



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Cleveland Spruill, Sr.
Chief of Police

MEMORANDUM

Date: 17 March 2020

To: Cleveland L. Spruill, Sr.
Chief of Police

From: Lieutenant S. Harrison Daniel
Office of Professional Standards.



Subject: Annual Report on Vehicle Pursuits for 2019

The purpose of this memorandum is to report the annual review and analysis of vehicle pursuits for the Athens-Clarke County Police Department (ACCPD) during 2019. Pursuant to ACCPD General Order 3.09 (IV) (K), the Office of Professional Standards conducted an annual analysis on all vehicle pursuits and reviewed all of the pursuit policies and reporting procedures. The current reporting period is January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

Pursuit Analysis

In 2019, ACCPD officers reported initiating 17 vehicle pursuits. A vehicle pursuit (or simply referred to herein as “pursuit”) is defined as “an active attempt by a law enforcement officer operating an authorized law enforcement vehicle to apprehend a fleeing suspect who is actively attempting to elude law enforcement personnel.”¹ Every pursuit has unique factors and circumstances impacting the dynamics of that pursuit. However, this analysis focused on several key factors for the 17 pursuits in 2019. These factors are a) the initial reason for the pursuits; b) how the pursuits ended; c) whether or not any vehicle crashes occurred as a result of the pursuits; and d) whether or not there were injuries that occurred as a result of the pursuits.

Officers reported that a “traffic violation”² was the reason for initiating their pursuits in a majority of the pursuits. The next most selected initial reason was “other.”³ When these initial reasons were reported by the offices, the reports indicated that officers justified the pursuit a) due to reckless or dangerous driving engaged in by the driver of the suspect vehicle prior to the officer’s involvement; or b) since the driver’s actions were deemed failing to yield. See the pie chart below:

¹ ACCPD General Order 3.09 (III) - Definitions

² Selected in 10 pursuits

³ Selected in 3 pursuits

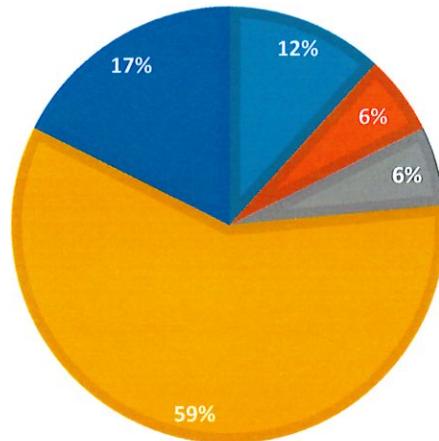
Annual Report on Vehicle Pursuits for 2019

Office of Professional Standards

Prepared by Lt. S. Harrison Daniel/#1113

INITIAL REASON FOR PURSUIT

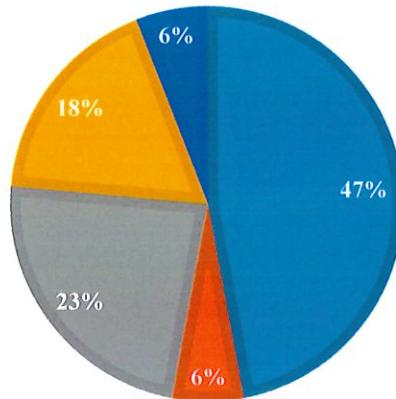
■ Forcible Felony ■ Property Felony ■ Hit & Run ■ Traffic Violation ■ Other



Officers reported that a) eight pursuits were ultimately terminated either by the pursuing officer or the monitoring supervisor; b) four pursuits ended when the offender stopped the vehicle to surrender or to flee on foot; c) three pursuits ended when the suspect vehicle crashed; d) one pursuit ended by the use of stop sticks⁴; and e) one pursuit ended when the suspect vehicle was boxed in. See the pie chart below:

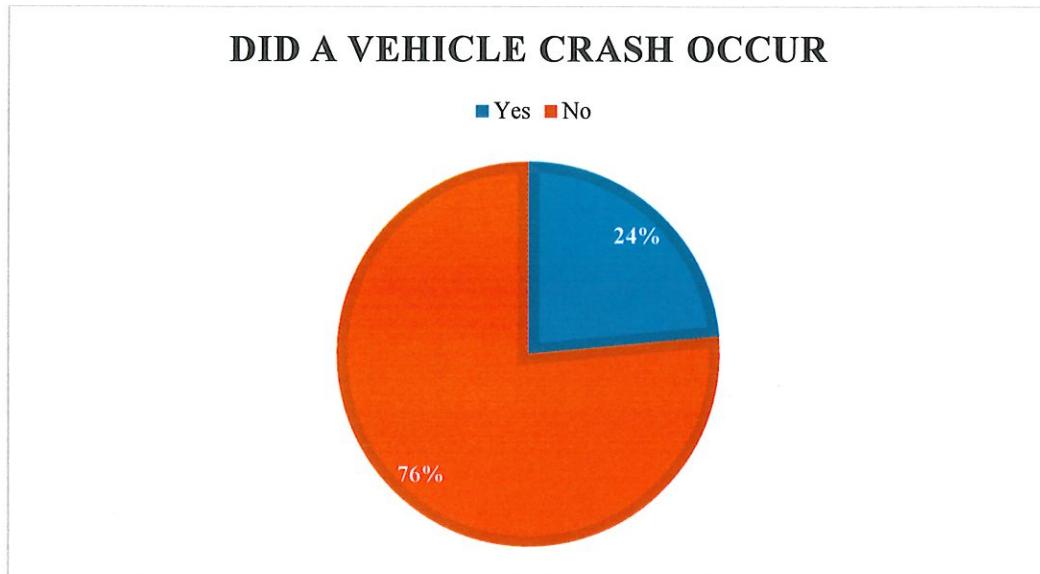
HOW PURSUIT ENDED

■ Terminated ■ Road Block/Boxed In ■ Offender Stopped ■ Vehicle Crash ■ Stop Sticks

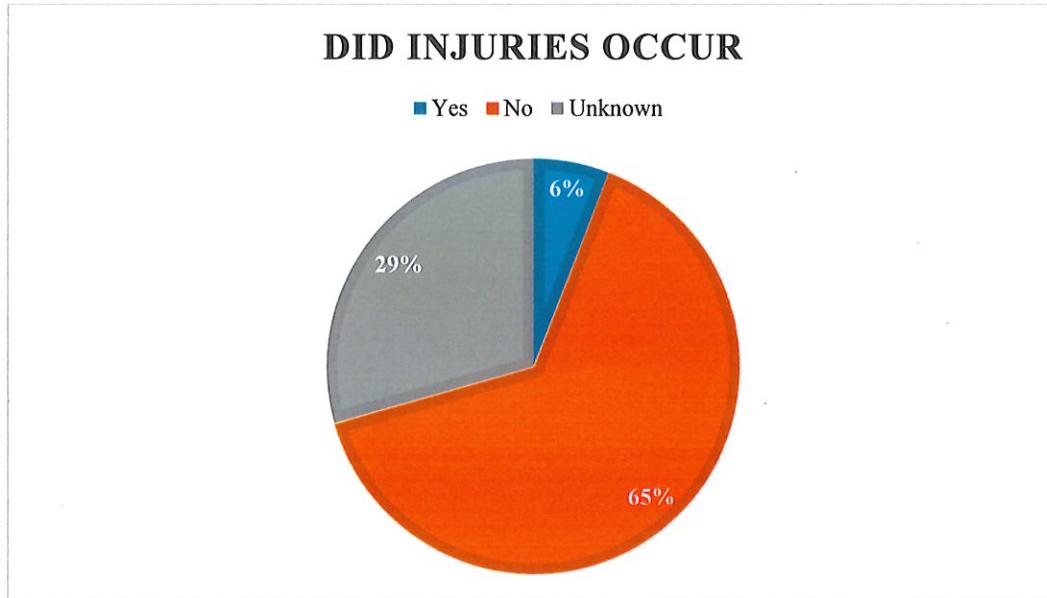


⁴ A plastic encased column of hollow spikes designed to be tossed/placed into the path of a vehicle and penetrate the tires of a vehicle when run over causing the tires to deflate in a controlled manner.

Even when it was not the terminating event of the pursuit, officers reported that vehicle crashes occurred in only four pursuits. One of these incidents resulted in significant property damage when the suspect vehicle crashed into a fast food restaurant during non-business hours. Thirteen pursuits reported no vehicle crashes associated with the pursuit. See the pie chart below:



Officers reported only one pursuit that resulted in any known injuries. In that single case, the offending driver was the injured party. No third-party or officer injuries were reported for any pursuits. In five pursuits, there was no determination on injuries reported because the pursuit was terminated, and the driver initially evaded arrest. See the pie chart below:



Pursuit Policy

ACCPD General Order 3.09 governs departmental policy on pursuits. It was reissued in October 2018 and was in effect for the full term of the 2019 calendar year (i.e., the reporting period). The policy clearly identifies specific circumstances when officers are permitted to engage in a pursuit, as well as specific offenses and circumstances when officers are restricted from engaging in a pursuit. The policy provides clear and appropriate procedures and guidelines for responsibilities, decision making, tactics, and other matters related to initiating, conducting, terminating, and reporting pursuits. At the time of this report, the departmental policy on pursuits is under standard review and is expected to be amended to remain in compliance with applicable laws, standards, and best practices. There were no reported administrative investigations or disciplinary actions taken as a result of any policy violations during any pursuits. There are no further policy recommendations at this time.

Reporting Procedures

ACCPD General Order 3.09 (IV) (G) governs vehicle pursuit reporting and compliance procedures. The current policy clearly details reporting procedures that cover a) when reports are required; b) the manner of reporting; and c) oversight and review procedures. The major issue of concern for reporting was found in the old reporting software.⁵ There were technical issues with this software that are no longer relevant because the department changed to a new reporting software⁶ as of January 1, 2020. Additionally, there were instances of incomplete information found in pursuit reports (e.g., the absence of the offending driver data and officer data). These issues have been corrected through the implementation of the new reporting software because it requires this data before the report can be completed. As stated above, the departmental policy on reporting procedures for pursuits is under standard review and is expected to be amended to remain in compliance with applicable laws, standards, and best practices. There are no further concerns or recommendations for reporting procedures at this time.

⁵ In 2019, the Department used VIPR which is a vehicle pursuit reporting software produced by Lefta Systems, Inc.

⁶ In 2020, the Department began using BlueTeam and IAPro (products of CI-Technologies, Inc.) to report and analyze vehicle pursuits.