

Maryland State Police

VEHICLE PURSUITS

2021

ANALYSIS



Prepared by: Captain Daniel Everett, Commander, Internal Affairs Division

February 1, 2022

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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 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. The vehicle pursuit policy was revised and implemented on March 1, 2020. This report details vehicle pursuit incidents that occurred between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021.

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 MSP began to use 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 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 89 vehicle pursuit incidents in 2021 compared to 139 in 2020. There was a significant decrease in vehicle pursuits between 2020 and 2021.
- In 2021, the counties with the highest number of vehicle pursuits were Queen Anne’s County (13), St. Mary’s County (9), Cecil County (8), Anne Arundel County (6) and Harford County (6).
- In 2021, the most common reason for initiating a vehicle pursuit was for PRIOR – Reckless/Disoriented Driving (59%).
- In 2021, most vehicle pursuits traveled between 0-5 miles (65%).
- In 2021, the most commonly reported reasons for the conclusion of vehicle pursuits were supervisory termination (34%), the suspect stopped the vehicle (27%), collision (15%) or the trooper terminated the pursuit (11%).
- Of the 89 vehicle pursuits in 2021, troopers were injured in 4% of the incidents and citizens were injured in 8% of the incidents. This was compared to 139 vehicle pursuits in 2020 that resulted in troopers being injured in 4% of the incidents and 12% of the incidents resulted in citizen injury.

PART III – Vehicle Pursuit Statistics and Information

This analysis compares pursuit data between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021.

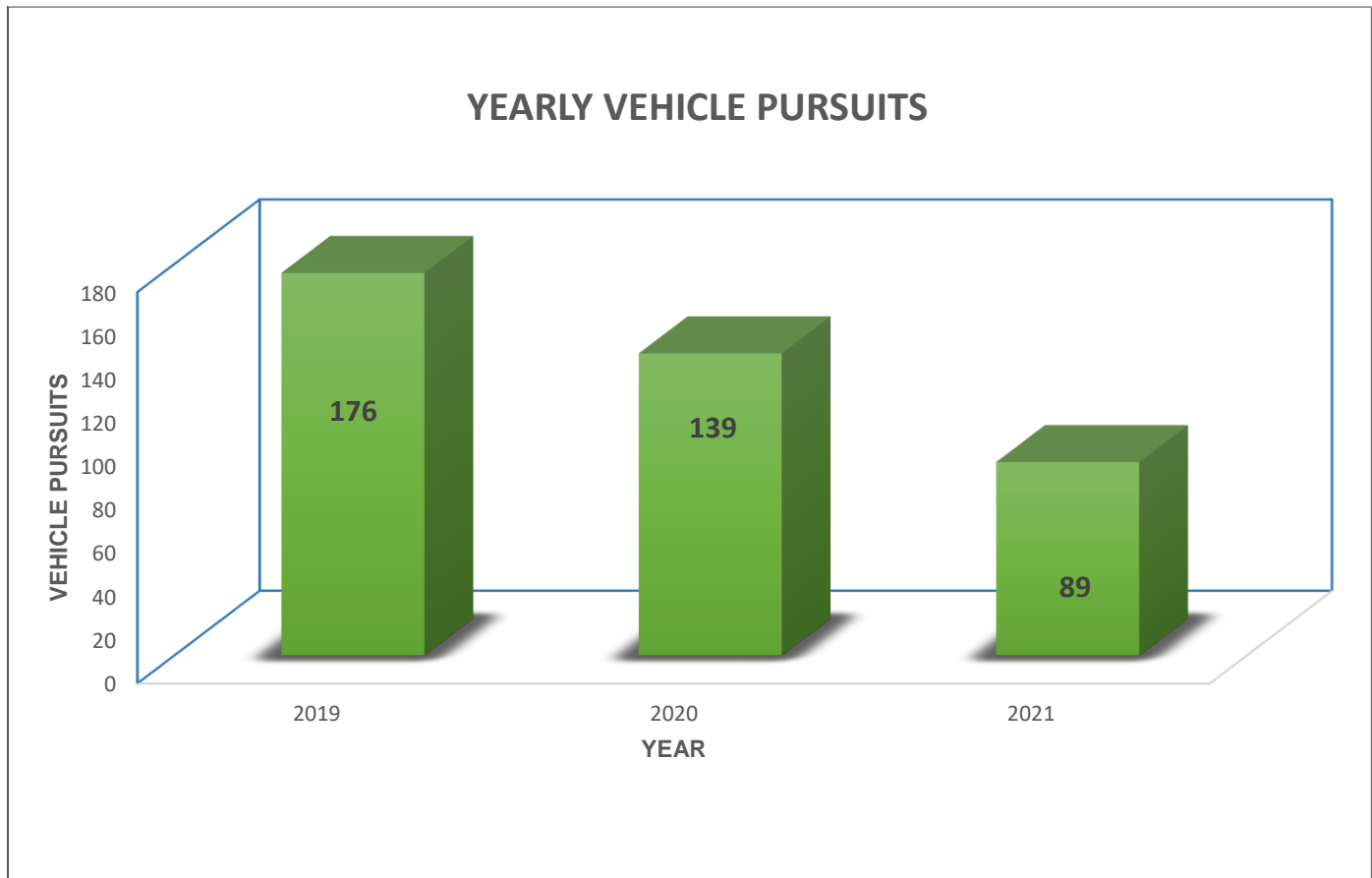
- In 2021, there were fifty less vehicle pursuits than in 2020.
- There were 87 less vehicle pursuits in 2021 than in 2019.
- When comparing 2019 and 2021 vehicle pursuits, there was a decrease in 18 counties (including Baltimore City), an increase of pursuits in 5 counties and no change in one county. All counties with an increased number of pursuits were on the Eastern Shore.
- From 2020 to 2021, 16 counties had a decrease in vehicle pursuits, three counties (including Baltimore City) had an increase in vehicle pursuits and there was no change in five counties.
- From 2019 to 2020, there was a decrease in vehicle pursuits within 13 counties.
- In 2019, there were two reported vehicle pursuits in Baltimore City. In 2020, there were no vehicle pursuits initiated. In 2021, there was one vehicle pursuit initiated in Baltimore City.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage of vehicle pursuits from 2019 to 2021. The following percentages depict the percentage decrease between the listed years:
 - 21% decrease from 2019 to 2020
 - 36% decrease from 2020 to 2021
 - 49% decrease from pursuits in 2019 compared to pursuits in 2021

Vehicle Pursuits by Year

Figure 1: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:

YEARLY VEHICLE PURSUITS	2019	2020	2021
	176	139	89

Figure 1a: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:



Vehicle Pursuits by County

Figure 2: Total Vehicle Pursuits by County of Initiation:

COUNTY	2019	2020	2021
Allegany County	4	3	3
Anne Arundel County	15	6	6
Baltimore City	2	0	1
Baltimore County	12	13	3
Calvert County	7	7	4
Caroline County	7	0	4
Carroll County	3	10	1
Cecil County	9	10	8
Charles County	10	5	2
Dorchester County	8	4	1
Frederick County	7	5	1
Garrett County	3	2	0
Harford County	17	9	6
Howard County	6	2	2
Kent County	0	1	1
Montgomery County	6	8	3
Prince George's County	17	13	4
Queen Anne's County	3	4	13
Somerset County	1	5	2
St. Mary's County	20	11	9
Talbot County	2	3	3
Washington County	11	6	3
Wicomico County	2	6	5
Worcester County	4	6	4
TOTAL	176	139	89

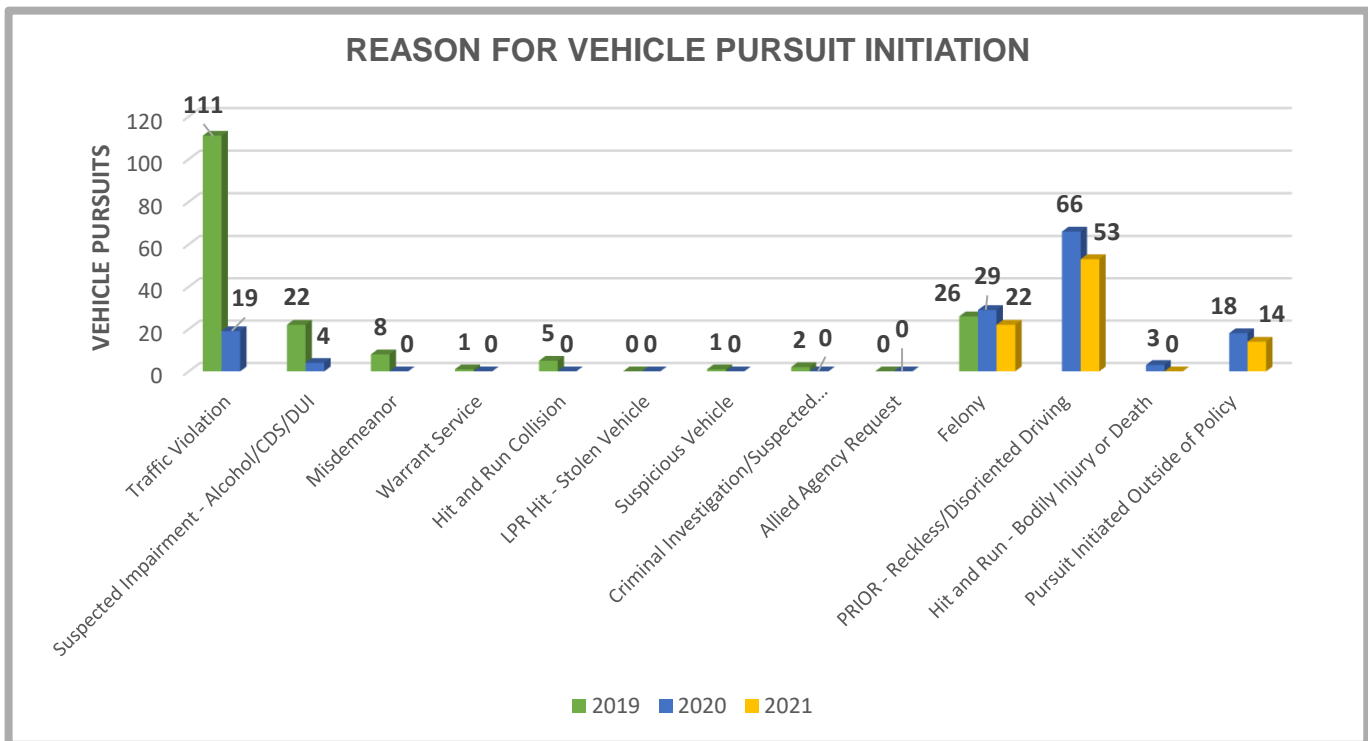
Reason Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated

Figure 3: Reason Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated:

REASON INITIATED	2019	2020	2021
Traffic Violation	111	19	
Suspected Impairment - Alcohol/CDS/DUI	22	4	
Misdemeanor	8	0	
Warrant Service	1	0	
Hit and Run Collision	5	0	
LPR Hit - Stolen Vehicle	0	0	
Suspicious Vehicle	1	0	
Criminal Investigation/Suspected Criminal Activity	2	0	
Allied Agency Request	0	0	
Felony*	26	29	22
PRIOR - Reckless/Disoriented Driving*		66	53
Hit and Run - Bodily Injury or Death*		3	0
Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy*		18	14
TOTAL	176	139	89

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

Figure 3a: Reason Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated:

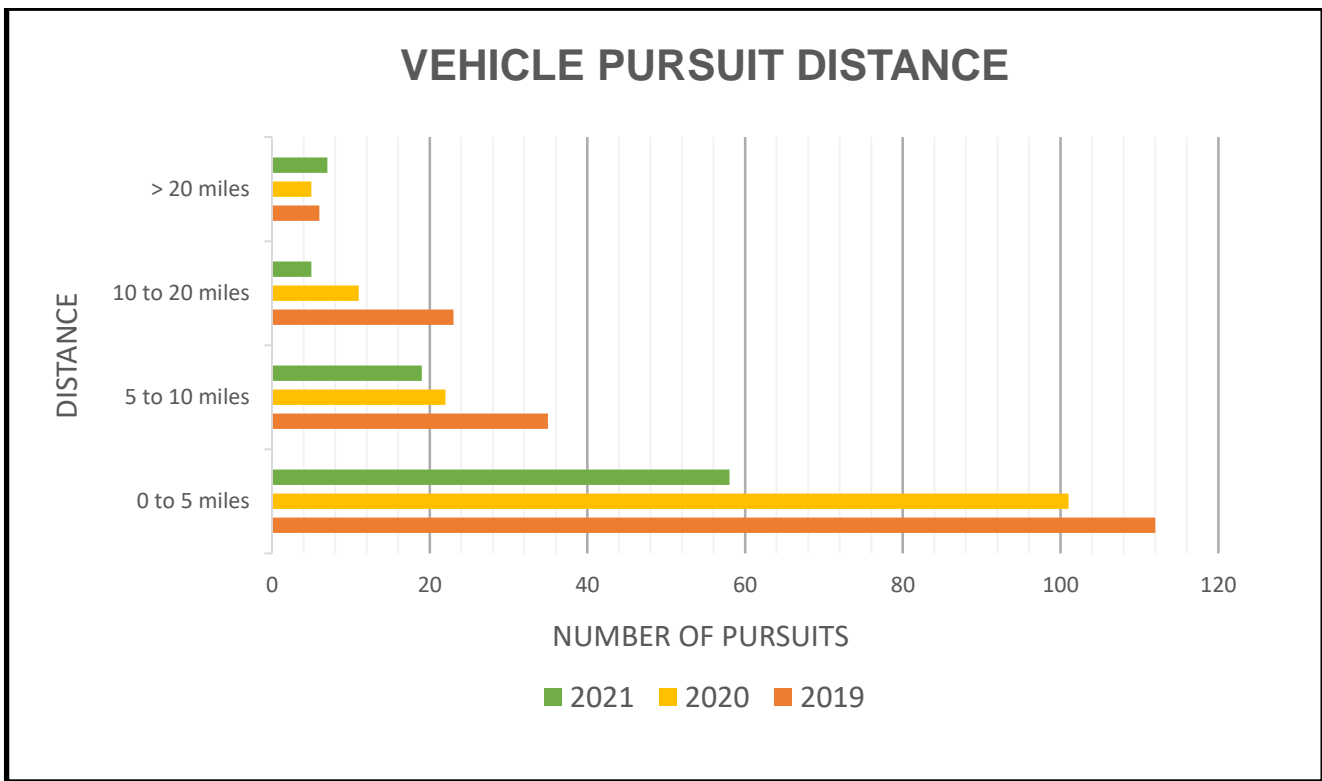


Vehicle Pursuit Distance

Figure 4: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

PURSUIT DISTANCE	2019	2020	2021
0 to 5 miles	112	101	58
5 to 10 miles	35	22	19
10 to 20 miles	23	11	5
> 20 miles	6	5	7
TOTAL	176	139	89

Figure 4a: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

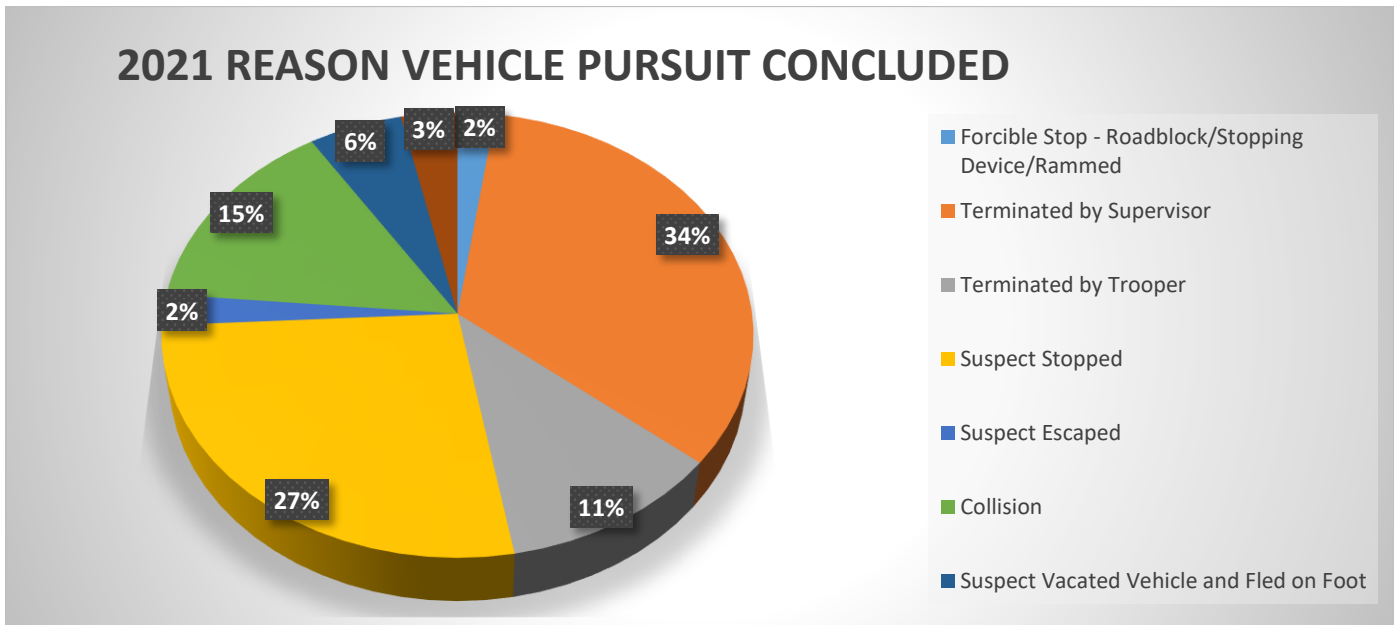


Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded

Figure 5: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:

REASON CONCLUDED	2019	2020	2021
Forcible Stop - Roadblock/Stopping Device/Rammed	12	13	2
Terminated by Supervisor	55	48	30
Terminated by Trooper	22	16	10
Suspect Stopped	33	22	24
Suspect Escaped	5	3	2
Collision	29	22	13
Suspect Vacated Vehicle and Fled on Foot	18	11	5
Other	2	4	3
TOTAL	176	139	89

Figure 5a: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:



Vehicle Pursuit Injuries/Fatalities

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

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	* INCIDENTS INVOLVING TROOPERS INJURED
2019	176	7
2020	139	6
2021	89	4

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

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

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	* INCIDENTS IN WHICH INVOLVED CITIZENS INJURED	** INCIDENTS IN WHICH UNINVOLVED CITIZENS INJURED
2019	176	18	2
2020	139	14	3
2021	89	7	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 Pursuit and Injury Incidents:

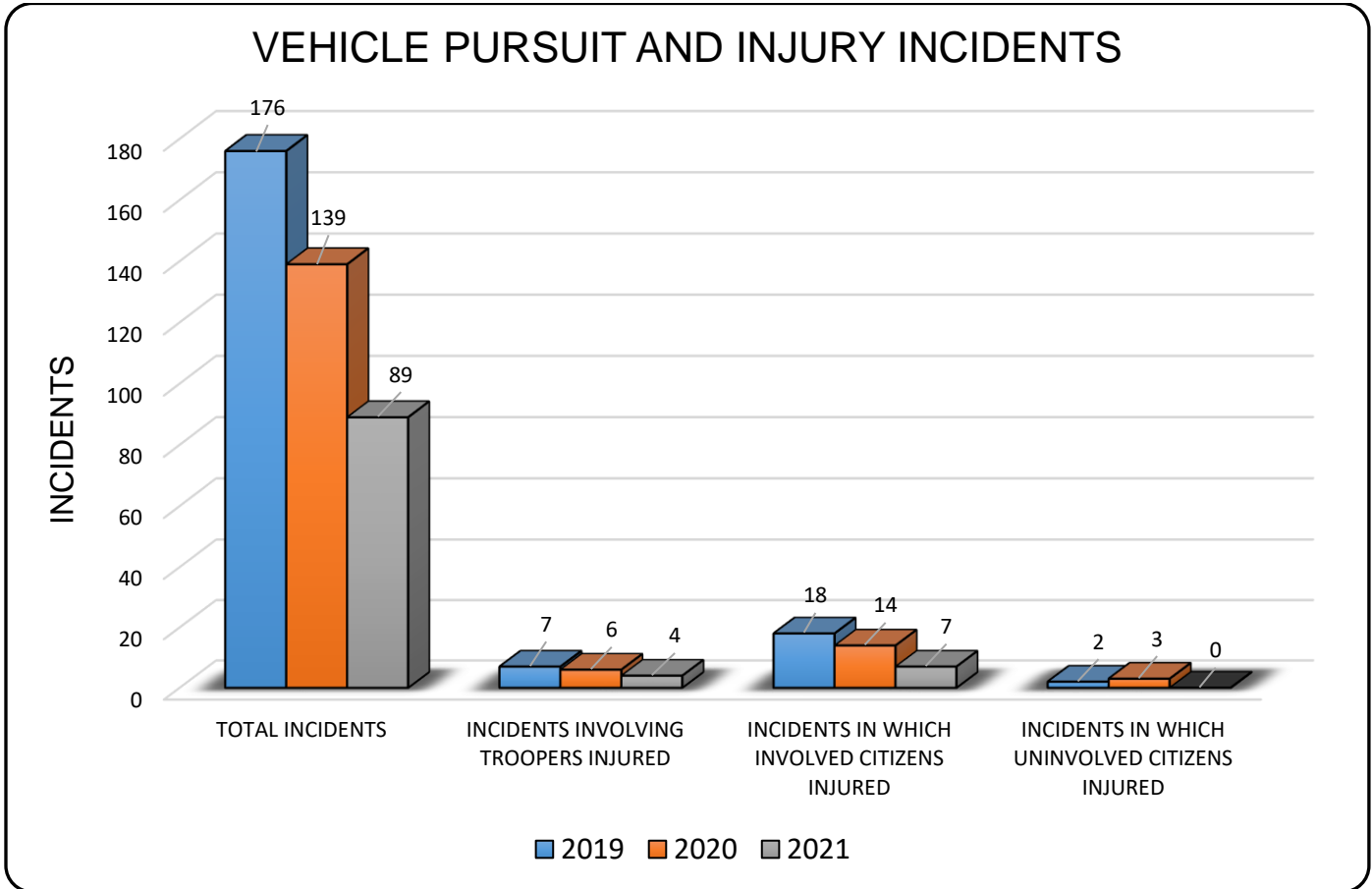


Figure 6c: Reported Fatalities to Involved and Uninvolved Citizens:

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	*INVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY	**UNINVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY
2019	176	0	1
2020	139	1	0
2021	89	0	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

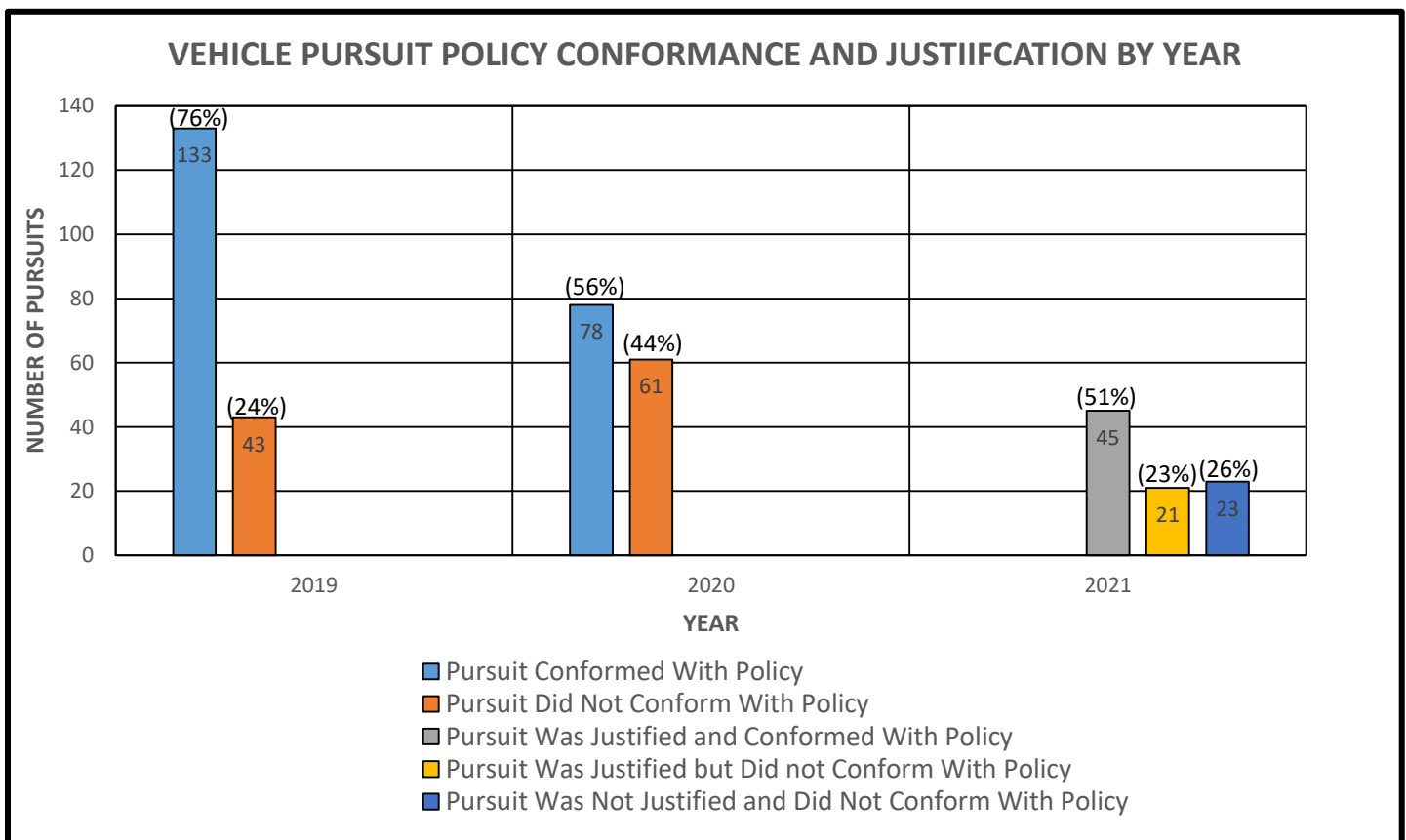
Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification

Figure 7: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:

	2019	2020	2021
PURSUIT CONFORMED WITH POLICY	133	78	
PURSUIT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	43	61	
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED AND CONFORMED WITH POLICY			45
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED BUT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY			21
*PURSUIT WAS NOT JUSTIFIED AND DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY			23
TOTAL	176	139	89

*Beginning on January 1, 2021, the Maryland State Police Lead Driving Instructor assigned to the Education and Training Division assessed all vehicle pursuits to determine justification. Commanders made a determination related to policy conformance.

Figure 7a: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:



PART IV – Litigation & Costs

	2019	2020	2021	3 YEAR TOTAL
NUMBER OF CASES	0	1	0	1
CASES SETTLED	0	0	0	0
CASES SETTLED WITH PAYOUT	0	1	0	1
CASES PENDING SETTLEMENT	0	0	0	0

Information provided by the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) indicated one lawsuits/tort claims 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 1, 2020, the current vehicle pursuit policy was implemented. Due to 2021 being the first full year of operation under the policy, a training session was added to the MSP 2021 In-Service training curriculum. From March 1, 2021 to November 23, 2021, the ETD provided the 2021 In-Service training program. All MSP sergeants, corporals and troopers were mandated to attend. The ETD Lead Driving Instructor was the primary instructor for the training session. The training focused on a review of the vehicle pursuit policy with a goal of educating personnel to enhance their understanding of the policy. At the conclusion of 2021 In-Service, the ETD Lead Driving Instructor advised 1,165 agency personnel received training on the vehicle pursuit policy.

In addition to annual In-Service training, the ETD Lead Driving Instructor conducted remedial vehicle pursuit training throughout 2021. The remedial vehicle pursuit training sessions were held for sworn personnel that were involved in two or more vehicle pursuits that were deemed as not conforming with the pursuit policy. Pursuit troopers and pursuit supervisors were referred to the ETD for such training. Remedial training sessions were held at various times throughout 2021. The remedial training focused on conducting a policy review with those in attendance. Discussions were also had with personnel in attendance related to their specific pursuits that did not conform with policy in order to eliminate repeated policy violations in future pursuits. The Lead Driving Instructor reportedly completed remedial training sessions for 17 sworn personnel.

The MSP Pursuit Review Committee also convened on February 17, 2021, June 22, 2021, October 26, 2021 and December 23, 2021. Committee members were provided with up-to-date statistical data for pursuits prior to each meeting. Due to the concerning conformance rate issues, the Pursuit Review Committee determined it would be prudent to test agency personnel on the vehicle pursuit policy. On July 8, 2021, the 2021 Pursuit Policy Review test was posted to the PowerDMS. Sworn members of the MSP, trooper through Captain, were required to complete the test. In addition to those sworn members, all civilians assigned to the Field Operations Bureau of the MSP were also required to complete the test. In total, 2,385 MSP personnel successfully completed the pursuit policy test.

On July 27, 2021, members of the Pursuit Review Committee attended a meeting with upper command staff. During the meeting, conformance rate issues were discussed in relation to disciplinary action implemented for pursuits that did not conform with policy. It was decided that policy infractions related to the vehicle pursuit policy would be added to the Disciplinary Matrix listed

in MSP Personnel Directive PER 19.11. On January 1, 2022, the updated directive was posted to the PowerDMS. The Disciplinary Matrix update was implemented to specifically address pursuits that were being initiated for a reason that was not justified within policy.

Supervisors, first sergeants 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 has continued to monitor troopers involved in non-conforming vehicle pursuits.

The Pursuit Review Committee recommends 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 non-conforming factor in 45% of the vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2021.

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 non-conforming factor in 75% of vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2021.

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

PART VI – Conclusion

In 2021, the ETD began to assess each vehicle pursuit to determine if it was justified. In order to make the determination of justification, the Lead Driving Instructor conducted a review of the BlueTeam entry. The Instructor analyzed the specific reason the pursuit was initiated by the pursuing trooper. The pursuit was not justified if the pursuit was initiated for something other than one of the three 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. In 2021, the MSP initiated 89 vehicle pursuits. Per policy, troopers had probable cause to initiate the pursuit in 74% of the 2021 pursuits. Troopers engaged in 21 vehicle pursuits that were justified, but did not conform with policy. Although justified, the majority of those pursuits did not conform with policy because the pursuing trooper did not terminate the pursuit when authorization was not received, and the pursuit supervisor did not always authorize the vehicle pursuit via police radio. Of the 89 pursuits in 2021, 26% were not justified and were also deemed to have not conformed with some aspect of the pursuit policy.

January 1, 2021, began the first full year of operation under the current vehicle pursuit policy. It was anticipated that with the implementation of that policy, the total number of vehicle pursuits would decrease. As thought, there was a significant decline in vehicle pursuits in 2021. In 2021, there were 89 vehicle pursuits compared to 139 pursuits initiated in 2020. Pursuits declined from 2020 to 2021 by 36%. In addition to the decline in pursuits from 2020 to 2021, there was also a notable decrease related to citizen injuries noted in vehicle pursuits between the two years. In 2020, citizen injuries were documented in 12% of the 139 total pursuits. In 2021, citizen injuries were noted in 8% of the 89 total pursuits. Pursuits involving injuries to troopers has remained consistent over the past three years. From 2019 through 2021, troopers were injured in 4% of pursuits each year. The most notable reduction in 2021, was the absence of any reported fatalities. In 2019 and 2020, each year had one reported pursuit related fatality. The MSP vehicle pursuit policy notes, “The guiding principle in any pursuit is the safety of the public and those involved in the pursuit.” While the number of incidents involving trooper related injuries from pursuits remained consistent, the reduction of citizen related injuries and the reporting of no pursuit related fatalities is a key result of the reduction of the total number of yearly pursuits.

As the MSP progresses toward the second full year under the current vehicle pursuit policy, there should be significant emphasis on education, understanding and accountability. Commanders and supervisors should focus their efforts on increasing pursuit policy education to assist with improving the current 49% policy non-conformance rate. Additionally, the focus should remain on improving the 26% of vehicle pursuits that not only do not conform with policy, but were also not justified to engage in the pursuit. Also, with the addition of vehicle pursuits to the Disciplinary Matrix, it will be especially important going forward to closely monitor vehicle pursuits for justification and policy conformance. Accountability from the troopers, supervisors and commanders will be crucial to ensuring compliance. Commanders will be tasked with implementing progressive supervision as it relates to each vehicle pursuit and its applicability to the matrix additions. In order to assist with compliance, commanders should also provide education to their personnel as it relates to commonly identified issues noted in this analysis in order to improve pursuits during the next calendar year.

All troopers, regardless of rank, should continue to educate themselves on the policy. The importance of realizing the civil, and possibly even criminal liability, that could result from a pursuit should provide incentive to educate themselves, and others, to ensure each pursuit is justified and in conformance with policy.