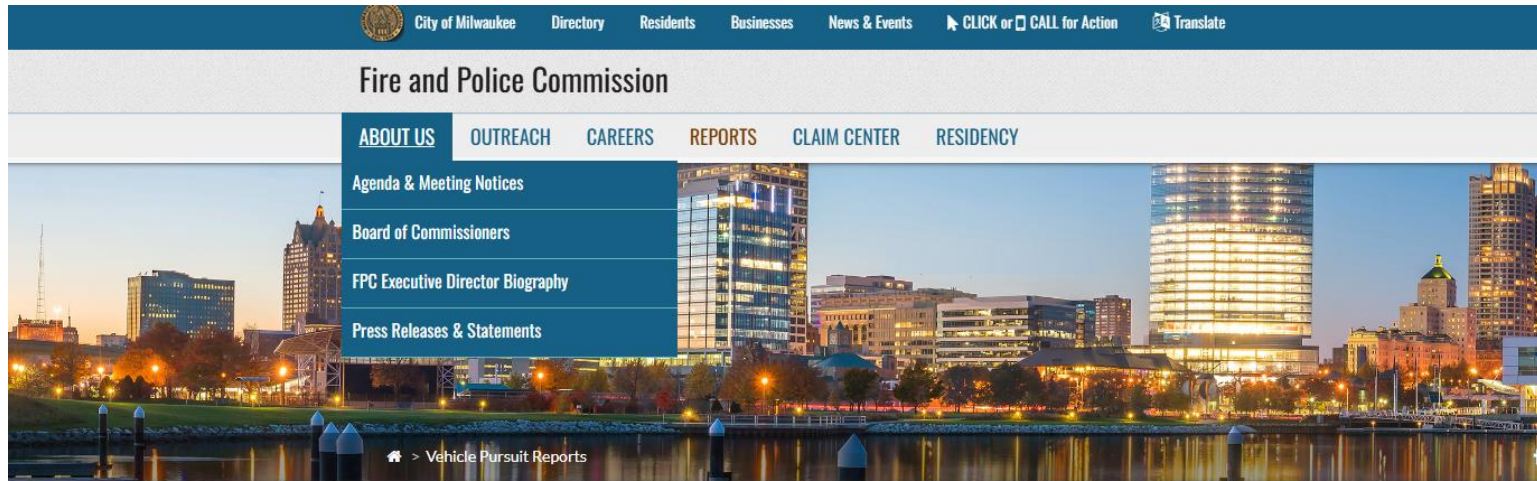
The percentage of traffic stops that resulted in subject vehicle flight in 2024, 9.0%, was down from 2023, 10.7%. This was still significantly higher than in the 6 years from 2016 to 2021, which had an overall flight rate average of 4.5%.

The percentage of pursuits resulting in any accident has decreased steadily from a 2008-2017 average of 34% to a 2018-2024 average of 29%, while the corresponding number of pursuits resulting in any accident increased from a 2008-2017 average of 50 to a 2018-2024 average of 281.

The number of pursuits resulting in injury to subjects, department members, and third parties has increased slightly since 2023, from 225 to 242.

The percentage of pursuits reaching speeds greater than 75 mph has increased steadily since 2008, from 15% up to 71% in 2024. It was at 66% in 2023. Correspondingly, the median age of pursuit subjects reached a high of 40 years in 2003 and decreased steadily to 21 in 2014. Since 2014, the median age has ranged from 18 to 21, and was 21 in 2024.

The percentage of pursuits resulting in subject apprehension reached a high of 91.2% in 2010. After a low of 31% in 2017, this percentage increased until 2019 (48%) and, with the exception of 2022 (38%), held fairly steady until 2024 (49%).



Vehicle Pursuit Reports

The Fire and Police Commission's Vehicle Pursuit Reports provide a statistical measure of all Milwaukee Police Department vehicle pursuits.

- [2024](#)
- [2023](#)
- [2022](#)
- [2018](#)
- [2017](#)
- [2016](#)
- [Addendum to 2016 Report \(Non-Pursuits\)](#)
- [2011](#)
- [2010](#)
- [Analysis of March 26, 2010 MPD Vehicle Pursuit Policy Revision](#)
- [2002 - 2009](#)

MPD preparing a presentation for the Fire and Police Commission scheduled for October 16th.