

Maryland State Police

VEHICLE PURSUITS

2023

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, 2021 and December 31, 2023.

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.

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 ensures all pursuits are evaluated and any training considerations are addressed with the Pursuit Review Committee. 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 48 vehicle pursuit incidents in 2023, compared to 45 in 2022. The number of vehicle pursuits remained relatively the same between 2022 and 2023. It should be noted, Agency personnel engaged in 176 vehicle pursuits in 2019; the year before the Department revamped its pursuit policy. Since the March 2020 release of OPS 09.02, the number of pursuits has continued to decrease exponentially.
- In 2023, Cecil County accounted for the highest number of pursuits with seven. Prince George's County accounted for five vehicle pursuits; while Allegany County, Baltimore County, Calvert County, Frederick County, and St. Mary's County had four pursuits per county in 2023.
- In 2023, the most common reason for initiating a vehicle pursuit was for Felony offenses (42%).
- In 2023, most vehicle pursuits traveled between 0-5 miles (65%).
- In 2023, the most commonly reported reasons for the conclusion of vehicle pursuits were supervisory termination (25%), the trooper terminated the pursuit (21%), the suspect stopped the vehicle (19%), or the suspect vacated the vehicle and fled on foot (15%).
- Of the 48 vehicle pursuits in 2023, there were no reported injuries to any trooper involved in the incidents. Citizens involved in the vehicle pursuits were reportedly injured in 16% of the incidents; uninvolved citizens were injured in 4% of the incidents. This was compared to 45 vehicle pursuits in 2022, which resulted in troopers being injured in 4% of the incidents and 11% of the incidents resulted in injury to citizens involved in the vehicle pursuit.

PART III – Vehicle Pursuit Statistics and Information

This analysis compares pursuit data between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2023.

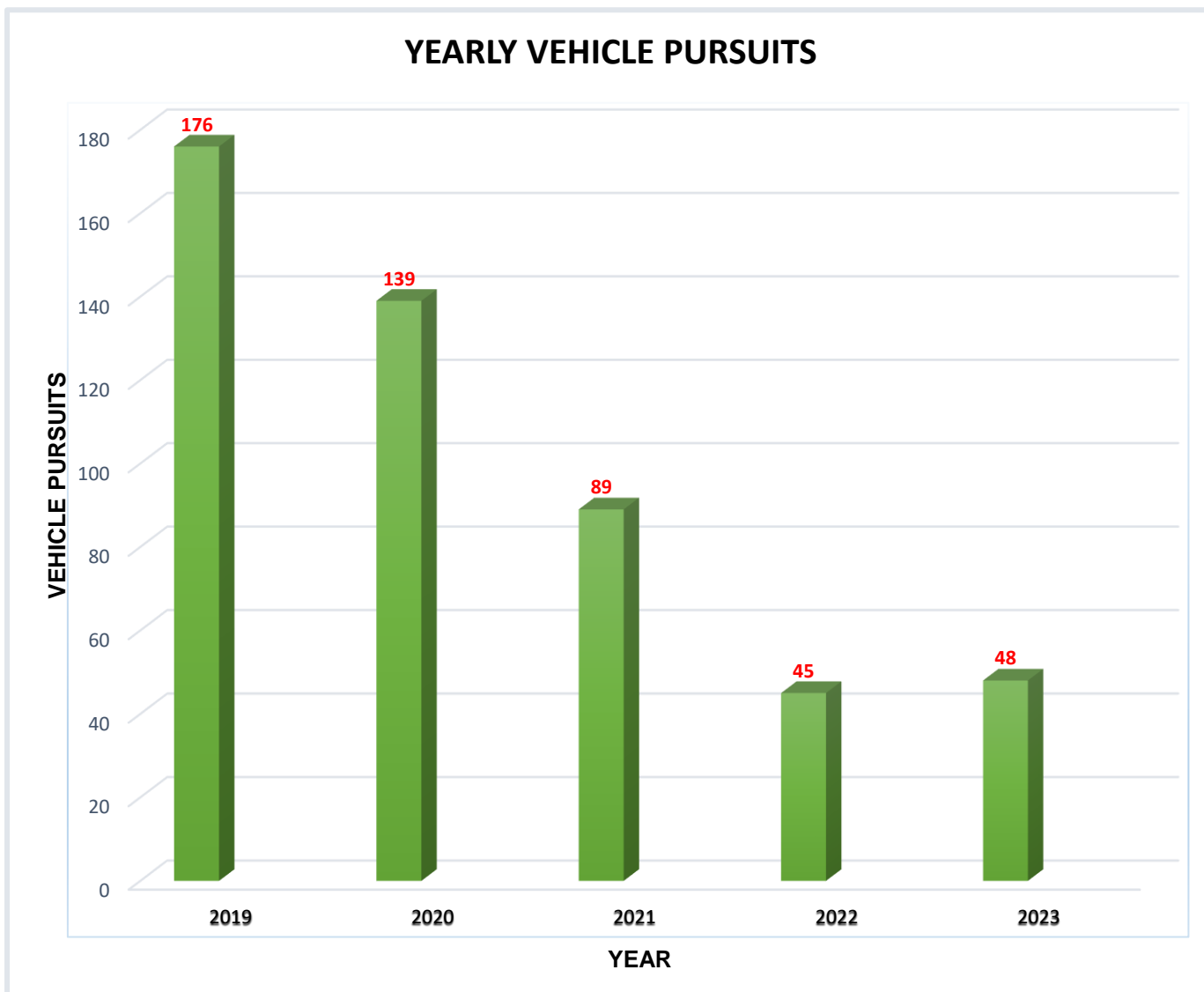
- In 2023, there were three more vehicle pursuits than in 2022.
- There were 41 less vehicle pursuits in 2023 than in 2021.
- When comparing 2021 and 2023 vehicle pursuits, there was a decrease in 15 counties, no change in four counties (including Baltimore City); however, there was an increase in five counties.
- From 2022 to 2023, eight counties had a decrease in vehicle pursuits, 10 counties (including Baltimore City) had an increase in vehicle pursuits, and there was no change in six counties.
- From 2020 to 2021, there was a decrease in vehicle pursuits within 17 counties.
- In 2021 and 2023, there were two reported vehicle pursuits in Baltimore City. In 2022, there were no vehicle pursuits initiated in Baltimore City.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage of vehicle pursuits in 2022 and 2023, as compared to 2021. The following percentages depict the percentage decrease between the listed years:
 - 49% decrease from 2021 to 2022; and
 - 46% decrease from pursuits in 2021 compared to pursuits in 2023.

Vehicle Pursuits by Year

Figure 1: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
VEHICLE PURSUITS	176	139	89	45	48

Figure 1a: Vehicle Pursuit Incidents by Calendar Year:



Vehicle Pursuits by County

Figure 2: Total Vehicle Pursuits by County of Initiation:

COUNTY	2021	2022	2023
Allegany County	3	0	4
Anne Arundel County	6	4	0
Baltimore City	1	0	1
Baltimore County	3	3	4
Calvert County	4	2	4
Caroline County	4	0	1
Carroll County	1	2	0
Cecil County	8	4	7
Charles County	2	1	1
Dorchester County	1	1	1
Frederick County	1	3	4
Garrett County	0	2	2
Harford County	6	5	2
Howard County	2	1	0
Kent County	1	1	0
Montgomery County	3	4	1
Prince George's County	4	2	5
Queen Anne's County	13	1	0
Somerset County	2	0	1
St. Mary's County	9	4	4
Talbot County	3	0	0
Washington County	3	1	3
Wicomico County	5	3	2
Worcester County	4	1	1
TOTAL	89	45	48

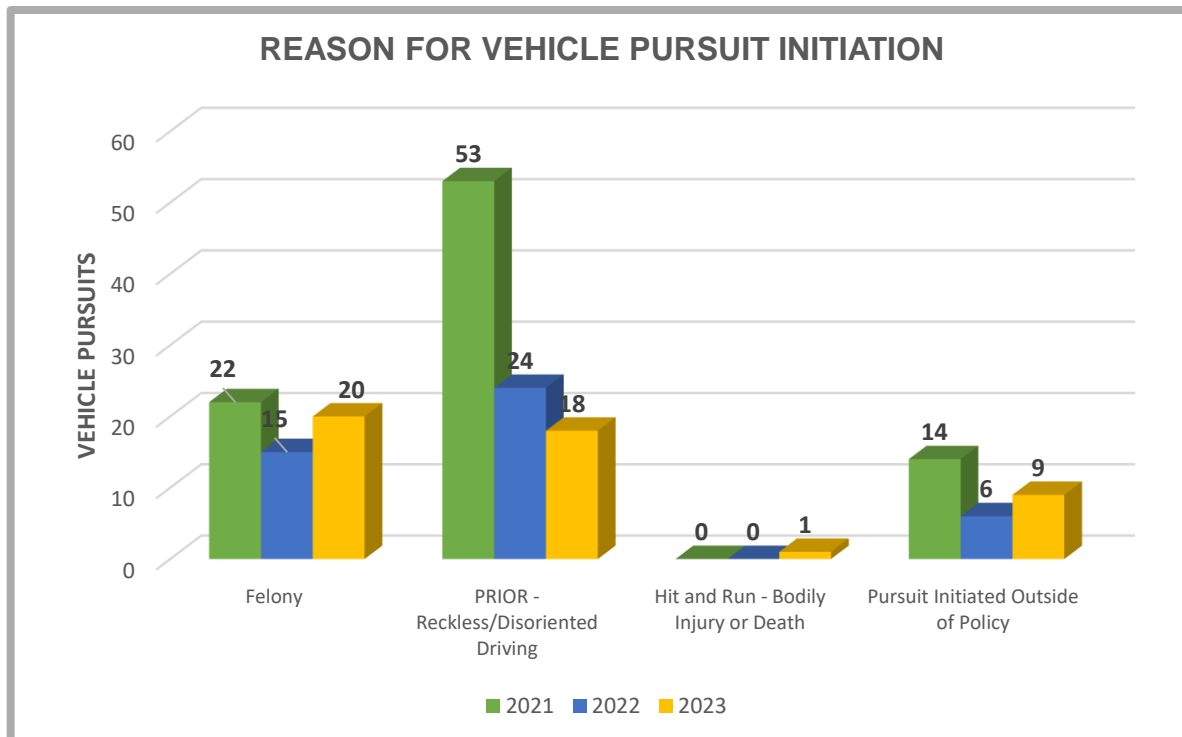
Reasons Vehicle Pursuits were Initiated

Figure 3: Reason a Vehicle Pursuit was Initiated:

REASON INITIATED	2021	2022	2023
Felony*	22	15	20
PRIOR - Reckless/Disoriented Driving*	53	24	18
Hit and Run - Bodily Injury or Death*	0	0	1
Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy*	14**	6**	9**
TOTAL	89	45	48

** Pursuit Initiated Outside of Policy = The number for 2023 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:

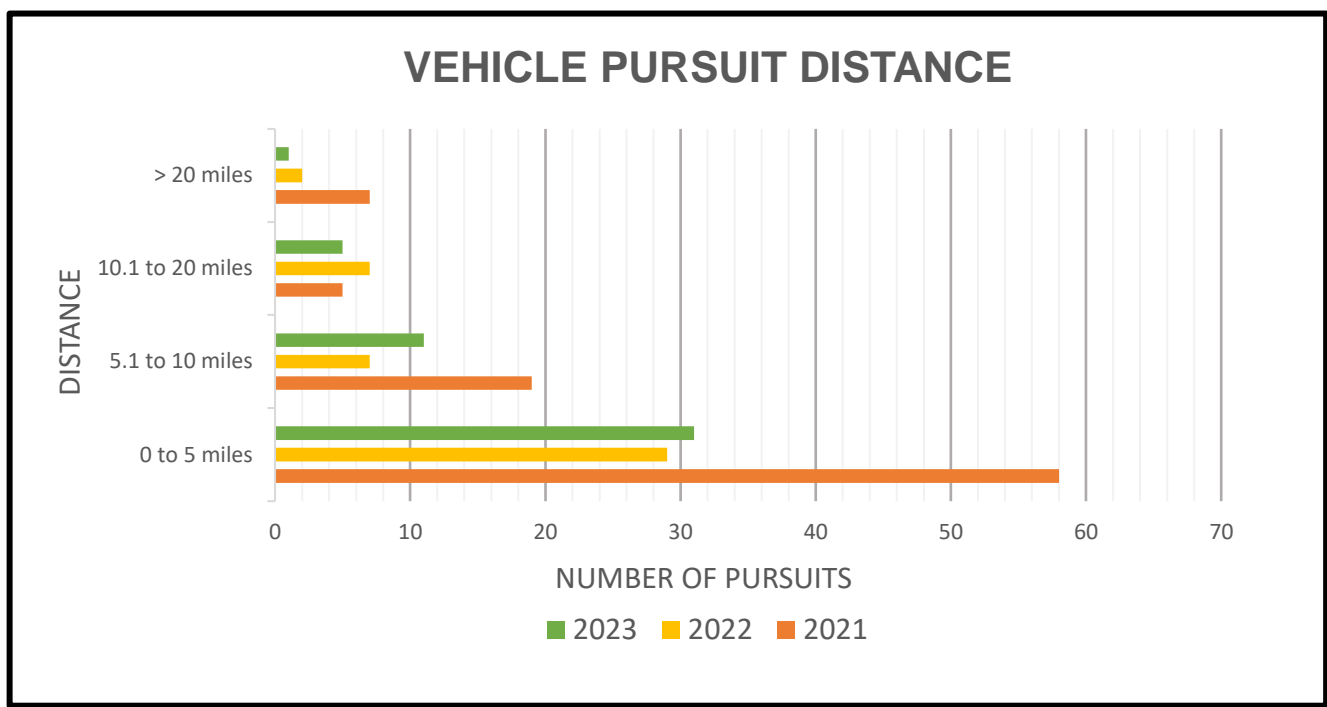


Vehicle Pursuit Distances

Figure 4: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

PURSUIT DISTANCE	2021	2022	2023
0 to 5 miles	58	29	31
5.1 to 10 miles	19	7	11
10.1 to 20 miles	5	7	5
> 20 miles	7	2	1
TOTAL	89	45	48

Figure 4a: Vehicle Pursuit Distance:

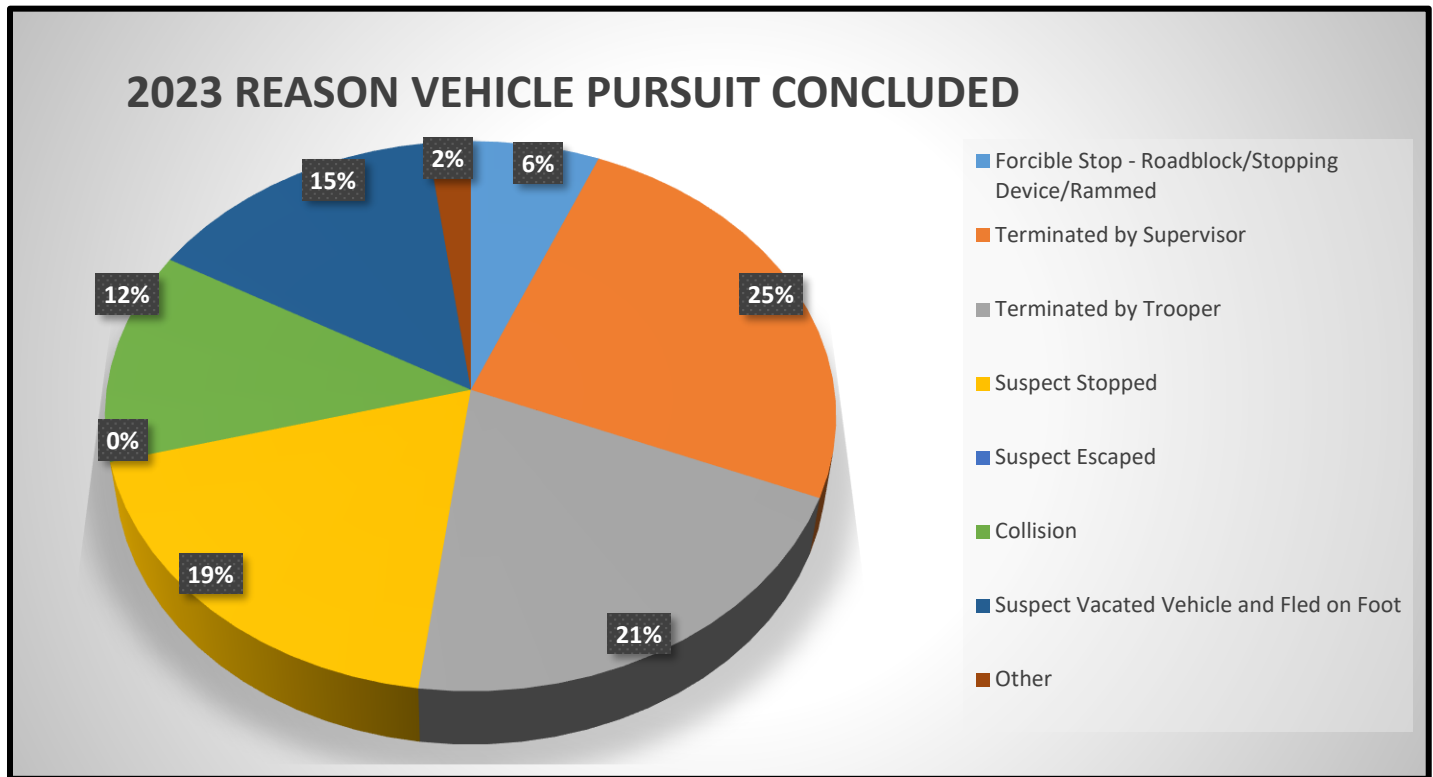


Reasons Vehicle Pursuits Concluded

Figure 5: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:

REASON CONCLUDED	2021	2022	2023
Forcible Stop - Roadblock/Stopping Device/Rammed	2	3	3
Terminated by Supervisor	30	10	12
Terminated by Trooper	10	7	10
Suspect Stopped	24	9	9
Suspect Escaped	2	1	0
Collision	13	5	6
Suspect Vacated Vehicle and Fled on Foot	5	9	7
Other	3	1	1
TOTAL	89	45	48

Figure 5a: Reason Vehicle Pursuit Concluded:



Vehicle Pursuits Injuries/Fatalities

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

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	* INCIDENTS INVOLVING TROOPERS INJURED
2021	89	4
2022	45	2
2023	48	0

* 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
2021	89	7	0
2022	45	5	0
2023	48	8	2

* 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:

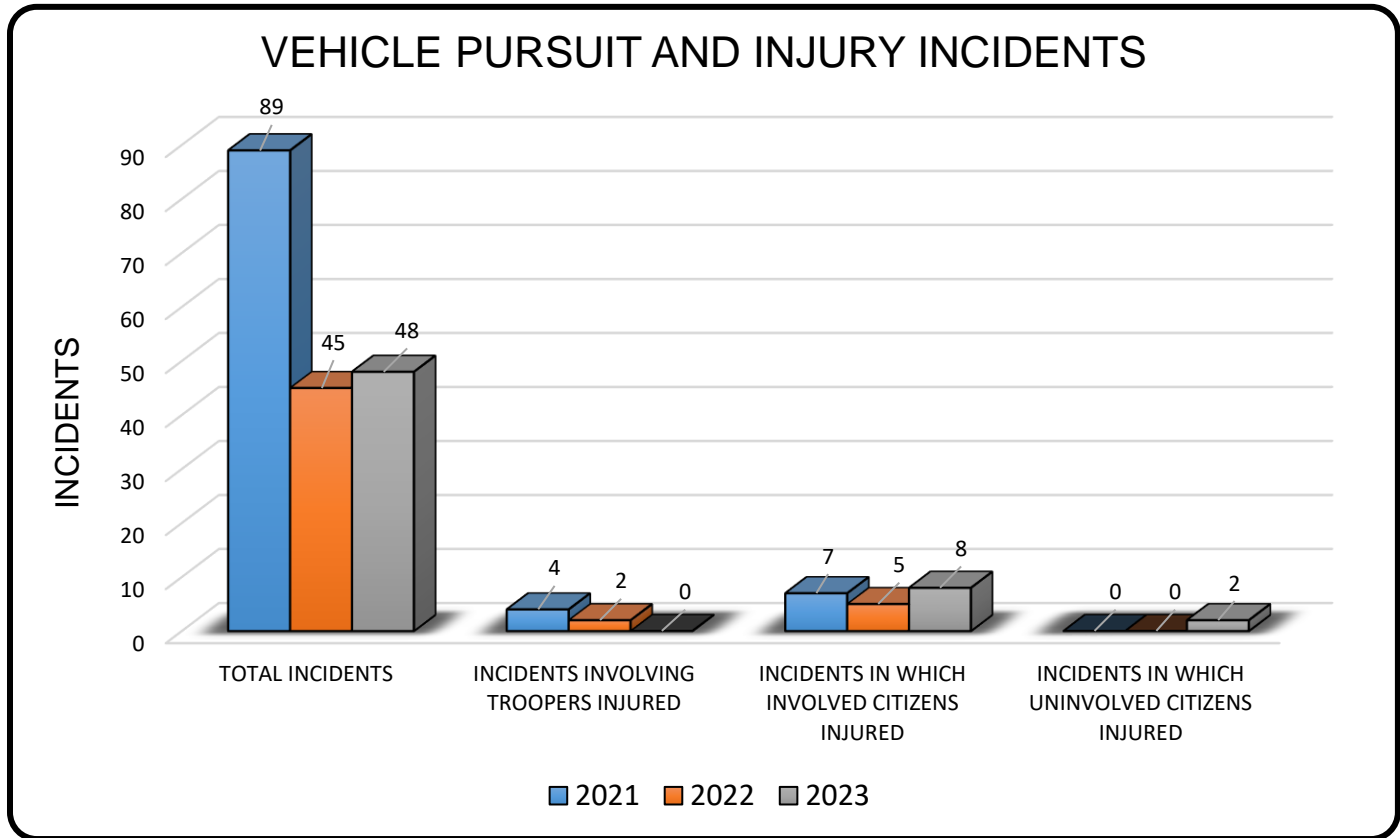


Figure 6c: Reported Fatalities to Involved and Uninvolved Citizens:

YEAR	TOTAL INCIDENTS	*INVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY	**UNINVOLVED CITIZENS FATALITY
2021	89	0	0
2022	45	1	0
2023	48	0	0

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

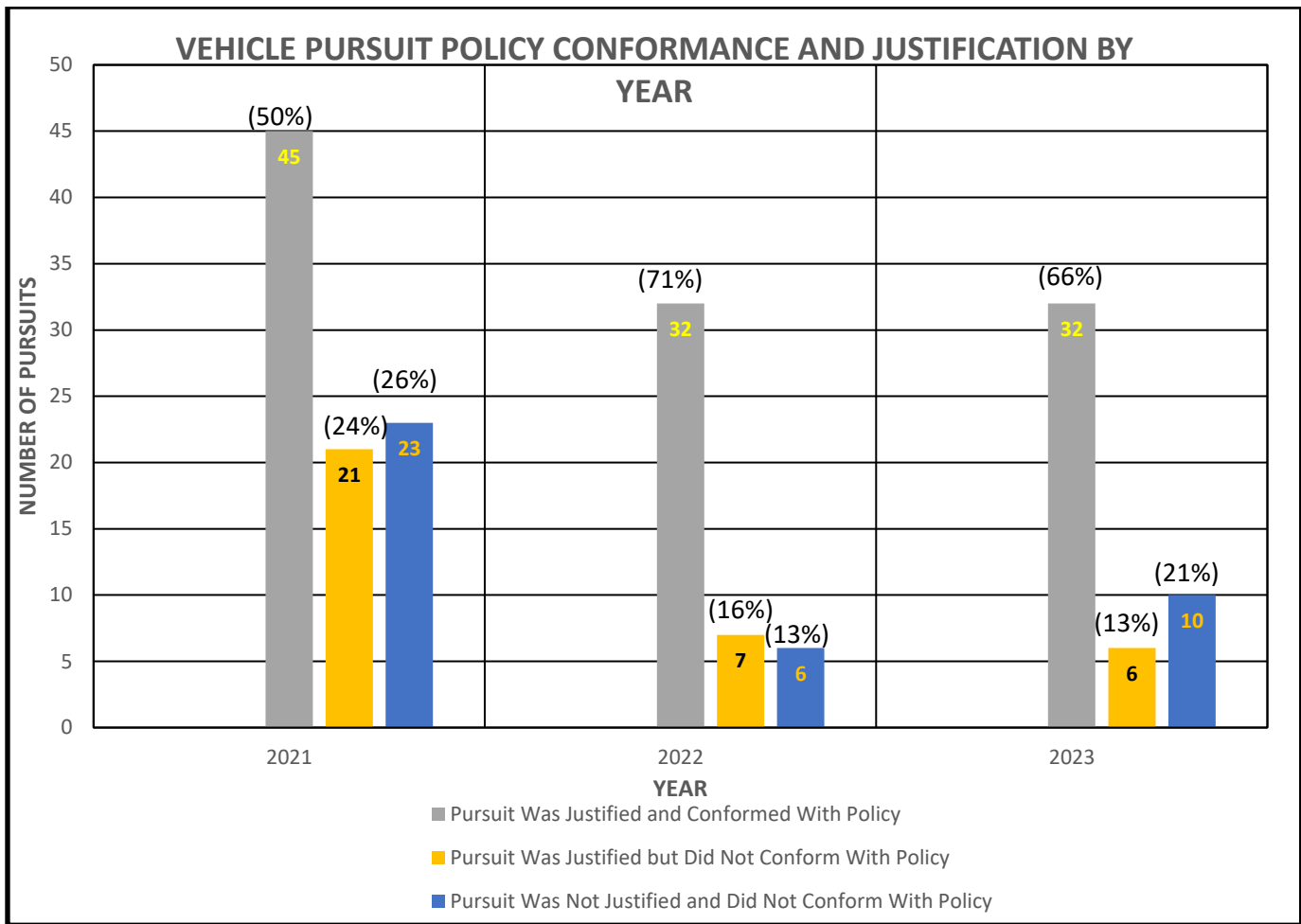
** Uninvolved Citizens Fatality - Total number of citizens not within the pursued vehicle receiving fatal injuries.

Vehicle Pursuits Policy Conformance and Justification

Figure 7: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:

	2021	2022	2023
*PURSUIT JUSTIFIED AND CONFORMED WITH POLICY	45	32	32
*PURSUIT JUSTIFIED, BUT DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	21	7	6
*PURSUIT NOT JUSTIFIED AND DID NOT CONFORM WITH POLICY	23	6	10
TOTAL	89	45	48

Figure 7a: Vehicle Pursuit Policy Conformance and Justification:



PART IV – Litigation & Costs

	2021	2022	2023	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

On February 24, 2023, Special Order 01-23-001, 2023 In-Service Training, was posted on the PowerDMS. All sworn personnel holding the rank of sergeant and below were required to complete two days of in-person training. The Pursuit Policy was included in the classroom portion of training. 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 leaving the training site (classroom) and required a minimum score of 70%. The total number of troopers who successfully completed In-Service Training in 2023, was 1,262.

The MSP Pursuit Review Committee convened in January, April and August of 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.

On July 1, 2022, the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix created by the 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*.

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 56% of the non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2023.

COMMON ISSUE 2:

- 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 63% of the non-conforming vehicle pursuits under the current policy in 2023.

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 number of vehicle pursuits in 2023 was slightly higher than the number of vehicle pursuits in 2022; however, there was still a decline in the total number of vehicle pursuits compared to 2021. Since the MSP revised its pursuit policy in 2020, in the wake of the 176 vehicle pursuits in 2019, the Agency has experienced 73% decline in pursuits over a five-year period. In 2023, there were 48 total vehicle pursuits, compared to 45 total vehicle pursuits in 2022. During 2021, troopers engaged in 89 total vehicle pursuits, which led to a 46% decline when comparing 2023 to 2021 vehicle pursuits. At the close of 2023, 66% of vehicle pursuits conformed with policy. Additionally, 34% 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. In 2023, 79% of all pursuits, to include those that conformed to policy and those that did not conform to policy, were justified.

There was a reduction in the total number of vehicle pursuits from 2021 to 2023. Two key components believed to have impacted the decline were education and accountability. In 2021, extensive vehicle pursuit policy training was completed during In-Service. In 2021 and 2022, vehicle pursuit training was posted on the PowerDMS, and in both years, testing was required for completion of the training. Additionally, in 2023, vehicle pursuit training was completed during In-Service. 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, troopers must understand the pursuit policy and that they must have probable cause for one or more of the three pursuit authorization factors in order to engage in a pursuit. Those three factors are felony offenses, hit-and-run traffic collisions resulting in bodily injury or death, or 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.). Any trooper engaging in a pursuit will immediately notify the barrack responsible for that area that a pursuit is underway. The policy states that 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. That said, troopers initiating a pursuit outside of policy was the leading factor related to vehicle pursuit non-conformance. In 2023, troopers initiating a pursuit outside of policy was a factor in 56% of non-conforming vehicle pursuits. Additionally, 63% of non-conforming vehicle pursuits were contributed to the failure of the trooper to request or receive permission to pursue the vehicle from the duty officer. Moving forward, troopers, along with their supervisors, should focus on ensuring they understand when a pursuit is authorized to further increase the Agency's policy conformance rate.

The MSP closed out the third full year under the current vehicle pursuit policy. Not only was there a slight increase in the total number of vehicle pursuits from the second year (2022) to the third year (2023), there was a slight increase in the total number of vehicle pursuits that did not conform to policy and were not justified. There was also an increase in the total number of vehicle pursuits initiated outside of policy. Commanders and supervisors should continue their focus on pursuit policy education. However, 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 the vehicle pursuit education development. Non-supervisory personnel should participate in self-accountability and self-education by studying and learning all aspects of the MSP vehicle pursuit policy.