



WESTFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL VEHICLE PURSUIT ANALYSIS – 2022



TOTAL VEHICLE PURSUITS		
YEAR	2022	NO. OF OFFICERS INVOLVED
1ST QUARTER	1	1
JANUARY	0	0
FEBRUARY	1	1
MARCH	0	0
2ND QUARTER	1	2
APRIL	0	0
MAY	1	2
JUNE	0	0
3RD QUARTER	3	4
JULY	3	4
AUGUST	0	0
SEPTEMBER	0	0
4TH QUARTER	8	9
OCTOBER	2	3
NOVEMBER	4	4
DECEMBER	2	2
TOTAL	13	16

OFFICERS INVOLVED IN VEHICLE PURSUITS		OFFICER ASSIGNMENT
BAGAN, NICHOLAS OFFICER	1	PATROL
BRUNO, NICHOLAS SERGEANT	2	PATROL
DIBELLA, MICHAEL OFFICER	4	PATROL
FOURRE, SAMUEL OFFICER	1	PATROL
DONOVAN, TIMOTHY OFFICER	1	PATROL
GILL, RICHARD OFFICER	1	PATROL
JARAMILLO, ANDRES OFFICER	1	PATROL
O’HOLLA, MATTHEW OFFICER	1	TRAFFIC
POLLOCK, MICHAEL OFFICER	1	PATROL
SHAUGHNESSY, RYAN OFFICER	1	PATROL
WEISS, RYAN OFFICER	2	PATROL (1); SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT (1)
TOTAL	13	

VEHICLE PURSUITS BY DAY OF WEEK	
MONDAY	2
TUESDAY	2
WEDNESDAY	2
THURSDAY	4
FRIDAY	0
SATURDAY	1
SUNDAY	2
TOTAL	13

VEHICLE PURSUITS BY HOUR OF DAY	
0000-0100 (1)	2
0100-0200 (2)	2
0200-0300 (3)	1
0300-0400 (4)	0
0400-0500 (5)	3
0500-0600 (6)	0
0600-0700 (7)	0
0700-0800 (8)	0
0800-0900 (9)	1
0900-1000 (10)	1
1000-1100 (11)	0
1100-1200 (12)	0
1200-1300 (13)	0
1300-1400 (14)	0
1400-1500 (15)	1
1500-1600 (16)	1
1600-1700 (17)	0
1700-1800 (18)	0
1800-1900 (19)	1
1900-2000 (20)	0
2000-2100 (21)	0
2100-2200 (22)	0
2200-2300 (23)	0
2300-2400 (24)	0
TOTAL	13

VEHICLE PURSUITS BY INVOLVED OFFICERS' SHIFTS	
0600 – 1700 HOURS (PATROL DAY)	2
0800 – 1900 HOURS (PATROL OVERLAP)	1
1600 – 0300 HOURS (PATROL NIGHT)	5
1900-0600 HOURS (PATROL MIDNIGHT)	6
0800-1800 HOURS (TRAFFIC)	1
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT (AUTO THEFT DETAIL)	1
TOTAL	13

VEHICLE PURSUITS BY INITIATING FACTOR	
STOLEN VEHICLE	11
SUSPECTED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY	2
TOTAL	13

LOCATION OF INITIATION OF VEHICLE PURSUITS	
COMMERCIAL AREA	3
OTHER JURISDICTION	1
RESIDENTIAL AREA	9
TOTAL	13

LOCATION OF TERMINATION OF VEHICLE PURSUITS	
COMMERCIAL AREA	2
OTHER JURISDICTION	10
RESIDENTIAL AREA	1
TOTAL	13

REASON FOR TERMINATION OF VEHICLE PURSUITS	
OFFICER DECISION	4
PURSUED ESCAPED IN VEHICLE	1
PURSUED STOPPED IN ACCIDENT	1
SUPERVISOR DECISION	7
TOTAL	13

VEHICLE PURSUITS RESULTING IN CRASHES	
NO CRASH	12
CRASH INVOLVING PURSUED VEHICLE & OTHER VEHICLE	1

TOTAL	13
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VEHICLE PURSUITS RESULTING IN INJURY	
NO INJURY	12
INJURY TO PERSONS IN OTHER VEHICLES	1
TOTAL	13

VEHICLE PURSUITS RESULTING IN ARRESTS	
ARREST	1
NO ARREST	12
TOTAL	13

AGENCY INITIATING VEHICLE PURSUITS	
THIS AGENCY	13
TOTAL	13

ANALYSIS COMMENTS:

All law enforcement officers who operate law enforcement vehicles in vehicular pursuits shall complete a report in the Attorney General’s Use of Force Reporting Portal. The report shall be completed by the officer within twenty-four (24) 24 hours of the vehicular pursuit and preferably before the end the shift in which the pursuit occurred. If the officer involved in the pursuit is unable to complete the report within twenty-four (24) hours, it should be completed as soon the officer is able to do so, or by a supervising officer within forty-eight (48) hours, in accordance with this agency’s Pursuit and Forcible Stopping Guidelines standard operating procedure.

This agency’s Pursuit and Forcible Stopping Guidelines standard operating procedure not only fully complies with present law and Addendum B (Vehicular Pursuit Policy) of the Attorney General’s Use of Force policy, but also meets New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) accreditation standards, which represent law enforcement’s “best practices.” The Westfield Police Department has been an accredited law enforcement agency since March 11, 2021.

Vehicle thefts and attempted vehicle thefts continue to plague affluent suburban northern New Jersey municipalities, and Westfield has been and remains a particularly attractive target for such property crime.

In 2017, there were twenty-eight (28) vehicle thefts, in 2018 there were twenty-six (26) vehicle thefts, in 2019 there were twenty (20) vehicle thefts, in 2020 there were twenty-five vehicle (25) thefts, and in 2021 there were twenty-eight (28) vehicle thefts.

Vehicle thefts and attempted vehicle thefts have been occurring on all days of the week and at all hours of the day. In most instances, the vehicles stolen were left unlocked with their keys or

key fobs in them at the time of their thefts.

Information acquired as a result of subsequent investigations indicates that suspects in stolen vehicles searched residential Westfield neighborhoods adjacent to area highways, such as U.S. Route 22 and the Garden State Parkway, in search of high-end, unlocked vehicles with their keys or key fobs in them. Once located, said vehicles were stolen by suspects with ease, who then fled at high speeds via those nearby highways.

Criminals have undoubtedly targeted Westfield because of its plethora of high-end vehicles, such as Audis, BMWs, Land Rovers, Mercedes Benzes, and Porsches, and its residents' well-demonstrated complacent behavior.

Several residents have been repeat victims of vehicle thefts and attempted vehicle thefts. There are residents that have reported two (2) vehicles stolen in the past, residents that have reported two (2) vehicles stolen on the same date and time, and even one (1) resident that has reported the same vehicle stolen twice – all under the same circumstances – unlocked with their keys or key fobs in them at the times of their theft.

Follow-up investigations conducted by this agency's Detective Bureau have determined that many vehicles stolen in this jurisdiction were used in the commission of violent crimes occurring in other jurisdictions, predominantly in Essex County, and in particular, the City of Newark. One (1) such stolen vehicle was used in an execution-style shooting homicide in 2021 in Newark involving multiple actors.

Such learned information strongly intimates that perpetrators were likely armed at the time the initial vehicle thefts occurred in this jurisdiction, and that said actors should be considered armed and extremely dangerous. Officers must exercise extreme caution at all times.

In order to help combat this on-going vehicle theft problem, the Westfield Police Department began installation of (15) Flock Safety license plate recognition (LPR) cameras at various entrance points to Westfield in the latter part of 2021. Installation of fourteen (14) of those LPR cameras has been completed, and the placement and installation of the fifteenth LPR camera is pending at this time.

These LPR cameras are motion-activated. They take still photographs that focus solely on the backs of vehicles as they drive by, with particular attention directed towards license plates. The LPR cameras have an intentionally narrow field of view designed to capture 1.5 lanes of traffic traveling in a single direction.

Flock Safety offers a feature called the "Hot List," which provides real-time alerts if a stolen vehicle passes by one of these LPR cameras. It also provides real-time "Hot List" alerts for vehicles displaying stolen license plates, those vehicles associated with known wanted persons, and more. The real-time "Hot List" feature connects to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database and is updated four (4) times a day (or every 6 hours).

The LPR cameras are always actively monitored via computer by personnel assigned to the 9-1-1 Police-Fire-EMS Communications Center and patrol units are immediately notified of real-time "Hot List" alerts. Additionally, patrol officers assigned to units equipped with mobile computers

can monitor the LPR cameras themselves for real-time “Hot List” alerts and have been directed expected to do so. Each patrol officer has his/her own Flock Safety user account.

It has been well demonstrated that perpetrators often travel in stolen vehicles, seeking to steal additional vehicles. When a real-time “Hot List” alert is received for a stolen vehicle, available patrol unit(s) are dispatched to the area of the LPR camera, or to areas in the stolen vehicle’s projected path of travel, this in attempt to locate the stolen vehicle and/or to create a high-visibility police presence to deter vehicle thefts and attempted vehicle thefts.

Real-time “Hot List” alerts are handled and documented in the same manner as the receipt of calls for service reporting a crime in progress. Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system entries are used to document the receipt of a real-time “Hot List” alert for a stolen vehicle (“Flock” can be identified as “how reported”). The CAD system entries identify the unit(s) dispatched and include a final disposition in the notes. In the latter part of 2022, real time “Hot List” alerts generated one hundred seventy-five (175) CAD system entries for calls for service, most of them for stolen vehicles.

In 2022, there were fifteen (15) stolen vehicles – a 46.4% reduction from the previous year, when there were twenty-eight (28) stolen vehicles. This substantial reduction in vehicle theft is attributed in large part to the LPR cameras, which have provided real-time “Hot List” alerts to the presence of stolen vehicles entering Westfield.

However, in 2022, there were thirteen (13) vehicle pursuits – an 85.7% increase from the previous year, when there were seven (7) vehicle pursuits. This substantial increase is also attributed in large part to the LPR cameras, which have provided real-time “Hot List” alerts to the presence of stolen vehicles entering Westfield. Eleven (11) of those vehicle pursuits were initiated for stolen vehicles and six (6) of them were the direct result of receipt of real-time “Hot List” alerts.

Pursuant to agency General Order 2020-06 (Issued on June 8, 2020), each vehicle pursuit is subject to a “Meaningful Review,” which is a formal, documented process to determine whether policy, training, equipment and/or any disciplinary issues need to be addressed. The “Meaningful Review” includes an examination of all available sources of information relating to the vehicle pursuit, including any MVR and/or BWC recordings of the incident.

In accordance with the agency’s Pursuit and Forcible Stopping Guidelines standard operating procedure, the preliminary “Meaningful Review” is conducted by the duty Watch Commander and then reviewed by the Captain of Operations. In further accordance with that standard operating procedure, I, as the Chief of Police, review each “Meaningful Review” and approve or reject the recommendations of those who conducted the review.

The “Meaningful Reviews” prompted two (2) officers to receive corrective training – one for his failure to properly first “attempt to close distance” before initiating a vehicle pursuit, and the other for his failure to activate his police vehicle’s “audible device” upon commencement of a vehicle pursuit. This corrective training was documented with the issuance of Training Notices to both involved officers (Referral Supervisory Complaint Numbers SC2022-09 & SC2022-69).

As a result of the “Meaningful Reviews” and this Annual Vehicle Pursuit Analysis, no agency-wide training needs, equipment improvements and/or acquisitions have been identified, and no

modifications to any agency standard operating procedure were deemed necessary.

There is no evidence to intimate that any vehicle pursuit was predicated on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any protected characteristic of any person.

Both officers and supervisors have demonstrated very sound decision-making with vehicle pursuits. Four (4) vehicle pursuits were terminated by the officers involved and seven (7) vehicle pursuits were ordered terminated at the direction of a duty supervisor, this due to the extreme danger presented by same.

One (1) vehicle pursuit was terminated because the pursuing officers lost sight of the vehicle being pursued, and one (1) pursuit was terminated when the pursued vehicle crashed into another vehicle and was rendered disabled. With regards to the latter vehicle pursuit (Referral Westfield Police Department Case #22-57585) which resulted in injuries to a civilian, the Union County Prosecutor's Office was notified in accordance with this agency's Pursuit and Forcible Stopping Guidelines standard operating procedure. An external review conducted by that agency disclosed no evidence of "criminality."

There is no doubt vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous, and the safety of officers and the general public must always be of paramount concern. In recognition of such, this agency continues to place an overarching emphasis on subsequent investigations rather than initial vehicle pursuits to identify and apprehend fleeing criminals, recognizing the inherent dangers presented by vehicular pursuits far outweigh the need for immediate apprehension.

Since March 2020, this agency has assigned a Detective full-time to the New Jersey State Police (NJSP) Motor Vehicle Crimes North Unit (MVCNU) as a Task Force Officer (TFO). It has also assigned additional personnel to the NJSP MVCNU for various lengths of time to support the unit's overall operations, in general, and to focus on Westfield's persistent vehicle theft problem, in particular. Westfield is the only Union County municipal law enforcement agency to have assigned personnel to the NJSP MVCNU.

Despite the tremendous efforts of both this agency and its Detective assigned full-time to the NJSP MVCNU, neither Westfield's, nor northern suburban New Jersey's vehicle theft problem has shown any signs of slowing down. As of the date of completion of this Annual Vehicle Pursuit Analysis, two (2) vehicles have already been stolen in Westfield in 2023 – both on the same date and time – and from the same residence. Additionally, this agency has already had three (3) vehicle pursuits involving five (5) officers – all for stolen vehicles – and all of them the direct result of real-time "Hot List" alerts.

While Westfield's vehicle theft problem is not likely to improve until residents' change their complacent behavior, this Annual Vehicle Pursuit Analysis has determined that this agency's commitment to ensure full compliance with its Pursuit and Forcible Stopping Guidelines standard operating procedure and the New Jersey Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy has been resolute.

ANALYSIS PREPARED BY:

SIGNED. Chief Christopher Battilora

DATE. January 27, 2023

Christopher Battiloro, Chief of Police

ANALYSIS APPROVED BY:

SIGNED. Chief Christopher Battiloro DATE. January 27, 2023
Christopher Battiloro, Chief of Police