

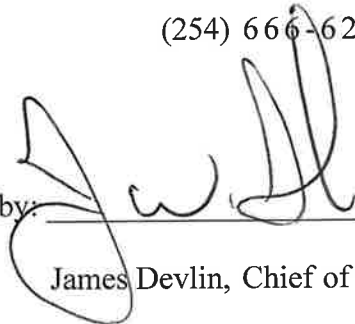
AN ANALYSIS OF VEHICLE PURSUITS IN  
THE HEWITT POLICE DEPARTMENT  
For 2020



July 8, 2021

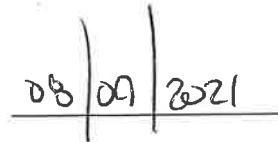
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Reviewed and Approved by:



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Law enforcement officers must make quick decisions in a matter of seconds. This must be done while balancing the obligation to protect and serve with the obligation to apprehend a suspect. Police pursuit driving is just one example of such a decision-making dilemma.

Police pursuits can be very dangerous, but at times, they are an essential part of the criminal apprehension activities. Should law enforcement officers routinely fail to pursue it would soon become common knowledge. This would lead to many more drivers fleeing a stop to prevent a citation or apprehension. Chaos on the roadways may follow. This analysis provides a baseline about the frequency and circumstances surrounding vehicle pursuits. All police pursuits performed by the Hewitt Police Department (HPD) for 2020 were part of the analysis. This analysis will provide data for reviews of HPD policy, procedures, and training. The goal of the Hewitt Police Department is to implement the reporting of pursuits, the collection, standardization, analysis, and utilization of pursuit data to reduce negative outcomes. This will increase our ability to address crime, while maintaining accountability and legitimacy of police pursuits.

The objective is to use pursuit information to better understand the factors which increase the risk of negative outcomes (injuries, damage, fatalities, liability suits, loss of public legitimacy) to make more evidence-based decisions regarding pursuit policies. This data can also better inform officers and supervisors who make decisions during pursuits about the best course of action. It further informs officers and their supervisors of the need to incorporate empirical evidence into such discretionary decisions. It is understood that police officers must often make split-second decisions during pursuits. Framing those decisions must be done under the full understanding of their attending consequences.

The Hewitt Police Department has what is known as a "restrictive" pursuit policy. For example, a police officer will not initiate a pursuit for a class C traffic offense alone. Despite such a policy, there has been a relatively large number of pursuits. We have observed a growing number of motorists that choose to flee an attempted stop by an officer. We have no statistical evidence as to the cause of the choice to flee, but wonder if the restrictive policy to pursue has contributed.

The Hewitt Police Department has built an organization infrastructure that assists the officer with evidentiary based data to ultimately affect their street-level decisions. This was accomplished by the following:

1. Making report writing on all pursuit's mandatory.
2. Analyze data collected.
3. Apply knowledge from analysis to training, policy creation or amendments, and daily practice.
4. Staying knowledgeable about both state and federal laws, court deliberations, and also trends in pursuits in similar agencies, and within their larger regions and states.

Available information systems provided recorded data about each pursuit, the situational, environmental, and context by which pursuits occurred, their outcomes, and our response. The benefits provided by information collection databases are that they allow police agencies to compare pursuits with other jurisdictions, and share data for strategic purposes.

All information was collected for transparency and legitimacy, while providing the ability to analyze pursuit data to improve policies and effectiveness. Future reports will gather information about the officer and the suspect involved, the nature of injuries, accidents or other outcomes and information about supervisory actions. This is critical to maintaining accountability and our ability to examine data to improve future responses.

As with many other police activities, by clearly informing the public of pursuit policies, legal precedents, and police actions, we can improve our legitimacy with the public and also better match citizen expectations and understanding with actual police actions.

## REVIEW OF HPD PURSUITS

For 2020

The Hewitt Police Department participated in (4) pursuits between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020, (see Table 1). This compares with (12) pursuits in 2019, and (6) in 2018. Thus, there have been (22) pursuits during the period with 2019 having the most of the last three years.

**Table 1 -Vehicle Pursuits per Year**

Year	Number of Pursuits	Percentage
2020	4	36%
2019	12	43%
2018	6	21%

This report is designed to present data and analysis for only 2020.

**Table 2 - Cumulative Vehicle Pursuits Per Month, 2020:**

Month	# of Pursuits	Percentage
January	0	0%
February	0	0%
March	1	25%
April	1	25%
May	0	0%
June	1	25%
July	0	0%
August	0	0%
September	0	0%
October	0	0%
November	0	0%
December	1	25%

**Note:** Of the (4) Pursuits for the 2020 year it should be noted that (2) were initiated by Hewitt Police Officers. The other (2) were Hewitt Officers Assisting other Agencies with their Pursuits which came through Hewitt.

Of the (4) pursuits in 2020 March, April, June, and December had one pursuit each.

**Table 3 – Vehicle Pursuit Time of Day for 2020:**

Time of Day	# Of Pursuits	Percentage
0001 - 0060	2	50%
0601 - 1200	1	25%
1201 – 1800	0	8%
1801 - 2400	1	25%

The majority of pursuits occurred between 0001 to 0060 with (2). A total of (1) each occurred from 0601 to 1200 and 1801 to 2400 hours.

**Table 4 – Vehicle Pursuit Distance for 2020:**

Distance	# Of Pursuits	Percentage
Less than 1 mile	0	0%
1 to 2 miles	1	25%
2.1 to 5 miles	1	25%
5.1 to 10 miles	1	25%
Beyond 10 miles	1	25%

Pursuit distance shows only (1) pursuit was beyond 10 miles in distance. The other (3) pursuits can be seen as being 5.1 miles to 10 miles or less in distance.

**Table 5 -Type of vehicle pursued:**

Type of Vehicle	# Of Pursuits	Percentage
Automobile	4	100%
Motorcycle	0	0%
Truck	0	0%
UNK	0	0%

Of the (4) pursuits, which included assisting other agencies, Hewitt Officers pursued automobiles.

**Table 6 – Reason Initiated for 2020:**

Reason Initiated	# of Pursuits	Percentage
Traffic Stop	3	75%
Wanted Fugitive (committed crime)	1	25%

The majority of pursuits stemmed from Traffic Stops totaling (3). The (1) pursuits for Wanted fugitives were individuals who had recently committed a crime.

**Table 7-2020 Vehicle Pursuit Outcomes:**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b># of Pursuits</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Discontinued other Agency's Pursuit	1	25%
Handed over to another agency		0%
Public Safety	1	25%
Suspect Stopped Vehicle	1	25%
Suspect vehicle crashed		0%
Suspect eluded pursuit	1	25%

(1) of the pursuit's was terminated due by the other agency.

(1) pursuit was terminated due to the public's safety. Due to possible dangers to the public.

(1) pursuit was concluded by the suspect stopping their vehicle and the last (1) was terminated when the officer lost sight of the vehicle.

**Table 8-Conditions of Pursuit**

<b>Weather Conditions</b>	<b># of Pursuits</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cold	0	0%
Cool	0	0%
Dry	3	75%
Warm	1	25%
Wet	0	0%

Of the (4) pursuits Hewitt Officers were involved in all of the pursuits were on decent road conditions.

**Table 9 – Driving under the influence factors:**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
N/A	1	50%
Alcohol	1	50%
Drugs	0	0%

Driving under the influence factors for the pursuits consisted of a total of (1) having been influenced by Alcohol or Drugs. (1) involved drivers that chose to attempt to flee the police with no underlying factors. The other (2) pursuits were Assist other Agencies.

### **Analysis/Recommendations**

Hewitt Officers did well in handling the (4) pursuits presented to them during the 2020 year. All were reviewed and determined to be within policy with one being noted as a training failure. The only recommendation is the department needs to continue its EVOC training in order for the officers to be continuously ready should a pursuit occur. During the EVOC and policy training the department must ensure both the officers and supervisors adhere to “a police officer will not initiate a pursuit for a class C traffic offense alone”. This will continue to ensure the exposure to the Department's and City's liability.