

# 2024 ANNUAL PURSUIT REPORT

## Montgomery County Department of Police



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Prepared by  
The Policy and Planning Division

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am pleased to pass along my first report as chief to the community on police pursuits. As always, I need to remind everyone that in real life, police pursuits are much different from show-business police chases. On the screen, those which can go on for quite a few minutes over long distances, ending in some dramatic conclusion. Most of our pursuits are less than three miles and are over in a couple of minutes. It's not as dramatic but is much safer for everyone.

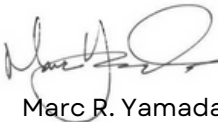
As you will see in this report, there were 99 pursuits in 2024, four more than reported in 2023, or an increase of 4.2%. This is the highest number of pursuits in 10 years and is above the Department's 10-year pursuit average of 58 per year.

This is the highest total in 10 years and much higher than the average of 51 yearly pursuits. To put this in a larger perspective, there were 40,123 traffic stops, so the 95 pursuits amount to 0.2 percent, similar to past rates.

Of the felony offenses, auto theft was the most frequent offense, accounting for 46% of pursuits in 2024, compared to 42% in 2023, even as crime data shows a decrease of 14% in all auto theft crimes throughout the county compared to 2023.

On a more positive side, the number of DUI-related events decreased by 55% from 2023. However, this may be due to a growing national trend of a higher frequency of cannabis use than alcohol use. There were 22 pursuits involving juveniles, 14 (64%) pursuits of which were initiated for the report of a stolen vehicle.



  
Marc R. Yamada  
Chief of Police

## 2024

Under the Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD) policy, a criminal pursuit is justified if an officer believes a serious crime has been committed or is being committed. A traffic-related pursuit is justified if the officer sees someone driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, if there is a hit-and-run personal injury collision, or when the officer has reasonable cause to believe a serious physical injury has occurred.

Again, as you will note in this report, most of our pursuits end without incident. But when a police pursuit ends with a crash or someone getting injured or killed, the public will ask questions and demand accountability. Rest assured, those are the same questions and level of accountability that the MCPD brings to each police pursuit in which we engage.

The MCPD conducts an in-depth review of every vehicular pursuit to ensure those guidelines are followed, and if not, appropriate follow-up actions are promptly taken. In addition, a supervisor will monitor and decide whether to allow the chase to continue. Safety is the primary concern, whether the safety of the public, the safety of the officer, or the safety of the person(s).

# VEHICLE PURSUIT POLICY

## OVERVIEW

The information in this report is obtained from the MCP Form 610, Motor Vehicle Pursuit Report, completed by a supervisor from the district where a police pursuit originated. All reports are reviewed by the supervisor, district executive, and assistant chief of the respective bureau to verify compliance with department policy.

The Department's policy defines a vehicle pursuit as an active attempt by an officer in a vehicle to apprehend an occupant of a moving motor vehicle who exhibits a clear intention to avoid apprehension by maintaining elevated speed, increasing speed, and using evasive tactics.

On an annual basis, the Montgomery County Department of Police reviews and analyzes the data collected from the MCP 610 forms obtained in that calendar year and the pursuit policy (Function Code (FC) 0135).

Per Function Code 0135, Vehicle Pursuits, the pursuit of a vehicle is authorized only when the offense for which the suspect is being pursued is one of the following:

### **Criminal:**

Felony or the officer has reason to believe a felony has occurred or is occurring.

*Note: For 2nd Degree Assault on a Police Officer to be a felony, physical injury means "any impairment of physical condition, excluding minor injuries," and "a person may not intentionally cause physical injury to another if the person knows or has reason to know that the other is a law enforcement officer engaged in the performance of the officer's official duties."*

### **Traffic:**

- Driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics (misdemeanor).
- Hit-and-run, personal injury collision when the officer has reasonable cause to believe serious physical injury has occurred (felony).

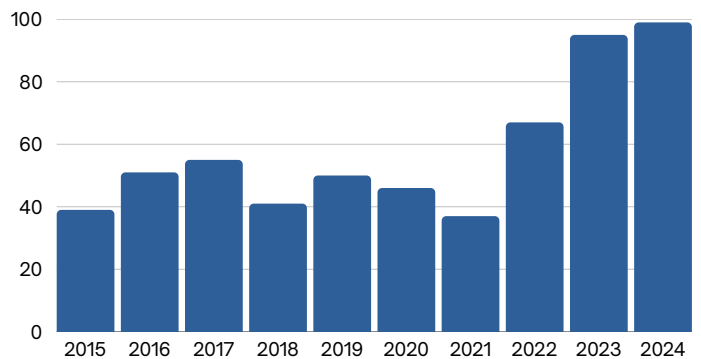
### **Policy Review:**

Regular policy review and revision is an important part of maintaining operational efficiency and consistency with changes in legislation and/or the environment.

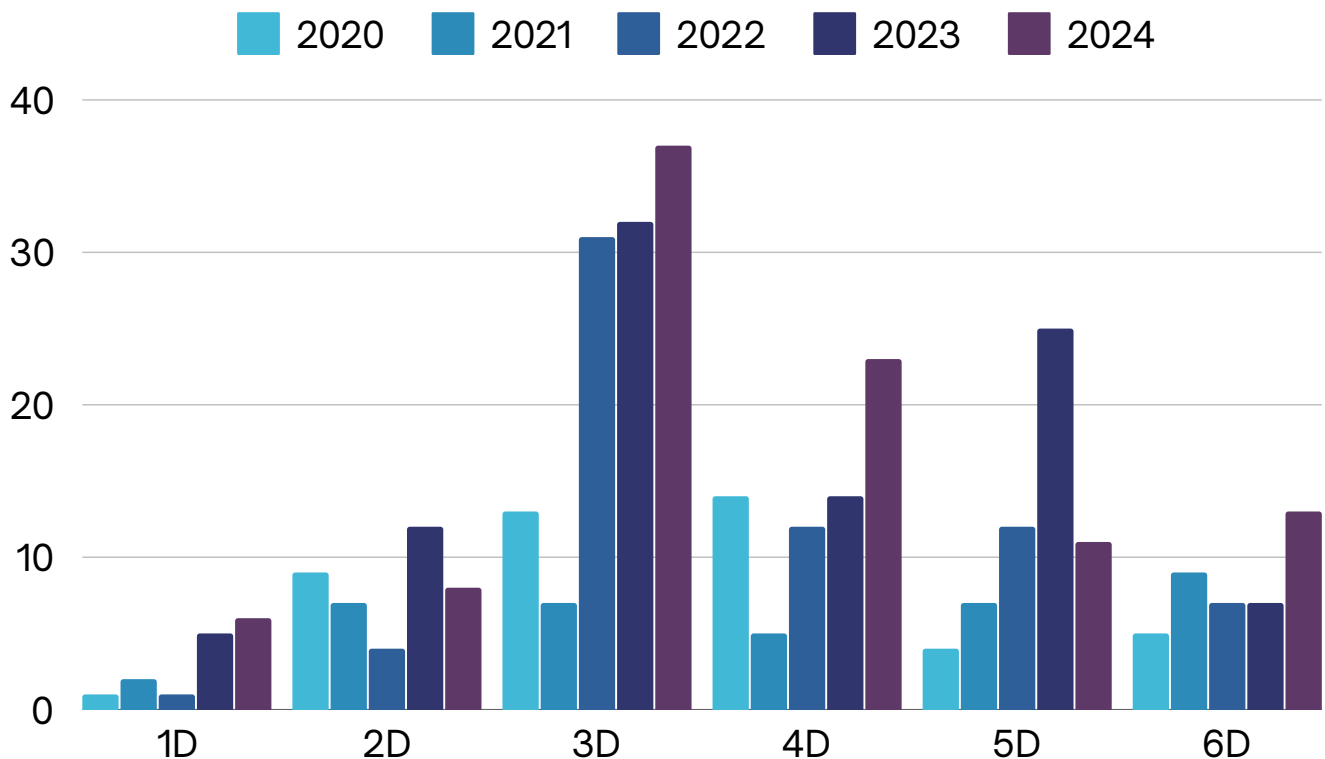
In 2024, the Department's Pursuit Policy underwent a thorough review and revision process. The updated policy will be published in 2025, and is based on updated safety outcomes and best practices.

## A YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

In 2024, there were 99 pursuits, four (4) more pursuits than reported in 2023, or an increase of 4.2%. This is the highest number of pursuits in 10 years and is above the Department's 10-year pursuit average of 58 per year. In 2024, four pursuits were deemed non-compliant with department policy, as outlined in FC 0135 (Vehicular Pursuits). There were no injuries reported and corrective action was taken for the officers involved in the non-compliant pursuits.



## PURSUIT BY DISTRICT



## LOCATION

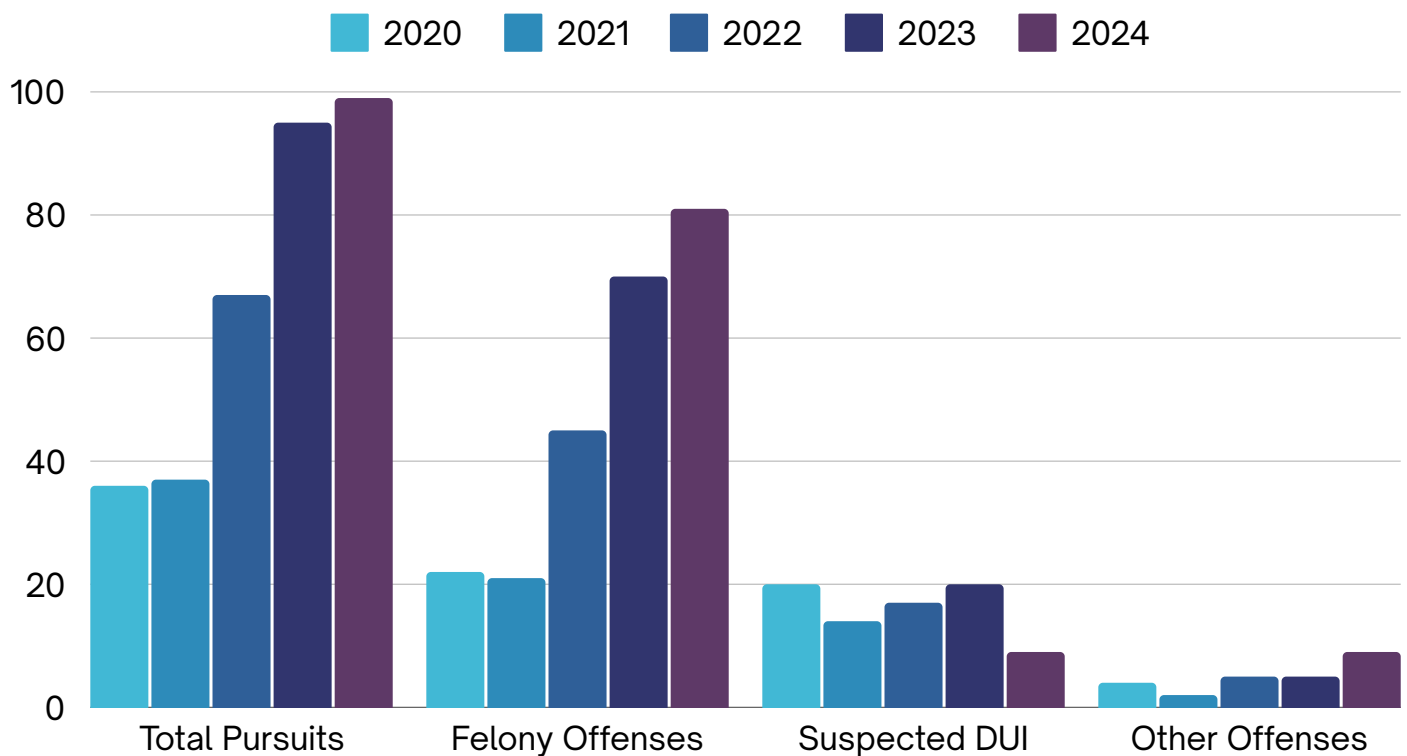
Function Code 0135 states, “Officers may pursue into a neighboring jurisdiction only when an officer has probable cause to believe the crime committed was a felony of a violent type.”

In 2023, there were ten incidents in which Montgomery County police officers pursued suspects outside the county’s jurisdictional boundaries. In 2024, in compliance with FC 0135, 5 (5%) incidents crossed the county boundary, and eighteen pursuits were terminated at or before the county line.

## PURSUIT JUSTIFICATION

In 2024, apprehension of suspects engaged in various felony offenses and suspected of driving under the influence (DUI) were the primary reasons officers initiated pursuits (82% and 9%, respectively). The remaining nine pursuits (9%) were initiated for traffic-related offenses and pursuing a wanted subject.

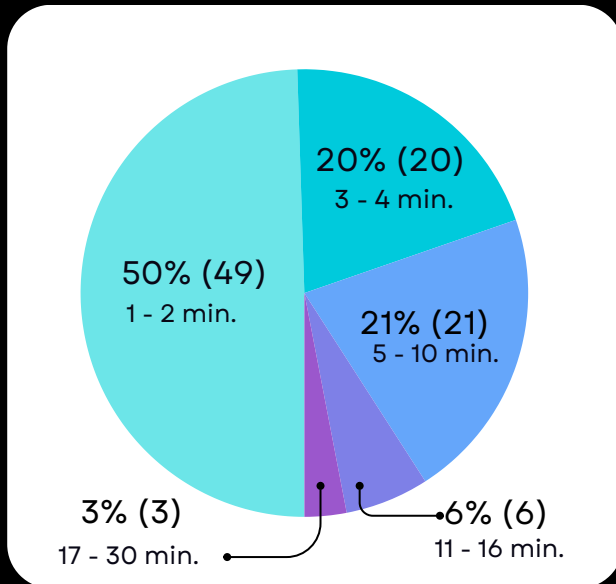
Since 2020, 72% of pursuits by officers were for subjects eluding police who were involved in felony offenses such as stolen vehicles; 24% were for individuals suspected of driving under the influence and the remaining percentage were for other offenses or violations, such as weapons offenses and narcotics-related offenses.



# PURSUIT DURATION AND DISTANCE

## DURATION

NUMBER OF MINUTES

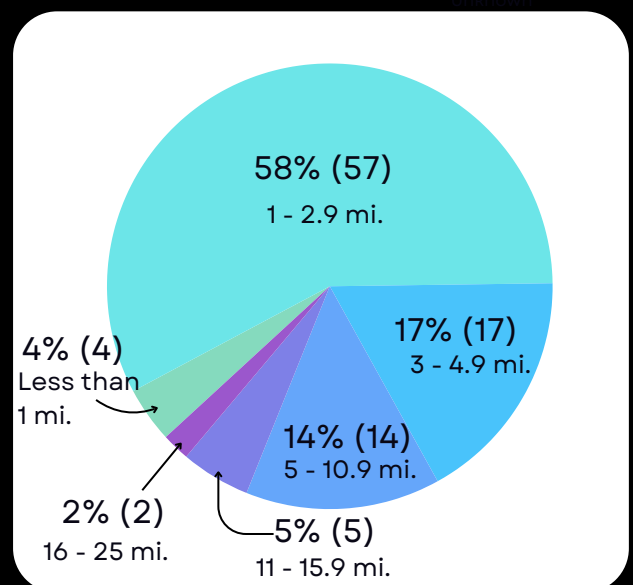


The duration of pursuits in 2024 was similar to those from 2023, in which 70% of the pursuits in Montgomery County lasted less than five minutes, compared to 62% in 2023. There was a 2% decrease in pursuits lasting five to ten minutes and a 4% decrease in pursuits lasting between eleven and sixteen minutes. Four pursuits lasted more than 15 minutes, with the longest pursuit lasting 30 minutes, traveling 10 miles.

In 2024, 62% of pursuits traveled less than three miles, compared to 51% in 2023. Seventeen (17%) pursuits traveled three to five miles, and fourteen (14%) pursuits traveled five to ten miles, compared to 2023, with seventeen and nineteen pursuits, respectively. The longest pursuit traveled 18 miles and lasted 17 minutes. Three pursuits traveled across MCPD Police district lines and ended in a different MCPD Police district from which they were initiated.

## DISTANCE

NUMBER OF MILES





## SUSPECT ANALYSIS

### DATA SUMMARY

Number of times suspects evaded police

**61**

Percentage of known suspects

**74%**

Average age of suspect

**21**

Youngest age of suspect

**13**

Most frequent reason for pursuit

**Felony - stolen vehicle**

Number of apprehension/arrests

**83 individuals**

Apprehension is not the primary aspect of a police vehicle pursuit; the safety of the officer and the public is the most important aspect since the risks are high for all. Officers and supervisors must balance the inherent safety risks with the urgency to apprehend the suspect.

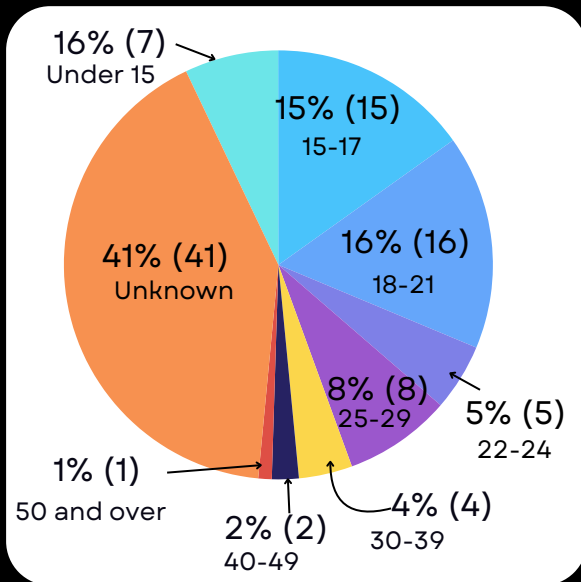
In 2024, suspects successfully evaded police officers in 61 of the 99 pursuits (62% of the time) compared to 57% in 2023. Typically, successful evasion occurred when the pursuit was terminated by police supervisors for safety reasons or for crossing jurisdiction boundaries, or the suspect fled on foot once the vehicle stopped or crashed.

The demographic data in the chart on the next page reflects information for the suspects apprehended during the pursuits, as well as the random data that was known about the suspects who were able to elude apprehension.

*\*Note: Race categories were standardized in 2022 to reflect the terms: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian-Pacific Islander (API), and Native American. Categories were previously listed as Caucasian, African American, Latino, Asian, or American Indian. It should be noted that these categories are not exhaustive and do not capture the diversity within and among different racial and ethnic groups. Some individuals may not identify with any of these or may identify with multiple categories.*

# SUSPECT DEMOGRAPHICS

## AGE



4%  
Female

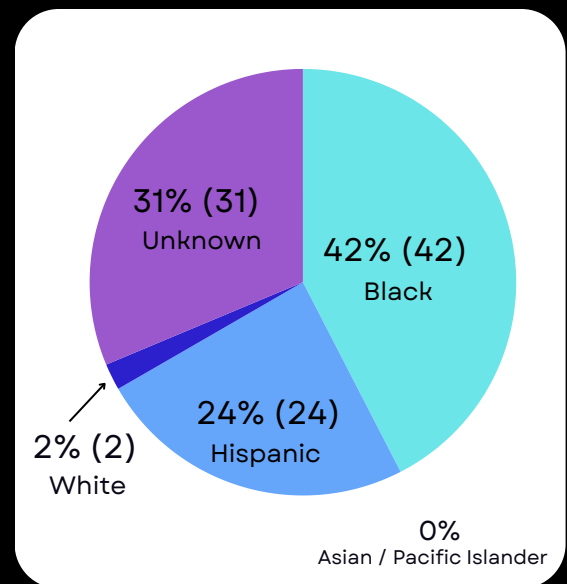


70%  
Male

26%  
Unknown

## GENDER

## RACE



In 2024, the number of known suspects ages 15 to 29 decreased by 4% compared to 2023, and over the two years, accounted for 62% of the known individuals involved in police pursuits. Known suspects in the 30 to 39 decreased by 20% and 40 to 49 age groups increased by 100%, from 2023. In 2024, there were seven known suspects under the age of 15, with the youngest being 13.

Male suspects accounted for most known individuals involved in pursuits (70%) in 2024 compared to 67% in 2023. From 2023 – 2024, males accounted for 66% of the known suspects involved in pursuits.

In 2024, 42% of the known suspects involved in police pursuits were Black, compared to 44% in 2023. White suspects accounted for 2% of the known individuals involved in pursuits in 2023, compared to 6% in 2023. Hispanic suspects accounted for 24% of the known suspects involved in pursuits in 2024, compared to 19% in 2023.

For the two years 2023– 2024, the data shows the following when the subject's race was known:

- Black suspects were involved in 42% of police pursuits.
- White suspects were involved in 2% of police pursuits.
- Hispanic suspects were involved in 24% of pursuits.
- In 31% of police pursuits, the suspect's race/ethnicity was unknown.

## COLLISION DATA

Pursuit collisions can damage suspect vehicles, civilian vehicles, and department vehicles. They may result in injuries to suspects, civilians, police officers, and property damage.

Thirty-two (32) of the 99 pursuits (32%) in Montgomery County, MD in 2024 resulted in a “bailout,” which occurs when the suspect(s) stop or crash the vehicle and flee on foot, compared to 38% of the pursuits reported in 2023. Suspects were subsequently apprehended in approximately 63% of these instances. Thirteen bailout incidents (65%) also involved collisions, compared to 19 incidents in 2023.

Of the 99 pursuits in 2024, 26 (26%) resulted in a collision, compared to 34 collisions (36%) reported in 2023. A detailed breakdown by district of the 26 collisions related to pursuits in 2024 is provided in the table below.

PURSUITS INVOLVING COLLISIONS SUMMARY							
DISTRICT	COLLISIONS	DAMAGED SUSPECT VEHICLES	SUSPECTS INJURED	DAMAGED CIVILIAN VEHICLES	CIVILIANS INJURED	DAMAGED MCPD VEHICLES	POLICE OFFICERS INJURED
1	3	3	2	2	1	0	0
2	3	3	2	2	1	2	0
3	6	2	0	7	2	2	2
4	6	4	0	8	1	1	0
5	6	5	0	5	0	0	0
6	2	2	1	2	0	3	0
TOTALS	26	19	5	26	5	8	2

## DETAILED PURSUIT ANALYSIS

Of the felony offenses, auto theft was the most frequent offense, accounting for 46% of pursuits in 2024, compared to 42% in 2023. Surprisingly, crime data shows a decrease of 14% in all auto theft crimes throughout the county compared to 2023. Carjacking accounted for 4% of pursuits in 2024, compared to 2% in 2023. Additionally, four pursuits involved suspects armed with a weapon. Four handguns and one knife were recovered.

Of the 58 suspects whose ages were known, 36 (62%) involved suspects ages 21 and younger—twenty-two of those involved juvenile suspects under 18, eighteen of whom were apprehended. Of the 22 pursuits involving juveniles, 14 (64%) pursuits were initiated for the report of a stolen vehicle. In addition to the 22 juvenile suspects, 15 additional juvenile passengers were apprehended (37 juveniles total).

In addition to the 99 suspects, there were 44 additional passengers or vehicle occupants, 26 of whom were apprehended and arrested.

The number of DUI-related events decreased by 55% from 2023. This may be due to a growing national trend of a higher frequency of cannabis use than alcohol use. A national survey conducted in 2022 found that “an estimated 17.7 million people reported using marijuana daily or near-daily compared to 14.7 million daily or near-daily drinkers.”<sup>1</sup>

On July 1, 2023, the recreational use of cannabis was legalized in Maryland. Before this date, the Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD) had already been at the forefront of training officers to recognize impaired drivers. Unlike alcohol, which has quantifiable measurements such as Breathalyzer Instruments, cannabis intoxication is largely measured by visual cues of impaired behavior. Police are trained to recognize impairment using Green-Labs, where participants intentionally become intoxicated and go through a series of tests for police to observe behavioral and physiological signs of impairment. Green-Labs are similar to Wet-Labs used for studying the effects of alcohol intoxication.<sup>2</sup> As more states move toward cannabis legalization, advancements in technology for quantifiable measurement of impairment are also likely to come.

<sup>1</sup>The research, based on data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, was published Wednesday May 22, 2024 in the journal Addiction. The survey is a highly regarded source of self-reported estimates of tobacco, alcohol and drug use in the United States. <https://apnews.com/article/marijuana-cannabis-alcohol-drinking-daily-use-b91c2c5957fdb2d48e6616c3baa14c13>

<sup>2</sup> [www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/17/driving-high-police-marijuana-training/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/17/driving-high-police-marijuana-training/)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Police pursuits can be dangerous. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis nationally on utilizing tactical maneuvers to end police pursuits. In 92% of the pursuits in 2024, no special tactics or additional resources were used, compared to 86% in 2023.

Eight (8%) of the pursuits reported in 2024 involved using other resources, including allied police agencies, K9 teams, or aircraft. The assistance of a drone was utilized in two pursuits. None of the pursuits involved the use of tire-deflating devices (TDD) to end the pursuit safely and successfully. While MCPD policy prohibits rolling roadblocks and tactical vehicle intervention, it does allow tire-deflating devices by officers trained to use them. These devices are primarily used to prevent pursuits from occurring.

Supervisors terminated 20 of the 99 pursuits (20%) in accordance with Function Code 0135 when the dangers to the officers and the public outweighed the continuation of the pursuit. Pursuits were also terminated when the suspect(s) left the county, exited onto an interstate highway, or fled at a high rate of speed, which increased the risk associated with the pursuit. This number decreased by 10% from the twenty-nine (31%) pursuits terminated for similar reasons in 2023.

## USE OF FORCE IN RESPONSE TO RESISTANCE

Overall, there were 34 pursuits in 2024 (34%) in which force was used by police officers in response to resistance by suspects, consistent with the 35% of pursuits in 2023. These instances were the result of bail-outs or vehicle collisions in which the occupants attempted to flee and/or resist arrest.

In fifteen of the 34 incidents (44%) no physical force was used, officers only pointed a weapon. Officers used their hands as a compliance technique in 18 of the incidents (53%). A canine was used in one incident.

## SUMMARY

With more than one million people living in Montgomery County and thousands more traveling through the county each year, police pursuits are a rare occurrence. In 2023, there were 40,123 traffic stops, yet only 95 pursuits resulted from these encounters, an occurrence rate of 0.2%. Similarly, in 2024, there were 46,499 traffic stops, but 99 pursuits still occurred, a consistent rate of 0.2%. With a 16% increase in traffic stops in 2024, the pursuit frequency increased by only 4%. This is likely due to an overall increase in felony offenses such as stolen vehicles, drug/narcotic offenses, and weapons offenses from the previous year. As mentioned earlier, the frequency of DUI-related pursuits decreased in comparison to 2023.

The Montgomery County Department of Police continues to be proactive in driver safety to reduce the number of law enforcement officer deaths, disabilities, and injuries caused by traffic-related incidents. In 2020, The Public Safety Training Academy (PSTA) introduced a three-hour driving in-service class for all sworn officers focused on vehicle maneuverability, parallel parking, and a review of proper vehicle operations during pursuit driving. The class continued into 2021, and a biennial version was added in 2022. The department has also taken measures to focus on more in-depth data collection and analysis to identify root causes of collisions so targeted intervention and preventive measures can be instituted to reduce the potential for collisions and injuries.

The Montgomery County Department of Police remains dedicated to creating a culture of safety and accountability. As such, a copy of this report will be distributed to all Patrol Services Bureau Commanders and the Director of the Training and Education Division for review and identification of any additional training or policy review that may be necessary on an operational level.

Questions may be directed to [MCP.PolicyandPlanning@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:MCP.PolicyandPlanning@montgomerycountymd.gov).

