

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

April 19, 2023
8.1

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS' REQUEST FOR PURSUIT ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Department's Report on vehicle pursuit statistics.

DISCUSSION

The Board of Police Commissioners requested that Traffic Group (TRFG) provide an overview on the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) policy pertaining to when a vehicle pursuit can be initiated, supervisory control, number of units authorized in a pursuit and when a pursuit should be discontinued. It was further requested that Pursuit Review Unit (PRU) provide vehicle pursuit statistical information reflecting data from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2022, and year to date (YTD) for 2023, as of March 30, 2023.

The Board of Police Commissioners requested statistical information related to:

- Total number of pursuits;
- Number that resulted in a traffic collision (TC);
- Number of injuries and fatalities as a result of a pursuit related traffic collision;
- Reason for initiation of pursuit;
- Number of pursuits that were cancelled by the involved officers, supervisor or watch commander; and,
- Number of pursuits that were adjudicated as Out of Policy/Administrative Disapproval.

Should you require additional information, please contact Commander Craig Valenzuela, Traffic Group, at (213) 486-0680.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

Attachment

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VEHICLE PURSUIT ANALYSIS FOR THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

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Background

The Board of Police Commissioners requested that Traffic Group (TRFG) provide an overview on the Los Angeles Police Department (“LAPD” or “Department”) policy pertaining to when a vehicle pursuit can be initiated, supervisory control, number of units authorized in a pursuit, and when a pursuit should be discontinued. It was further requested that Pursuit Review Unit (PRU) provide vehicle pursuit statistical information reflecting data from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2022, and year to date (YTD) for 2023, as of March 30, 2023.

The Board of Police Commissioners requested statistical information related to:

- Total number of pursuits;
- Number that resulted in a traffic collision (TC);
- Number of injuries and fatalities as a result of a pursuit related collision;
- Reason and initiation for pursuit;
- Number of pursuits that were cancelled by the involved officers, supervisor or watch commander; and,
- Number of pursuits that were adjudicated as Out of Policy/Administrative Disapproval.

Vehicle Pursuit Policy – Initiation

The policy for initiating a pursuit is delineated in Department Manual Volume I, Section 555.10, “Initiation of a Vehicle Pursuit.” The policy reads:

“Officers may pursue felons and misdemeanants, including law violators who exhibit behaviors of illegally driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If reasonable suspicion or probable cause exists that a misdemeanor (with the exception of misdemeanor evading or reckless driving in response to enforcement action by Department personnel) or felony occurred, is occurring is about to occur, employees may pursue a suspect vehicle.”

The policy for terminating a pursuit is delineated in Department Manual Volume IV, Section 205.17, “Continuation/Termination of the Pursuit.” The policy reads:

“Officers involved in a pursuit shall continually evaluate the necessity for continuing the pursuit. Officers must determine whether the seriousness of the initial violation or any subsequent violations reasonably warrants continuance of the pursuit.”

The Department Manual provides a list of factors that require officers to weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential dangers to themselves and the community. These factors should be considered by the officers when choosing to initiate or terminate a pursuit. This assessment by officers is known as the “balance test.” Pursuits are particularly challenging incidents, as the circumstances of the pursuit can change or escalate at any moment.

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Therefore, the balance test is not a single moment decision, but is instead meant to be an ongoing assessment throughout the course of the pursuit. This policy is intended to assist officers in decision making that prioritizes public safety. Furthermore, all officers involved in a vehicle pursuit will be held accountable for the decision to continue a pursuit when circumstances indicate it should have been terminated.

Supervisory Responsibility/Control

The policy for supervisory responsibility and control of a pursuit is delineated in Department Manual Volume IV, Section 205.10, "Control of a Vehicle Pursuit." The policy reads:

"General Guidelines. Communications Division will be responsible for requesting and assigning to the pursuit a back-up unit, air unit and an available uniformed supervisor in close proximity to the pursuit. Responding back-up units may respond "Code Three." However, once all authorized units have joined the pursuit, all other units shall discontinue their "Code Three" response. Officers in all other units shall stay clear of the pursuit, but remain alert to its progress and location.

Note: When available, any unit in a pursuit should be a two-officer unit. Tactically, two officers (driver and passenger) are better able to evaluate and control activities in a pursuit."

"Supervisor's Responsibilities. Once a supervisor is assigned to a pursuit, he/she shall respond immediately and upon arrival, declare themselves as Incident Commander via broadcast to Communications Division. As Incident Commander, he/she shall be responsible for the management and control of the pursuit and post incident management. The Incident Commander shall monitor the pursuit and continuously assess the situation and ensure that the pursuit is conducted within Department guidelines. If necessary, the supervisor shall direct specific units out of the pursuit, reassign the primary or secondary units, assign an available air unit, terminate the pursuit, or determine the necessity of employing a VIT. Code Three vehicle operation is authorized for the supervisor, at the supervisor's discretion, to properly monitor and direct the pursuit."

When a pursuit is initiated, Communications Division assigns a supervisor to respond to the pursuit. While responding to the pursuit, the supervisor monitors the pursuit and provides supervisory oversight. Upon arrival to the pursuit, the supervisor declares himself/herself Incident Commander (IC) and assumes incident command from the primary unit. As the IC, the supervisor is responsible for the management and control of the pursuit and the post incident management.

Some of the responsibilities of a supervisor when monitoring or with the pursuit includes: directing units in or out of the pursuit, reassigning the primary or secondary units, assigning an available air unit, terminating the pursuit, or determining the necessity of employing a Vehicle Intervention Techniques (e.g., Pursuit Intervention Technique or Tire Deflation Device).

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Number of Units Authorized

The policy for the number of units authorized during a pursuit is delineated in Department Manual Volume IV, Section 205.19 “Vehicle Pursuit Driving Tactics.” The policy reads:

“During the course of the pursuit, officers shall continuously assess the road conditions and the actions of the suspect. Primary responsibility for pursuit activities shall be restricted to the primary unit, secondary unit, and assigned supervisor. All other units shall remain clear of the pursuit, but shall remain alert to the location and progress of the pursuit. Units remaining clear of the pursuit shall follow the rules of the road and shall not drive Code Three. Units other than the primary unit, secondary unit, or assigned supervisor shall not become involved in the pursuit unless requested by officers in the primary unit or directed by a supervisor.”

Pursuit Continuation/Termination

The policy for determining to continue or terminate a pursuit is delineated in Department Manual Volume IV, Section 205.17, “Continuation/Termination of the Pursuit.” The policy reads:

“Officers involved in a pursuit shall continually evaluate the necessity for continuing the pursuit. Officers must determine whether the seriousness of the initial violation or any subsequent violations reasonably warrants continuance of the pursuit. The following factors should be considered when evaluating speeds throughout a pursuit and assessing whether to continue or terminate a pursuit:

- Whether there is an unreasonable risk of injury to the public's safety, the pursuing officers' safety or the safety of the occupant(s) in the fleeing vehicle;
- Whether speeds dangerously exceed the normal flow of traffic;
- Whether vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic safety is unreasonably compromised;
- Whether the suspects can be apprehended at a later time;
- If the weather conditions such as rain, fog, snow, etc., create an unreasonable risk of injury to the public or the pursuing officers;
- The suspect is not responding to the emergency equipment, e.g., siren and red lights of the police vehicle; is not accelerating to get away from the officer; and the only known reason for initiating a pursuit is a minor traffic infraction;
- The seriousness of the crime and its relationship to community safety;
- The traffic conditions: Volume of vehicular traffic, volume of pedestrian traffic and road conditions;
- Nature of the area of the pursuit: Residential, commercial, or rural;
- Whether the lack or quality of communication between the primary unit and Communications Division or the primary unit and a supervisor causes an unreasonable risk to the public;
- The familiarity of the primary pursuing officer with the area;

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- The availability of an air unit; and,
- The loss of the pursued vehicle, or unknown location of the pursued vehicle.

All officers involved in a vehicle pursuit will be held accountable for the continuation of a pursuit when circumstances indicate it should have been discontinued. Since driver officers are usually concentrating on the safe operation of the police vehicle, passenger officers are particularly responsible for advising drivers when they feel the pursuit is exceeding reasonable limits.”

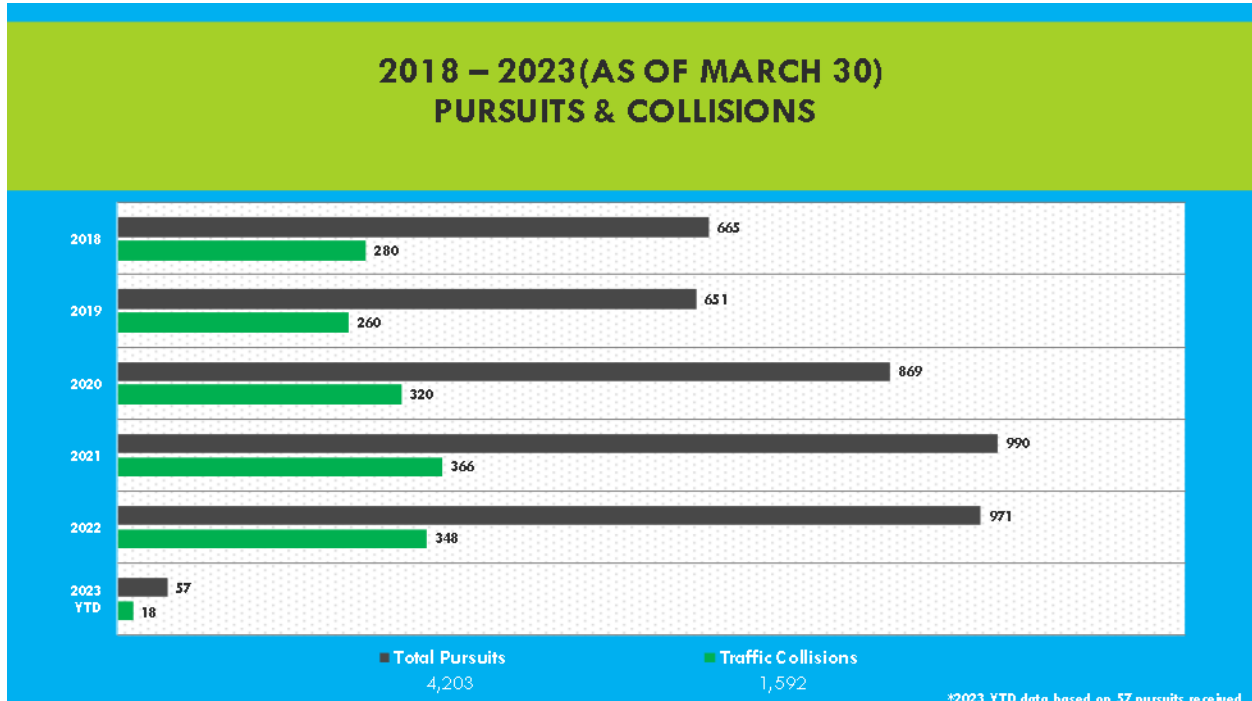
The following pursuit data reflects information gathered from 2018 to 2022, and YTD 2023, as of March 30, 2023:

1. Total Number of Pursuits

- From 2018 to YTD 2023, there were a total of 4,203 pursuits.

2. Pursuit Related Collisions

- Of the 4,203 pursuits, 1,592 resulted in a traffic collision.



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3. Pursuit Collisions with Injuries

From 2018 to YTD 2023, LAPD officers were involved in a total of 4,203 pursuits. Of these pursuits, a total of 1,032 (25 percent of pursuits) resulted in a collision with injury or death. The largest percentage of collisions with injuries resulting from a pursuit were suffered by third-party victims at 49 percent, which included 496 TCs with injuries and nine deaths. Suspect collisions with injuries accounted for 45 percent, which included 462 injuries and five deaths. Collisions with injuries to LAPD personnel accounted for six percent. There were 60 injuries, however, no deaths to LAPD personnel during this period.

The average speed during an LAPD pursuit was 46 Miles Per Hour (MPH). The highest percentage of collisions at 64 percent occurred when pursuits were approximately 41-80 MPH. The duration of an LAPD pursuit lasted approximately 5.34 minutes; however, the largest percentage of pursuits at 72 percent were less than five minutes in duration. The highest percentage of collisions, 76 percent, occurred when pursuits were less than five minutes in duration.

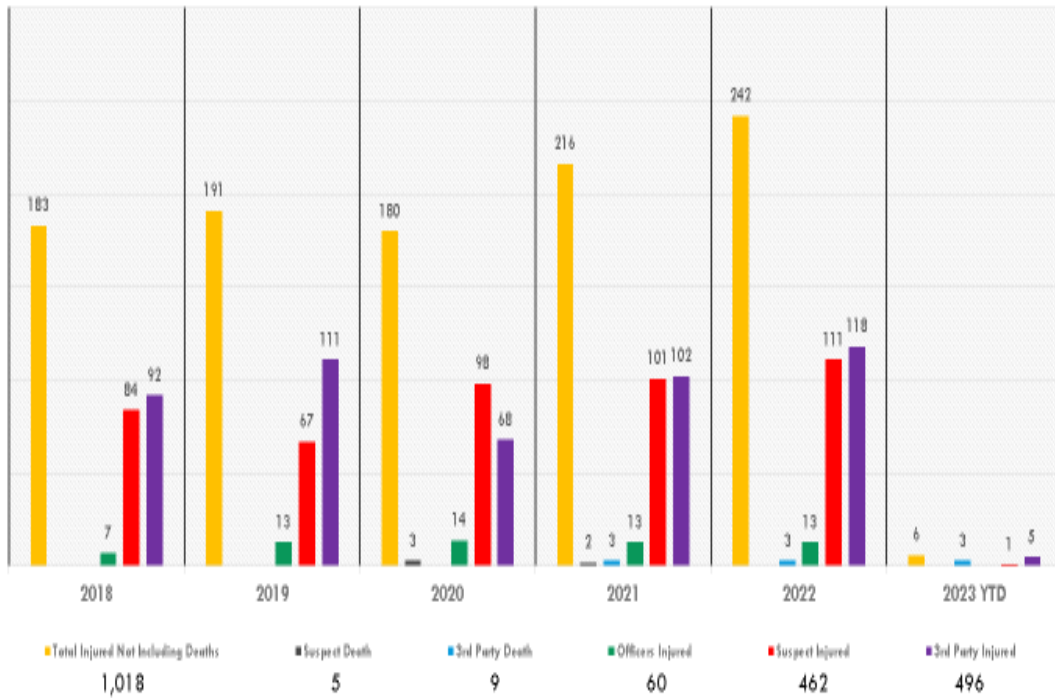
The average distance covered by an LAPD pursuit was 4.71 miles, however, the largest percentage of pursuits at 53 percent covered less than two miles. The highest percentage of collisions at 54 percent occurred when pursuits were less than two miles in distance. From 2018 to 2022 of the 4,146 pursuits, LAPD Air Support assisted with 1,575, or 38 percent of all pursuits, either before, during or as it ended. Of the 1,575 pursuits, when an air-unit was overhead 629 pursuits ended in a collision and 946 did not.

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**2018 – 2023 (AS OF MARCH 30)
VEHICLE PURSUITS & INJURIES**



*2023 YTD data based on 57 pursuits received

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Pursuits with Collisions Resulting in Serious Injury or Death

2023 YTD

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed MPH	Avg Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
Stolen	Foothill	Death	(2) 3 rd Parties	4 minutes	79	60	Y	N
Robbery	Devonshire	Death	(1) 3 rd Party	42 seconds	101	86	N	N
Stolen	77 th St.	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party (2) Suspects	1 minute	76	45.6	N	N
Reckless	Rampart	Severe	(2) 3 rd Party (2) Suspects	55 seconds	75	70.6	N	N

2022

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/ Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed	Average Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
Reckless	77 th St	Death	(2) 3 rd Parties	18 seconds	50	40	N	N
Stolen	77 th St	Death	(1) 3 rd Party	2.75 minute	100	65	Y	Y
Stolen	Top.	Severe	(2) Suspects	23 seconds	60	55	N	N
Stolen	Mission	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party (1) Suspect	1 minute	75	51	N	N

2021

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed	Average Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
Firearm	Southeast	Severe	(1) Suspect	2.33 minutes	60	54	Y	N
Stolen	Foothill	Severe	(1) Suspect	50 seconds	100	72	N	N
DUI	Hollywood	Death	(1) 3 rd Party	30 seconds.	90	62	N	N
Kidnap	Hollywood	Death & Severe	(1) 3 rd Party (1) 3 rd Party	1.5 mins	80	48	Y	N
Reckless	Central	Severe	(1) Suspect	1 minute	65	48	N	N
Stolen	Hollenbeck	Death	(1) Suspect	3 minutes	80	53	N	N
Hit & Run	Southeast	Death & Severe	(1) 3 rd Party (1) 3 rd Party	2 minutes	70	64	N	N
DUI	Hollenbeck	Severe	(1) Suspect	39 seconds	95	54	N	N
Stolen	Hollenbeck	Death & Severe	(1) Suspect (1) Suspect	3.65 minutes	85	82	N	N

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2020

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed	Average Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
ADW	Newton	Severe	(1) Suspect	1.18 minutes	50	48	N	N
Robbery	Southwest	Death & Severe	(1) Suspect (1) Suspect	1.5 minutes	80	68	Y	N
Reckless	77 th Street	Severe	(1) Suspect	1.91 minutes	74	63	N	N
ADW	Hollywood	Severe	(1) Suspect	16 minutes	85	73	Y	Y
Stolen	77 th St	Deaths	(2) Suspects	1 minute	60	60	Y	N
Stolen	West LA	Severe	(1) Suspect	2 minutes	50	35	N	N
Stolen	Central	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party	16 seconds	55	37	N	N

2019

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed	Average Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
Stolen	Van Nuys	Severe	(1) Suspect	11 minutes	115	87	N	N
Reckless	Metro	Severe	(1) Suspect	15 seconds	90	48	N	N
Stolen	77 th St	Severe	(1) Suspect	2 minutes	75	65	N	N
Stolen	West Valley	Severe	(1) Suspect (1) 3 rd Party	29 seconds	80	51	Y	N
Robbery	Wilshire	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party	23 seconds	60	31	N	N
Stolen	Southwest	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party	1.67 minutes	80	65	N	N

2018

Reason for Pursuit	Area	Type of Injury	Number of Parties Injured/Killed	Duration of Pursuit	Highest Speed	Average Speed	Air Unit	Tracking
ADW	Southwest	Severe	(1) 3 rd Party	1 minute	60	36	N	N
ADW	West Valley	Severe	(1) Suspect	2.95 minutes	65	60	N	N
Stolen	Rampart	Severe	(1) Suspect	12.9 minutes	60	53	Y	Y
Burglary Suspect	Devonshire	Severe	(1) Suspect	5.4 minutes	120	85	N	N
Stolen	Hollywood	Severe	(1) Suspect	8.5 minutes	65	60	Y	Y

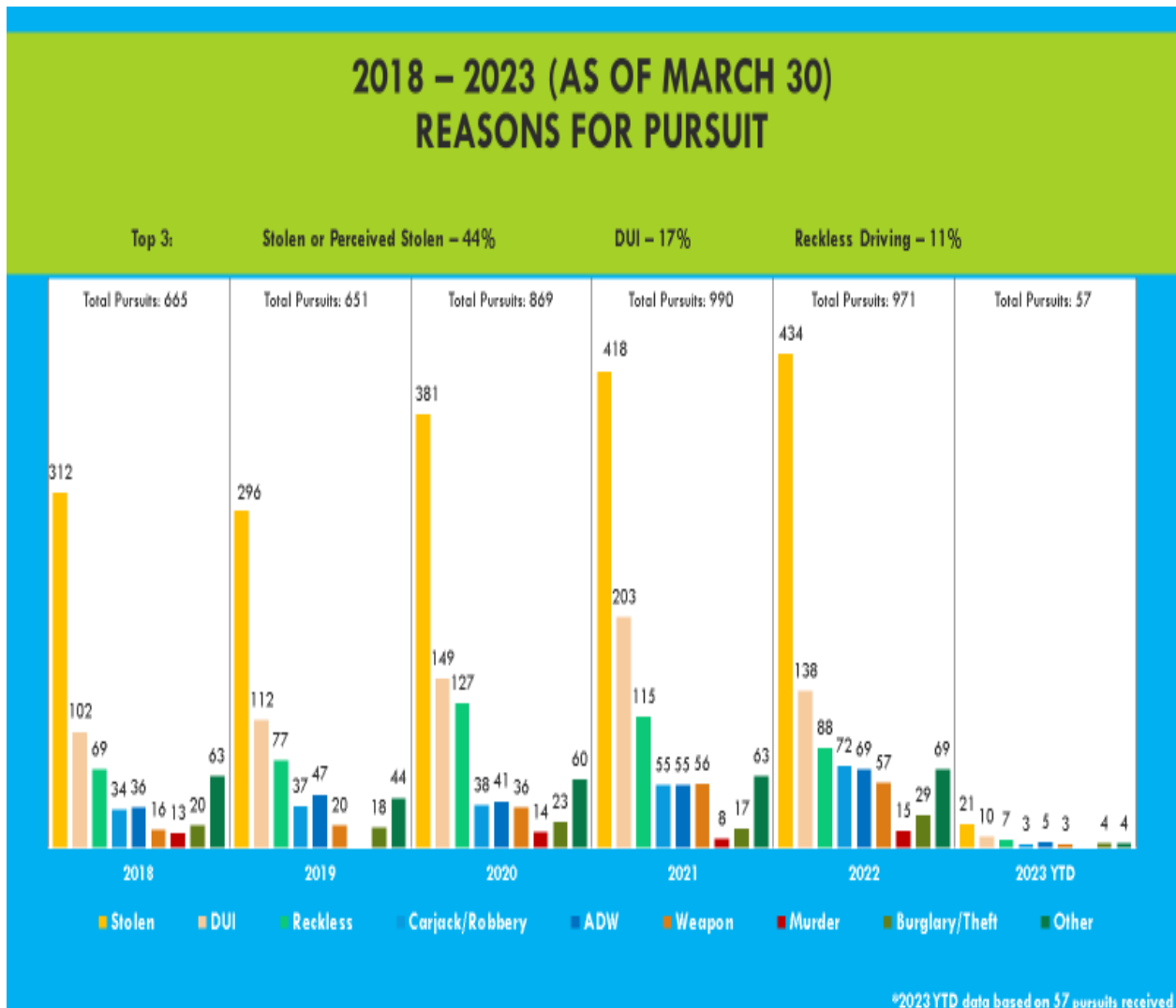
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4. Initiation

From 2018 to YTD 2023, LAPD officers were involved in a total 4,203 pursuits. The top three reasons for initiating a pursuit were:

- Grand Theft Auto (Stolen) at 44 percent;
- Driving Under the Influence at 17 percent; and,
- Reckless Driving at 11 percent.



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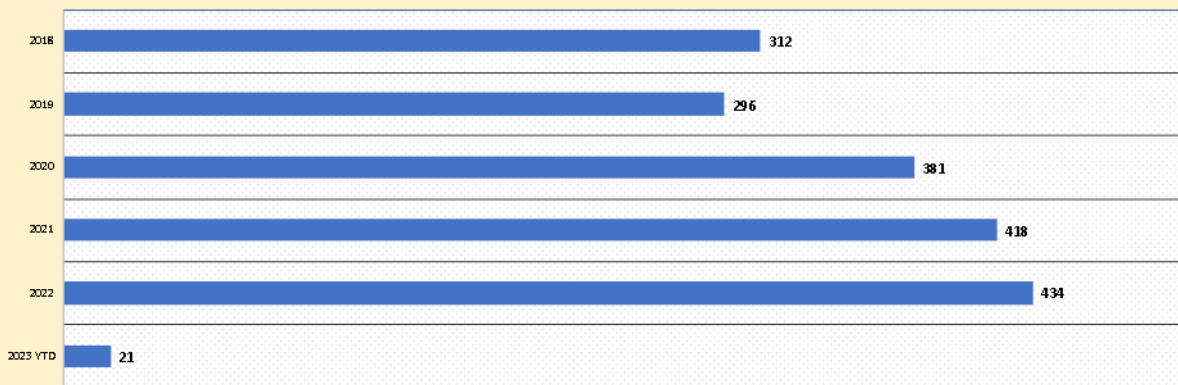
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In the analysis period of 2018 to 2023, as of March 30, 2023, stolen vehicles accounted for 1,841 of the pursuits initiated by officers in the five-year period. In 2020, there was a considerable increase of pursuits from 296 to 381 (28.72 percent) initiated by officers of reported stolen vehicles. A further review of Citywide COMPSTAT Profiles from 2018 to 2022, revealed a substantial increase in reported stolen vehicles Citywide after 2018. The increase in stolen vehicles correlated to the increase of pursuits initiated by officers:

- From 2018 to 2020, reported stolen vehicles increased from 15,763 to 21,249 (34.8 percent). Pursuits for stolen vehicles increased by 28.72 percent;
- From 2020 to 2021, reported stolen vehicles increased from 21,441 to 24,303 (13.3 percent). Pursuits for stolen vehicles increased by 9.71 percent;
- From 2021 to 2022, reported stolen vehicles increased from 24,555 to 25,901 (5.5 percent). Pursuits for stolen vehicles increased by 3.83 percent; and,
- As of March 30, 2023, there were 21 pursuits for stolen vehicles.

2018 TO 2023 (AS OF MARCH 30) STOLEN VEHICLE PURSUITS



■ Stolen Vehicle Pursuits

*2023 YTD data based on 57 pursuits received

5. Number of Terminated Pursuits

- Of the 4,203 pursuits, 406 pursuits were terminated by officers or supervision.

6. Number of Pursuits that were Adjudicated as Out of Policy and Administrative Disapproval

- Of the 4,203 pursuits, 609 total pursuits were adjudicated as Out of Policy or Administrative Disapproval.

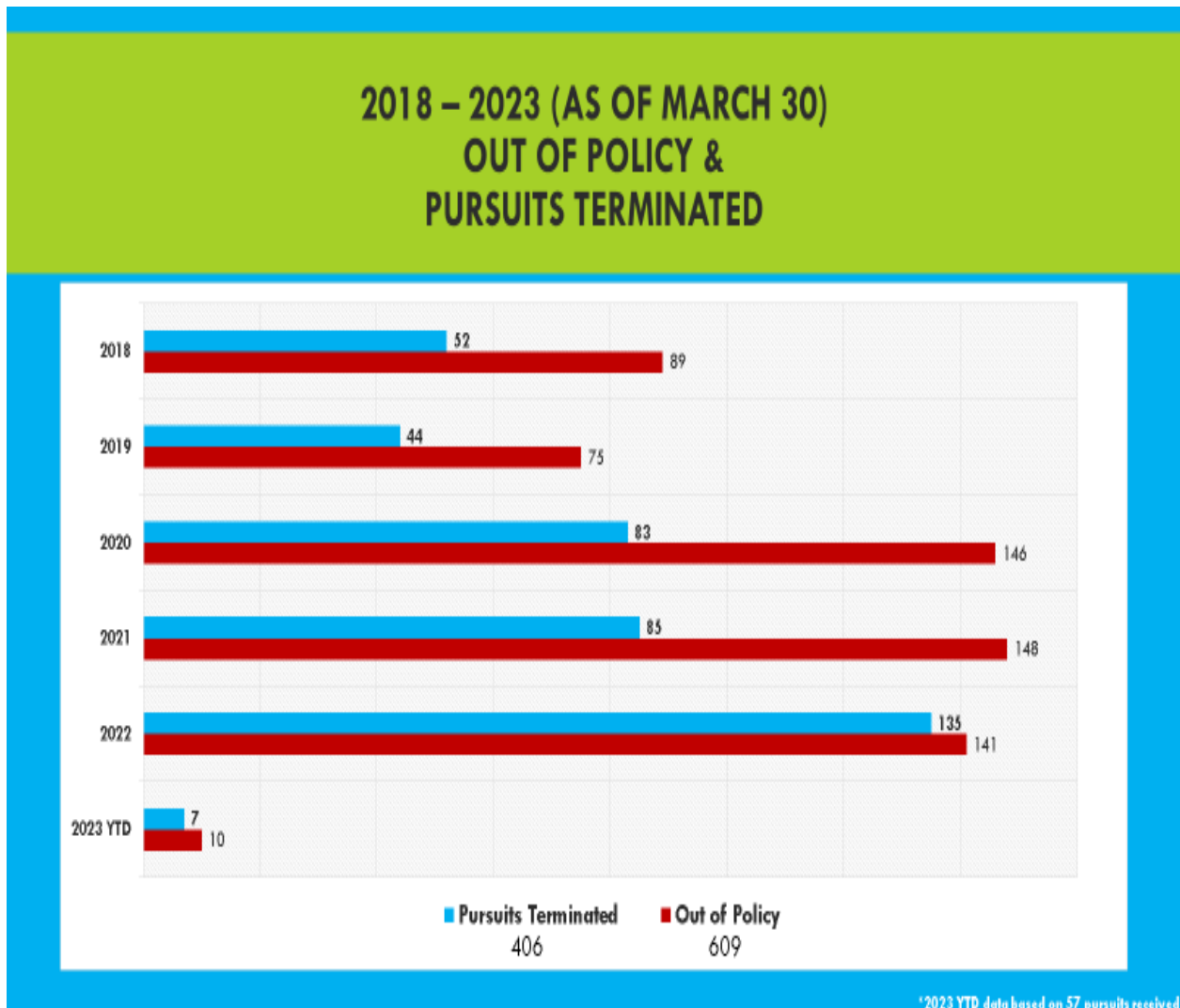
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Note: On July 2, 2019, the Department published Special Order No. 5, *Administration Review and Adjudications of a Vehicle Pursuits*, that revised the adjudication process into two separate findings for Initiation and Involvement/Pursuit Tactics, for each officer.

Prior to Special Order No. 5, pursuits were adjudicated based on the primary unit's final disposition. Therefore, data for 2018 to 2019 does not include findings for each officer.



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YEAR	Total Pursuits	Number of OOP pursuits for Initiation	Number of Officers that were OOP pursuits for Initiation	Balance Test Training	Code-3 Driving Training	Officers Adjudicated for OOP Formal Training	Officers Adjudicated for OOP/NTC	Officers Adjudicated for AD/1.28
2022	971	*10	*19	*6	*13	8	0	1
2021	990	29	55	12	35	42	2	11
2020	869	28	52	8	30	45	2	4
2019	651	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA
2018	665	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA

Year	Total Pursuits	Number of AD Pursuits for Involvement / Pursuit Tactics	Officers AD for Involvement Pursuit Tactics	Code-3 Driving Training	Post Pursuit Tactics Training	Balance Test Training	Tracking Training	Officers Adjudicated for AD/Formal Training	Officers Adjudicated for AD/ NTC	Officers Adjudicated for AD/1.28
2022	971	*116	*301	*158	*46	*85	*8	*279	*13	*9
2021	990	124	333	130	42	57	6	293	19	19
2020	869	122	336	104	37	40	10	309	12	15
2019	651	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA
2018	665	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA	*NA

*Based on pursuits adjudicated as of April 17, 2023:

- In 2018, there were 88 pursuits that were adjudicated Out of Policy;
- In 2019, there were 75 pursuits that were adjudicated Out of Policy;
- In 2020, there were 150 pursuits that were adjudicated Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals. There were 37 officers identified as having two Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals. Two officers were identified as having three Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals;
- In 2021, there were 153 pursuits that were adjudicated as Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals and 24 officers were identified as having two Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals. Six officers were identified as having three Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals. One officer had four Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals; and,
- In 2022, there were 126 pursuits that were adjudicated as Out of Policy/Administrative Disapproval and 28 officers were identified as having two Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals. Two officers were identified as having two Out of Policy/Administrative Disapprovals.

Conclusion

Our current policies regarding pursuits will be evaluated and assessed to maximize public safety considerations. Concurrently, to reinforce the Department's expectation governing the management of pursuits and to maximize public safety, the following policies and best practices will be reinforced for all Department personnel through ongoing debriefs, post-incident follow-ups, and training:

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- Active management by the incident commander through limiting the number of units in a pursuit is a significant factor in maintaining public safety. Per Department policy, the responding incident commander and watch commander shall determine the necessity of the number of units that should be involved in the pursuit based on the seriousness of the crime, number of occupants in pursued vehicle, or other pursuit tactics;
- Officers, when safe and feasible, should broadcast the approximate speeds of both the suspect and officers pursuing. Per Department policy, involved officers and the incident commander shall continually apply the balance test during the progression of a pursuit and are empowered to terminate the pursuit when public safety is at risk. An uninvolved watch commander shall also assess whether to continue or terminate the pursuit based on the totality of the circumstances and public safety needs;
- Air Support Division provides support for the involved units and incident commander during pursuits. Responding airships provide a higher altitude perspective that facilitates the incident commander's decision-making. The airship's ability to provide tracking is a vital component of the balance test process, enabling involved units to consider alternative options that increase public safety;
- Research has been initiated to evaluate the feasibility of "Live Streaming" the video and audio recording from the Digital In-Car Video system and/or Body Worn Video cameras to a watch commander to assist in the active management of a vehicle pursuit. This feature is a recent addition to the Axon systems;
- Funding needs to be funded for Telematics Systems Data and install them at geographic patrol divisions. Telematics will enable the Department to monitor vehicle operations in real-time;
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness of the "Grappler" which is a device that works by using a heavy-duty nylon net that can be lowered from the front of the pursuing police vehicle to snag the rear tire of the suspect vehicle, wrapping around the axle, slowing and bring the vehicle to a stop; and,
- Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) is evaluating a pursuit alternative names "Star Chase" which is a vehicle mounted GPS launcher that deploys a GPS tracking tag onto a suspect's vehicle. Once the GPS tag sticks onto the vehicle, it communicates positional data to a real time mapping system. A coordinated tactical response can be employed while maintaining the safety of the community and officers.

In closing, the Department is committed to increasing the safety of the community and our officers as it relates to vehicle pursuits. Along with our efforts in analyzing Department policy, we will continue to maintain risk management oversight, supervisor and officer accountability in regard to adherence to policies and procedures, and ongoing education to all personnel on Department expectations.