



Analysis of 2012 Milwaukee Police Department Vehicle Pursuits



Joseph Lawler

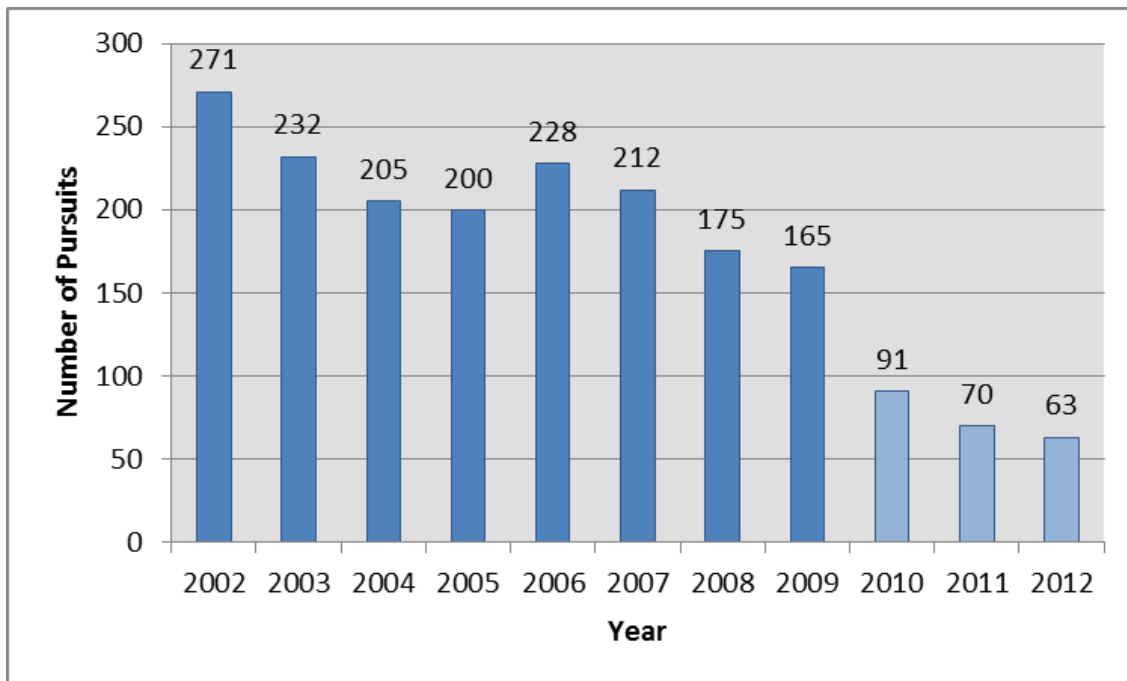
September 5, 2013

ANALYSIS OF 2012 VEHICLE PURSUITS

The purpose of this study is to review all vehicle pursuits conducted by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012. Analyses conducted provide measurements as to the frequency and circumstances surrounding vehicle pursuits conducted by MPD. Data presented in the report were obtained from the MPD AIM (Administrative Investigations Management) system and analyzed using SPSS.

Between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012, officers of MPD initiated a total of 63 vehicle pursuits, which represents the fewest number of pursuits in the past eleven years (see Chart 1). The greatest number of vehicle pursuits occurred in 2002, with 271 vehicle pursuits.¹ Between 2002 and 2012, vehicle pursuits decreased by 208 incidents, a 76.7% decrease. The most significant drop in vehicle pursuits occurred between 2009 and 2010 due to a change in the Milwaukee Police Department's Standard Operating Procedure for Vehicle Pursuits.² In the three years following the SOP revision, vehicle pursuit incidents remain significantly lower than pre-revision numbers. Overall, vehicle pursuits conducted by MPD have steadily declined since 2002, except for an increase between 2005 and 2006.

Chart 1. Vehicle Pursuits By Year



1. 2002 is the first year that vehicle pursuit data is available electronically.

2. MPD's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Vehicle Pursuits was amended on March 26, 2010. The SOP revision required an officer to know or have probable cause that a violent felony has occurred or is about to occur in order to begin or continue a vehicle pursuit.

In 2012, the highest number of vehicle pursuits occurred in January (9 pursuits, 14.3%) and September (8 pursuits, 12.7%), while the fewest number of pursuits occurred in both February and March (2 pursuits, 3.2%) (see Table 1). As seen in Table 1, there was variation in the frequency of incidents across months but no discernible seasonal pattern.

Table 1. Vehicle Pursuits By Month

Month	Number of Pursuits	Percentage
January	9	14.3%
February	2	3.2%
March	2	3.2%
April	6	9.5%
May	7	11.1%
June	4	6.3%
July	4	6.3%
August	6	9.5%
September	8	12.7%
October	7	11.1%
November	5	7.9%
December	3	4.9%
Total	63	100.0%

In 2012, the highest number of vehicle pursuits began between the hours of 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm (8 pursuits, 12.7 %) and 2:00pm-3:00pm (6 pursuits, 9.5%), while the fewest (1 pursuit, 1.6%) occurred during three of the time intervals (see Table 2).

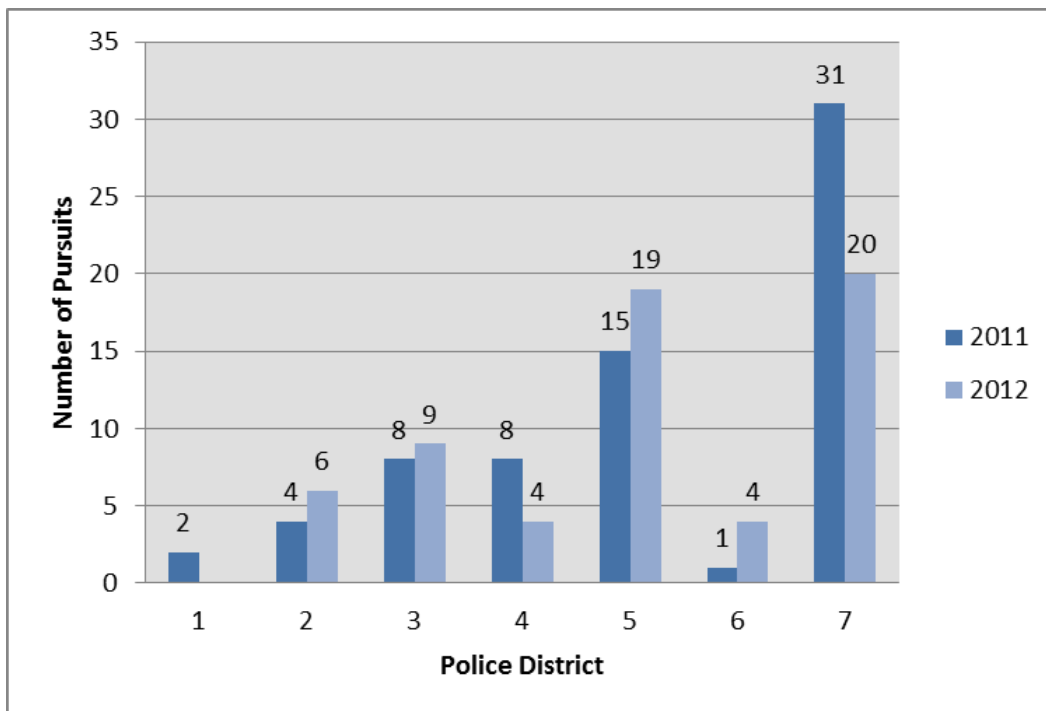
As seen in Chart 2, the greatest number of vehicle pursuits originated in Police District 7 (20 pursuits, 32.3%), while the fewest number of pursuits originated in Police District 1 (0 pursuit, 0.0%).³ The majority of vehicle pursuits originated in Police Districts 7 and 5 (39 pursuits, 62.9%).

3. Note: 1 missing case

Table 2. Vehicle Pursuits by Time

Time	Frequency	Percent
00:00-00:59	5	7.9%
01:00-01:59	5	7.9%
02:00-02:59	4	6.3%
03:00-03:59	2	3.2%
04:00-04:59	2	3.2%
09:00-09:59	1	1.6%
10:00-10:59	1	1.6%
11:00-11:59	2	3.2%
14:00-14:59	6	9.5%
15:00-15:59	1	1.6%
16:00-16:59	5	7.9%
17:00-17:59	2	3.2%
18:00-18:59	5	7.9%
19:00-19:59	4	6.3%
20:00-20:59	2	3.2%
21:00-21:59	4	6.3%
22:00-22:59	8	12.7%
23:00-23:59	4	6.3%
Total	63	100.0%

Chart 2. Vehicle Pursuits By Police District



The greatest percentage of vehicle pursuits originated in Aldermanic District 6, with 17 pursuits (27.9%), and Aldermanic Districts 7 and 15, with 8 pursuits each (13.1%) (see Table 3).⁴ Aldermanic Districts 8 and 13 had no pursuits.

Table 3. Vehicle Pursuits by Aldermanic District

Aldermanic District	Number of Pursuits	Percentage
1	7	11.5%
2	5	8.2%
3	2	3.3%
4	1	1.6%
5	1	1.6%
6	17	27.9%
7	8	13.1%
8	0	0.0%
9	2	3.3%
10	1	1.6%
11	1	1.6%
12	5	8.2%
13	0	0.0%
14	3	4.9%
15	8	13.1%
Total	61	100.0%

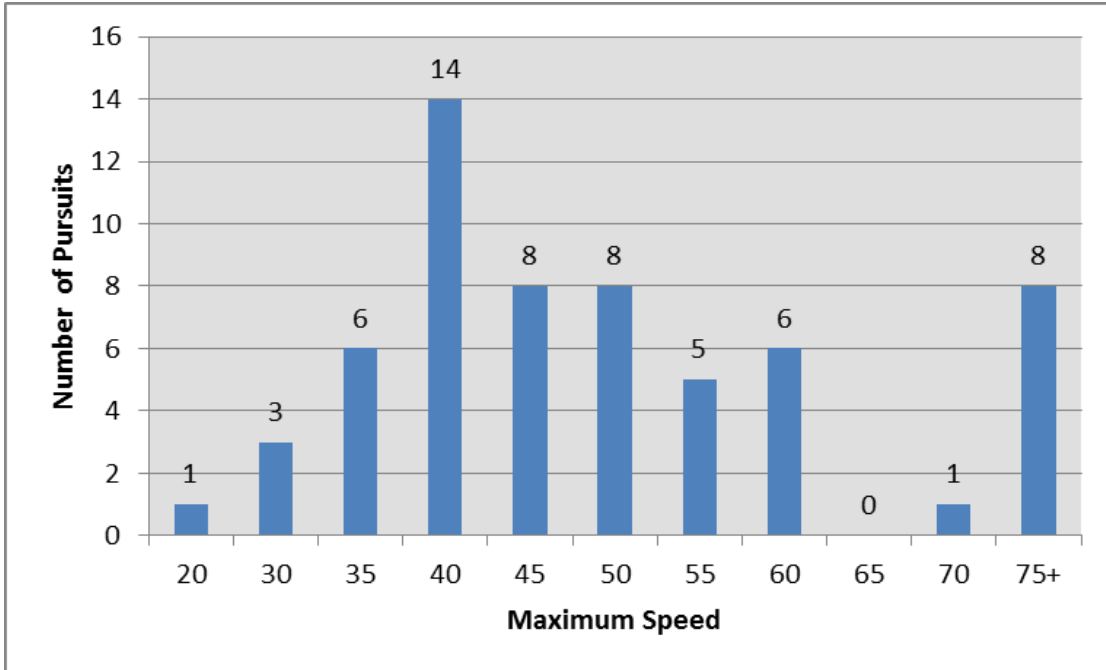
Maximum speed reached during the pursuit ranged from 20 miles per hour to over 75⁵ miles per hour (see Chart 3).⁶ The most common maximum speeds were 40 miles per hour (14 pursuits, 23.3%) , 45 miles per hour, 50 miles per hour, and 75+ miles per hour (8 pursuits, 13.3%). The average maximum speed reached was 49 miles per hour, with a median of 45 miles per hour.

4. Note: 2 missing cases

5. For Pursuits where the maximum speed reached was listed as 75 miles per hour or greater, the data was recoded to 80 miles per hour for statistical purposes.

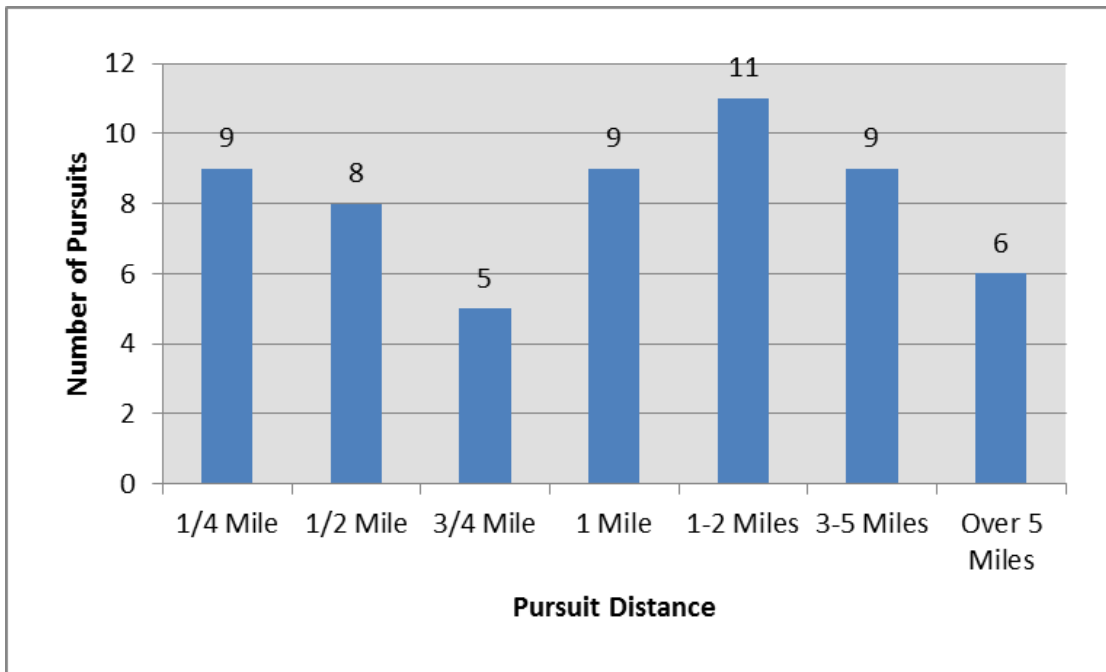
6. Note: 3 missing cases

Chart 3. Maximum Speed



Pursuit distance ranged from one-quarter of a mile to 5 miles or greater (see Chart 4).⁷ The most common distances were 1-2 miles (11 pursuits, 19.3%), one-quarter of a mile, 1 mile, and 3-5 miles (9 pursuits, 14.3%).

Chart 4. Pursuit Distance



7. Note: 6 missing cases

Marked squads were utilized in 58 pursuits (95.1%).⁸ Three pursuits (4.9%) utilized other vehicles (e.g., unmarked squads, wagon, motorcycle, etc.).

The outcome for pursuits included: the suspect stopped (12 pursuits, 19.4%), the pursuit was terminated because of a crash (13 pursuits, 21.0%), the pursuit was terminated by law enforcement (28 pursuits, 45.2%), the suspect escaped (6 pursuits, 9.7%), and vehicle failure/other (3 pursuits, 1.6%).⁹ Stop sticks were deployed in one pursuit.¹⁰ Twenty-one of the pursuits terminated by law enforcement were halted because the pursuit did not meet the criteria under the March 26, 2010 SOP revision.

The length of time for a pursuit ranged from less than 60 seconds to 23 minutes.¹¹ Fifteen pursuits (24.6%) lasted one minute, 13 pursuits (21.3%) lasted two minutes, 7 pursuits (11.5%) lasted 6 minutes, and 12 pursuits (19.7%) lasted 60 seconds or less. The mean amount of time a pursuit lasted was 2 minutes, with a median of 2 minutes and a mode of 1 minute.

In 2012, 24 pursuits (38.7%) involved an accident.¹² One of these accidents resulted in one third-party bystander sustaining minor injuries. Seventeen accidents (70.8%) involved property damage, four accidents involved personal injuries (16.7%), and three accidents (12.5%) were hit and run. Sixteen pursuits listed an estimate for the amount of property damage. The cost of property damage ranged from \$200 to \$10,000.

As the overall number of pursuits has decreased, the number of pursuits that involved an accident has also declined.¹³ There was a slight increase in the number of pursuits that involved an accident from 29% in 2011 to 38% in 2012 (see Chart 5).¹⁴ In 2007, 100 vehicle pursuits (48.1%) resulted in an accident, while 108 pursuits (51.9%) did not. In 2012, 24 pursuits (38.1%) resulted in accident, while 38 pursuits (60.3%) did not.¹⁵

8. Note: 2 missing cases

9. Note: 1 missing case

10. Note: 2 missing cases

11. Note: 1 missing case

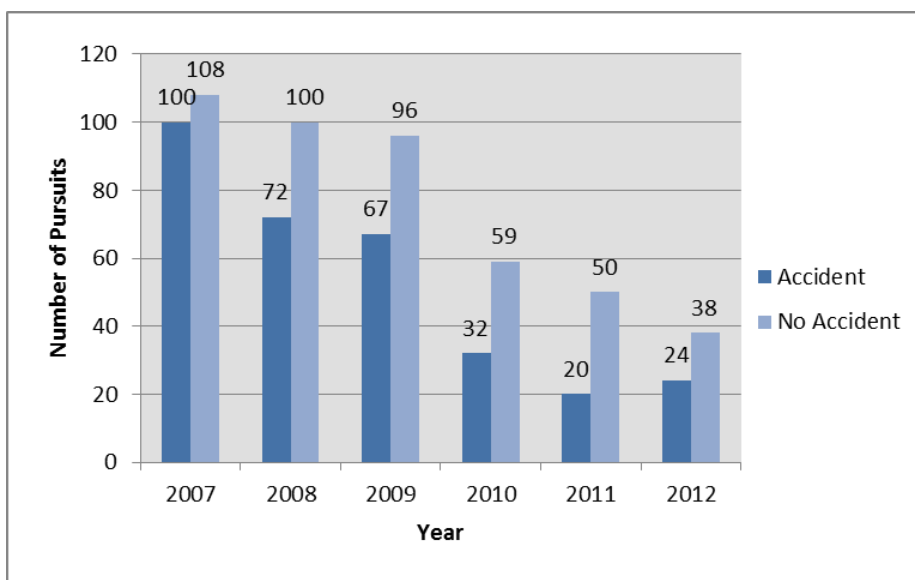
12. 1 missing case

13. An accident is defined as involving a suspect vehicle, police vehicle, uninvolved/bystander vehicle, object, person, or structure, or any combination.

14. Note: 4 missing cases in 2007, 3 missing cases in 2008, 2 missing cases in 2009, and 1 missing case in 2012.

15. Due to the number of vehicle pursuit reports with missing data between 2002 and 2006, those years are not counted in the accident totals reported here. For example, 85 vehicle pursuit reports indicated that an accident occurred in 2002, but 186 reports gave no indication as to whether an accident occurred or not. By including the 85 reports in which an accident occurred and counting the 186 reports as missing data, the percentage of vehicle pursuits with an accident would be much higher than what is accurate. As the same time, it cannot be assumed that all 186 reports from 2002 did not have an accident. So, in order to present the most accurate data, only 2007 to 2012 is shown here.

Chart 5. Pursuit Accidents By Year



OFFICER DEMOGRAPHICS¹⁶

Of the 63 vehicle pursuits in 2012, 59 contained officer demographic information.¹⁷ Forty-four officers were involved in one vehicle pursuit and the remaining eight were involved in two.¹⁸ Fifty-seven officers (96.6%) involved in vehicle pursuits in 2012 were male, and 2 officers (3.4%) were female.¹⁹ Forty-six officers (78.0%) were white, five officers (8.5%) were Hispanic, two officers (3.4%) were black, two officers (3.4%) were American Indian, one officer (1.7%) was Asian, and three officers (5.1%) were non-specified.²⁰

Officer age ranged from 23 years old to 55 years old, with a mean of 37 years old, a median of 36 years old, and a mode of 28 and 33 years old.²¹ Years of service ranged from one year to 20 years, with a mean of 9.9 years, a median of 9.5 years, and a mode of 10 year.²²

Safety equipment was utilized by 56 officers (90.3%), while 6 officers (9.7%) did not use safety equipment.^{23,24} One officer was injured during the course of a pursuit in 2012 (see Chart 6).²⁵

16. Officer demographic data focuses only on the driver of the first pursuit vehicle.

17. Note: 4 missing cases

18. Note: 3 missing cases

19. Note: 4 missing cases

20. Note: 4 missing cases

21. Note: 4 missing cases

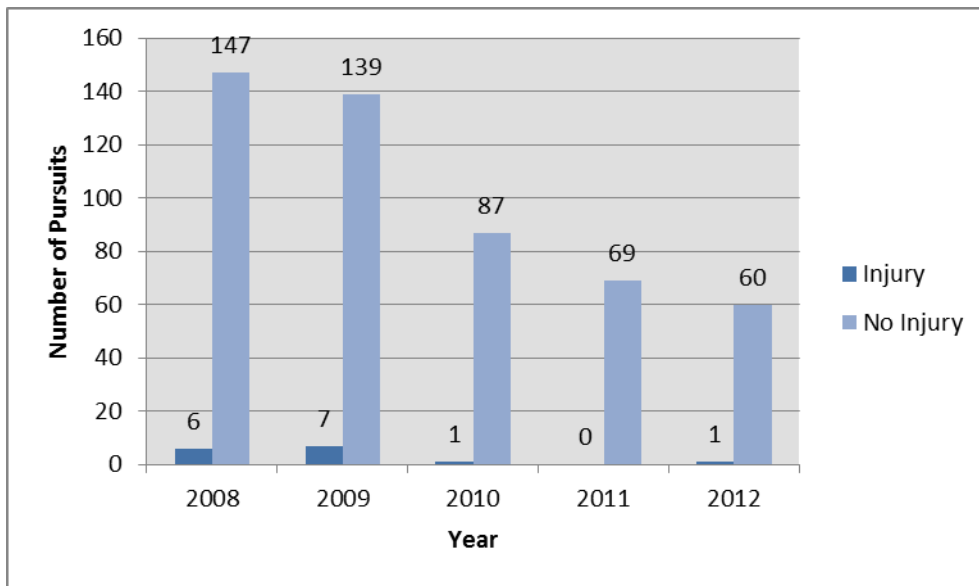
22. Note: 2 missing cases

23. Safety Equipment refers to the seat belt designed to secure the officer against harmful movement that may result from a collision or a sudden stop

24. Note: 1 missing case

25. Note: 2 missing case

Chart 6. Officer Injuries By Year



Six officers were injured in 2008, seven officers were injured in 2009, 1 officer was injured in 2010, zero officers were injured in 2011, and one officer was injured in 2012. No MPD law enforcement personnel died as the result of a vehicle pursuit during this time period.

SUSPECT DEMOGRAPHICS²⁶

The majority of suspects were male (59 suspects, 98.3%), while 1 suspect (1.7%) was female²⁷. Fifty-one suspects (86.4%) were black, 4 suspects (6.8%) were white, and 4 suspects (6.8%) were hispanic²⁸. Suspect age ranged from 15 years old to 54 years old, with a mean of 29.8 years old, a median of 27.5 years old, and a mode of 16 years old²⁹.

Sixteen suspects (26.7%) were injured, while 44 suspects (73.3%) were not³⁰. Of these 16 injured suspects, 13 were listed as minor, 1 was classified as taser related, and 3 were considered major³¹.

Twelve suspects (22.6%) fled because of a felony, 1 (1.9%) because of a traffic violation, 1 (1.9%) for warrants, 17 (32.1%) for an ordinance/misdemeanor violation, 17 (32.1%) for other reasons, and 5 (9.4%) for unknown reasons.³² Suspects were apprehended in 41 pursuits (66.1%).³³

26. Suspect demographic data focuses on the driver of the pursued vehicle.

27. Note: 3 missing cases

28. Note: 4 missing cases

29. Note: 18 missing cases

30. Note: 3 missing cases

31. Note: 6 Missing Cases

32. Note: 10 missing Cases

33. Note: 1 missing Cases

SUMMARY

A total of 63 vehicle pursuits were conducted by the Milwaukee Police Department in 2012, the lowest number recorded in the past ten years. In general, vehicle pursuits were most likely to have:

- Originated in Police District 7 or Aldermanic District 6;
- Reached an average maximum speed of 49 miles per hour;
- Covered a distance of 5 or less miles;
- Lasted an average of 5 minutes;
- Been terminated by law enforcement;
- Been conducted by a white, male police officer, with an average age of 37 years old and an average of 9 years of service, who utilized safety equipment; and
- Involved a black, male suspect, with an average age of 29 years old, who was fleeing because of a misdemeanor/ordinance violation.

This report provides data on the frequency and circumstances surrounding vehicle pursuits conducted by the Milwaukee Police Department in 2012. This study can be utilized as a baseline measurement for future analyses of vehicle pursuits and to assess the implications of MPD policy, procedures, and training.