

# Maryland State Police

## VEHICLE PURSUITS

2022

ANALYSIS



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## **PART I – Purpose, Scope and Methodology**

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this report is to analyze Maryland State Police (MSP) vehicle pursuits with transparency and accountability for the Agency, as well as the citizens we serve. This report will address the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Law Enforcement Standard 41.2.2 and is a detailed analysis of incidents involving vehicle pursuits that may reveal patterns or trends indicating needs related to policy, training and/or pursuit reporting.

### ***Scope***

This report was designed to address general trends and be proactive by identifying needs in policy, training, and/or reporting, as they are evident on an annual basis. The goal in such an analysis will potentially save lives, protect property and ensure risks are identified and reviewed. This report details vehicle pursuit incidents that occurred between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022. It should be noted the vehicle pursuit policy was revised and implemented on March 1, 2020.

### ***Methodology***

The assessment, trends and report follow standard law enforcement protocols; the report is objective, fact-based and reliable. The vehicle pursuit statistical information displayed in this report was gathered from the IAPro database maintained by the Internal Affairs Division (IAD). The information contained in IAPro was gathered from BlueTeam, an online reporting system the MSP began using in 2015, which replaced the previously used paper document system.

Primary pursuit troopers create a vehicle pursuit entry in BlueTeam, as well as an Incident Report in the Report Management System (RMS), for each pursuit initiated. Secondary pursuit units complete supplemental reports in the RMS. All reports are then forwarded through the chain of command to the troop/division Captain for review. Supervisors and commanders are able to review and endorse each vehicle pursuit entry within BlueTeam. Once a review and endorsement are completed by the involved employee's commander, the entry is routed via BlueTeam to the IAD. The IAD routes the BlueTeam entry to the Education and Training Division's (ETD) Lead Driving Instructor for review. The Lead Driving Instructor reviews each vehicle pursuit to determine if the pursuit was justified and if there were any training-related issues during the pursuit. The Lead Driving Instructor then routes the vehicle pursuit to the IAD for closure.

On March 1, 2020, the first ever MSP Pursuit Review Committee was established. The Pursuit Review Committee is comprised of the Lead Driving Instructor assigned to the ETD (Chair), a representative of the IAD, a representative of the Planning and Research Division, a representative of the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) and a representative of the Field Operations Bureau (FOB). The Committee reviews vehicle pursuits that qualify for a Complete Post – Pursuit Analysis in order to provide recommendations for this analysis to the IAD.

It should be noted that when a trooper enters a vehicle pursuit in BlueTeam, only the primary pursuing trooper makes a BlueTeam entry for the pursuit. Therefore, all troopers involved in the

vehicle pursuit will be listed within one BlueTeam entry. Numerous troopers from one unit or separate units are often listed within one vehicle pursuit.

## **PART II – Overview**

Based on a comprehensive analysis of vehicle pursuits submitted by MSP personnel, the following are highlights of the results:

- Troopers reported 45 vehicle pursuit incidents in 2022 compared to 89 in 2021. There was a significant decrease in vehicle pursuits between 2021 and 2022.
- In 2022, Harford County accounted for the highest number of pursuits with five. Anne Arundel County, Cecil County, Montgomery County and St. Mary's County had four pursuits per county in 2022.
- In 2022, the most common reason for initiating a vehicle pursuit was for PRIOR – Reckless/Disoriented Driving (53%).
- In 2022, most vehicle pursuits traveled between 0-5 miles (64%).
- In 2022, the most commonly reported reasons for the conclusion of vehicle pursuits were supervisory termination (22%), the suspect stopped the vehicle (20%), the suspect vacated the vehicle and fled on foot (20%) or the trooper terminated the pursuit (16%).
- Of the 45 vehicle pursuits in 2022, troopers were injured in 4% of the incidents and citizens were injured in 11% of the incidents. This was compared to 89 vehicle pursuits in 2021 that resulted in troopers being injured in 4% of the incidents and 8% of the incidents resulted in citizen injury.

## **PART III – Vehicle Pursuit Statistics and Information**

This analysis compares pursuit data between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022.

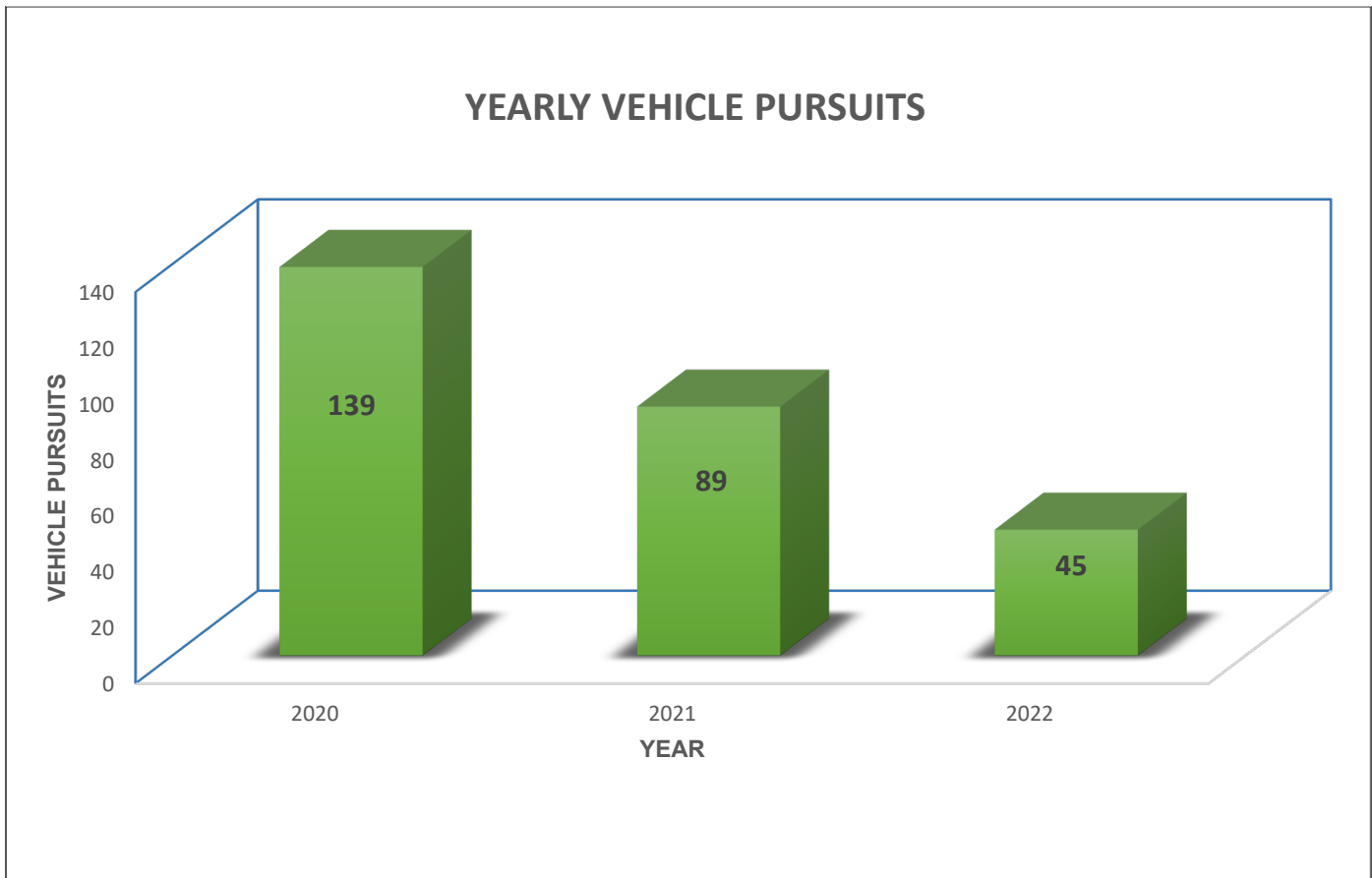
- In 2022, there were 44 less vehicle pursuits than in 2021.
- There were 94 less vehicle pursuits in 2022 than in 2020.
- When comparing 2020 and 2022 vehicle pursuits, there was a decrease in 20 counties, no change in four counties (including Baltimore City), but there was no increase in any county.
- From 2021 to 2022, 17 counties (including Baltimore City) had a decrease in vehicle pursuits, four counties had an increase in vehicle pursuits and there was no change in three counties.
- From 2020 to 2021, there was a decrease in vehicle pursuits within 16 counties.
- In 2020 and 2022, there were no reported vehicle pursuits in Baltimore City. In 2021, there was one vehicle pursuit initiated in Baltimore City.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage of vehicle pursuits from 2020 to 2022. The following percentages depict the percentage decrease between the listed years:
  - 36% decrease from 2020 to 2021
  - 49% decrease from 2021 to 2022
  - 68% decrease from pursuits in 2020 compared to pursuits in 2022

## Vehicle Pursuits by Year

Figure 1: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:

YEARLY VEHICLE PURSUITS	2020	2021	2022
	139	89	45

Figure 1a: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:



## Vehicle Pursuits by County

Figure 2: Total Vehicle Pursuits by County of Initiation:

COUNTY	2020	2021	2022
Allegany County	3	3	0
Anne Arundel County	6	6	4
Baltimore City	0	1	0
Baltimore County	13	3	3
Calvert County	7	4	2
Caroline County	0	4	0
Carroll County	10	1	2
Cecil County	10	8	4
Charles County	5	2	1
Dorchester County	4	1	1
Frederick County	5	1	3
Garrett County	2	0	2
Harford County	9	6	5
Howard County	2	2	1
Kent County	1	1	1
Montgomery County	8	3	4
Prince George's County	13	4	2
Queen Anne's County	4	13	1
Somerset County	5	2	0
St. Mary's County	11	9	4
Talbot County	3	3	0
Washington County	6	3	1
Wicomico County	6	5	3
Worcester County	6	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>45</b>

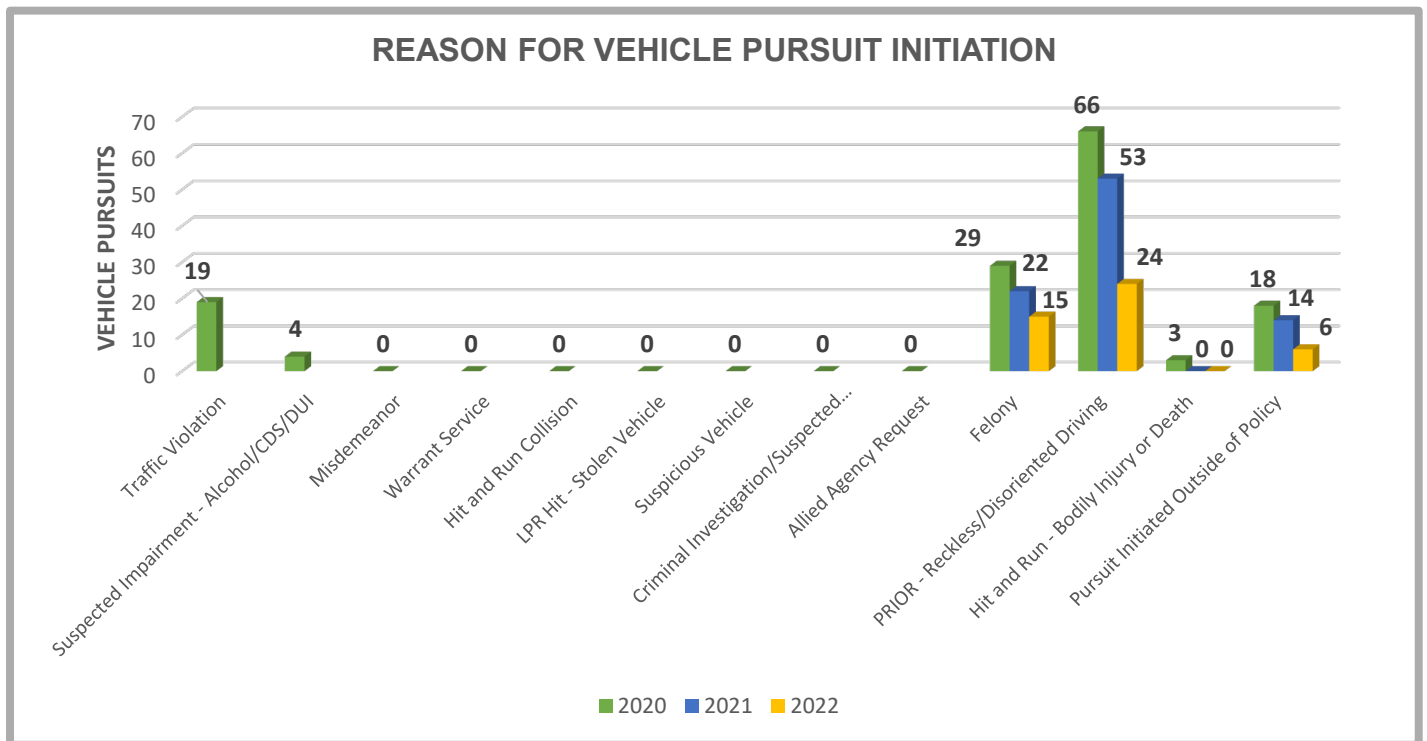
### Reasons Vehicle Pursuits were Initiated

Figure 3: Reason Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated:

REASON INITIATED	2020	2021	2022
Traffic Violation	19		
Suspected Impairment - Alcohol/CDS/DUI	4		
Misdemeanor	0		
Warrant Service	0		
Hit and Run Collision	0		
LPR Hit - Stolen Vehicle	0		
Suspicious Vehicle	0		
Criminal Investigation/Suspected Criminal Activity	0		
Allied Agency Request	0		
Felony*	29	22	15
PRIOR - Reckless/Disoriented Driving*	66	53	24
Hit and Run - Bodily Injury or Death*	3	0	0
Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy*	18	14	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>45</b>

\* On March 1, 2020, the revised policy was implemented. The options for Reason Initiated were added and limited to Felony, PRIOR - Reckless/Disoriented Driving, Hit and Run - Bodily Injury or Death and Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy

Figure 3a: Reasons Vehicle Pursuits were Initiated:

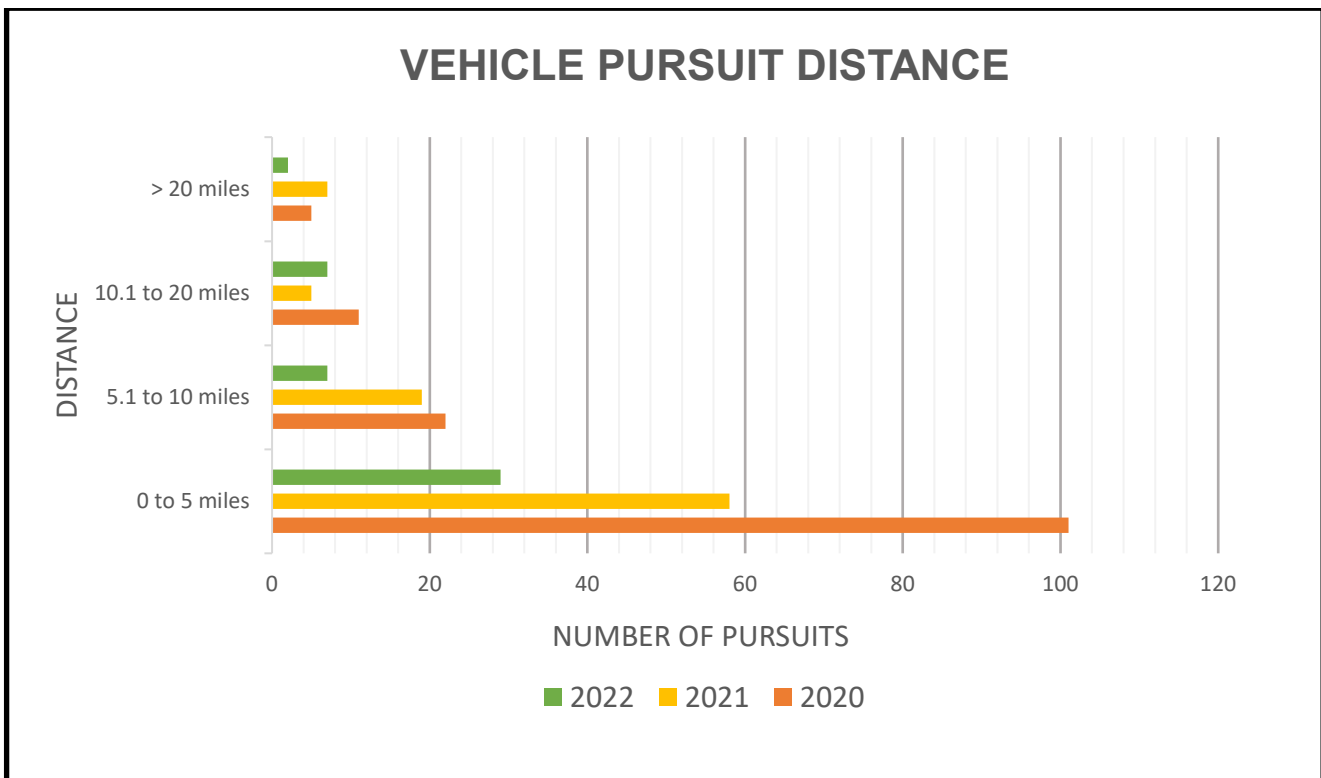


## Vehicle Pursuit Distances

Figure 4: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

PURSUIT DISTANCE	2020	2021	2022
0 to 5 miles	101	58	29
5.1 to 10 miles	22	19	7
10.1 to 20 miles	11	5	7
> 20 miles	5	7	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>45</b>

Figure 4a: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

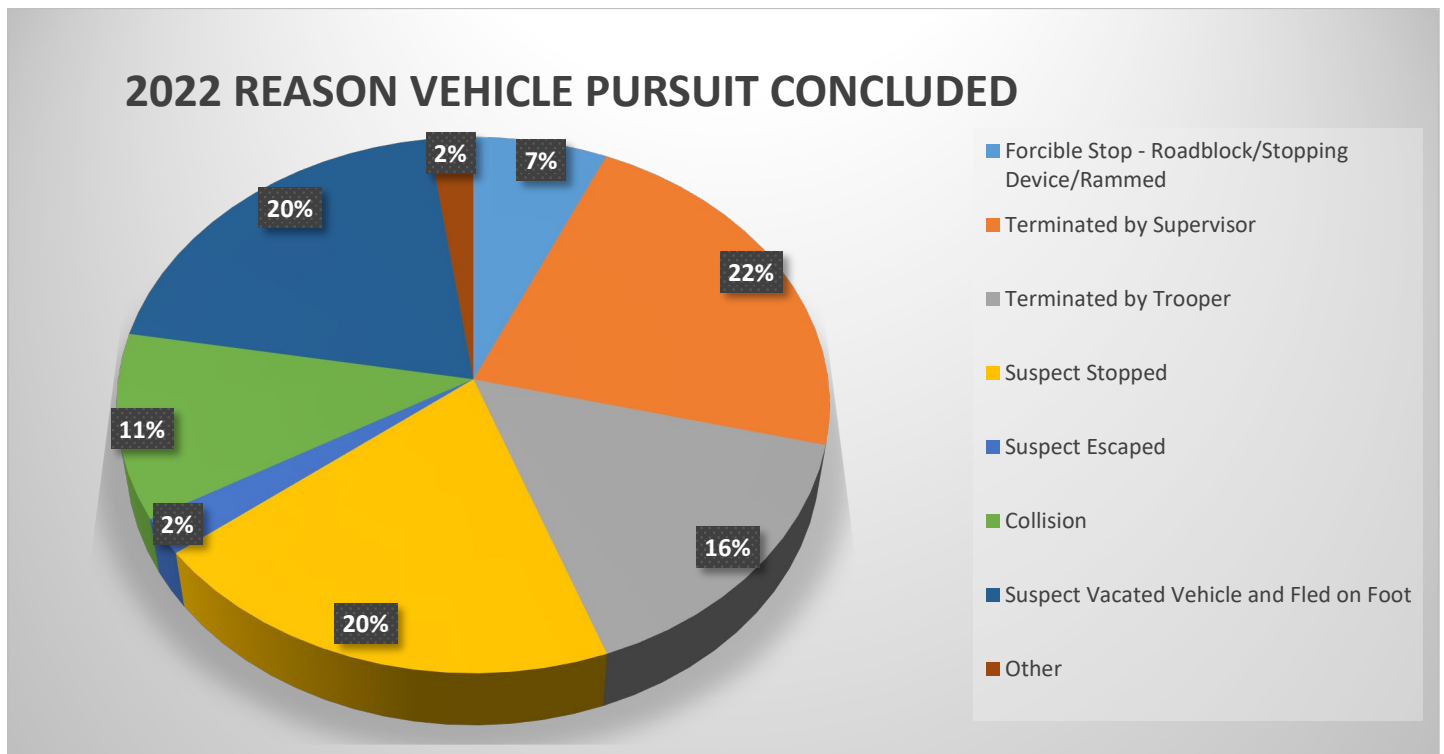


### Reasons Vehicle Pursuits Concluded

Figure 5: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:

REASON CONCLUDED	2020	2021	2022
Forcible Stop - Roadblock/Stopping Device/Rammed	13	2	3
Terminated by Supervisor	48	30	10
Terminated by Trooper	16	10	7
Suspect Stopped	22	24	9
Suspect Escaped	3	2	1
Collision	22	13	5
Suspect Vacated Vehicle and Fled on Foot	11	5	9
Other	4	3	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>45</b>

Figure 5a: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:



**Vehicle Pursuits Injuries/Fatalities**

Figure 6: Reported Incidents Involving Injuries to Trooper(s):

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS</b>	<b>* INCIDENTS INVOLVING TROOPERS INJURED</b>
2020	139	6
2021	89	4
2022	45	2

\* Trooper Injured = Total incidents resulting in a trooper being injured

Figure 6a: Reported Incidents Involving Injuries to Involved and Uninvolved Citizens:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS</b>	<b>* INCIDENTS IN WHICH INVOLVED CITIZENS INJURED</b>	<b>** INCIDENTS IN WHICH UNINVOLVED CITIZENS INJURED</b>
2020	139	14	3
2021	89	7	0
2022	45	5	0

\* Incidents in which Involved Citizens Injured = Total incidents resulting in an occupant within the pursued vehicle receiving an injury

\*\* Incidents in which Uninvolved Citizens Injured = Total incidents resulting in a citizen not within the pursued vehicle receiving an injury

Figure 6b: Vehicle Pursuits and Injury Incidents:

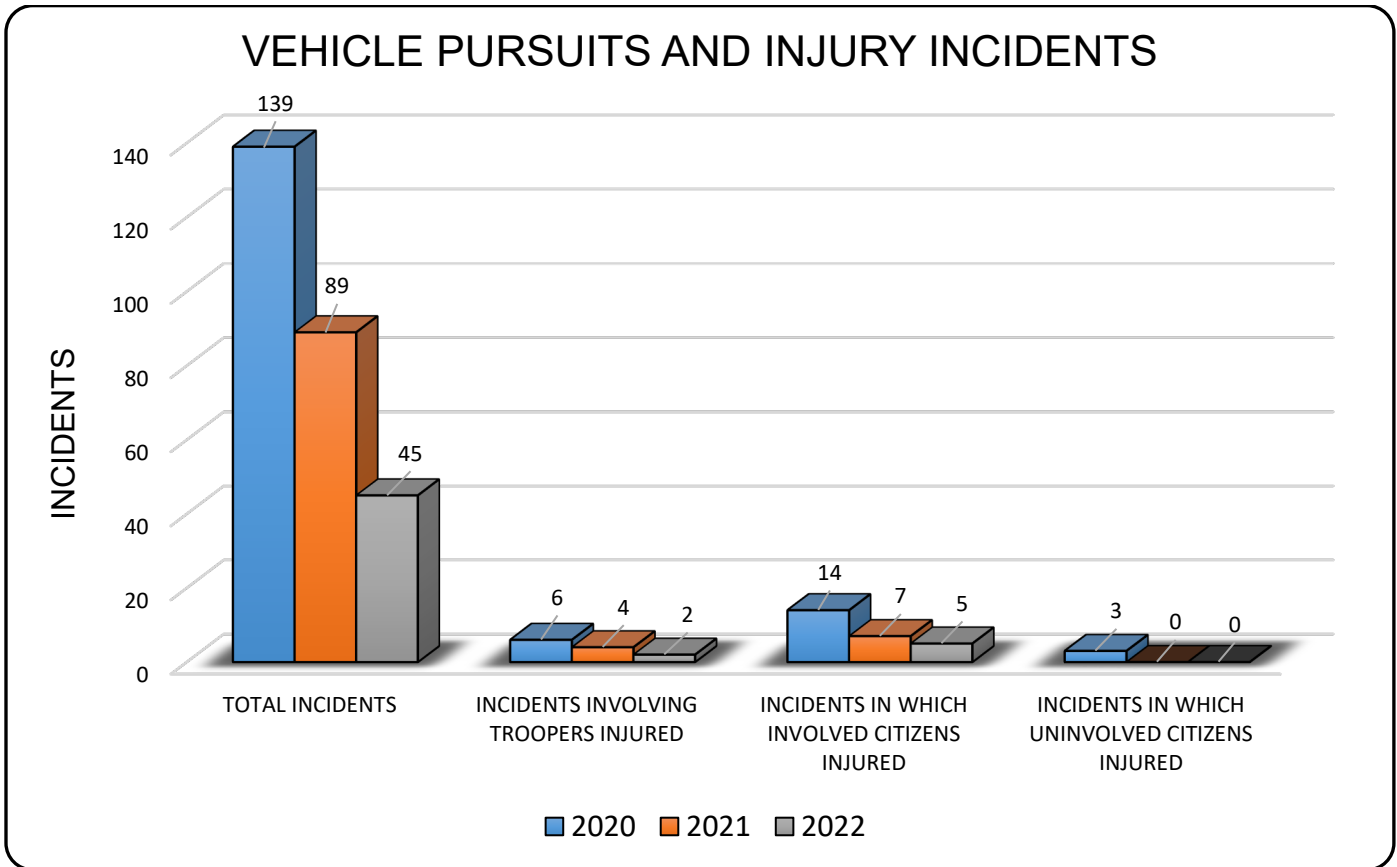


Figure 6c: Reported Fatalities to Involved and Uninvolved Citizens:

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	*INVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY	**UNINVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY
2020	139	1	0
2021	89	0	0
2022	45	1	0

\* Involved Citizens Fatality = Total number of occupants within the pursued vehicle receiving fatal injuries

\*\* Uninvolved Citizens Fatality - Total number of citizens not within the pursued vehicle receiving fatal injuries

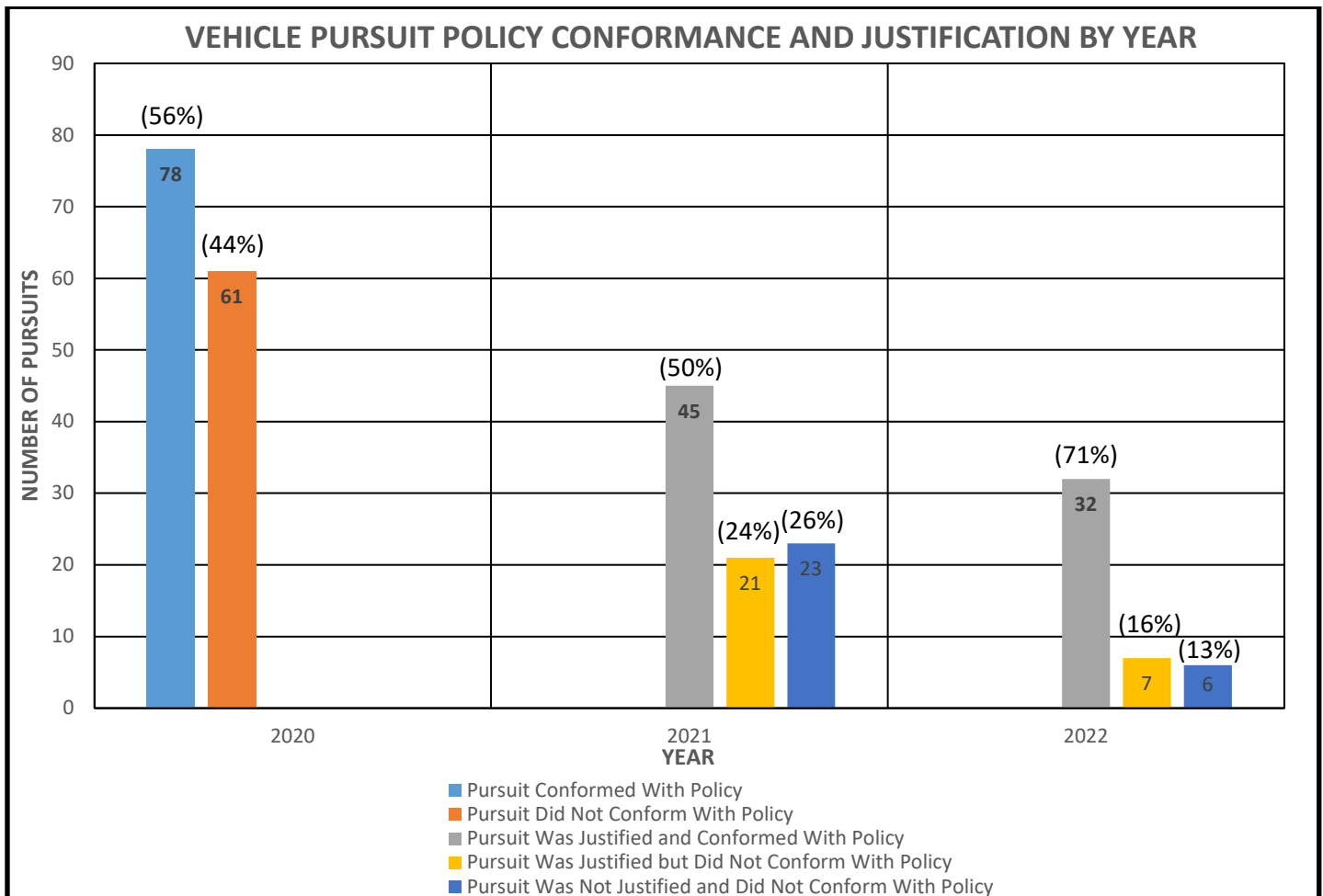
## Vehicle Pursuits Policy Conformance and Justification

Figure 7: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:

	2020	2021	2022
PURSUIT CONFORMED WITH POLICY	78		
PURSUIT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	61		
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED AND CONFORMED WITH POLICY		45	32
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED BUT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY		21	7
*PURSUIT WAS NOT JUSTIFIED AND DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY		23	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>45</b>

\*Beginning on January 1, 2021, the Maryland State Police Vehicle Pursuit Coordinator assigned to the Education and Training Division assessed all vehicle pursuits to determine justification. Commanders determined whether the pursuit conformed with policy.

Figure 7a: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:



## PART IV – Litigation & Costs

	2020	2021	2022	3 YEAR TOTAL
NUMBER OF CASES	1	0	0	1
CASES SETTLED	0	0	0	0
CASES SETTLED WITH PAYOUT	1	0	0	1
CASES PENDING SETTLEMENT	0	0	0	0

Information provided by the OLC indicated one lawsuit/tort claim resulting from vehicle pursuits has been filed over the past three years. One case filed in 2020 has been settled with a payout.

## PART V – Training, Policy Recommendations and Common Issues Identified

On March 10, 2022, the MSP ETD posted the *2022 Vehicle Pursuits Annual Training PowerPoint* to the PowerDMS. All sworn and civilian personnel were required to review the PowerPoint. Once reviewed, personnel were required to electronically sign for the posting and take a ten-question test. Participants were required to score at least 70% in order to obtain a passing score. Personnel scoring less than 70% were required to retake the examination. As of January 4, 2023, sworn and civilian personnel totaling 1,832 participated in the vehicle pursuit examination that was posted on the PowerDMS. Due to the vehicle pursuit related information and testing posted on PowerDMS, there was no additional vehicle pursuit training during 2022 In-Service.

The MSP Pursuit Review Committee convened on February 17, 2022, July 20, 2022, and January 3, 2023. Committee members were provided with up-to-date statistical data for pursuits prior to each meeting. It was apparent during each Pursuit Review Committee meeting throughout the year that the vehicle pursuit updates to the Disciplinary Matrix listed in MSP Personnel Directive PER 19.11 were having an impact on the total number of vehicle pursuits. Statistical data provided to the Pursuit Review Committee would show a decrease in vehicle pursuits in 2022 compared to 2021. On January 1, 2022, the MSP-authored Disciplinary Matrix was updated to reflect the following vehicle pursuit allegations:

- 1) Unauthorized (not justified) vehicle pursuit resulting in injury or death.
- 2) Unauthorized (not justified) vehicle pursuit (no injury).
- 3) Non-Conforming vehicle pursuit.

On July 1, 2022, the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix created by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC), replaced the MSP matrix in PER 19.11. The July 1, 2022 matrix specifically noted the following vehicle pursuit related allegations:

- 1) Unauthorized vehicle pursuit – no injury.
- 2) Unauthorized vehicle pursuit – with injury.

In 2022, any vehicle pursuit that was determined to not conform with policy required a separate Internal Complaint BlueTeam entry addressing the allegation of *Violation of Department Pursuit Policy*. It was believed the matrix updates and the corresponding disciplinary action accounted for the significant decrease of vehicle pursuits during calendar year 2022.

Supervisors, assistant commanders and commanders must remain attentive to vehicle pursuit entries within BlueTeam. The application of policy while conducting pursuit reviews is imperative to improving compliance. Early identification of issues that led to non-conformance will assist with further educating personnel to make improvements during future vehicle pursuits. The IAD and the ETD have continued to monitor troopers involved in non-conforming vehicle pursuits.

The Pursuit Review Committee continues to recommend the ETD focuses “real life scenario” training on two topics:

1. Three pursuit authorization factors;
2. Obtaining proper authorization to pursue from the Pursuit Supervisor.

The analysis revealed the following common issues:

#### COMMON ISSUE 1:

- The pursuit trooper initiated a vehicle pursuit for something other than one of the three pursuit authorization factors ([OPS 09.02 Section B](#)).
  - A trooper must have probable cause for one or more of the following three factors in order to engage in a pursuit:
    1. Felony offenses;
    2. Hit-and-run traffic collisions resulting in bodily injury or death; or
    3. Significant reckless/disoriented driving actions PRIOR to the trooper’s involvement in a pursuit that could cause imminent danger to the public (includes but is not limited to: collisions with other vehicles, forcing other vehicles to take evasive action, failure to stop at controlled intersections, driving on the wrong side of the road, etc.)
- It is imperative troopers and pursuit supervisors are only initiating and authorizing vehicle pursuits where probable cause is established for one or more of the authorization factors. Otherwise, the pursuit should not be initiated.
  - This issue was a factor in 46% of the non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2022.

#### COMMON ISSUE 2:

- The pursuit trooper failed to terminate a pursuit if authorization to pursue was not received ([OPS 09.02 Section E](#)), and the pursuit supervisor (duty officer) did not always authorize the vehicle pursuit via police radio ([OPS 09.02 Section G](#)).
  - If the pursuit trooper does not receive a response from the duty officer related to the vehicle pursuit, or the duty officer is not available to monitor the pursuit, the trooper should immediately terminate.

- The duty officer must acknowledge control of the pursuit, notify the trooper either “the pursuit is authorized” or “terminate the pursuit,” and assume responsibility for monitoring and directing the pursuit regardless of the rank of the pursuing trooper.
  - This issue was a factor in 69% of non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2022.

Cooperation continues between the IAD and the ETD in order to identify commonly reported issues. The IAD and the ETD continue to apprise the additional members of the Pursuit Review Committee of issues identified during pursuit reviews. The ETD has tracked the issues in order to implement appropriate training to minimize the risk to the public, the trooper and the MSP.

## **PART VI – Conclusion**

There was a significant decline in vehicle pursuit reporting in 2022 compared to 2021 and 2020. In 2022, there were 45 total vehicle pursuits compared to 89 total vehicle pursuits in 2021. The decrease of vehicle pursuits in 2022 compared to 2021 accounted for a 49% decline in total pursuits. During 2020, troopers engaged in 139 total vehicle pursuits which led to an even more significant 68% decline when comparing 2022 to 2020 vehicle pursuits. At the close of 2022, 71% of vehicle pursuits conformed with policy. Additionally, 29% of pursuits did not conform with policy. Although a pursuit may be deemed not to be in conformance with policy, it could be justified. A pursuit would be justified if it was initiated for one of the following pursuit authorization factors: felony offenses, hit-and-run traffic collisions resulting in bodily injury or death or significant reckless/disoriented driving action PRIOR to the trooper’s involvement in a pursuit that could cause imminent danger to the public. 87% of all pursuits were justified.

There was a significant reduction in vehicle pursuits from 2020 through 2022. Two key components believed to have impacted the decline were education and accountability. In 2020, vehicle pursuit training sessions were conducted specifically for Field Operations Bureau (FOB) Sergeants, as well as Corporals working as duty officers. Additionally, in 2021, extensive vehicle pursuit policy training was completed during 2021 In-Service. In 2021 and 2022, vehicle pursuit training was posted on the PowerDMS, and both years testing was required for completion of the training. The accountability component came with the addition of vehicle pursuit related allegations to the MSP-authored disciplinary matrix on January 1, 2022. On July 1, 2022, when the MSP-authored disciplinary matrix was replaced with the MPTSC-authored Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, it too included specific vehicle pursuit related allegations. Therefore, any vehicle pursuit deemed not to conform to policy was documented separately for potential disciplinary action to be taken against the trooper and/or supervisor that violated the established vehicle pursuit policy.

As the agency moves into another year, pursuing troopers and duty officers supervising pursuits must make improvements related to pursuit authorization. The policy clearly states the duty officer overseeing the pursuit is responsible for not only authorizing a pursuit, but also for allowing the pursuit’s continuation. When notification is made to the duty officer of a pursuit, the duty officer shall immediately acknowledge control of the pursuit over the radio, notify the pursuing trooper “the pursuit is authorized” or “terminate the pursuit” and assume responsibility for monitoring and directing the pursuit as it progresses. In addition to the duty officer’s responsibilities, the pursuing trooper must immediately notify the barrack that a pursuit is underway and provide specified information regarding the pursuit. However, if the pursuing trooper does not receive a response from the duty officer, or the duty officer is not able to monitor the pursuit, the pursuing trooper should

immediately terminate the pursuit. That said, pursuit authorization, or lack thereof, continued to be the leading factor related to vehicle pursuit non-conformance. In 2021, the pursuit authorization issue was a factor in 75% of non-conforming vehicle pursuits. Although there was a decrease in 2022, 69% of non-conforming vehicle pursuits were related to an issue with pursuit authorization. Moving forward, troopers and supervisors alike should focus on ensuring that proper authorization is requested and received in order to further increase the agency's policy conformance rate.

The MSP closed out the second full year under the current vehicle pursuit policy. Although there was a significant decline in the total number of vehicle pursuits, commanders and supervisors should continue their focus on pursuit policy education. Policy education should not rest solely on the supervisory levels of the agency or with the personnel assigned to the ETD. Commanders, supervisors and the ETD personnel play an extremely important part of vehicle pursuit education. Non-supervisory personnel should participate in self-accountability and self-education by studying and learning all aspects of the MSP vehicle pursuit policy.