

2024 CITY OF MILWAUKEE FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION VEHICLE PURSUIT REPORT

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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.

Vehicle pursuits are formally defined in MPD Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 660 as:²

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.*

It is not considered a pursuit if the officer does not actively attempt to apprehend the suspect. For instance, if a squad activates its lights and/or siren attempting to pull over a vehicle and the vehicle drives away, it will not be considered a pursuit until/unless the initiating officer decides to attempt apprehension of the occupants in the fleeing vehicle. Absent the initiation of a pursuit, instances such as this are classified as non-pursuits.

Decisions to attempt apprehension are guided by SOP 660.20(C), which currently states:

- C. Vehicle pursuits are justified when the police member knows or has probable cause to believe:*
1. *The occupant(s) has committed, is committing, or is about to commit 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*
 2. *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*
 3. *The vehicle or occupant(s) present 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); or*

¹ U.S. Department of Justice, *Restrictive Policies for High-Speed Police Pursuits* (1990).

² The current version of SOP 660 – Vehicle Pursuits and Emergency Vehicle Operations, can be located and reviewed on MPD’s website at: <https://city.milwaukee.gov/Directory/police/About-MPD/Code-of-Conduct.htm>

4. *The occupant(s) of the vehicle are engaged in drug dealing proximate in time to the initiation of the vehicle pursuit.*

Note: *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.*

5. *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.*

Note: *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.*

6. *A “refusal to stop” pursuit, as previously defined within this policy, may be initiated and maintained for a lesser offense than described above.*

Even if a pursuit is allowed under the conditions detailed in SOP 660.20(C), officers and their field supervisors are expected to use their discretion regarding the choice to initiate or continue a pursuit depending on a number of factors. Section 660.10(F)4 details the considerations that the involved officer and their field supervisor shall consider when deciding whether to initiate or continue a pursuit:

- a. *The seriousness of the offense;*
- b. *Necessity of pursuit by vehicle;*
- c. *Known information on the suspect;*
- d. *Road conditions and configuration (e.g. interstate, divided highway, work zone);*
- e. *Physical location and population density (e.g. residential area, school zone, business district);*
- f. *Existence of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;*
- g. *Lighting and visibility;*
- h. *Weather and environmental conditions;*
- i. *The relative performance capabilities of the pursuit vehicle and the vehicle being pursued;*
- j. *Officer training and experience;*
- k. *Available equipment;*
- l. *Speed and evasive tactics employed by the suspect;*
- m. *The presence of other persons in the police and suspect vehicle; and*
- n. *Any other condition or situation that would create an unreasonable risk.*

Policy Evolution

Vehicle pursuits initiated before March 2010 were under the guidance of a previous version of SOP 660, which stated that vehicle pursuits were authorized only when the law enforcement officer knew or had reasonable grounds to believe that:

1. *The suspect presents a clear and immediate threat to the safety of others;*
2. *The suspect has committed or is attempting to commit a serious offense; or*

3. *The necessity of immediate apprehension outweighs the level of danger created by the vehicle pursuit, as in the case of a serious traffic violation such as OWI, reckless driving, etc.*

In response to a number of pursuit-related fatalities, a revision to the policy was adopted in March 2010 that said that an officer must have *probable cause that a violent felony has occurred or is about to occur* instead of reasonable suspicion that a suspect has committed or is attempting to commit a serious offense.³ A key objective of this revision to the pursuit policy was to regulate officers' decisions to initiate or continue a dangerous high-speed pursuit with someone who is not an immediate threat to the public.

An additional update to the SOP occurred in June 2015 in response to increases in the number of vehicles taken in armed robberies (also known as "car jackings"). This policy change expanded permitted pursuits beyond persons involved in certain crimes to also include the vehicles involved in those crimes. Between March 2010 and June 2015, the officer engaging in the pursuit would have had to know that a person in the subject vehicle was involved in a violent felony to engage in a vehicle pursuit. Under the 2015 policy revision, the department member would only have to know that the *vehicle itself* was involved in a violent felony (for instance, if it was taken during a carjacking) to engage in a vehicle pursuit.

The exact wording added at that time to SOP 660.20 is highlighted here:

B. Vehicle pursuits are justified only when the police member knows or has probable cause to believe:

2. *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*
3. *The vehicle or occupant(s) present 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).*

In September 2017, another significant revision to the policy was enacted wherein the categories of permitted vehicle pursuits were again expanded. These revisions were undertaken in an effort to address growing community concerns surrounding reckless driving and vehicle-based drug dealing. In compliance with a directive issued on July 13, 2017 from the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners to MPD Chief of Police Edward Flynn, the revised SOP allowed for department members to engage in a vehicle pursuit if the vehicle is engaged in reckless driving, as defined by Wis. Stat. §§ 346.62(2) and 939.25, or if the occupants of the vehicle are engaged in drug dealing.

The exact wording added at that time to SOP 660.20 is highlighted here:

C. Vehicle pursuits are justified when the police member knows or has probable cause to believe:

1. *The occupant(s) has committed, is committing, or is about to commit 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*

³ Probable cause is the quantum of evidence that would lead a reasonable police officer to believe that the defendant committed a crime. It is more than a hunch or suspicion, but less than the evidence required to convict at trial.

2. *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*
3. *The vehicle or occupant(s) present 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); or*
4. *The occupant(s) of the vehicle are engaged in drug dealing proximate in time to the initiation of the vehicle pursuit.*
5. *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.*
6. *A “refusal to stop” pursuit, as previously defined within this policy, may be initiated and maintained for a lesser offense than described above.*

Further amendments to the SOP were adopted by the FPC on May 16, 2019.⁴ The changes adopted at that time reflected updated language in Wis. Stat. § 346.04(3), required shift commander collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Bureau under certain circumstances detailed under 660.20(K) (now 660.20(N) in the current version of SOP 660), and codified into the SOP under 660.25(B) non-pursuit follow up procedures that had been previously disseminated to members via memorandum.

Additional amendments were adopted by the FPC effective July 22, 2022. These changes included a note in 660.20(C)(5) clarifying that a pursuit may be initiated based on a member’s observation of reckless driving and the driver’s refusal to stop, or after a member attempts a stop for any state law or ordinance violation and the driver flees, driving recklessly. Another amendment removed a reference stating only police vehicles are authorized to arrest a person for fleeing, as the requirement was removed from Wis. Stat. § 346.04(3).

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.”

When comparing year-to-year historical data in this report, the dates of significant policy revisions should be kept in mind.

Incident Reporting

The vehicle pursuit data for this study was obtained from the Administrative Investigations Management (AIM) database, which MPD uses to manage internal incident investigations and reports. The non-pursuit data examined in this report was obtained from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) database and the TriTech Records Management System (RMS).

⁴ For details refer to legislative [file FPC19193](#).

Pursuant to SOP 660.20(O), a vehicle pursuit report must be completed in the AIM database within eight days of the incident. Subsequent reviews by the shift commander/commanding officer shall be completed within 35 days of the incident and then forwarded to the Internal Affairs Division, who shall also review the report within 21 days following receipt, before each report is classified as closed.

If a non-pursuit occurs, SOP 660 directs the department member on scene to notify a dispatcher in the Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) and include information about the incident for documentation in the CAD database. Members are also instructed to report the circumstances of the event to a field supervisor and document any subsequent investigatory information into RMS.

Over the years, software improvements have been made to the AIM system, and those improvements impact the data available for this report. The earliest vehicle pursuit data available in the system dates back to 2002, but the array of data collected has changed over time; therefore, not all data available now is available for all years. The choices of time span in the various data presentations have been guided by either availability of data or clarity of presentation.

Pursuit Data

Number of Pursuits

MPD engaged in 957 vehicle pursuits in 2024, an 11% decrease from the previous year (Figure 1). The number of pursuits underwent a decrease beginning in 2002 and reached a low of 50 pursuits in 2012. From 2012 to 2023, the number of vehicle pursuits increased by over 2,100%, but has somewhat leveled off since a sharp increase from 2017 to 2018.

The significant increases or decreases coincide with policy changes: the limiting of allowable pursuits in 2010, the broadening of allowable pursuits in 2015 to include vehicles involved in car jackings, and the further expansion of allowable pursuits in late 2017 to include vehicles engaged in reckless driving. This can be compared contextually to the years 2002 – 2009, during which there was a consistent pursuit policy that did not specifically restrict the types of allowable pursuits beyond very general guidance, instead relying more heavily on officer and supervisor discretion. During the years between 2002 and 2009, the number of pursuits year to year was less volatile and experienced a general long-term decline.

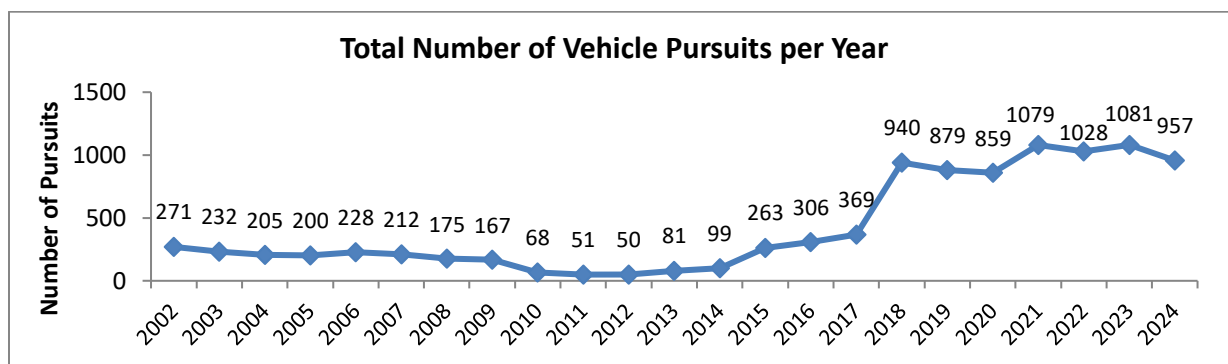


Figure 1: Number of Vehicle Pursuits per Year

Time and Place

The time of day each pursuit was initiated in 2024 is detailed in Figure 2. During the 8 hours between 4:00 PM and 12:00 AM, 62% of the total number of pursuits were initiated; in the 8 hours between 12:00 AM and 8:00 AM, 23% of the pursuits were initiated; and in the remaining 8 hours between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, 15% of the pursuits were initiated. These total 954 instead of 957 because the initiation time was not recorded for 3 of the pursuits.

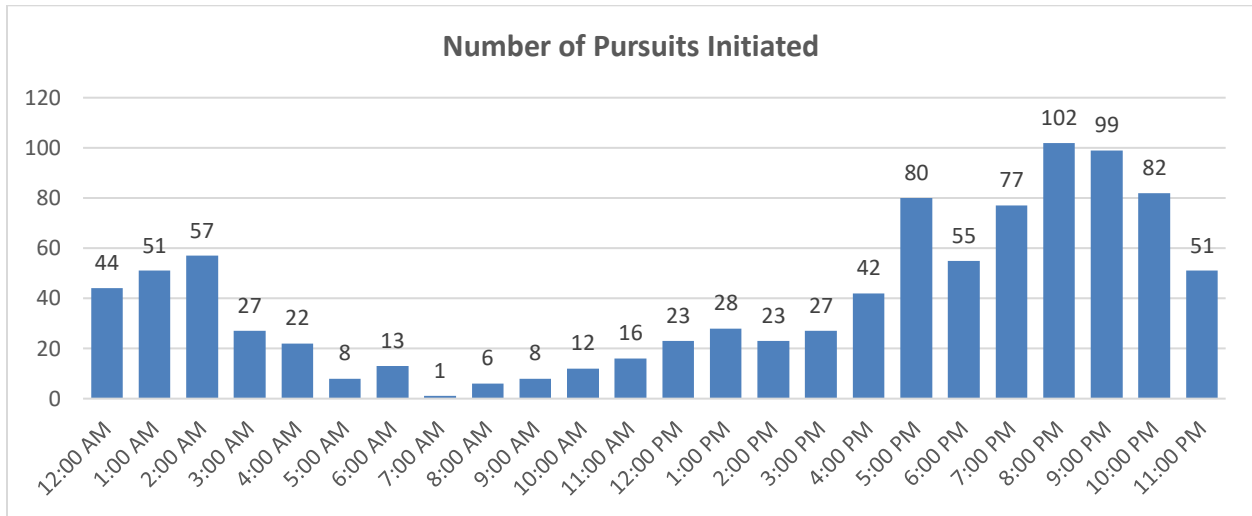


Figure 2: Time of Pursuit Initiation

A summary of the number of pursuits per month during 2024 is shown in Figure 3. The maximum number of pursuits per month occurred in February and October (104 and 87, respectively) and the minimum in July and November (58 and 69). The average number of pursuits per month during 2024 was 80, down from 90 in 2023.

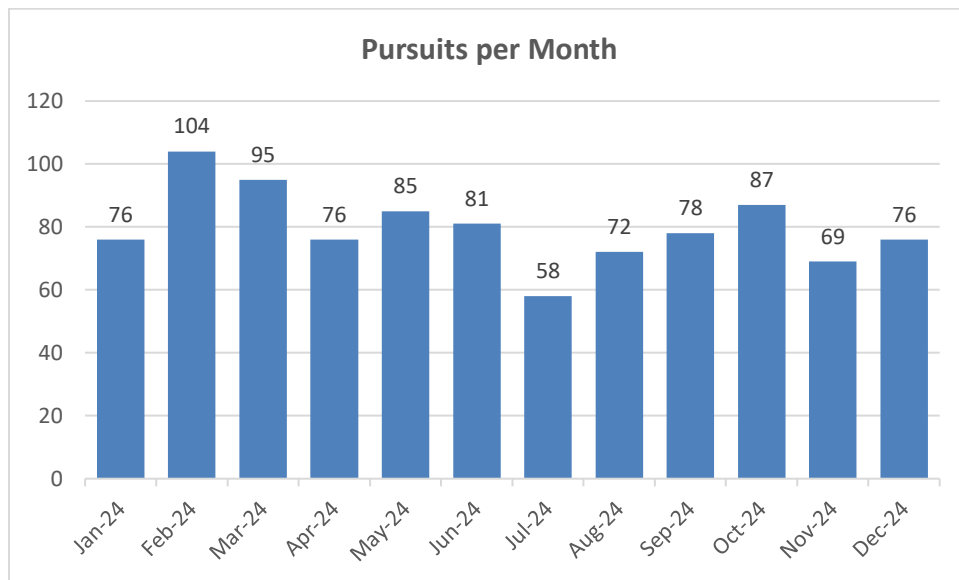


Figure 3: Pursuits per Month

The number of vehicle pursuits per police district during 2024 is shown in Figure 4. The largest number of pursuits occurred in Districts 2 and 7 (182 and 276, respectively) and the fewest occurred in Districts 1 and 6 (16 and 40). There was a marked increase from 2022 to 2024 in District 7, and a steady decrease in District 5. In 33 incidents the district was not reported.

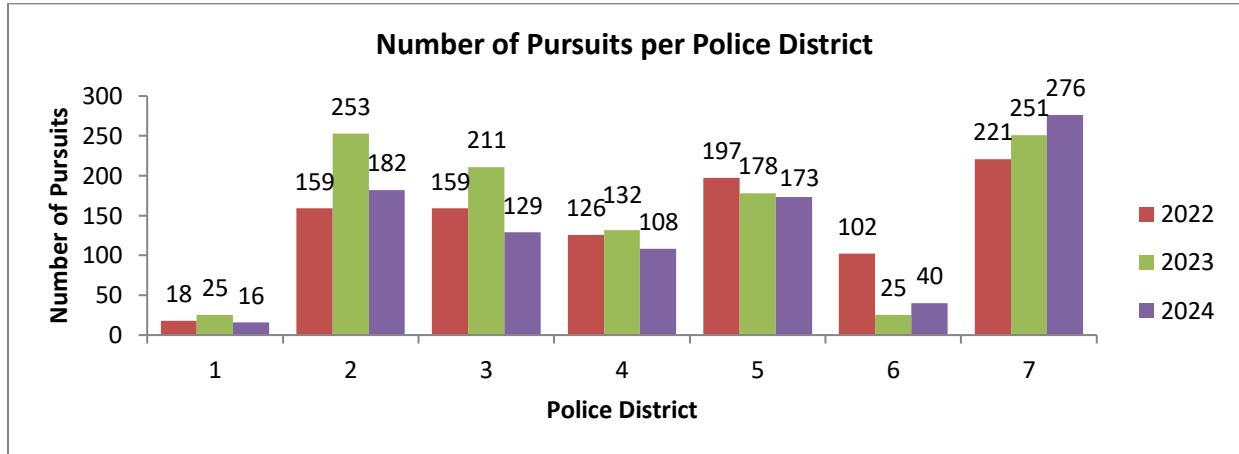


Figure 4: Number of Pursuits per Police District

The maximum speed of the MPD vehicle in each pursuit in 2024 is shown in Figure 5. Nearly 3/4 (71%) of the 925 pursuits in which the top speed was recorded in 2024 reached speeds in excess of 75 miles per hour (mph) – up slightly from 2/3 (66%) in 2023. 87% reached speeds above 60 mph. In addition, 17% of pursuits (159) reached speeds in excess of 100 mph, about equal to the rate in 2023. It is a relatively recent phenomenon for such a large percentage of pursuits to reach such high speeds (Figure 6). From 2007 to 2012, the proportion of pursuits that reached speeds greater than 75 mph was relatively constant between 10% and 18%. There was a modest increase in the years 2013 and 2014, followed by substantial additional increases in 2015 and 2016, with the proportion remaining around one-half through 2019 and increasing to 71% in 2024. The total number of pursuits in Figure 5 does not include 32 incidents for which no speed value was reported.

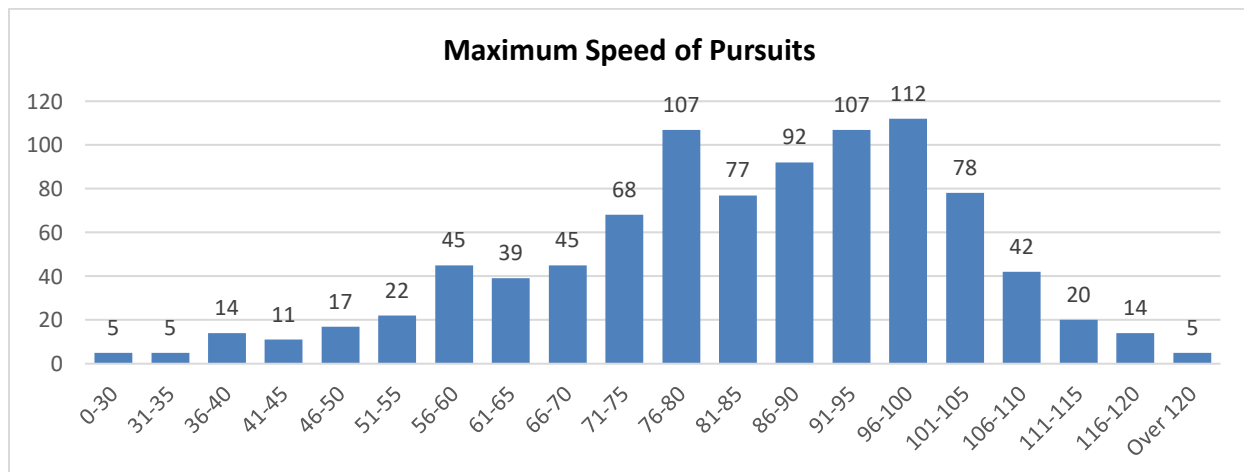


Figure 5: Maximum Speed of Pursuits (2024)

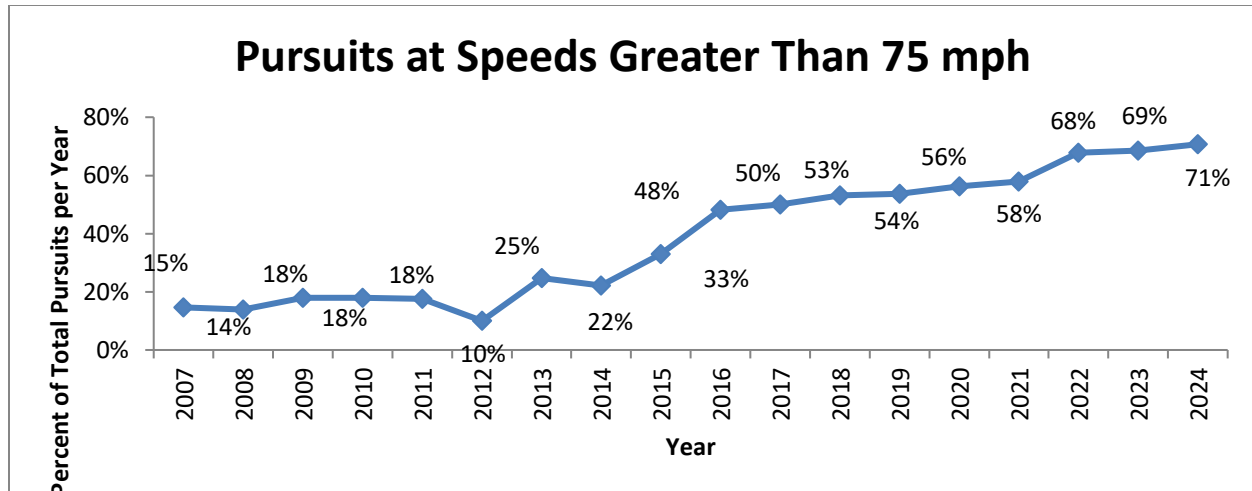


Figure 6: Percent of Pursuits at Speeds Greater than 75 mph

Pursuit Initiation

Table 1 details the reported reason for the initiation of each vehicle pursuit engaged in during 2024. The most common reason for initiating a pursuit was in response to reckless driving (605 pursuits, 62.4%). If one considers this figure in the context of the 2017 policy change, it is noteworthy that subtracting the number of pursuits initiated in response to reckless driving from the total number of pursuits initiated during 2024 results in 352 pursuits initiated for reasons other than reckless driving. This number is close to the total number of pursuits engaged in during the previous full year of data preceding the 2017 policy change (2016, 306 pursuits). The “Other” category includes 9 blank entries, nonviolent and misdemeanor offenses, traffic offense-other, refusal to stop, and simply “other.” The total of reasons for pursuit initiation equals 11 more than the 957 total pursuits because in some cases more than one reason was given for initiation.

Reason for Pursuit Initiation	Number of Pursuits	Percent of Pursuits
Drug Related Offense	31	3.2%
Other	52	5.5%
Traffic Offense - Reckless Vehicle	605	62.4%
Violent Felony	276	28.5%
Warrant	4	0.4%

Table 1: Reason for Pursuit Initiation

Stolen Status

Table 2 details the number of vehicle pursuits that were of vehicles positively identified as stolen within each pursuit initiation category. This is an account of only those positively identified as stolen; it is possible that more vehicles involved in pursuits may have been stolen. In 2024, 36.1% of all vehicle pursuits were of vehicles positively identified as stolen.

Reason for Pursuit Initiation	Number in pursuit of a stolen vehicle	Percent of all pursuits
Drug Related Offense	1	0.1%
Other	25	2.6%
Traffic Offense - Reckless Vehicle	152	15.9%
Violent Felony	166	17.3%
Warrant	1	0.1%
Total	345	36.1%

Table 2: Pursuits of Known Stolen Vehicles

Pursuit Accidents and Injuries

The number of pursuits resulting in vehicle accidents per year since 2007 is shown in Figure 7. Note that these numbers include all accidents associated with the vehicle pursuit; it is greater than the number of pursuits terminated by the subject vehicle crashing (Table 3, Outcome of Pursuits, below). The blue bars represent the actual number of pursuit accidents and correspond to the left axis. The red line represents the percent of pursuits each year that resulted in accident and corresponds to the right axis. The trend since 2007 has seen the percentage of pursuits resulting in accidents decrease from 47% to 32%, even as the number of accidents has increased with the number of pursuits.

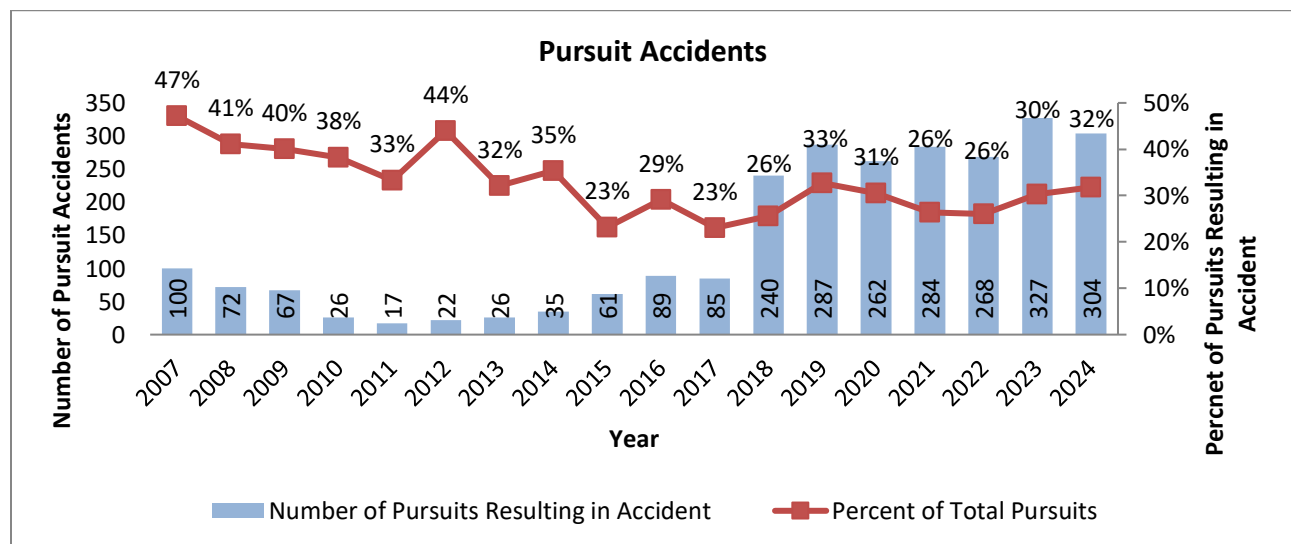


Figure 7: Pursuit Accidents

In 2024 there were 26 pursuits in which a department employee was injured (2.7% of all pursuits), 52 in which a 3rd party was injured (5.4% of all pursuits), and 164 in which a pursuit subject was injured (17.1% of all pursuits) (Figure 8). These percentages are slightly greater than in 2023. The total number of accidents and injuries is limited to those reported in MPD vehicle pursuit reports. Accidents and injuries occurring after pursuits have been terminated are generally not included in vehicle pursuit reports.

For pursuits resulting in subject and department member injuries, the AIM database contains additional information detailing the severity of the injury for each individual injured party. For pursuits resulting in 3rd party injury, the AIM database only contains a yes/no field indicating whether such an injury occurred.

Of the 52 pursuits in which a 3rd party was injured, 31 terminated in crashes, and 50 had associated accidents. The WisTransPortal Crash Reports contain details of injuries resulting from crashes.

In order to examine in greater detail the actual number of 3rd parties injured and the severity of those injuries, the crash reports related to each of these pursuits were obtained from the University of Wisconsin's Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory WisTransPortal system and manually reviewed. In crash reports injuries are classified as Fatal, Suspected Serious, Suspected Minor, Possible, or No Apparent Injury.

The crash reports detailed 67 individual 3rd party injuries (note that this excludes involved 3rd party individuals classified as "No Apparent Injury"). Thirty-six people were classified as sustaining possible injuries, 22 people were classified as sustaining suspected minor injuries, 7 people were classified as sustaining suspected serious injuries. One person sustained a fatal injury. These numbers have changed little since 2023, when they were 31, 27, 9 and 1, respectively.

In the 164 pursuits that resulted in subject injuries, 225 individual subject injuries were recorded in the AIM database. No subject injuries were fatal. Seventeen were described as bruises or contusions, 13 as broken bones or teeth, 42 as abrasions, cuts or lacerations, 2 as gunshot wounds, 1 as eye or respiratory, and the remaining 150 were complaints of pain.

In the 21 pursuits that resulted in department member injury, there were 24 department member injuries recorded in the AIM database. Two injuries were classified as major and the remaining 22 injuries were classified as minor. None were fatal. Note that only the driver and passenger of squads in the primary pursuing position are listed in this report. If a secondary or tertiary pursuing squad was involved in an accident, the data regarding those potential member injuries are not accounted for in this report.

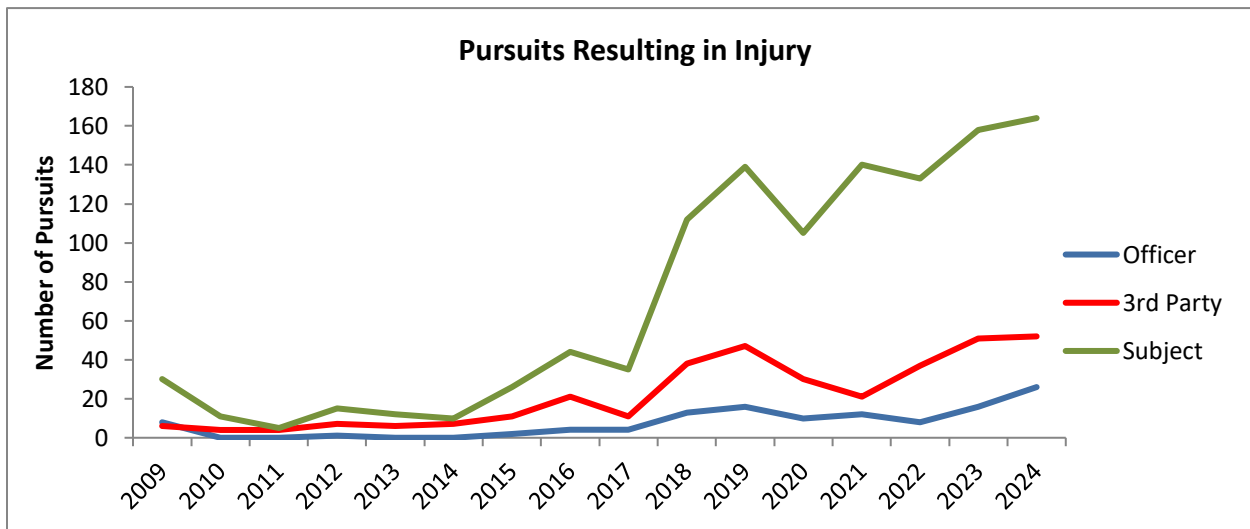


Figure 8: Number of Pursuits Resulting in Injury

Pursuit Outcomes

The subject apprehension rate of vehicle pursuits is charted in Figure 9. In 2010, 62 of the 68 pursuits (91.2%) resulted in subject apprehension. In 2019, 419 of the 879 pursuits (47.7%) resulted in subject apprehension. After remaining relatively consistent for the 3 years between 2015 and 2017, the apprehension rate began rising in 2018, reaching 49.1% in 2024.

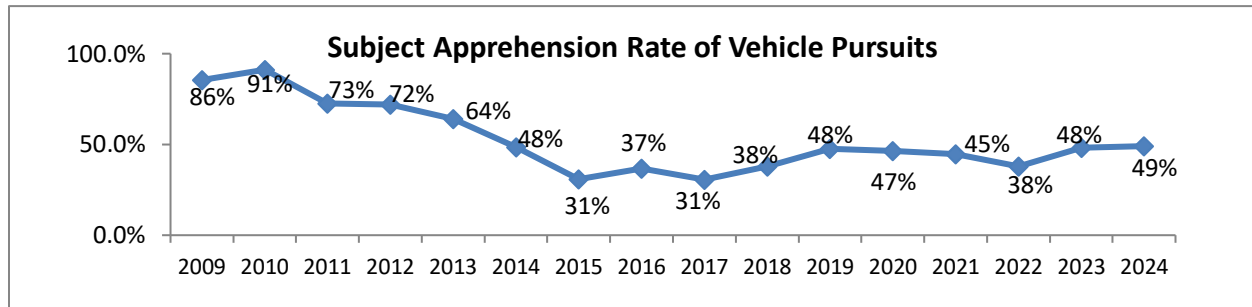


Figure 9: Apprehension Rate of Pursuits

The apprehension rate of vehicle pursuits can be further understood by examining the reported outcomes of the pursuits detailed for 2024 in Table 3. Pursuits in which the suspect is not apprehended are often terminated by MPD, and 307 pursuits (32%) were terminated by MPD in 2024 for a variety of reasons (detailed in Table 4). Note that more than one reason may be listed as a reason for pursuit termination, so the number of listed reasons is greater than the number of outcomes. The most commonly reported reason for terminating a pursuit was the subject vehicle's location or distance

Outcome of Pursuit	Number of Pursuits
Terminated - By Law Enforcement	307
Terminated - Crash	158
Violator Escape	173
Terminated - Violator Stopped	156
Other	47
Violator Vehicle Failure	54
No Reason Given	62

Table 3: Outcomes of Pursuits

Reason for Pursuit Termination	Number of Pursuits
Suspect Vehicle Location/Distance	185
Directed by Higher Rank	95
Traffic, Roadway, Environment Conditions	23
Suspect's Identity Established	2
Did not meet Criteria under 660.20	3
Department Equipment Malfunction	7
Render Aid to Injured Person(s)	5

Table 4: Reasons for Pursuit Termination

Figure 10 shows the most common pursuit outcomes since 2009 as a percentage of pursuits for each year. In the years between 2009 and 2010, the various pursuit outcomes were relatively flat. The percentage of pursuits terminated by law enforcement reached a high of 50% in 2014 and has since trended downward to a rate of 32% in 2024. In the same period, the percent terminating in a crash and the percent in which the subject ultimately stops have remained fairly steady.

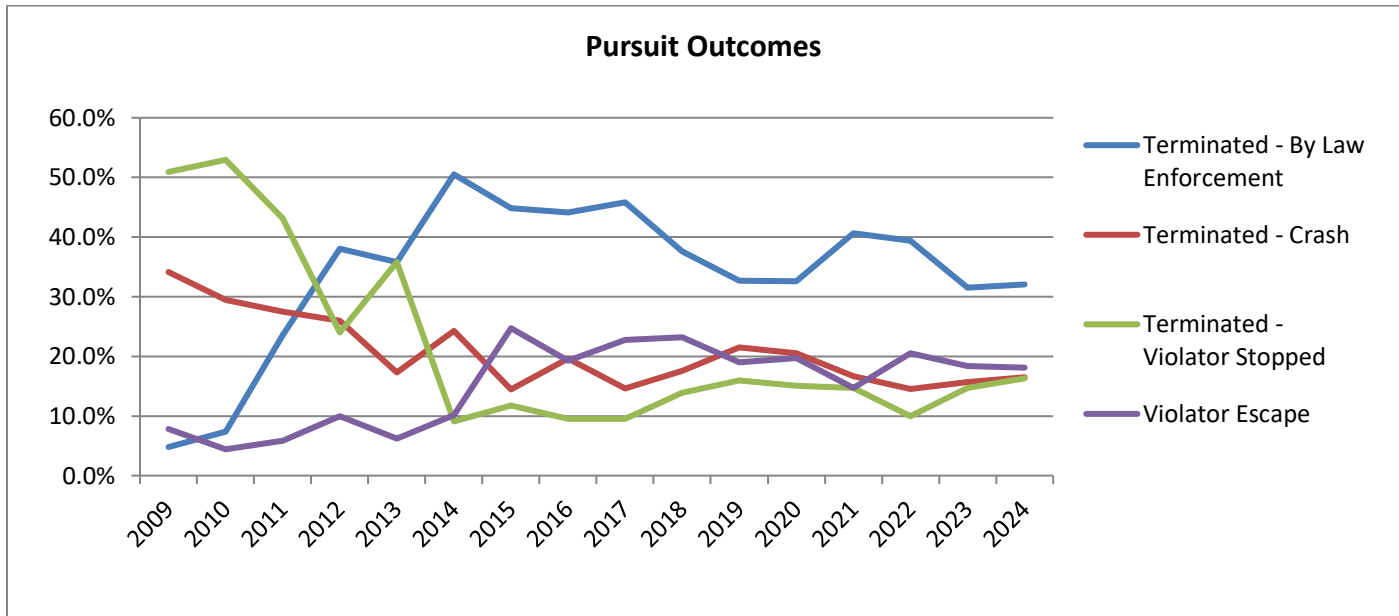


Figure 10: Pursuit Outcomes

Charges Requested

The AIM database contains a field in which members can list the charges requested for each pursuit subject and that information was analyzed in bulk. The most common criminal charges requested upon subject apprehension were, as one would expect, charges directly related to the pursuit itself such as fleeing, resisting arrest, and recklessly endangering safety. In all, charges were requested against 1,382 subjects, both drivers and passengers, in 2024. In only the 605 reckless driving pursuits, charges were requested against 780 subjects, both drivers and passengers. For all pursuits, 274 individuals were alleged to be operating the vehicle without the owner's consent, 52 individuals were alleged to be in possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver, and 85 individuals were alleged to be felons in possession of firearms.

Employee Information

The 957 vehicle pursuits that occurred in 2024 involved 412 department employees (drivers and passengers). Involved employees had an average of 7 years of service. Of the 412 involved employees, 400 held the rank of Police Officer (97%). Two drivers (squads) or more were involved in 455 pursuits. The largest number of involved drivers (squads) in any single pursuit was 5.

Figure 11 details the number of pursuits per employee driver for the year 2024. One-hundred-twenty-three employees were the drivers in one pursuit, 54 were the drivers in 2 pursuits, and 16 were the drivers

in 3 pursuits. For those who were the drivers in 15 or more pursuits, the number of pursuits engaged in as the driver were 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 35, 45, 48 and 52.⁵

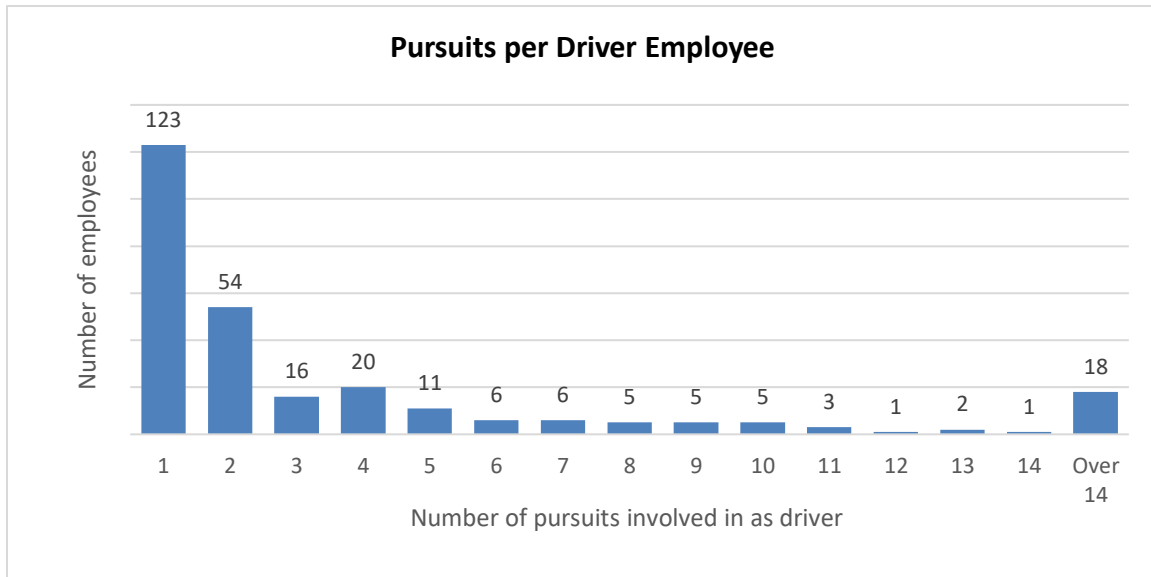


Figure 11: Number of pursuits per employee-driver

Pursuit Subject Age

In 496 of the 957 vehicle pursuits that occurred in 2024, the subject driver and/or passenger(s) were identified. Those 496 pursuits involved 834 identified individuals (drivers and passengers). Twenty-one individuals were identified in 2 separate pursuits each during 2024. Two hundred nineteen (26%) of the known pursuit subjects were age 18 or younger, down 7% from 2023. The median age of known pursuit subjects was 21, and the average age was 24. Figure 12 details the median age of known pursuit subjects since 2002.⁶ After a long-term decline in the median age, from a high of 40 in 2003, the median age has leveled off at 18-21 since 2014.

⁵ There was often more than one police vehicle involved in a single pursuit and there is overlap among the pursuits in which this set of employees was involved.

⁶ Age data for the years 2005 and 2006 was unavailable.

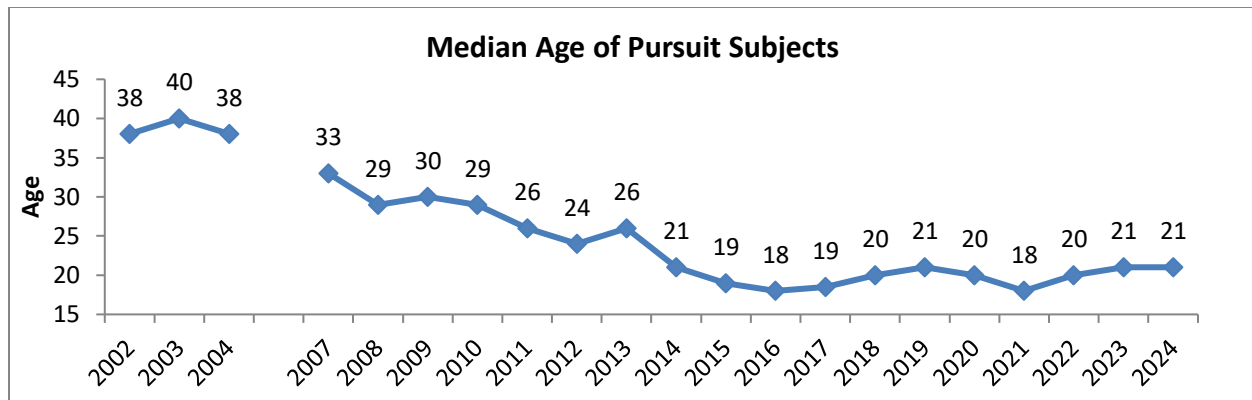


Figure 12: Median Age of Pursuit Subjects

Non-Pursuits

Non-pursuits are incidents in which a stop is attempted, the vehicle continues, and a pursuit is not initiated. Upon the request of members of the Milwaukee Common Council, the FPC released its first comprehensive review of non-pursuit incidents in concert with the release of the 2016 Vehicle Pursuit Report.⁷

The non-pursuit report for 2016 analyzed a number of data elements, made possible because there was a period of time in 2014 and 2015 in which these events were recorded in detail in the AIM system. However, beginning in late 2015 non-pursuit events were no longer recorded in the AIM system and instead were recorded in the CAD database. Recording the events in the CAD database allows for faster and easier record keeping for department members but limits the detail of and analysis potential for the data. Information regarding the subject vehicle license plate, vehicle description, stolen status, etc. (when known) is contained in a narrative field, which while easy to examine on a case by case basis is not easily analyzed in bulk.

On October 6, 2017, a department-wide memorandum was issued instructing all members to record details regarding some non-pursuit events into RMS as well as the CAD system. This practice was incorporated into MPD's vehicle pursuit SOP in May 2019. Members are to commence and document in the RMS a full investigation for instances in which a full, valid plate number was obtained during a non-pursuit event.

Figure 13 details the number of non-pursuit events each year between 2015 and 2024. The decrease in frequency beginning after a high of 8,561 non-pursuits occurred in 2017 coincident with the change in the pursuit policy in late September 2017. The reduced number of non-pursuits has since ranged from 2,829 in 2018 to a low of 1,080 in 2019. It was 1,327 in 2024.

⁷ All of the FPC's reports can be located on the FPC website at: <https://city.milwaukee.gov/fpc/Reports>.

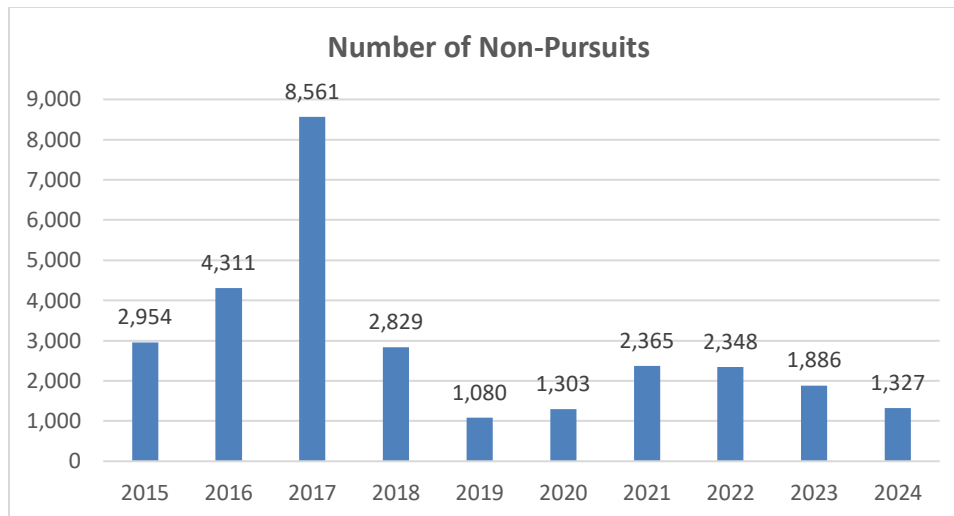


Figure 13: Non-Pursuits per Year

Propensity to Flee

The overall propensity for subjects to flee from traffic stops was calculated by dividing the total number of pursuit and non-pursuit instances by the total number of traffic stops.⁸ Figure 14 details the results of that calculation for each year beginning with 2016. The rate of vehicular flight increased from mid-2016 to August 2017 and a sharp decrease in the rate began in September 2017 coincident with the change in pursuit policy. The rate of vehicular flight increased steadily beginning in 2020 until reaching a high of 0.8% in 2022. It should be noted that the number of traffic stops per year dropped steadily, from 155,441 in 2016 to 25,492 in 2024. This may have affected the percentage of stops which resulted in flight.

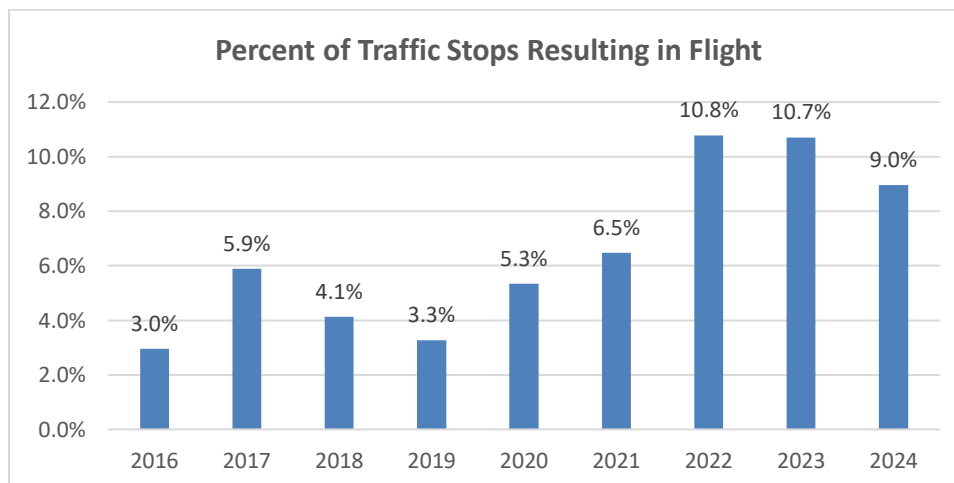


Figure 14: Percent of Traffic Stops Resulting in Flight

⁸ There is some minor imperfection in these calculations because small numbers of pursuits and non-pursuits are sometimes included in the traffic stop totals. Given the scale of the number of traffic stops compared to the number of pursuits and non-pursuits, however, discrepancies of this magnitude do not materially impact the results of the analysis.

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%).

2024 Fire and Police Commission Vehicle Pursuit Report

April 23, 2025

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