

# Milwaukee Police Department Vehicle Pursuit Update

Assistant Chief of Police Craig Sarnow



October 16, 2025

# Overview

- History of Standard Operating Procedure 660 (2010-Present)
- Pursuit Data (Year/Month/Location)
- Reason for the Pursuit
- Pursuit Outcome
- Arrests/Charges
- Summary of Findings
- Repeat Vehicle Pursuit Suspects
- Pursuit Crashes/Injuries
- Crash Fatality Statistics
- 2025 Fatal Crash Analysis
- Mitigation Strategies
- Current Policy
- PERF Report
- Conclusion/Questions

## VEHICLE PURSUIT

### 1. Eluding / Fleeing

An active attempt by one or more law enforcement officers to apprehend a suspect who is either an occupant of or operating a motor vehicle, during which time the operator of the motor vehicle is attempting to avoid capture by using high speed driving or other evasive tactics such as driving off a highway, or making sudden or unexpected maneuvers.

### 2. Refusal to Stop

An active attempt by one or more law enforcement officers to stop a motor vehicle by use of emergency lights and siren, during which time the operator of the motor vehicle is driving at a reasonable speed (e.g., at or below the established speed limit), but willfully refusing to pull over and stop.

SOP 660.15 (A) / WILEAG 6.1.4

# Key Policy Changes 2010 & 2015

March 26, 2010, MPD changed its pursuit policy following the deaths of four (4) bystanders in three (3) separate incidents in late 2009 and early 2010.

Updated pursuit policy stated pursuits were authorized when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe:

- The occupant(s) has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a violent felony (i.e., armed robbery, recklessly endangering safety, and other crimes against a person in which violence is an element to the felony offense); or
- The occupant(s) presents a clear and immediate threat to the safety of others and therefore the necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by vehicle pursuit.
- For a refusal to stop, which is an active attempt by one or more law enforcement officers to stop a motor vehicle by use of emergency lights and siren, during which time the operator of the motor vehicle is driving at a reasonable speed (i.e., at or below the established speed limit), but willfully refusing to pull over and stop.

June 29, 2015, as the previous policy did not address vehicles taken in violent felonies (only occupants).

The updated pursuit policy stated pursuits were authorized when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe:

- The specific vehicle was used in or taken during the attempt or commission of a violent felony (e.g., armed robbery, recklessly endangering safety, and other crimes against a person in which violence is an element to the felony offense); or
- The vehicle or occupant(s) presents a clear and immediate threat to the safety of others and therefore the necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the vehicle pursuit (e.g., misdemeanor shots fired incident in which a specific vehicle is described as being involved).

# 2017

## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

### CHAIR

- Judiciary and Legislation
- Milwaukee Arts Board
- Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board

### MEMBER

- Finance and Personnel
- Steering and Rules



**MICHAEL J. MURPHY**  
ALDERMAN, 10TH DISTRICT

April 7, 2017

City of Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission  
Attn – MaryNell Regan, Executive Director  
200 E. Wells St., Rm. 706A  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Executive Director Regan,

After reviewing statistics on City of Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn's police pursuit policy, I am requesting that the Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission (FPC) review said policy given the amount of crime we are currently experiencing when it comes to vehicle flights, mobile drug transactions, and more.

As you know, the pursuit policy changed in 2010 under the direction of Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn when four innocent civilians were killed as a result of high-speed pursuits. I respect Chief Flynn's rationale based on the protection of civilian lives and officer safety, but I feel that the pursuit policy must be reexamined and possibly amended based upon current pursuit data. I encourage you to examine the data below from the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) Office of Management, Analysis & Planning:

Vehicle Pursuits & Non-Pursuits by the MPD							
Police Activity	2012	2013	2014*	2015*	2016*	YTD 2016	YTD % 2017 Change
Vehicle Pursuits	49	82	102	263	305	71	-62%
Non-Pursuits	12	36	689	2,544	4,317	863	1,675 94%

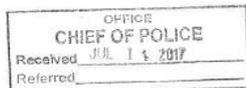
\*Includes both pursuit and non-pursuit data is not comparable due to policy changes or reporting practices

In 2016, there were 305 vehicle pursuits and 4,317 non-pursuits. As you can see, vehicle pursuits decreased 62% from January 1 through March 13, 2017 (27) from the same time period in 2016 (71); however, non-pursuits dramatically increased by 94% from 863 in YTD 2016 to 1,675 in YTD 2017. If current trends continue, we will likely exceed the 2016 figure this year. Again, while I respect Chief Flynn's rationale, I also wonder whether some of these should be pursued to prevent further illegal acts.

April 7, 2017, Alderman Michael Murphy requested the FPC “review and, if deemed appropriate, make modifications to the current pursuit policy because of staggering statistics.”



# Key Policy Change 2017



Fire and Police Commission

MaryNell Regan  
Executive Director

Steven M. DeVougas  
Chair  
Fred Crouther  
Vice-Chair  
Kathryn A. Hein  
Ann Wilson  
Marisabel Cabrera  
Angela McKenzie  
Nelson Soler  
Commissioners

July 14, 2017

Edward A. Flynn, Chief of Police  
Milwaukee Police Department  
749 W. State St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Chief Flynn:

Please be advised that the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, at a Regular Meeting on July 13, 2017, voted unanimously to issue the enclosed directive pursuant to Section 62.50(23) Wis. Stats.

MILWAUKEE BOARD OF  
FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS

STEVEN DeVOUGAS  
Chair

SD:MNR:rk

Enc.

c: Fire and Police Commissioners  
Mayor Tom Barrett

July 14, 2017, when the FPC issued a directive to then Chief Edward Flynn to allow for pursuits related to drug dealing and reckless driving following significant feedback from the community and elected officials.

- The updated pursuit policy stated pursuits were authorized when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe:
  - The occupant(s) of the vehicle are engaged in drug dealing proximate in time to the initiation of the vehicle pursuit.
  - The necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the vehicle pursuit, as in the case of the vehicle engaging in reckless driving.

# Key Policy Changes 2022 & 2024

July 22, 2022, clarified to members when they could pursue a vehicle for reckless driving.

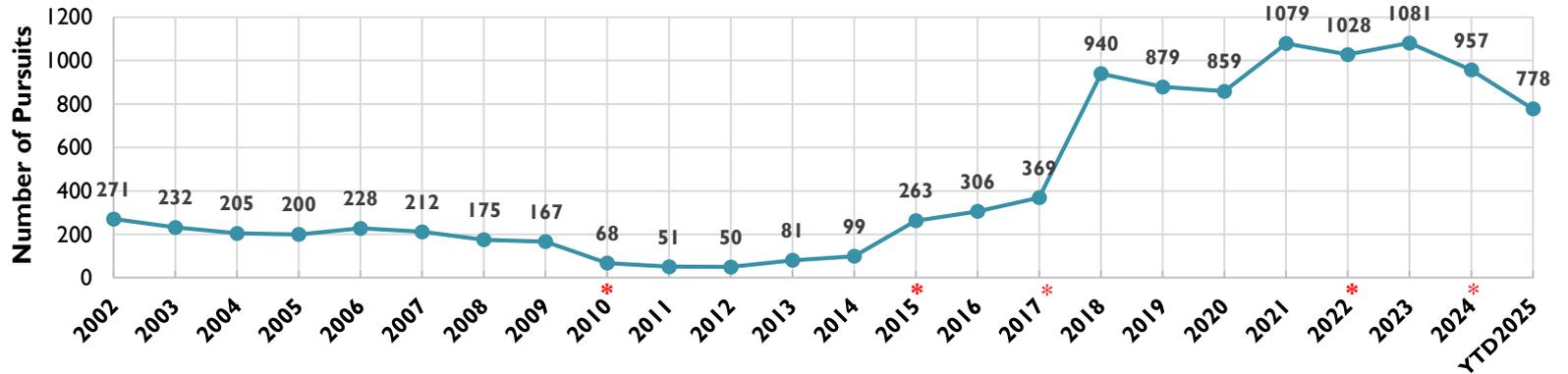
- The updated pursuit policy stated pursuits were authorized when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe:
  - The necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the vehicle pursuit, as in the case of the vehicle engaging in reckless driving.
  - A note was added to this to give officers more direction as it stated, “Members may initiate a vehicle pursuit for either (1) reckless driving observed by the member prior to the initiation of a traffic stop or (2) if the suspect vehicle flees while driving in a reckless manner after an attempted traffic stop for any state law or ordinance violation.”

June 3, 2024, clarified to members when they could pursue a vehicle related to drug dealing.

- The updated pursuit policy stated pursuits were authorized when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe:
  - The occupant(s) of the vehicle are engaged in drug dealing proximate in time to the initiation of the vehicle pursuit.
  - A note was added to this to give officers more direction as it stated, “This subsection is limited to only incidents in which the observed drug dealing is directly related to a substantive drug investigation or long term investigation. Members may initiate a vehicle pursuit under this subsection if the suspect flees while driving in a reckless manner after an attempted traffic stop or for a “refusal to stop” pursuit, as previously defined within this policy.”

# Vehicle Pursuits by Year

## Total Number of Vehicle Pursuits per Year



Years with \* reflect a pursuit policy change.

# Vehicle Pursuits by Month

Month	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
January	76	108	42%
February	104	80	-23%
March	95	93	-2%
April	76	95	25%
May	85	67	-21%
June	81	78	-4%
July	58	87	50%
August	72	121	68%
September	36	49	36%
Total	<b>683</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>14%</b>

- In August 2025, vehicle pursuits increased 68% (121) from August 2024 (72)
- In July 2025, vehicle pursuits increased 50% (87) from July 2024 (58)

# Non-Pursuits by Month

Month	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
January	136	132	-3%
February	140	125	-11%
March	122	92	-25%
April	100	89	-11%
May	114	130	14%
June	108	93	-14%
July	65	115	77%
August	139	88	-37%
September	62	46	-26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>-8%</b>

SOP 660.25 Decision Not to Pursue

# Pursuits by Work Location

Work Location	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
District 1	16	23	44%
District 2	114	144	26%
District 3	105	99	-6%
District 4	78	83	6%
District 5	131	156	19%
District 6	32	49	53%
District 7	209	198	-5%
CIB	50	49	-2%
SPD	12	43	258%
Other/Unknown	3	4	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>14%</b>

# Reason for Pursuit

Reason	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
Traffic Offense - Reckless Vehicle	420	583	39%
Violent Felony	216	150	-31%
Non-Violent Felony	13	15	15%
Drug Related Offense	28	15	-46%
Refusal to Stop	2	12	500%
Warrant	4	3	-25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>14%</b>

- In 2025, Reckless Vehicle accounted for 75% (583) of pursuits.

# Pursuit Outcome

Outcome	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
Terminated - By Law Enforcement	227	226	0%
Terminated - Crash	151	187	24%
Terminated – Violator Stopped	139	185	33%
Violator Escape	125	154	23%
Violator Vehicle Failure	41	26	-37%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>14%</b>

# Pursuit Arrests/Charges

Charge Category	2024	2025	2024-2025 % Change
Fleeing/Eluding	296	361	22%
Resisting/Obstructing	322	359	11%
Reckless Endangering Safety	258	315	22%
Operating w/o Consent	249	240	-4%
Drug Related Charges	158	176	11%
Weapon Related Charges	166	165	-1%
All Other Charges	109	129	18%
Traffic Related Charges	23	65	183%
Probation/Parole	48	64	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>9%</b>

# Summary of Findings

- In 2025, the average pursuit distance was 3.79 miles, compared to 3.86 miles in 2024.
- The average pursuit lasted 4 minutes and 29 seconds in 2025, a decrease of 3 seconds from 4 minutes and 32 seconds in 2024.
- The average maximum pursuit speed was 85.05 mph, compared to 84.26 mph in 2024.

# Summary of Findings

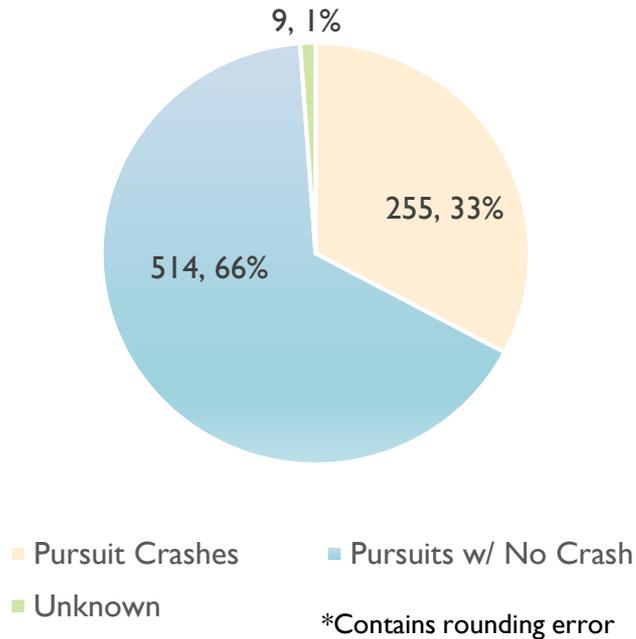
- In 2025, vehicle pursuits increased 14% (778) from 2024 (683)
- Pursuits associated with reckless driving increased 39% (583) from 2024 (420)
- Pursuits associated with violent felony's decreased 31% (150) from 2024 (216)
- Pursuits terminated by a crash increased 24% (187) from 2024 (151)
- Pursuits that involved a crash increased 19% (255) from 2024 (214)
- Since January 1, 2025, 19 individuals were involved in two incidents compared to 13 individuals in 2024\*
- The average age of a pursuit driver is 26 years old in 2025 and 27 2024
- Vehicle pursuits occur most frequently on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between the hours 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM
- There were 6 vehicle pursuit incidents resulting in 9 fatalities
  - Pursuit fatality data was gathered through 9/16 due to a pursuit incident resulting in 3 fatalities on that date***

# Repeat Vehicle Pursuit Subjects

- 19 subjects who account for 33 incidents that were involved in 2 or more vehicle pursuits, compared to 13 subjects who accounted for 23 incidents in 2024
  - 3 subjects were only passengers in separate incidents
  - 8 subjects were only drivers in separate incidents
  - 8 subjects were drivers and passengers in separate incidents
- 53% (10) subjects were 17 and younger
- Of these incidents 61% (20) were pursued for reckless driving and 30% (10) were pursued for a violent felony
- 39% (13) violator stopped
- 33% (11) were terminated due to a crash

# 2025 Pursuit Crashes & Injuries

Pursuit Crashes in 2025\*



- 33% (255) of incidents involved a crash
  - 68% (174) of vehicles were pursued for reckless driving and 27% (69) for a violent felony

- There were 137 incidents that involved a subject who was injured
- Of all incidents, 5% (41) involved bystanders (3<sup>rd</sup> party) that were injured in 2025
  - 59% (24) of those incidents were initiated due to reckless driving. 41% (17) for violent felony
- 14 members were injured in vehicle pursuits this year (11 incidents)
  - Four incidents had two different members injured.
  - One member was injured in two separate incidents
- This year there were 6 incidents involving 9 fatalities\*
  - Pursued due to reckless driving (4) and violent felony (2)\*
  - **\*Pursuit fatality data was gathered through 9/16 due to a pursuit incident resulting in 3 fatalities on that date**

# Fatal Crash - 4300 N Green Bay Ave

## Reckless driving

- Wednesday 4/30 | 10:58 PM
- Subjects vehicle was pursued for reckless driving
  - Originally a traffic stop for suspicious persons entering vehicles prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted 1 minute for a total distance of 0.3 miles reaching speeds of 93 mph
- Struck 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle head on in oncoming traffic containing 3 occupants (all injured)
- Two passengers (17 yoa & 18 yoa) in subjects vehicle were pronounced deceased while the driver (19 yoa) sustained injuries
- Guns (two rifles) and drugs (21.6 g marijuana) recovered in subjects vehicle & driver was arrested
- Driver of subject vehicle had a suspended license with no prior arrests
  - Driver stated he was held at gunpoint by his two passengers to flee

# Fatal Crash - 4300 W Fond Du Lac Av

## Reckless driving

- Monday 7/14 | 8:28 PM
- Subjects vehicle was pursued for reckless driving
  - Originally a traffic stop for a vehicle registration violation prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted 27 seconds for a total distance of 0.6 miles reaching speeds greater than of 90 mph
- Subject lost control of vehicle and struck a pedestrian (55 yoa) at a bus stop & two legally parked unoccupied vehicles
- Subject was arrested after a brief foot pursuit with officers
- Pedestrian was pronounced deceased on scene
- Driver of subject vehicle had a revoked license with three prior arrests
  - 1<sup>st</sup> degree RES, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree RES, resisting/obstructing, criminal damage to property, bail jumping felony, possession of THC

# Fatal Crash - 1101 E Brady St

## Reckless driving

- Tuesday 7/29 | 9:22 PM
- Subject's vehicle was pursued for reckless driving
  - Officers attempted a traffic stop for speeding prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted 2 minutes for a total distance of 2.2 miles reaching speeds greater than 88 mph
- Subject disregarded numerous red lights/oncoming traffic nearly striking a pedestrian crossing a street
- Subject subsequently disregarded a red light and crashed into oncoming traffic with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle containing two occupants at the intersection of Brady/Humboldt
- Driver of struck vehicle (28 yoa) was pronounced deceased on scene & his passenger (27 yoa) was injured
- Driver of subject vehicle had a valid license with no priors
  - Cited on 2/14/2023 by the Butler PD for fleeing/eluding an officer

# Fatal Crash - 1900 W Hampton Ave

## Violent Felony

- Wednesday 8/6 | 7:25 PM
- Subjects vehicle was pursued for a violent felony.
  - Officers made a brief traffic stop for a previous BOLO for an RES incident prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted 3 minutes for a total distance of 3.5 miles reaching speeds of 75 mph
- Subject drove recklessly around other motorists
- Subject subsequently lost control of the vehicle and collided with a tree where the vehicle caught fire
- Driver of subject vehicle was pronounced deceased shortly after the crash
- Damaged firearm was recovered in the rubble of the crash
- Driver of subject vehicle was not licensed with one prior arrest
  - Battery, OWOC, robbery x2, resisting/obstructing an officer

# Fatal Crash - 2700 N. 51<sup>st</sup> Street

## Violent felony

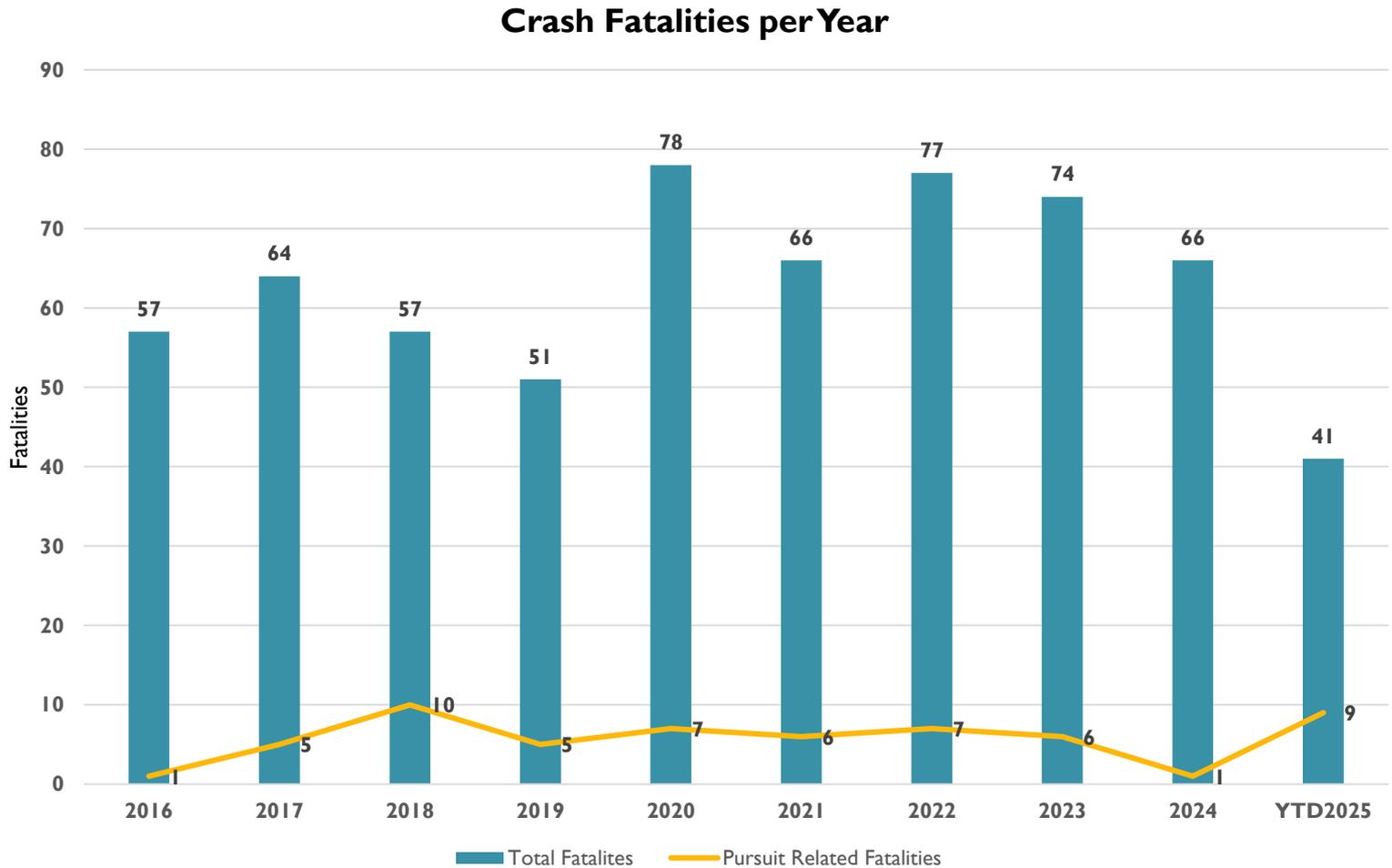
- Saturday 8/23 | 7:41 PM
- Subjects vehicle was pursued for a violent felony
  - Officers attempted a traffic stop for a BOLO vehicle wanted in connection to a shooting incident prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted 5 minutes for a total distance of 3.45 miles reaching speeds double & triple residential speed limits
- Subject drove recklessly into oncoming traffic disregarding numerous stop signs and nearly striking other civilian motorist
- Subject subsequently failed to stop at a red light and struck a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle
- Driver of 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle (30 yoa) was pronounced deceased on scene. Passenger (31 yoa) was injured
- Two individuals fled the subject vehicle after the crash (driver and rear passenger). One has an Investigative Alert and the other has a Suspect Alert regarding this incident, while the front passenger (17 yoa) was conveyed to Froedtert

# Fatal Crash - 3500 W. Vliet St.

## Reckless Driving

- Tuesday 9/16 | 9:37 PM
- Subjects vehicle was pursued for reckless driving
  - Officers attempted a traffic stop for reckless driving prior to subject fleeing
- Pursuit lasted roughly 1 minute for a total distance of 1.39 miles reaching a top speed of 80 mph
- Subject drove recklessly into oncoming traffic disregarding numerous stop signs
- Subject subsequently failed to stop at a red light and collided with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle
- Driver of 3<sup>rd</sup> party vehicle (21 yoa), front passenger (15 yoa), rear passenger (50 yoa) were pronounced deceased on scene. Two other rear passenger (18 and 12 yoa were injured)
- Subject vehicle was reported stolen by Elkhart PD. Driver (17 yoa) and front passenger (19 yoa) arrested (both not licensed).
  - Pistol recovered from subject vehicle
  - Driver stated she was held at gunpoint to flee

# How Common are Crash Fatalities?



Crash fatalities were obtained from Inform RMS Central Square for the time period of 1/1/2016 – 9/16/2025

# What is MPD Doing to Mitigate Risk

1. Digital Siren (Pursuit Alert)
  - 2024 - 88 deployments; and 3 Piranha deployment.
  - 2025(YTD) - 91 deployments; and 1 Piranha deployment.
2. The Grappler Bumper System
3. \*StarChase (GPS Launcher)
4. HAAS Cloud Safety Alert
  - \*WI statewide had approximately 367 in 2024 (MPD 23%).

<https://www.cbs58.com/news/milwaukee-county-sheriffs-office-praises-new-system-to-alert-drivers-of-nearby-emergency-vehicles>

# Current Policy

		
<b>MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>		
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		
660 – VEHICLE PURSUITS AND EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS		
GENERAL ORDER: 2025-06 ISSUED: March 17, 2025	EFFECTIVE: March 17, 2025	REVIEWED/APPROVED BY: Assistant Chief Craig Sarnow DATE: December 23, 2024
ACTION: Amends General Order 2024-10 (June 3, 2024)		WILEAG STANDARD(S): 6.1.3, 6.1.4, 6.2.11

**660.00 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish guidelines with regard to vehicle pursuits and emergency vehicle operations.

**660.05 POLICY**

All personnel operating department vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons. There are no assignments or tasks of such importance that they justify the reckless disregard of the member's safety or the safety of other persons. Members must be mindful of the balance between achieving the goals of law enforcement while maintaining the public's safety.

**660.10 STATUTORY GUIDELINES (WILEAG 6.1.3, 6.1.4)**

A. All emergency vehicle operations shall be conducted in strict accordance with existing statutes. Police members engaged in emergency vehicle response shall simultaneously utilize both audible (siren) and visual (red/blue emergency light(s)) emergency warning equipment unless specifically exempted by statutes.

B. For maximum visibility at intersections and to avoid injuries, if the only emergency light for an unmarked police squad is a red strobe light, it shall be used only on the roof of the squad. It shall not be used in the interior of the vehicle.

C. Exemptions to the use of audible and visual emergency equipment are as follows:

1. [Wis. Stat. § 349.03\(4\)\(a\)](#) Officers may exceed the speed limit without giving audible and visual signals when obtaining evidence of a speed violation.
2. [Wis. Stat. § 349.03\(4\)\(b\)](#) Officers may exceed the speed limit without giving audible and visual signals when responding to a call which the officer reasonably believes involves a felony in progress and the officer reasonably believes any of the following:
  - a. Knowledge of the officer's presence may endanger the safety of a victim or other person.
  - b. Knowledge of the officer's presence may cause the suspected violator to evade apprehension.

Policy can be found at:

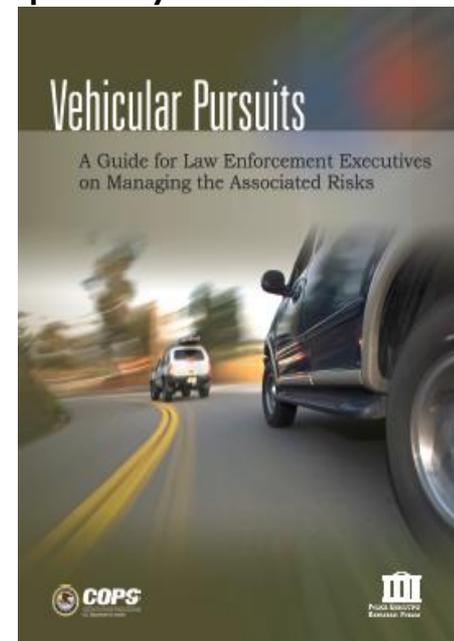
[660-VEHICLEPURSUITSANDEMERGENCYVEHICLEOPERATIONS1.pdf](#)

- “All personnel operating department vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons.” 660.05
- Statutory Guidelines
- Factors whether to initiate or continue a pursuit and shall be continually assessed
- Vehicle Pursuit Justification
- Decision not to Pursue
- Officer Responsibilities
- Passenger Responsibilities
- Supervisor Responsibilities
- Inter-jurisdiction pursuits

Policy in compliance with both IACP Model Policy Guidelines and WILEAG standards 6.1.3 and 6.1.4

# Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

- Policies & Standards
  - Role of a Supervisor
  - Pursuit Interventions, Alternatives and Technology
  - Post Pursuit Reporting
  - Training
  - Community Engagement, Education and Transparency
- 65 total recommendations highlighted in the report.
  - 11 not applicable by function.
  - 43/54 of the total recommendations have been adopted by MPD=83%.



# Questions?

