

# 2023 Annual Pursuit Analysis

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**Tualatin Police Department**

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Report prepared by:

Captain Jeremy Rankin

## **Introduction**

The 2023 Tualatin Police Department Pursuit Analysis uses data from the past two years to compare trends. In 2023, The Tualatin Police Department Officers were involved in 15 vehicle pursuits. Information in this analysis reviews and compares the pursuits from the current year to the year. The data is broken down into sections, which include specific analysis of time, distance, road conditions, pursuit termination, outcome of pursuits and reasons for eluding.

## **Policy Review**

The Vehicle Pursuit Policy 314 was reviewed by Patrol Captain Brian Struckmeier, Support Services Captain Jeremy Rankin and Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) Lead Instructor, Sergeant Seth Ceciliani and the EVOC Instructors. No discrepancies were found in the policy relating to our procedures. No changes were recommended at the time of this report. The pursuit reporting requirements outlined in section 314.8 were reviewed and remain accurate.

Vehicle pursuits pose a high risk for the community and the pursuing officers. It is the policy of the Tualatin Police Department to exercise good judgement and give consideration to public safety in the decision to pursue, continue, or terminate vehicle pursuits and to use sound tactics during those pursuits to ensure safe resolution. The policy is consistent with current law and best practices across the United States.

## **Training**

Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) training involves all sworn employees reviewing policy, discussing practices in a classroom session, precision placement course driving, Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) qualification, spike strip deployment demonstration, and scenarios. This training is conducted every other year. It is valuable to have the officers drive the patrol vehicles in a secure environment where they can learn and improve their driving techniques. Equally important is the mental side of the training.

The Tualatin Police Department continually trains for balance, in regards to the safety of the public and themselves, against law enforcement's duty to apprehend violators of the law.

Deciding whether to pursue a motor vehicle, to continue the pursuit or terminate a pursuit is a critical decision that must be constantly evaluated and re-evaluated throughout the incident; quickly, and under difficult, unpredictable circumstances. The last EVOG training occurred in April of 2022 at the Portland International Raceway and consisted of an 8 hour training day.

### **Overall Summary of Data**

Due to the relatively low number of pursuits each year, small differences can indicate a large percentage change in the data. Changes in the data, positive or negative, are not always an accurate indicator of a trend or a result of our actions. In 2022, the Tualatin Police Department changed the system used to track pursuits to the Frontline Pro Standards software. The overall summary of data is pulled from that system.

In 2022, there were 36 cases, in 2023 there were 15 pursuit cases which is a significant decrease in 2023. The majority of the pursuits in both years were initiated due to suspected criminal activity (35% in 2022 and 47% in 2023) and observed traffic infractions (31% in 2022 and 26% in 2023).

The pursuits were predominantly short in both years, with the majority covering a distance of 1-2 miles (45% in 2022 and 47% in 2023). However, there was a slight increase in pursuits under half a mile in 2023 (27%) compared to 2022 (18%).

The geographic areas of the pursuits were mainly business areas in both years (60% in 2022 and 72% in 2023), with a few in residential areas (19% in 2022 and 17% in 2023). The traffic conditions during the pursuits were mostly light in both years (55% in 2022 and 60% in 2023), and the road conditions were predominantly dry (68% in 2022 and 80% in 2023).

The lighting conditions varied between the two years. In 2022, most pursuits occurred in the dark (38%) and during daytime (41%), while in 2023, the conditions were mostly good due to artificial lighting (60%).

The subjects involved in the pursuits were predominantly male (79% in 2022 and 80% in 2023) and white (92% in 2022 and 93% in 2023).

The pursuits were mostly terminated due to conditions being too dangerous in both years (44% in 2022 and 48% in 2023). The resolutions were mostly in compliance with policy (100% in 2022 and 93% in 2023), and the actions taken were predominantly no action needed (100% in 2022 and 87% in 2023).

In terms of officer demographics, the majority were male in both years (88% in 2022 and 83% in 2023).

This comparative analysis provides valuable insights into the nature of vehicle pursuits in 2022 and 2023, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two years.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The review of vehicle pursuits during 2023 revealed the actions by the Tualatin Police Department members, with the exception of one incident, were justified and within policy. There was a significant drop among pursuits from 36 in 2022 to 15 in 2023. The reason for this drop was an emphasis placed on not pursuing drivers for only violations. This is correlated with the data that in 2022 17 pursuits were initiated for traffic violations while in 2023 only 5 were initiated for traffic violations.

As a Police Department in the metro Portland area it is important that as a Department we continue to evaluate our decisions on when to initiate a pursuit. The majority of Departments that are adjacent to Tualatin have policies that restrict the initiation of pursuits to pursue only for violent person crimes or driving behavior that represents a significant risk to the general

public. While the Tualatin Police Department has not specifically changed its policies the education and training of the factors to pursue a vehicle has caused a significant decrease in the initiation of pursuits in our agency. In regards to the one pursuit that was found to be outside of policy the Officer involved received verbal counseling and training as a corrective action.

The Tualatin Police Department is a professional, progressive law enforcement family, whose members are our greatest asset. Continual training and vesting officers with the authority to pursue vehicles, to protect the public welfare, requires monitoring, evaluation, and a careful balancing of all interests.