

Maryland State Police

VEHICLE PURSUITS

2024

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, 2022 and December 31, 2024.

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, it is routed to the Captain who sends it 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 49 vehicle pursuit incidents in 2024 compared to 48 in 2023. Of those 49 vehicle pursuits 67% were justified and conformed to policy.
- In 2024, Cecil County accounted for the highest number of pursuits with nine (9). Wicomico County accounted for seven (7), Frederick County accounted for five (5); while Montgomery and Prince George’s County each had four (4) pursuits per county in 2024.
- In 2024, the most common reason for initiating a vehicle pursuit was for Felony offenses (53%), next was prior reckless/disoriented driving (39%).
- In 2024, most vehicle pursuits traveled between 5.1 to 10 miles (45%).
- In 2024, the most commonly reported reasons for the conclusion of vehicle pursuits were the suspect vehicle crashed (20%), the suspect stopped the vehicle (18%) and supervisor terminated the pursuit (18%).
- Of the 49 vehicle pursuits in 2024, involved Troopers were injured in 6% of the incidents and citizens involved in the vehicle pursuits were injured in 8% of the incidents. This was compared to 48 vehicle pursuits in 2023, which resulted in troopers being injured in 0% of the incidents and citizens involved in the vehicle pursuit were injured in 17% of the incidents.

PART III – Vehicle Pursuit Statistics and Information

This analysis compares pursuit data between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024.

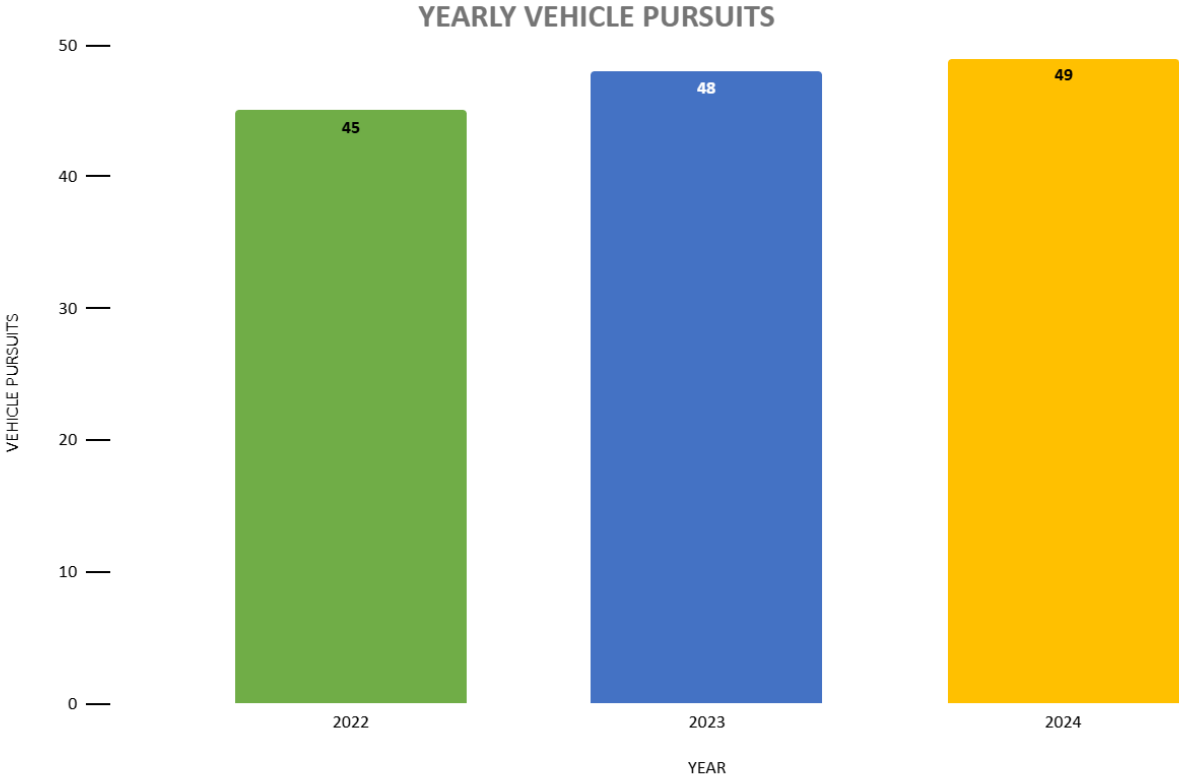
- In 2024, there were four (4) more vehicle pursuits than in 2022, but only one (1) more vehicle pursuit compared to 2023.
- When comparing 2022 and 2024 vehicle pursuits, there was a decrease in seven (7) counties, no change in ten (10) counties (including Baltimore City); however, there was an increase in seven (7) counties.
- From 2023 to 2024, eleven (11) counties (including Baltimore City) had a decrease in vehicle pursuits, eight (8) counties had an increase in vehicle pursuits, and there was no change in five (5) counties.
- In 2023 there was one (1) reported vehicle pursuit in Baltimore City, in 2024, there were no vehicle pursuits initiated in Baltimore City.

Vehicle Pursuits by Year

Figure 1: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:

YEARLY VEHICLE PURSUITS	2022	2023	2024
	45	48	49

Figure 1a: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:



Vehicle Pursuits by County

Figure 2: Total Vehicle Pursuits by County of Initiation:

COUNTY	2022	2023	2024
Allegany County	0	4	1
Anne Arundel County	4	0	2
Baltimore City	0	1	0
Baltimore County	3	4	1
Calvert County	2	4	2
Caroline County	0	1	0
Carroll County	2	0	2
Cecil County	4	7	9
Charles County	1	1	1
Dorchester County	1	1	0
Frederick County	3	4	5
Garrett County	2	2	2
Harford County	5	2	0
Howard County	1	0	1
Kent County	1	0	0
Montgomery County	4	1	4
Prince George's County	2	5	4
Queen Anne's County	1	0	2
Somerset County	0	1	0
St. Mary's County	4	4	3
Talbot County	0	0	0
Washington County	1	3	3
Wicomico County	3	2	7
Worcester County	1	1	0
TOTAL	45	48	49

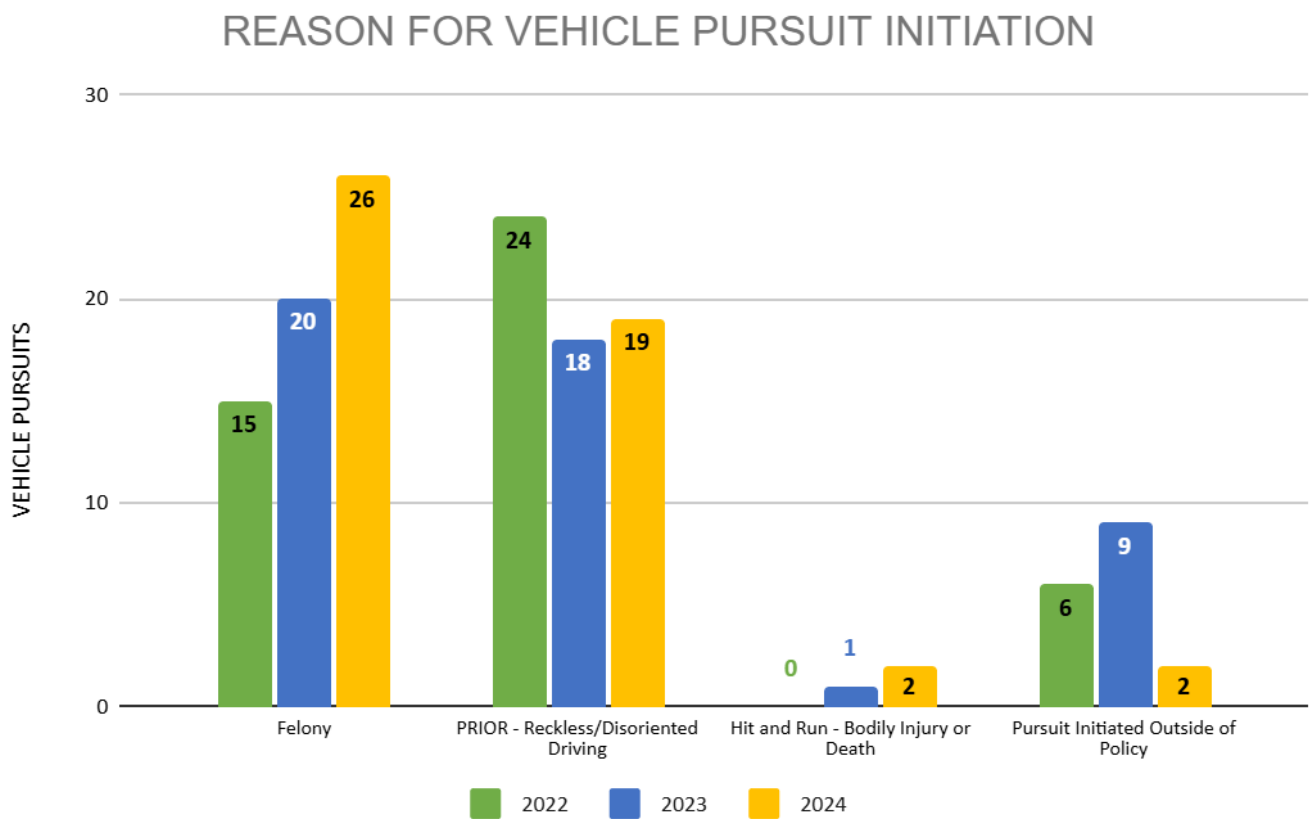
Reasons Vehicle Pursuits were Initiated

Figure 3: Reason Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated:

REASON INITIATED	2022	2023	2024
Felony	15	20	26
PRIOR - Reckless/Disoriented Driving	24	18	19
Hit and Run - Bodily Injury or Death	0	1	2
Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy	6**	9**	3**
TOTAL	45	48	49

** Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy = The number for 2024 reflected the number of pursuits deemed to have been initiated outside of policy, regardless if the trooper documented the pursuit was initiated for one of the three pursuit authorization factors.

Figure 3a: Reasons Vehicle Pursuits were Initiated:

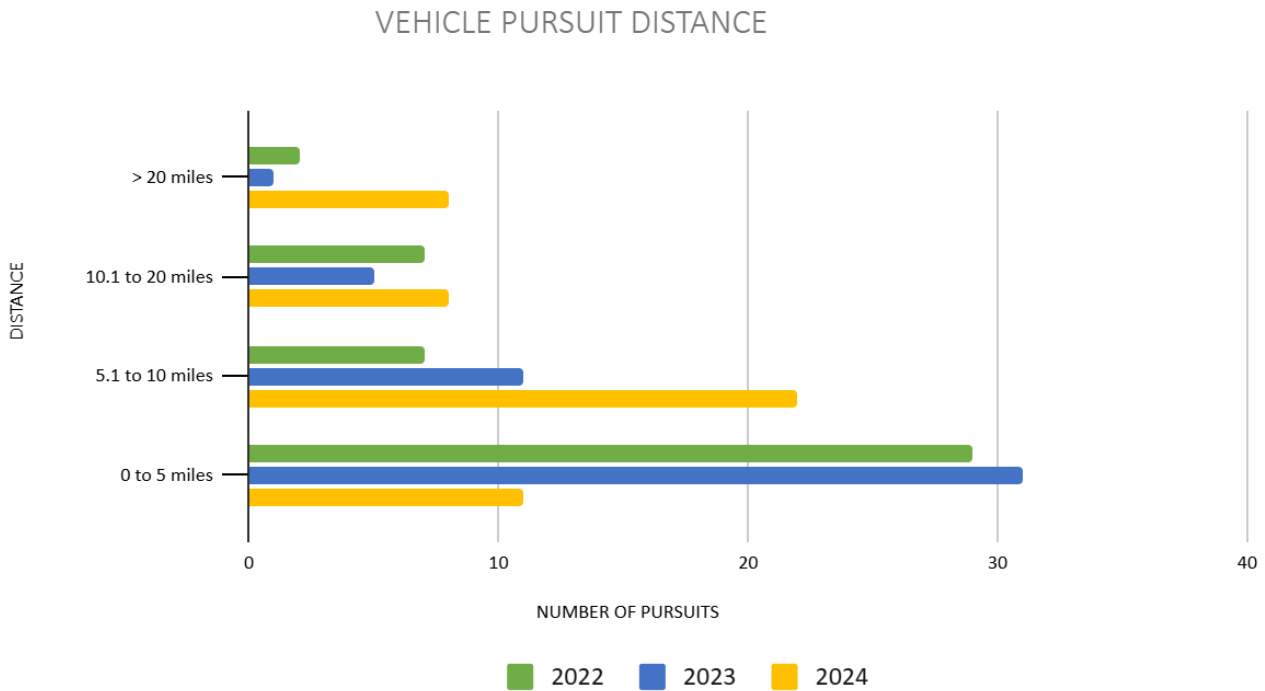


Vehicle Pursuit Distances

Figure 4: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

PURSUIT DISTANCE	2022	2023	2024
0 to 5 miles	29	31	11
5.1 to 10 miles	7	11	22
10.1 to 20 miles	7	5	8
> 20 miles	2	1	8
TOTAL	45	48	49

Figure 4a: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:



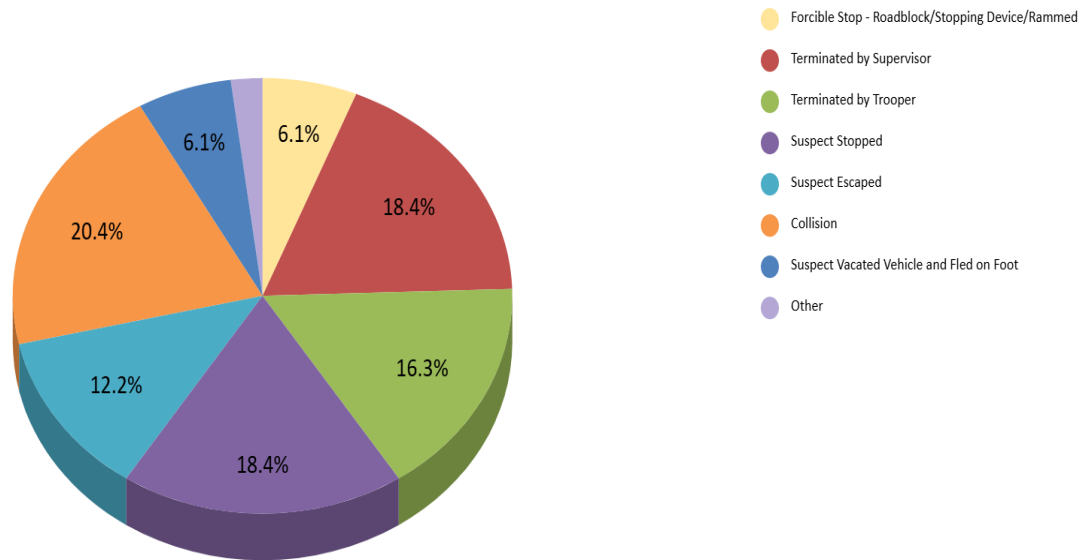
Reasons Vehicle Pursuits Concluded

Figure 5: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:

REASON CONCLUDED	2022	2023	2024
Forcible Stop - Roadblock/Stopping Device/Rammed	3	3	3
Terminated by Supervisor	10	12	9
Terminated by Trooper	7	10	8
Suspect Stopped	9	9	9
Suspect Escaped	1	0	6
Collision	5	6	10
Suspect Vacated Vehicle and Fled on Foot	9	7	3
Other	1	1	1
TOTAL	45	48	49

Figure 5a: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:

2024 REASON VEHICLE PURSUIT CONCLUDED



Vehicle Pursuits Injuries/Fatalities

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

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	* INCIDENTS INVOLVING TROOPERS INJURED
2022	45	2
2023	48	0
2024	49	3

* 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
2022	45	5	0
2023	48	8	2
2024	49	4	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:

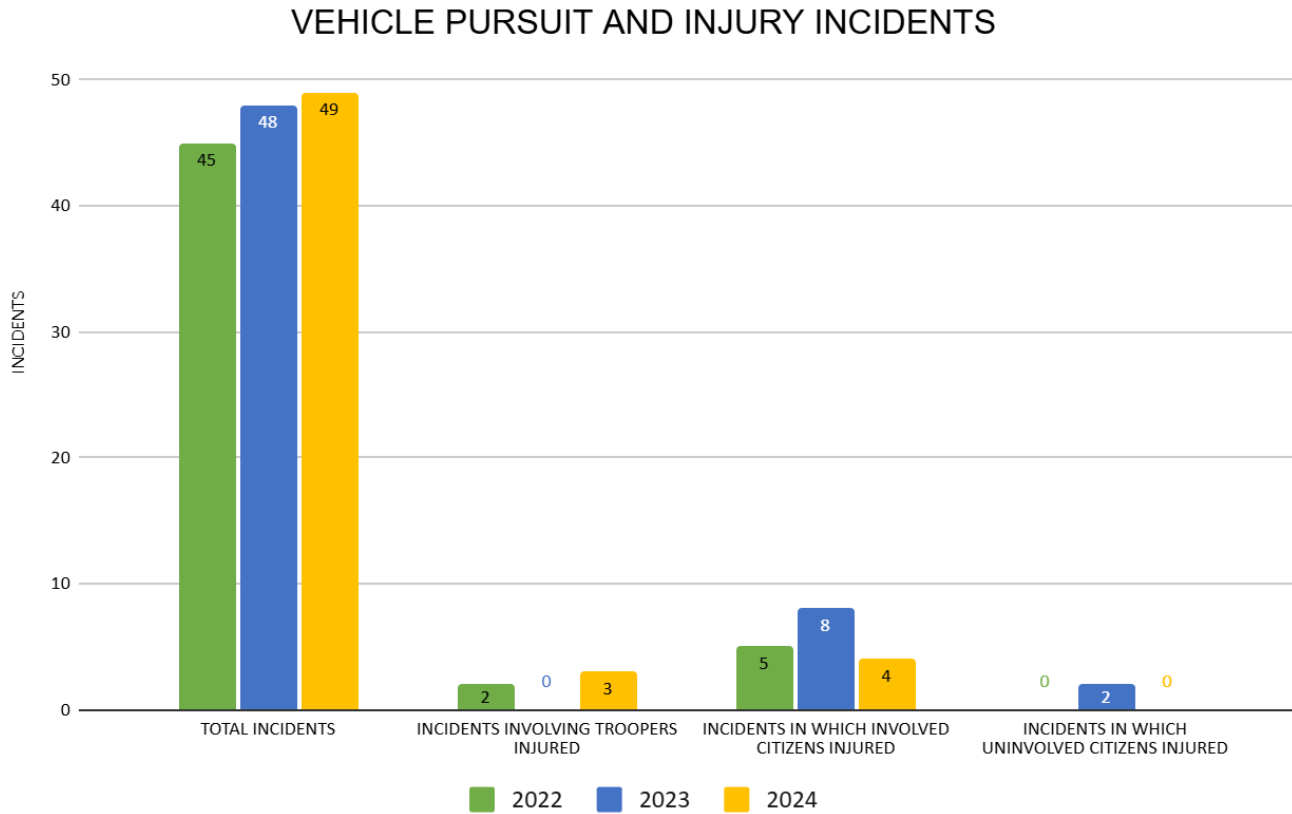


Figure 6c: Reported Fatalities to Involved and Uninvolved Citizens:

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	*INVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY	**UNINVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY
2022	45	1	0
2023	48	0	0
2024	49	0	0

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

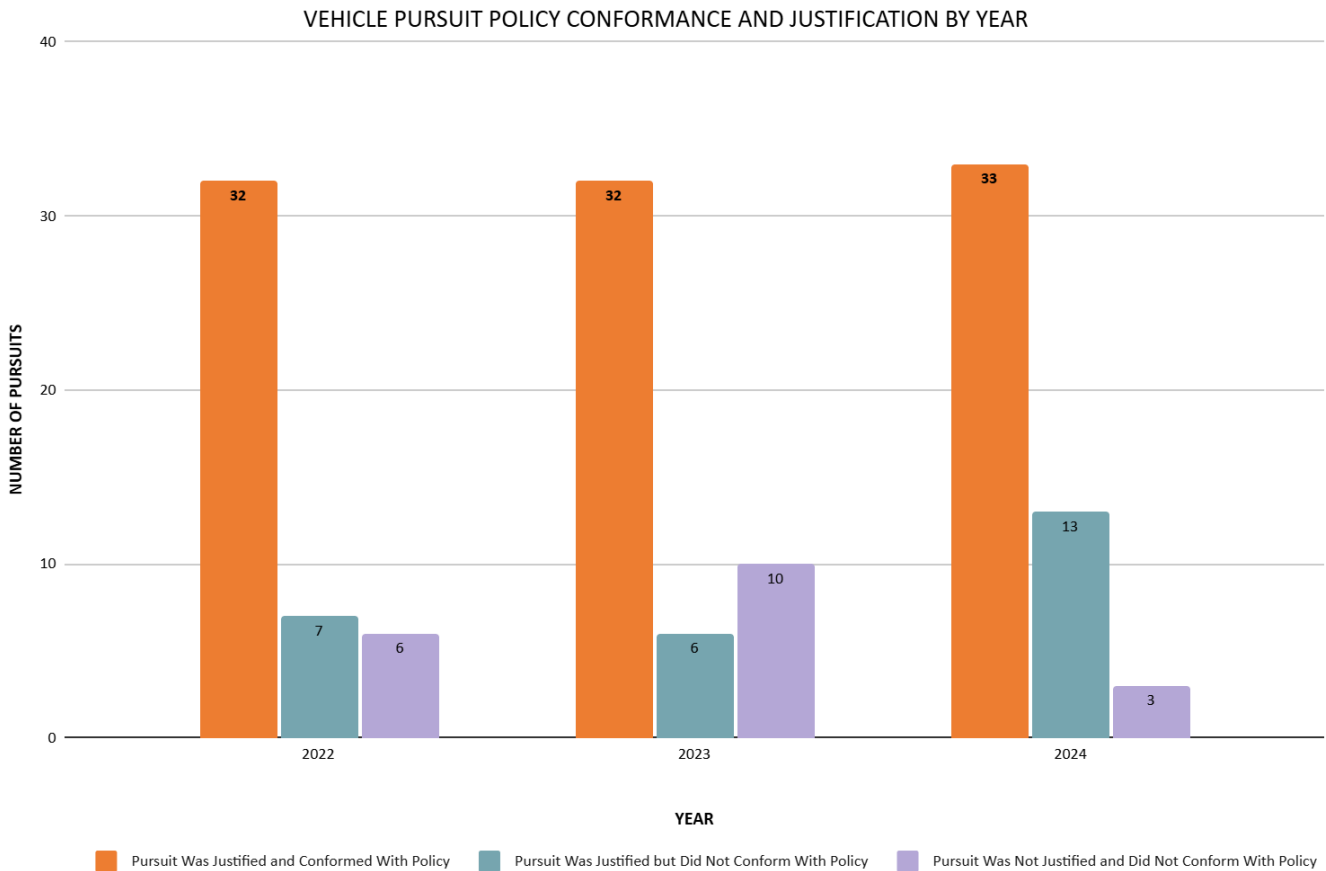
** Uninvolved Citizens Fatality - Total number of citizens not within the pursued vehicle receiving fatal injuries.

Vehicle Pursuits Policy Conformance and Justification

Figure 7: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:

	2022	2023	2024
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED AND CONFORMED WITH POLICY	32	32	33
*PURSUIT WAS JUSTIFIED BUT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	7	6	13
*PURSUIT WAS NOT JUSTIFIED AND DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	6	10	3
TOTAL	45	48	49

Figure 7a: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:



PART IV – Litigation & Costs

	2022	2023	2024	3 YEAR TOTAL
NUMBER OF CASES	0	0	0	0
CASES SETTLED	0	0	0	0
CASES SETTLED WITH PAYOUT	0	0	0	0
CASES PENDING SETTLEMENT	0	0	0	0

Information provided by the OLC indicated no lawsuits/tort claims resulting from vehicle pursuits have been filed over the past three years.

PART V – Training, Policy Recommendations and Common Issues Identified

In 2024 pursuit training was posted on the PowerDMS. All sworn personnel holding the rank of Lieutenant and below were required to complete online training. The Pursuit Policy was included in a PowerPoint presentation on the PowerDMS. The course provided troopers with an overview of the MSP's vehicle pursuit policy and the factors used when determining whether a pursuit should be authorized. The Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) regulations mandated all in-service training include a written or practical examination. Written examinations were to be completed before the end of 2024. Troopers must obtain a minimum score of 70%. The total number of troopers who successfully completed online pursuit training in 2024 was 1,431.

The MSP Pursuit Review Committee convened multiple times in 2024. 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.

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 failed to request or receive permission to pursue the vehicle from the duty officer (OPS 09.02 Section E).
 - Any trooper engaging in a pursuit will immediately notify the barrack responsible for that area that a pursuit is underway.
 - 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 will immediately terminate.
 - This issue was a factor in 75% of the non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2024.

COMMON ISSUE 2:

- 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 13% of the non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2024.

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 trooper, public and MSP.

PART VI – Conclusion

The total number of vehicle pursuits between 2022 and 2024 remained relatively consistent, which represents a significant decrease compared to previous years. At the close of 2024, 67% of pursuits were in full compliance with established policy. However, a notable 27% of pursuits were justified but did not conform to policy. These pursuits, although justified based on the situation, were not conducted in line with the department policies. Pursuits are deemed justified based on certain authorization factors, including: 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. Two significant factors influencing the reduction in vehicle pursuits were training and accountability. In 2021, extensive vehicle pursuit policy training was completed during In-Service. In 2021, 2022 and 2024, vehicle pursuit training was posted on the PowerDMS, and in those years, online testing was required for completion of the training. However, in 2023, vehicle pursuit training was completed during In-Service. Violations for pursuits not conforming to policy have been appropriately handled with disciplinary and corrective actions.

The MSP closed out the fourth full year under the current vehicle pursuit policy. The total number of vehicle pursuits from 2023 to 2024, increasing by one pursuit. Although the total number of pursuits slightly increased, there was a noticeable improvement in compliance. The number of pursuits that did not conform to policy and were not justified decreased by 70%. There was also a decrease in the number of pursuits initiated outside of policy. This is a strong indicator that the training and policy education efforts are having an impact, as fewer pursuits are starting without proper authorization and more are staying within policy. Troopers and supervisors have a better understanding of when and how to initiate pursuits, aligning more closely with policy expectations. While the training is proven effective, there's still a need for continued focus on pursuit policy education. The ETD is actively tracking these identified issues, which allows them to focus on areas that need improvement. By documenting these concerns, the Division can create targeted training or recommend adjustments to policy where necessary to minimize risks to troopers, the public, and the department. One of the most effective ways to address identified issues is through tailored training. The ETD is working to implement training programs designed to address the specific challenges revealed during pursuit reviews. By continuously improving training, they aim to reduce the risks associated with pursuits, such as accidents, injuries, or policy violations, and ensure that troopers are well-prepared to handle these situations safely and effectively.

The message is clear that commanders and supervisors play a key role in ensuring policy compliance. ETD personnel also play a crucial part in the training process and non-supervisory personnel (troopers not in leadership roles) should also take personal responsibility for educating themselves about the vehicle pursuit policy. Self-accountability is critical for ensuring that everyone, not just supervisors, are engaged in understanding and adhering to the policy. The emphasis on broad participation in policy education and self-accountability is vital for sustaining and improving upon the progress made. This approach will help ensure that the correct pursuit practices are deeply embedded at all levels of the agency. This update reflects a positive trend, but it also emphasizes the importance of ongoing education and accountability at every level of the department to maintain or even further reduce non-compliant pursuits.