

MONTGOMERY COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



ANNUAL PURSUIT REPORT 2014

**POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION
APRIL 2015**

Chief's Message:

Vehicular pursuits by police used to occur much more frequently. In 1976, when I began my police career, we chased anyone that would dare to try to elude us. In the ensuing years, and for a host of good reasons, police departments began restricting vehicular pursuits for the safety of both the officers involved and every other unsuspecting person who might find themselves in the midst of a high-speed chase. Basically, police began asking the question "***when is it worth the risk to chase someone?***" Some folks believe it is never worth the risk to put innocent drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, at risk with a high-speed chase. Others still think that police have a duty to lawfully pursue anyone who is suspected of breaking the law.



Most police chiefs believe there is middle ground here ... of primary importance—the safety of the public. So good policy with regard to vehicular pursuits involves weighing a number of factors prior to engaging in or continuing a pursuit. Some of those factors include:

- Reason for pursuing a vehicle (*suspected offense*)
- Suspicion that the driver may be impaired
- Time of day
- Type of location (*crowded street with pedestrians vs. limited-access highway*)
- Road and weather conditions

Police officers must make critical decisions frequently as they do their job. That is why clear policies and good training are so important. Based on the information in this report, I have confidence that my cops are adhering to our policy [Function Code 135](#) and understand the importance of balancing the safety of the motoring public with the need to take dangerous drivers off of our roadways.

J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police

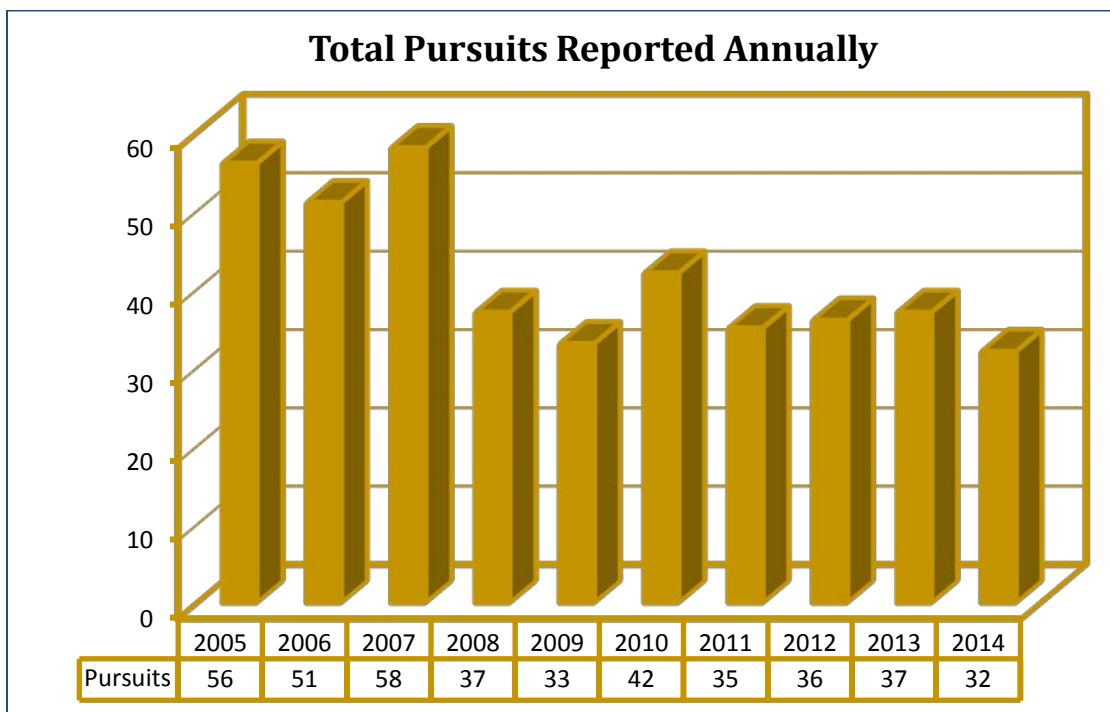
OVERVIEW

The information contained in this report is obtained from the MCP 610, *Motor Vehicle Pursuit Report*. The form is completed by a supervisor from the district where the pursuit originated. On an annual basis, the Montgomery County Police Department reviews and analyzes the data collected from the MCP 610 forms obtained in that calendar year.

Per Function Code 135, *Vehicle Pursuits*, pursuit of a vehicle is authorized only when the offense for which the suspect is being pursued is one of the following:

1. **Criminal:** Felony or the officer has reason to believe a felony has occurred or is occurring. Note: In order 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.”
2. **Traffic:**
 - a. Driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics (misdemeanor).
 - b. Hit-and-run, personal injury collision when the officer has reasonable cause to believe serious physical injury has occurred (felony).

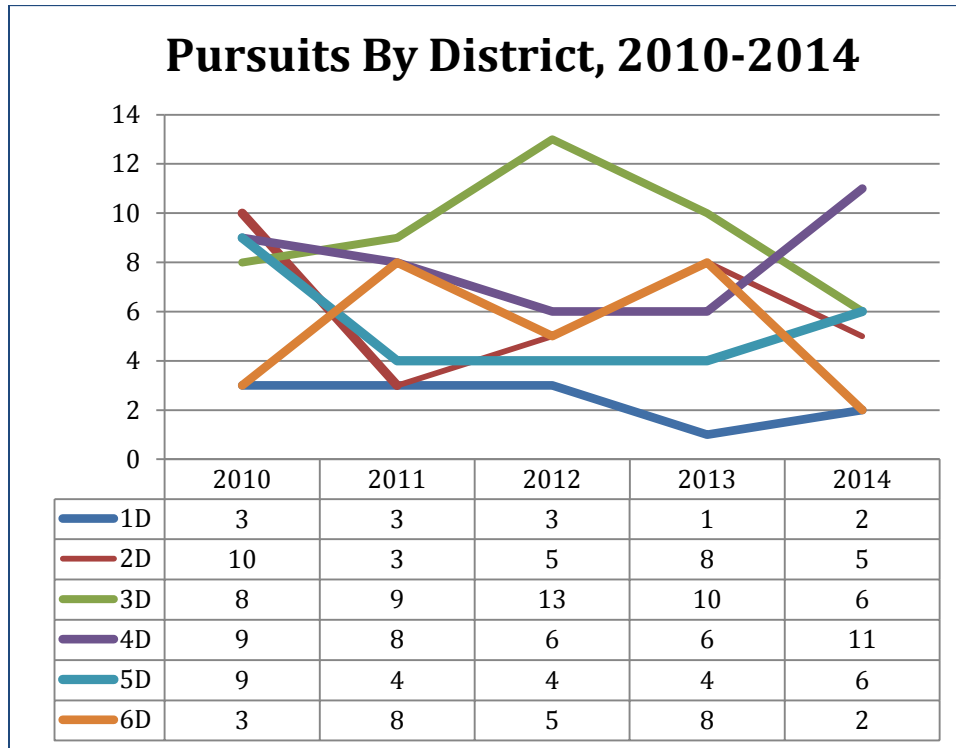
In 2014, there were 32 pursuits, five fewer than 2013, which equates to a 13.5% decline in the number of pursuits since last year. The department remains below the 10-year pursuit average of 41.7 pursuits per year.



2014 PURSUIT ANALYSIS

By District

The graph below illustrates the frequency by district in which Montgomery County police officers initiated a pursuit. The number of pursuits occurring in the 4th District increased sharply in 2014, while the 3rd and 6th Districts have seen reductions across the last five years.

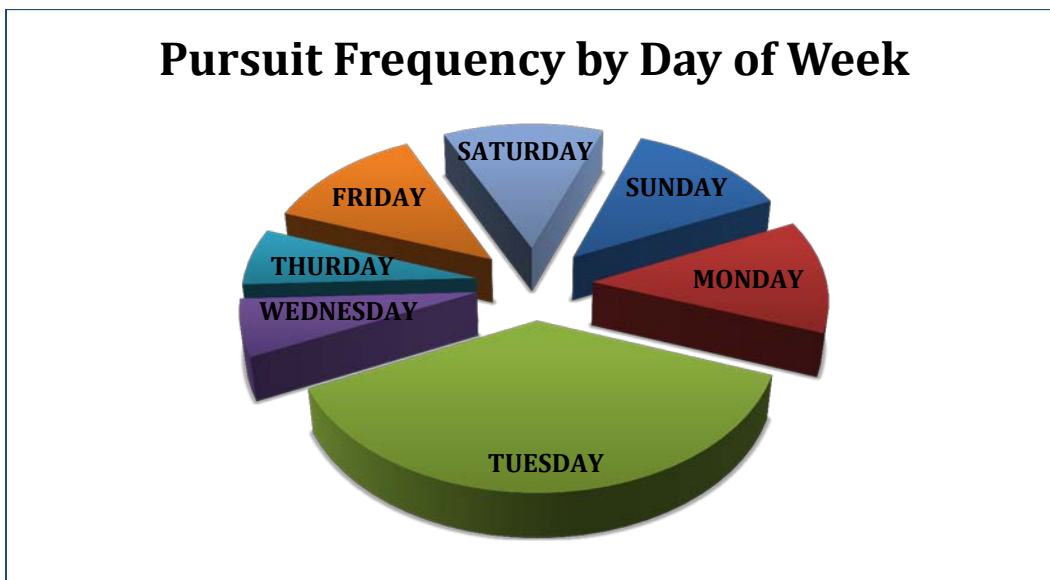
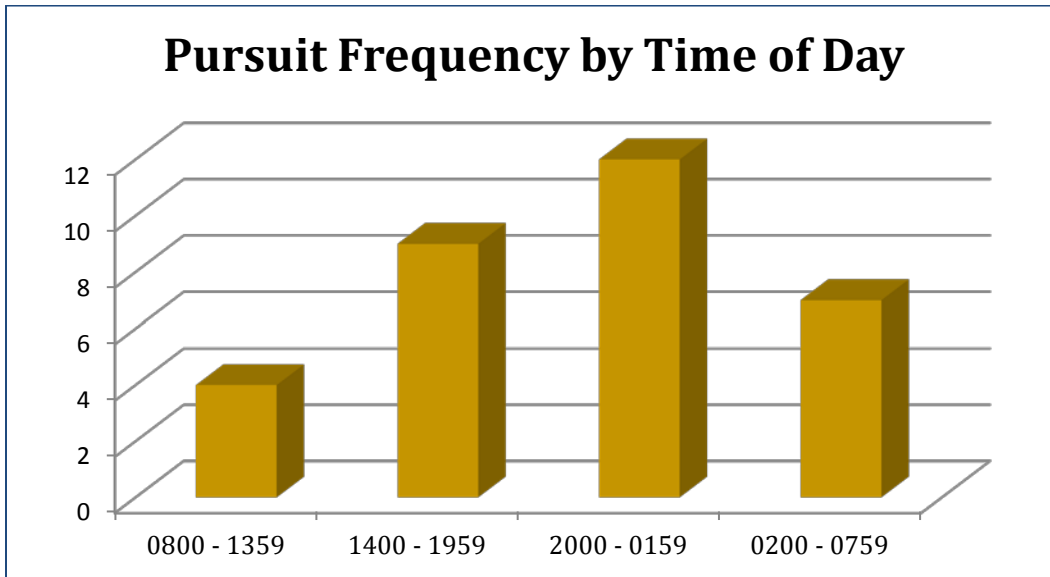


By Justification

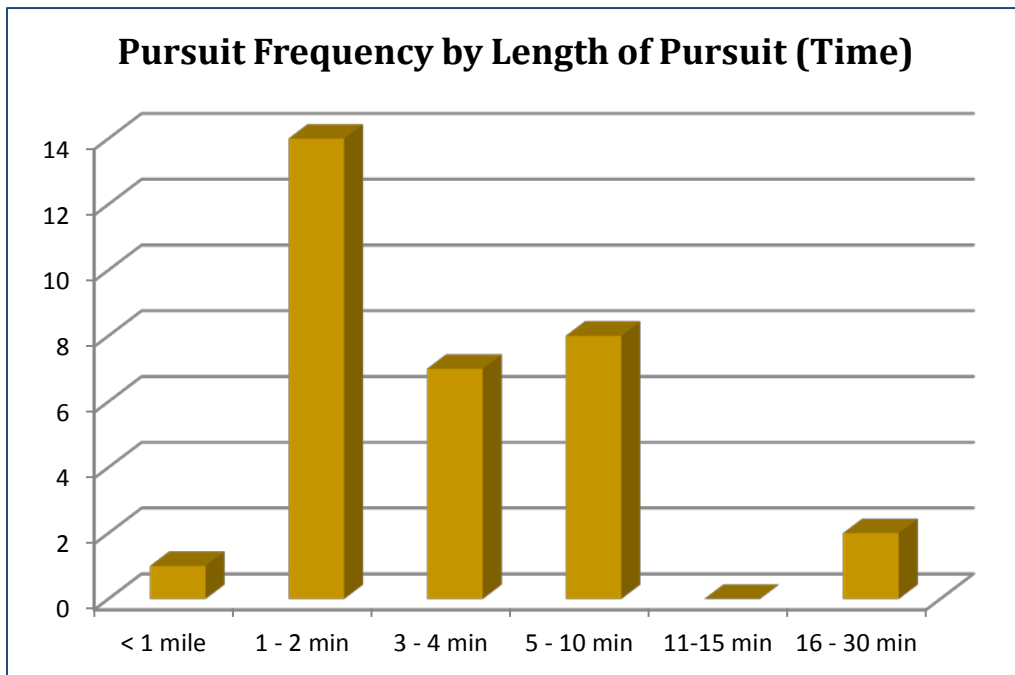
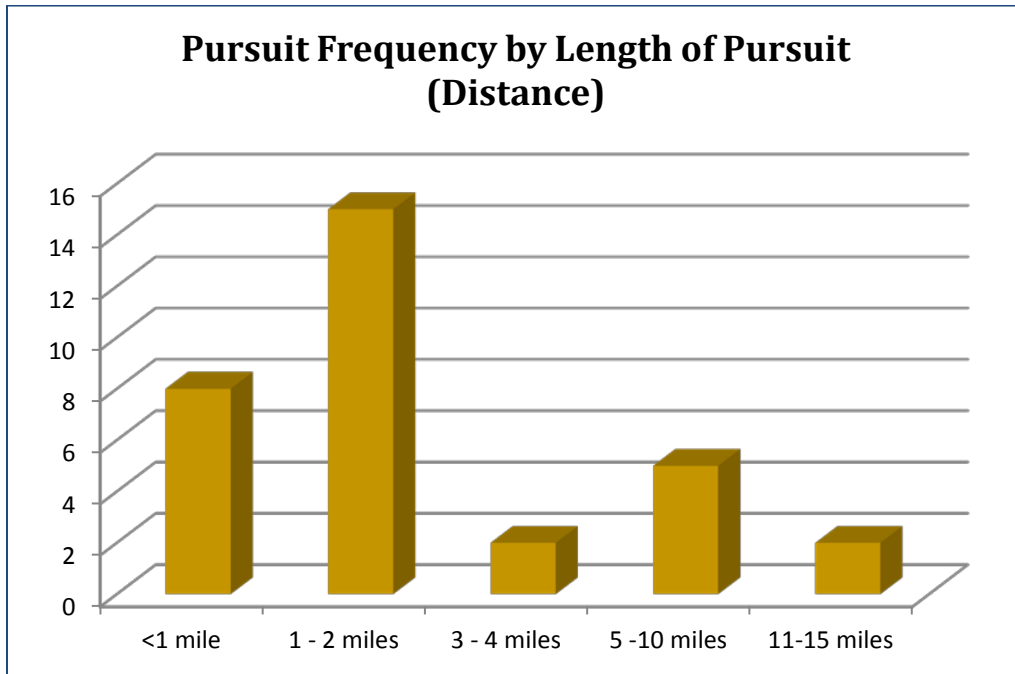
In 2014, the primary reason pursuits were initiated was for the apprehension of subjects driving while under the influence; 53.1% of pursuits began for this reason. Twelve (37.5%) pursuits were initiated for the apprehension of a felony suspect. Three pursuits were initiated as a result of other reasons.

There were no pursuits that extended outside the county's jurisdictional boundaries in 2014.

By Time of Day & Day of Week



By Distance & Duration



The majority of pursuits (71.9%) that occurred in Montgomery County in 2014 lasted less than two miles, and 68.75% lasted less than four minutes. Only two pursuits lasted more than 10 total minutes, a 50% reduction since 2013.

ANALYSIS OF PURSUIT RESULTS

Strategies

Police pursuits may be dangerous. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis nationally on utilizing tactical maneuvers to end police pursuits. Montgomery County Police Department policy prohibits the use of rolling roadblocks and tactical vehicle intervention. In the majority of pursuits (81.25%), there were no special tactics used. Six pursuits involved the use of other methods, including aircraft, canine, and in one pursuit, the police department successfully deployed stop sticks to end the pursuit without injury.

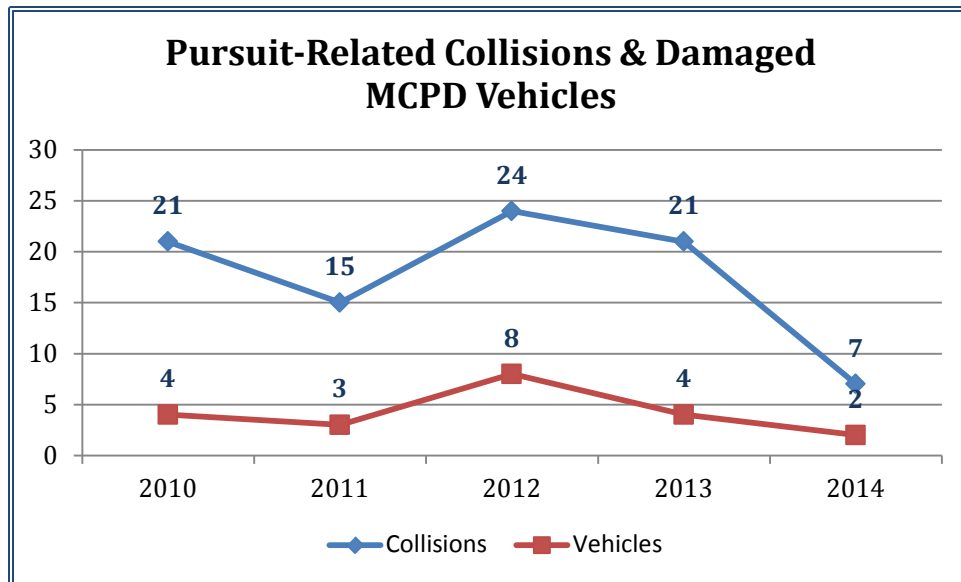
Officers used force during only one pursuit in 2014 (3.1%), following a bailout. Thirteen of the 32 pursuits (40.6%) in Montgomery County resulted in a bailout by the subject being pursued by police.

In 2014, subjects were apprehended in 68.75% of the pursuits (22). In the remaining 10 cases, the pursuits were terminated five times for safety reasons or prior to leaving the county and in the remaining five pursuits, the subject(s) were able to successfully evade police.

Collisions

Of the 32 pursuits that occurred in 2014, seven (21.9%) resulted in a collision. This is a significant decrease over 2013 when 57% of the pursuits ended in a collision. The collision statistics from 2014 represent a significant reduction over the last five years. The seven collisions were distributed across the following districts:

District	Collisions	Department Vehicles Damaged
1D	0	0
2D	1	0
3D	2	1
4D	2	0
5D	1	1
6D	1	0
TOTALS	7	2



Of the seven pursuits that ended in collision, the suspect's vehicle was involved in six of the collisions and a total of seven people (passengers) were injured in those collisions. Residents' vehicles were struck in two pursuits, and two residents were injured. One police officer was injured in a pursuit collision this year. None of the injuries sustained during any of these pursuits were life-threatening.

CONCLUSION

With more than 100,000 traffic stops per year, pursuits occur only a fraction of the time (approximately .025%). Overall, the Police Department saw statistical improvement in the total number of pursuits, pursuit-related collisions, and damaged police vehicles. Nationally, automobile accidents continue to be one of the leading causes of death of police officers. The Montgomery County Police Department continues to be proactive in this area, in an effort to reduce the number of collisions involving department vehicles, and law enforcement officer deaths, disabilities, and injuries caused by traffic-related incidents. Through the Public Safety Training Academy, the Montgomery County Police Department has embraced the **Arrive Alive** initiative: *Buckle Up, Slow Down, Pay Attention, Arrive Alive*. In addition, the Training and Education Division has instituted a mandatory in-service program to provide enhanced driver training to all officers and a remedial program for officers who have been identified as having a need for increased training. These proactive measures should improve the skills of the officers to avoid pursuit-related collisions, thereby reducing the risk to officers and the public.

A copy of this report will be distributed to all Patrol Services Bureau Commanders for review and identification of training that may be necessary on an operational level.