Vehicular Pursuits in Washington State

University of Washington, Department of Medicine

HARBORVIEW
INJURY PREVENTION
& RESEARCH CENTER

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Executive summary

This report to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) from the University of Washington fulfills the study requirements outlined in Section 133(25) of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5950. The Legislature directed OFM to "contract with a consultant to collect, review, and analyze data related to vehicular pursuits." The report must include a review of available data on vehicular pursuits and recommendations on what data should be uniformly collected by law enforcement agencies in Washington state for the purpose of policy evaluation.

This report outlines the background for the study and details the methods used for data collection. We obtained data to date from 64 law enforcement agencies (LEAs) accredited by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) in the state and 54 unaccredited agencies. In addition, we have obtained data from the Washington State Patrol (WSP). We asked for data for the period of calendar years 2019–2024 on police vehicular pursuits conducted by the agencies.

We received data on 11,062 vehicular pursuits — 6,801 from WASPC-accredited and unaccredited law enforcement agencies and 4,261 from the Washington State Patrol. The most common record management systems used were Spillman and IA Pro/Blue Team. The number of pursuits peaked in 2020, decreased in 2021, and have gradually increased since that time.

Suspects in LEA pursuits were an average age of 31.4 years, 58% were male, and 40% were white. Age, gender, and race of suspects were unknown in 40.4%, 33.5%, and 45.1% of pursuits, respectively. More than half the pursuits were between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., and 75% ended within six minutes. The average speed was 75.9 mph, with 25% of pursuits >95 mph. The most common reasons for initiating pursuits were traffic infractions (30.7%) and misdemeanors (28.4%). Major felony crimes accounted for 7.1% and 10.6% were for lesser felony crimes. Of the pursuits, 12.3% were terminated for safety reasons, and in 15.2% of the pursuits, the suspect's vehicle crashed. Reasons for termination of the pursuit were not listed in 16.9% and were unknown in 14.8%. Suspects were charged with major felony crimes in 5.7%, lesser felony crimes in 11.9%, other felony crimes in 6.3%, and misdemeanors in 4.6%. Of the 6,801 pursuits, officers were injured in 2.4%, suspects were injured in 7.6%, passengers injured in 2.5%, and bystanders injured in 2.6%.

Pursuits conducted by the WSP were at higher speeds (mean of 90.1 mph and 25% >110 mph) and 44% were terminated by Washington State troopers. The most common reasons for initiating pursuits were traffic infractions (64.0%) and misdemeanors (20.7%). Major felony crimes accounted for 3.3% and 7.7% for lesser felony crimes. WSP terminated 44.3% of pursuits for a variety of reasons, including trooper and public safety. Suspects were charged with major felony crimes in 4.9%, lesser felony crimes in 6.1%, other felony crimes in 4.3%, and misdemeanors in 4.6%. Of the 4,261 pursuits, troopers were injured in 9.3%, suspects

were injured in 4.2%, and passengers/bystanders were injured in 0.7%. Death occurred for one trooper, three suspects, and one passenger/bystander.

The study direction required the consultant to "gather input from individuals and families with lived experience interacting with law enforcement." Vigorous efforts were made to conduct interviews with individuals involved in police pursuits, but insufficient numbers agreed to be interviewed to allow any data analysis or conclusions. Interviews were done with nine police officers with lived experiences conducting pursuits. However, only eight were analyzed due to a recording error during one interview, which did not allow for a complete transcription to be created for thorough analysis. Those findings are analyzed in the qualitative portion of the study.

Current pursuit policies were collected from 118 agencies. The most common allowable reasons for initiating pursuits were "necessary for suspect apprehension," "threat to safety," and "reasonable suspicion." Most LEAs had a variety of allowable reasons for terminating pursuits; many focused on safety to officers or the public. Common interventions used to stop a pursuit were PIT maneuvers, spike strips/tire deflation devices, roadblocks, and boxing in. The most common record management systems used by LEAs were Spillman (32.2%) and IAPro (28.0%).

Recommendations to the state include: recommended RCW language around vehicular pursuit incident reporting; the creation of a common, unified Record Management System funded by the state of Washington for all law enforcement data; changes to practices around the documentation, review, and analysis of vehicular pursuit incident data in Washington state; and the creation of a statewide vehicular pursuit specific database, to be joined with the Use of Force Database from the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety at Washington State University.

List of abbreviations

LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
WSP	Washington State Patrol
WASPC	Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
RMS	Record Management System
PDR	Public Data Request
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
PIT	Precision Immobilization Technique

Background

Legislative changes in Washington state

There have been important changes in the RCWs regulating police pursuits in Washington state over the last four years. In 2021, the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1054. Section 7 of the bill stated that police officers could not engage in a vehicular pursuit unless:

> (a)(i) There is probable cause to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a violent offense or sex offense or an escape, or
>
> (ii) There is reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a driving under the influence offense.
>
> b) The pursuit is necessary for the purpose of identifying or apprehending the person;
>
> c) The person poses an imminent threat to the safety of others and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered to be greater than the safety risks of the vehicular pursuit under the circumstances; and
>
> d)(i) Except as provided in (d)(ii) of this subsection, the officer has received authorization to engage in the pursuit from a supervising officer and there is supervisory control of the pursuit.
>
> (ii) For those jurisdictions with fewer than 10 commissioned officers, if a supervisor is not on duty at the time, the officer will request the on-call supervisor be notified of the pursuit according to the agency's procedures.

This bill thus placed more restrictions on pursuits by police officers.

In 2023, Engrossed Senate Bill 5352 changed probable cause to reasonable suspicion (probable cause requires a higher level of certainty than reasonable suspicion), further defined violent offense, sex offense, vehicular assault offense, 1-4th degree assaults. It struck this section:

> (a)ii and changed it to “A driving under the influence offense under RCW 46.61.502;” changed “The person poses an imminent threat to the safety” to a “serious risk of harm to others.”

It changed section:

> (d) (i) to not require the officer to receive authorization before engaging in the pursuit but instead “the pursuing officer notifies a supervising officer immediately upon initiating the vehicular pursuit and the pursuing officer, in consultation with the supervising officer considers alternatives to the vehicular pursuit.”

The new law also stated:

> (c) The pursuing officer must be able to directly communicate with other officers engaging

in the pursuit, the supervising officer, if applicable, and the dispatch agency, such as being on a common radio channel or having other direct means of communication;

(d) As soon as practicable after initiating a vehicular pursuit, the pursuing officer, supervising officer, if applicable, or responsible agency shall develop a plan to end the pursuit through the use of available pursuit intervention options, such as the use of the pursuit intervention technique, deployment of spike strips or other tire deflation devices, or other department authorized pursuit intervention tactics."

In 2024, Washington State Initiative 2113 amended RCW 10.116.060 and 2023 c 235 s 1, which placed fewer restrictions on police to conduct a pursuit. It stated that for the police to initiate a vehicular pursuit, there is:

(a) reasonable suspicion a person has violated the law;

(b) The pursuit is necessary for the purpose of identifying or apprehending the person;

(c) The person poses a threat to the safety of others and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered to be greater than the safety risks of the vehicular pursuit under the circumstances; and

(d)(i) The pursuing officer notifies a supervising officer immediately upon initiating the vehicular pursuit; there is supervisory oversight of the pursuit;

Statement of tasks for this study: Contract between UW and Washington State Office of Financial Management

In a budget proviso (ESSB 5950, Sec. 133(25)(a)), the 2024 state Legislature directed OFM to "contract with a consultant to collect, review, and analyze data related to vehicular pursuits." OFM contracted with the researchers at the University of Washington to complete the study assignment, which is copied below.

(25)(a) $400,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for the office to contract with a consultant to collect, review, and analyze data related to vehicular pursuits and to compile a report. The report must include recommendations to the legislature on what data should be collected by law enforcement agencies throughout the state so that the legislature and other policymakers have consistent and uniform information necessary to evaluate policies on vehicular pursuits. The contractor must gather input from individuals and families with lived experience interacting with law enforcement, including Black, indigenous, and communities of color, and incorporate this information into the report and recommendations. The report must:

(i) Review available data on vehicular pursuits from those agencies accredited by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, and review a stratified sample of nonaccredited agencies for as many years as their data have been collected, including:

(A) The date, time, location, maximum speed, and duration of the incident;

(B) The reason for initiating a pursuit;

(C) Whether the pursuing officer sought authorization for the pursuit, or only gave notice of the pursuit, and whether authorization for the pursuit was granted;

(D) Whether a supervisor denied authorization for the pursuit and the reason for the denial;

(E) The number of vehicles and officers involved in the pursuit;

(F) The number of law enforcement agencies involved in the pursuit;

(G) Whether pursuit intervention techniques were employed, and if so, which ones;

(H) Whether the pursuit was terminated at any point, and if so, the reason for termination;

(I) The officer's perception of the age, gender, race, ethnicity, or applicable tribal affiliation of the driver and any passengers of the motor vehicle being pursued;

(J) Whether the pursuit resulted in no action, termination, apprehension, warning, citation, arrest and grounds for the arrest, or other action;

(K) Whether the pursuit resulted in any property damage, injury, or death, and to whom and what, including law enforcement, drivers, passengers, and bystanders;

(L) Copies of reports, annual or other frequencies, used for internal review of pursuit statistics; and

(M) Whether the law enforcement agency has a record-keeping system for pursuits, and if so, what that system is, how long it has been in place, and whether the system and the data collected has changed over time;

(ii) Provide recommendations on what data elements law enforcement agencies should collect, in relation to the list identified in (a)(i) of this subsection, and provide rationale for the recommendations;

(iii) Develop a protocol for data collection by law enforcement agencies and provide a statement regarding the use of such data and the purpose for its collection and analysis;

(iv) Make the data readily available to the public using standard open data protocols;

(v) Recommend an entity to collect and manage this data on a statewide basis;

(vi) Review existing statewide police data reporting systems, including:

(A) The national incident based reporting system program, which is for the federal uniform crime reporting program;

(B) The Washington technology solutions police traffic collision reporting system, which is used for both state systems and the federal fatality analysis reporting system; and

(C) The statewide use of force data program established in RCW 20 10.118.030;

(vii) Assess the benefits and drawbacks of each of the existing systems in (a)(vi) of this subsection as a possible platform for collecting, reporting, and hosting pursuit open source downloadable data from agencies, and recommend whether any of these, or another system, would be most appropriate; and

(viii) Recommend any changes in state law to accomplish and facilitate the collection and analysis of the data, including whether to align or integrate the data collection with the use of force data under chapter 10.118 RCW.

(b) The report and recommendations are due to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2025.

Methods

Introduction: Quantitative (Numerical) Data Sources and Agency Profiles

Section (a)(i) of the proviso directed the research team to review available data on police vehicular pursuits from law enforcement agencies in Washington state. Available data collected and reviewed from law enforcement agencies included vehicular pursuit policies, vehicular pursuit incident data, and the systems used by law enforcement agencies to record vehicular pursuit data, among other factors. These sets of data were collected through a mix of direct outreach and public records requests, depending on the data sharing practices of individual law enforcement agencies. After data was collected from individual agencies, data was processed and anonymized into a large, combined dataset. Finally, the combined dataset was analyzed using statistical modeling software, R.

The dataset is available for public download online.

Data Sources

There were three different groups of law enforcement agencies which contributed data to this study: (1) law enforcement agencies accredited by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), which will subsequently be referred to as “accredited agencies” in this report, (2) a stratified sample of unaccredited law enforcement agencies, and (3) the Washington State Patrol. For analysis purposes of this report, accredited and unaccredited law enforcement agency data were combined into a single dataset, because they shared several commonly recorded vehicular pursuit data elements. Combined accredited and unaccredited agencies are collectively referred to as LEAs (Law Enforcement Agencies) in subsequent sections of this report. Data from the Washington State Patrol was reported separately in this report, due to its unique nature as the state-wide law enforcement agency. It also has the largest number of pursuits and combining it with other LEAs would outweigh the other data.

Accredited Agencies

Accredited law enforcement agencies are defined as those that have earned accreditation through a set of demonstrated and documented professional practices and standards as defined by WASPC. Agencies must demonstrate these practices to earn and renew accreditation. WASPC provided a list of accredited law enforcement agencies to the research team at the outset of this study, and then once more after the list was updated. As of the writing of this report in spring of 2025, 66 accredited agencies were identified for the purpose of this report. All 66 were contacted but only 64 of those agencies provided data in time for writing of the final report. Accredited agencies such as accredited local jails, the Washington State Insurance Commissioner's Office, and the Gambling Commission were not included in the sample as there was a low likelihood they would engage in vehicular pursuits independently when compared to accredited sheriffs' offices and police departments.

The proviso also specifically required the inclusion of data from accredited law enforcement agencies. The research team engaged in a sustained effort to recruit the participation of accredited law enforcement agencies, both because of necessity as laid out in the study direction, and because of their demonstrated professionalism and WASPC-approved recordkeeping practices.

Unaccredited Agencies

The research team was tasked to review a "stratified sample of unaccredited agencies." These are law enforcement agencies that did not have accreditation from WASPC at the time of the writing of this report. There are over 200 unaccredited law enforcement agencies in the state. Given the high number of unaccredited agencies, constraints of time, the team's size, and ability to analyze data to create the report by its due date, the research team developed a set of inclusion criteria to determine from which unaccredited agencies to gather data. Not all unaccredited agencies were contacted for participation due to the limitations of this study.

The research team sought to include the sheriff's office from every county in Washington state. After factoring in those sheriff's offices that were accredited, the team pursued the remaining unaccredited sheriff's offices in each county. Additionally, the team sought to include at least one police department in each county. After determining which police departments were accredited, the team attempted to include at least one unaccredited police department in counties that did not have an accredited police department, totaling 74. Eventually, 54 unaccredited agencies were included in our data analysis based on these criteria and the response rate of contacted agencies.

Washington State Patrol

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) serves a unique role in Washington state as it provides law enforcement to all 39 counties in Washington state and has primary jurisdiction over all interstates and state highways. WSP is a large law enforcement agency, with many troopers and regional offices. It is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, not by WASPC. Owing to its unique profile, WSP engages in a high number of vehicular pursuits. WSP also records slightly different data elements for each pursuit event. Due to these factors, the research team decided to report WSP's vehicular pursuit data separately from sheriffs' offices and police departments in Washington state, after receiving the approval to do so from WSP leadership.

Overview of Data Collection Procedures

The following sections describe the data collection procedures of the Vehicular Pursuit Research Team. Data collection was done in two ways: (A) law enforcement agencies were "cold called" by members of the research team to set up appointments to discuss the research project over the phone or via a Zoom session, and agency pursuit data was shared with the team. (B) If a law enforcement agency did not wish to share data with the team directly or specifically asked that a public disclosure request be made, a public disclosure request was filed. The team sought to gather three categories of data from the groups of law enforcement agencies described in the previous section: (1) general information about the agency's vehicular pursuit practices; (2) vehicular pursuit data; (3) each agency's most recent vehicular pursuit policy. All this information was then recorded and analyzed by the research team.

Data Collection Limitations

A number of limiting factors impacted the amount of data the research team was able to collect and analyze. First, the team had a limited mandate. The research project was only budgeted for and given one year to complete its work, reducing the amount of time data could be collected and analyzed. Though the research team made every effort to provide for maximum data accuracy, given the small size of the team and high amount of data received, some data entry errors may have occurred. Second, Washington state law enforcement agencies are only required by the Washington State Secretary of State's Office to retain some vehicular pursuit incident records for five years and are then free to destroy them. This guidance is set out in the Secretary of State's Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule (Version 8.0; February 2022; page 54; Sec 8.1). Due to these factors, the research team decided to collect vehicular pursuit data from January 2019 through December 2024; this period covers the time before, during, and after the major legislative changes. Additionally, not all pursuit incidents from participating agencies within that window may have been shared with

the research team, as some involved active investigations or pending court cases. Thus, only closed cases were submitted by LEAs to the study team. Third, we were not able to include Tribal police agencies, as they declined to participate. While we directly contacted five Tribal police agencies and we worked with the Tribal liaison of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to reach out to the Tribal police on our behalf, none responded. Fourth, we did not collect data on "fleds," individuals whose vehicles were "lighted up" (in which an officer or deputy turned on their emergency lights) and did not stop but in which the officer did not pursue. The reason for not including these incidents is that LEAs varied greatly on whether they collected information on these incidents. Thus, we did not believe that this very incomplete data would be useful. The total number of pursuits in this report is the total pursuits recorded by the participating LEAs. A few of the pursuits may be double counted when multiple LEAs were involved and recorded by each of the LEAs.

Not all law enforcement agencies collected each data point listed in the research team's contract with the Office of Financial Management. Part of the data were manually abstracted by law enforcement agency staff or a member of the research team, if the agencies were not able to enter data into the data collection sheet directly due to their own staff or time constraints. Additionally, we were not able to verify the accuracy of the entire data set, owing to varied recordkeeping practices, and a wide range of RMS systems. Table 1 shows the completeness of each data element; data elements obtained from the LEAs' database were marked "Available." Manually extracted data elements from police reports and records by a member of our research team were entered as "Manually Extracted by RT." Data elements that were not recorded in LEAs' database and that could not be manually extracted by the research team were coded as "Not Available." Agencies that had zero pursuits were entered as "NP" for no pursuit data. About three-quarters of LEAs' pursuit data collection systems contain the date, time, duration, maximum speed, reason for initiating pursuits, intervention used, damage to LEA's vehicle, damage to suspect's vehicle, damage to property, injury to officers, injury to suspects, injury to passengers, and injury to bystanders.

While the legislation asked to report on perceived demographic characteristics of the suspects, law enforcement leaders in Washington state uniformly said that this was impossible to do in any sort of high-speed pursuit. Thus, we only report suspect demographic characteristics when the suspect was apprehended, and the data were recorded in the police report.

Table 1: Availability of data elements in LEAs' pursuit data tracking system database or data element requiring manual abstraction by Research Team (RT)

	Overall (N=118)
Date	
Manually Extracted by RT	31 (26.3%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	83 (70.3%)
Time	
Manually Extracted by RT	31 (26.3%)
No	2 (1.7%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	81 (68.6%)
Duration	
Manually Extracted by RT	19 (16.1%)
No	19 (16.1%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	76 (64.4%)
Speed	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	8 (6.8%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	77 (65.3%)
Reason for initiating pursuits	
Manually Extracted by RT	31 (26.3%)
No	2 (1.7%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	81 (68.6%)
Request permission/notify supervisor for continuing pursuits	
Manually Extracted by RT	9 (7.6%)
No	44 (37.3%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	61 (51.7%)
Permission granted	
Manually Extracted by RT	8 (6.8%)
No	46 (39.0%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	60 (50.8%)
Reason for denial of pursuit	

Manually Extracted by RT	9 (7.6%)
No	46 (39.0%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	59 (50.0%)
Number of LEA vehicles	
Manually Extracted by RT	33 (28.0%)
No	17 (14.4%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	64 (54.2%)
Number of Suspect vehicles	
Manually Extracted by RT	34 (28.8%)
No	16 (13.6%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	64 (54.2%)
Number of Officers	
Manually Extracted by RT	33 (28.0%)
No	15 (12.7%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	66 (55.9%)
Number of LEAs	
Manually Extracted by RT	33 (28.0%)
No	18 (15.3%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	63 (53.4%)
Pursuit Interventions	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	4 (3.4%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	81 (68.6%)
Reason for ending pursuits	
Manually Extracted by RT	32 (27.1%)
No	5 (4.2%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	77 (65.3%)
Age	
Manually Extracted by RT	26 (22.0%)
No	10 (8.5%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	78 (66.1%)
Gender	
Manually Extracted by RT	27 (22.9%)
No	10 (8.5%)
NP	4 (3.4%)

Yes	77 (65.3%)
Race	
Manually Extracted by RT	26 (22.0%)
No	12 (10.2%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	76 (64.4%)
Ethnicity	
Manually Extracted by RT	10 (8.5%)
No	53 (44.9%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	51 (43.2%)
Number of Passengers	
Manually Extracted by RT	33 (28.0%)
No	16 (13.6%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	65 (55.1%)
Charges	
Manually Extracted by RT	30 (25.4%)
No	14 (11.9%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	70 (59.3%)
Damage to LEA vehicles	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	8 (6.8%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	77 (65.3%)
Damage to Suspect vehicles	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	6 (5.1%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	79 (66.9%)
Damage to property	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	9 (7.6%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	76 (64.4%)
Injury to Officers	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	5 (4.2%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	80 (67.8%)
Injury to Suspects	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)

No	4 (3.4%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	81 (68.6%)
Injury to Passengers	
Manually Extracted by RT	29 (24.6%)
No	9 (7.6%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	76 (64.4%)
Injury to Bystanders	
Manually Extracted by RT	28 (23.7%)
No	7 (5.9%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	79 (66.9%)
Death if any	
Manually Extracted by RT	30 (25.4%)
No	18 (15.3%)
NP	4 (3.4%)
Yes	66 (55.9%)

[a]RT: "Research Team"
NP: No pursuit in 4 agencies, thus data forms were not viewed

Outreach to LEAs

"Cold Calling" Law Enforcement Agencies as Initial Outreach

Initially, accredited and unaccredited agencies were "cold called" by the research team. Cold calls were unsolicited initial contacts to potential research participants initiated by the researchers to describe the study and to gauge interest in responding. All accredited, and the above-described sample of unaccredited agencies meeting the inclusion criteria were contacted via email and phone calls. Email contacts utilized a "dear colleague" form letter describing the nature and goals of the study. Phone calls used the dear colleague letter as a basis for introducing the study. Often, both emails and phone calls were used to establish initial contact with law enforcement agencies. As law enforcement agencies are very busy, repeated initial contact was often required to establish two-way communication about the study. Then, the research team was able to find out the contact information for the individual within each agency who could assist in the collection of all necessary data for the study.

Data Collection Procedures – Successful "Cold Call" Contact

Following successful contact, a member of the research team would set up an in-person, phone or Zoom meeting at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the specifics of the study and

gather basic information about the vehicular pursuit practices of each law enforcement agency. This basic information included:

- Vehicular pursuit permission protocol
- Recordkeeping practices:
  - How vehicular pursuits are logged and reviewed
  - Record Management System (RMS) used – if any, and how long it had been in use
- Technologies and techniques used in vehicular pursuit events
  - If any grant money had been sought for those technologies
- Nearby law enforcement partners with whom agencies might collaborate in vehicular pursuit events
- When each agency most recently updated its vehicular pursuit policy

After it was determined an agency was able directly share their data with the research team, a follow-up email was sent after the end of the meeting outlining the data requested from each agency. This email requested each agency to provide its vehicular pursuit data from January 2019 through December 2024, describe its recordkeeping practices for vehicular pursuit incidents, and for a copy of each agency's most recent vehicular pursuit policy. Attached to the email were the research team's vehicular pursuit data collection sheet, a summary list of data collection elements, and a data dictionary defining each of the data points sought by the research team. The email also included a general deadline of when the research team would like the completed data returned, to allow adequate time for the team to analyze the data. Later, the research team sent out a second request for law enforcement agencies' internal reports on vehicular pursuits, following similar protocols.

The research team's vehicular pursuit data collection spreadsheet was designed to allow law enforcement agencies to enter data for vehicular pursuit events within the January 2019 through December 2024 timeframe. Each row in the spreadsheet was considered one vehicular pursuit event. Individual data points of each vehicular pursuit event were recorded in the columns of each row. These vehicular pursuit event data points were:

- Date and time of the incident
- Duration of incident
- Reason for initiating pursuit
- Officer sought authorization, or notified supervisor, and if authorization was sought, whether it was granted or denied
- Number of law enforcement agencies, vehicles, and officers/deputies involved
- Use of pursuit intervention techniques, and if so, which ones
- Maximum speed during pursuit
- Reason for pursuit termination
- Number of passengers in pursued vehicle
- If suspect was apprehended: age, gender, race, ethnicity

- Charges to suspect beyond felony elude
- Damage to law enforcement agency vehicle
- Damage to suspect vehicle
- Other property damage
- Injuries to officer(s)
- Injuries to suspect(s)
- Injuries to passengers
- Injuries to bystanders
- Death(s), if any

In addition to the vehicular pursuit data elements, there was an additional tab on the data collection sheet asking how law enforcement agencies record their data elements. This tab asked for the following points:

- Do you [law enforcement agency in question] have reports on pursuits?
- How often, annually, quarterly?
- Do you have a record-keeping system for tracking pursuit incidents?
- If yes, what is the [record-keeping] system, and how long has it been in place?
- Has the system and data collection changed over time?
- What technologies do you have for pursuits, including: Star Chase, Drones, License Plate Readers, PIT maneuvers, and Grapplers?

Law enforcement agencies were given a period of several weeks to provide the research team with this data and a copy of the agency's most recent vehicular pursuit policy. A member of the research team periodically contacted these agencies to determine how the data collection was proceeding and offer assistance or answer questions if needed. In some cases, law enforcement agencies would complete the vehicular pursuit data collection sheet for the team. Some agencies would provide the research team with a similar report from their record management system, and a member of the research team would format that data set to match the overall data set. Some agencies would complete the summary sheet of data elements for each vehicular pursuit event instead of completing the vehicular pursuit data collection sheet. In this case, a member of the research team would enter that data into a unique vehicular pursuit data collection sheet for that agency. Additionally, some agencies would provide the research team with vehicular pursuit incident reports, with necessary redactions, and a member of the research team would then enter that data into a data collection sheet for that law enforcement agency. Finally, all the data was anonymized and added to our full analysis to report on statewide vehicular pursuit characteristics from accredited and unaccredited agencies.

Public Disclosure Requests

In some cases, public disclosure requests were required to gather necessary information from both accredited and unaccredited law enforcement agencies. A member of the research team would file a public disclosure request with the necessary law enforcement agencies. These requests were often filed online, either through a public records portal, email to a records officer, or a completed printed request form that was electronically submitted. Public disclosure requests to law enforcement agencies followed a basic template:

- The purpose and background of the study was introduced
- Data requested by research team:
    - Vehicular pursuit data from January 2019 through December 2024
    - The law enforcement agency's most recent vehicular pursuit policy
    - The Record Management System used by the law enforcement agency to track vehicular pursuits, and how long it has been in use

After the request was submitted, law enforcement agencies typically responded within five days to provide a timeframe for sharing the requested data. This timeframe ranged from several days to several months. Often, public disclosure data was released over several disclosures as the data became available. Disclosures often consisted of vehicular pursuit incident reports which included the data points the law enforcement agency recorded about vehicular pursuits. A member of the research team would then take these reports and create a unique vehicular pursuit data sheet for the agency to record the necessary data elements for the study. In some cases, not all data elements were present for each pursuit event owing to the record keeping practices of each law enforcement agency. As in the successful "cold call" cases, data shared via public disclosure requests was also anonymized and added to our full report. Later, a similar public disclosure request process was also utilized to request LEAs' internal reports on vehicular pursuit data, if such reports existed.

Data Extraction and Procedures

The Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) delivered data to the research team through multiple sources including the vehicular pursuit data collection sheet and summary sheets of data elements previously discussed above that we delivered to all contacted agencies, Excel reports from LEAs' pursuit tracking database, and written police reports of incidents involving pursuits. For LEAs that filled out our vehicular pursuit data collection sheet, a member of the research team inspected and verified the presence or absence of data variables for each pursuit.

For LEAs that provided summary sheets of data elements, the research team entered the data variables into a separate table for each agency with the same list of data variables as mentioned above.

Several LEAs utilize a pursuit tracking system database. For the datasets exported from the LEAs' pursuit databases, a member of the research team would extract, clean, and input the available data elements into our team's vehicular pursuit data collection sheet.

Another source of data was written police reports or written police narratives that were sent to the research team in PDF documents. The LEAs' only role in this dataset was to send the documentation containing the police report narratives that involved vehicle pursuits during our time period of interest. To obtain data variables of interest from the police reports, a member of our research team read the reports and extracted the data. Agencies' police reports vary in terms of format and information recorded. A common structure in the police reports included a "Law Incident Table" or something similar that often contains some of the variables of interest, including date, time, location, charges or offence codes, and involvements including "Arrestee(s)," and "Other Entities," which could be victims, witnesses, passengers, or other persons involved in the pursuits. These "Law Incident Tables" would sometimes include demographic information including age, gender, and race. The "Law Incident Tables" sometimes would include information on injuries and property. For information not in tables, the research team had to read and review the primary responsible officer's written narrative and supplemental narratives from other involved officers to attempt to collect the remaining information for variables of interest. Some of the agencies also included their Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data. This additional information often helped to determine the duration of the pursuit. For every available data element that was recorded in the police report's table or narrative, a member of our research team entered that information into our team's vehicular pursuit data collection sheet.

Categorization of Reported Data

Categorization of vehicular pursuit data in this report was shaped by several factors. These factors included the vehicular pursuit data points specified in the proviso to collect, the data dictionary the team used to define datapoints for LEAs in the vehicular pursuit data collection sheet, and the data points reported by LEAs in their vehicular pursuit data.

Data coding and analysis

Data received from agencies were coded as follows; "free text" refers to text in the information provided by the police that was not specifically coded by their systems.

Injury and death: injury or death of a law enforcement officer, driver, passenger, or bystander that occurred during or after a pursuit event because of the actions taken by those involved with the pursuit.

Duration: durations recorded as "<1" were coded as 0.5 minute, ">1" were coded as 2 minutes; durations recorded as "100+," "25+," "60+," "64+," "70+," and so on were coded as 100, 25, 60, 64, and 70 minutes.

Maximum speed: maximum speed recorded as "<50," "<60," "~60," "<35," ">100," and so on were coded as 50, 60, 60, 35, and 100 mph; maximum speed recorded as "115+," "40+," "70+," and so on were coded as 115, 40, and 70 mph; maximum speed recorded as "100-115," "35-40," and so on were coded as 115 and 40 mph, respectively.

Age: age recorded as "juvenile" and "40-50" were coded as 16 and 45 years old, respectively.

Reason for initiating pursuits: the reasons for initiating pursuits were grouped into the following categories and subcategories using the keywords in the reason for initiating pursuits free text. One pursuit can have multiple reasons recorded, for example, if the reason is recorded as "armed robbery, stolen vehicle, reckless driving, hit and run," the reasons for initiating pursuits include major felony crimes (armed robbery), lesser felony crimes (vehicle theft), and misdemeanors (reckless driving, hit and run).

1. ***Major Felony Crimes***
    1) Homicide: free text containing keywords such as "murder," or "homicide."
    2) Arson: free text containing keywords such as "arson."
    3) Robbery and Carjacking: free text containing keywords such as "robbery" or "carjacking."
    4) Kidnapping and False Imprisonment: free text containing keywords such as "kidnapping," "unlaw imprisonment," or "false imprisonment."
    5) Rape: free text containing keywords such as "rape."
    6) Burglary First Degree: free text containing keywords such as "armed burglary," "burglary 1," or "burglary in the first degree."
    7) Assault First/Second Degree/Assault with a deadly weapon: free text containing keywords such as "assault 1," "assault 2," "assault firearm," "assault with bb gun," "assault with firearm, "shots fired," "hitting a patrol car," "vehicular assault," "assault with a knife," "harassment with firearm," "firearm offense," "struck officer with vehicle," "suspect vehicle in shooting that just occurred," "drive by shooting," "disarming le officer," "unlaw discharge of firearm," "aimed a weapon," armed aggravated," "assault with a deadly weapon," "threatening manner with a firearm," "felony assault with weapon," "felony harassment with a firearm," "incendiary devices."
    8) Warrants for above offenses: free text containing keywords such as "wanted for assault 2 with a knife," "wanted for dv unlawful imprisonment," "robbery 1st warrant," "wanted for violent offence involving firearms," "high priority warrant," "warrants for shooting," "murder warrant," "warrant for robbery."
2. ***Lesser Felony Crimes***

1) Theft: free text containing keywords such as “theft,” “shoplifting,” “stolen property,” “possession of stolen property,” “psp,” but not “theft of motor vehicle” or “vehicle theft”
2) Burglary: free text containing keywords such as “burglary,” but not “burglary in the first degree,” “burglary 1.”
3) Vehicle theft: free text containing keywords such as “poss stolen vehicle,” “stolen vehicle,” “theft of motor vehicle,” “vehicle theft,” “stolen motorcycle,” or “tmvwop.”
4) Assault Third Degree: free text containing keywords such as “assault 3.”
5) Unlawful possession of firearm and possession of stolen firearm: free text containing keywords such as “unlaw pss firearm,” “unlawful possession of a firearm,” “pss stolen firearm,” “firearm without license,” or “loaded firearm in vehicle.”
6) Warrants for above offenses: free text containing keywords such as "wanted for unlawful possession of a firearm,” “burglary warrant,” “theft warrant,” “warrant psp.”

3. ***Misdemeanors***

1) Reckless Endangerment/reckless driving: free text containing keywords such as “reckless endangerment,” “reckless driving” “reckless.”
2) DUI: free text containing keywords such as “dui,” “driving under the influence,” “minor alcohol intoxication”
3) Hit & Run: free text containing keywords such as "hit and run,” “hit & run,” or “hit-and-run”
4) Assault Fourth Degree: free text containing keywords such as “assault 4.”
5) Domestic violence unspecified: free text only containing keywords such as “dv” or “domestic violence,” but not “dv order violation,” “felony order violation/dv,” “viol dv no contact order,” “dv assault 2,” “dv burglary,” “dv robbery,” “violation of a domestic violence no contact order,” “dv unlaw imprisonment,” “dv order violation,” “warrant dv”
6) Unlawful possession of drug: free text containing keywords such as: “drug,” “toxic substances,” “vucsa,” drg para,” “pss con_sub,” “intent to sell,” “pss of legend drug without prescription”
7) Violation of contact order: free text containing keywords such as "order violation,” “dv order violation,” “felony order violation,” “felony order violation/dv,” or “viol dv no contact order,” “violation of a domestic violence no contact order,” “community custody violator,” “probation violation.”
8) Crime unspecified: free text only containing keywords such as “suspected of crimes,” or “suspected of crime,” “crime against person,” “crime against property,” “crim conspiracy,” “crim assistance.”
9) Misdemeanor other: free text only containing keywords such as “misdemeanor,” “misd suspect,” “stalking,” “trespassing,” “false statement,” “tampering,” “draw weapon,” “interfering with reporting dv,” “domestic

threat," "vandalism," "crim inper," "intentional endangerment," "brandishing," "interference with a health care facility," "indecent exposure," "harming a police dog," "fail to reg as sex off," "disorderly conduct," "fail to give info," but not "warrant misdemeanor" or "misdemeanor warrant," "trespassing warrant."

10) Property /vehicle prowl: free text containing keywords such as "vehicle prowl," "property prowl," "prowler."
11) Obstruction: free text containing keywords such as "obstruct," "resist."
12) Warrants for the above offense or misdemeanors: containing keywords such as "warrant misdemeanor," "misdemeanor warrant," "warrant dv vcno," "trespassing warrant," "child molest warrant," "dui warrant," "dv warrant."

4. **Felony other:**
    1) Felony other: free text only containing keywords such as "felon dangerous to the public," "felon, all other," "felony," "fleeing felon," "felony-person," "felony-property," "felony crime," "felonies," "felony persons crime," "felony property crime," "felony suspect," "felony violation non-traffic," "harassment," "pss dangerous weapon," "possession of dangerous weapon," "felony harassment," "woff," "threat to kill," but not "felony theft," "felony traffic," "felony assault," "felony order violation," "felony elude," "felony warrant."
    2) Assault other: free text only containing keywords such as "assault," "assault 1-3," "assault 1-4," "assault undesignated," "felony assault," but not "assault 2," "assault1," "assault with bb gun," "assault with firearm," "assault 3," "assault 4," "vehicular assault," "felony dv assault suspect," "dv assault."
    3) Malicious mischief: free text containing keywords such as "mal/mis," "malicious mischief," "mm," or "sus mm"
    4) Sex offence: free text containing "sex offence."

5. **Felony warrant unspecified:** free text only containing keywords such as "felony warrant," "felony doc warrant," or "felony arrest warrant," "warrant woff," "warrant for felony," "warrant for multiple felonies."

6. **Traffic Infractions**
    Free text containing keywords such as: "mhp," "speed," "speeding," "traffic infraction," "criminal traffic," "traffic crime," "felony traffic," "traffic violation," "traffic offense," "fail to yield," "equipment violation," "dwls," "suspended license," "lane travel," "no plates," "no front plate," "no headlights," "no lic plate," "no license plate," "no lights," "fail to stop," "fail to obey," "fail to comply," "unsafe lane change," "non-criminal traffic," "obstructed plate," "failure to yield," "ran stop sign," "expired tabs," "expired registration," "stolen plate," "suspended driver's license," "terry stop," "refuse to comply," "failure to stop," "trip violation," "defective brakelight," "no headlight," "defective license plate light ," "defective windshield," "driving motorcycle not street legal," "driving on the sidewalk at a school," "fail to maintain lane," "atv on roadway with no helmet," "no ignition interlock," "no valid operator's license," "no valid id," "illegal u turn," "illegal camping," "illegal pass," "impeding traffic."

7. **Miscellaneous**
    1) Warrant: free text only containing keywords such as “warrant” or “wanted,” but not warrant for major /lesser felony crimes, warrant for misdemeanor, or felony warrant.
    2) Assist other LEA: free text containing keywords such as “assist,” “assisted,” “assisting,” “other agency initiated,” “did not initiate, unknown initiating agency,” “county pursuit,” “osa felony eluding,” “wsp pursuit,” “apprehended by a different agency,” “transferred to another lea.”

Reason for ending the vehicular pursuits was grouped using the reason for ending the pursuits free text. All the 13 groups are mutually exclusive, so one pursuit can only have one reason for ending.

1. *Safety concern* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “public safety,” “danger to public,” “weather condition,” “road condition,” or “speed concern.”
2. *Fled* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “ran away,” “lost of sight,” “distance too great,” “fled,” “evaded,” “eluded.”
3. *Arrest* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “arrested”
4. *Stopped by intervention* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as "forcible stop,” “pit,” “intervention,” “stop stick,” or “stopped by use of tactic,” “barricades.”
5. *LEA vehicle crash* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “LEA vehicle crash,” “damage to LEA vehicle,” or “officer vehicle collision.”
6. *Crash of the suspect vehicl*e was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “crashed,” “collision,” “into lake,” or “into body of water.”
7. *Terminated for policy* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “terminated for policy”
8. *Suspect identified* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “suspect identified.”
9. *Suspect’s vehicle stopped* was identified as the free text containing keywords such as “suspect vehicle stopped,” or “suspect stopped”
10. *Suspect’s vehicle abandoned* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “vehicle abandoned”
11. *Suspect’s vehicle malfunctioned* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “malfunction”
12. *Transferred to another LEA* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “took over by another,” “transferred,” or “continuous pursuing”
13. *Terminated no listed reason* was defined as the free text containing keywords such as “terminated” and no reason listed.

Charges of suspect. These are the same categories as outlined above for reasons for initiating pursuits.

Continuous variables were described by median and quartiles, and categorical variables were described by count and frequency. All statistical analyses were performed using R Studio 2023.6.0.421.

Human Subjects

We consulted with the Human Subjects Division of the University of Washington to ensure compliance with research ethics guidelines. The main data collection was deemed exempt from full human subjects research requirements under federal guidelines under 45 CFR 46, since the data were public records. The main body of vehicular pursuit records and reports collected for this study were either freely shared by law enforcement agencies or obtained through public disclosure requests. As there was no ethical risk to human subjects in collecting such records, the study was deemed exempt. We asked for a review of the procedures regarding interviews of individuals with lived experiences of police vehicular pursuit events. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Washington determined the interview procedures and data collection practices of this study were considered exempt under IRB research guidelines. The IRB is charged with making sure all research at the University of Washington is conducted ethically and safely by university faculty and staff. The research team was approved to conduct qualitative interviews with individuals with lived experience of police vehicular pursuit events under those conditions.

Findings

As described above, we first present data from accredited and unaccredited agencies, followed by data from the Washington State Patrol.

Pursuits by law enforcement agencies

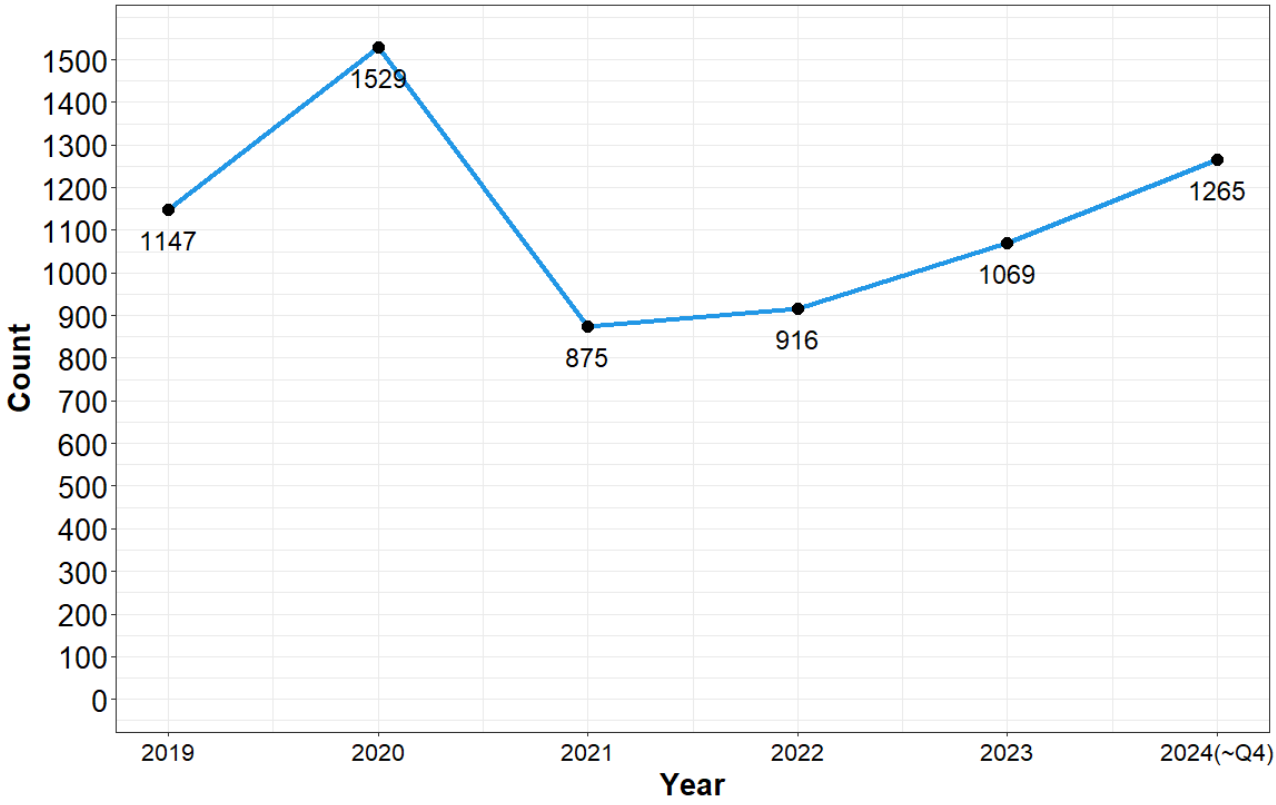
Between June 2024 and January 2025, we contacted 145 LEAs, including 66 accredited, 74 unaccredited, and five Tribal agencies. All 66 accredited and 54 unaccredited agencies out of 74 contacted have responded to our contacts. By the time of the writing of the final report, 64 accredited agencies and 54 unaccredited agencies provided us with vehicular pursuit data for a total of 118 agencies. Excluding Washington State Patrol, our sample consists of 117 city and county agencies with at least one agency from 38 out of the 39 counties in Washington state. Table 2 below indicates how that data was obtained. "Freely Shared" data was directly provided to the research team by law enforcement agencies. 75% (n=48) of accredited agencies and 51.9% (n=28) of unaccredited agencies provided their data to the research team directly. The remaining agencies required the research team to formally file a public records request. This was the case with 25% (n=16) of accredited agencies and 48.1% (n=26) of unaccredited agencies that participated in this effort.

Table 2: Data Collection Type from Participating LEAs

	Accredited (N=64)	Unaccredited (N=54)	Overall (N=118)
Number of LEAs	64 (100%)	54 (100%)	118 (100%)
Data Collection Type			
Freely Shared	48 (75%)	28 (51.9%)	76 (64.4%)
Public Records Request	16 (25%)	26 (48.1%)	42 (35.6%)

Between 2019 and the third or fourth quarter of 2024, 6,801 pursuits were recorded in 113 agencies (four agencies had 0 pursuits), including those leading the pursuits and assisting another agency. Separately, there were 4,261 pursuits recorded by the Washington State Patrol during this time. During the study time period, the highest number of pursuits was in 2020, with a sharp decline in 2021 and gradually increasing numbers subsequently.

Figure 1: Number of Pursuits between 2019 and 2024



The median (inter-quartile range) age of suspects was 30 [24, 37], with the youngest recorded as 12 and the oldest recorded as 76. More than half of the known suspects' age were aged 17 to 39. More than 50% were males, and 8% were females. 40% were white, 9.9% were Black, 9.4% were Hispanic, and 20% were non-Hispanic (Table 3), but ethnicity was missing on 71.2%.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of suspects

	Overall (N=6801)
Age (years)	
Mean (SD)	31.4 (10.3)
Median [Q1, Q3]	30.0 [24.0, 37.0]
Median (Min, Max)	30.0 (12, 76.0)
Unknown	2746 (40.4%)
Age group (years)	
<=16	174 (2.6%)
17-24	900 (13.2%)
24-39	2227 (32.7%)
40-60	705 (10.4%)

60+	49 (0.7%)
Unknown	2746 (40.4%)
Gender	
Female	576 (8.5%)
Male	3947 (58.0%)
Unknown	2278 (33.5%)
Race	
AIAN	124 (1.8%)
Asian	202 (3.0%)
Black	676 (9.9%)
More than one race	11 (0.2%)
White	2718 (40.0%)
Unknown	3070 (45.1%)
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	636 (9.4%)
Non-Hispanic	1320 (19.4%)
Unknown	4845 (71.2%)

More than half of vehicular pursuits happened between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., 75% ended within 6 minutes, and the longest duration was 410 minutes. Twenty-five percent of the pursuits had a maximum speed below 60 mph, 50% were between 60-93 mph, and 25% were above 95 mph. The highest speed was 160 mph (Table 4).

Table 4: Time, duration, and maximum speed

	Overall (N=6801)
Time of the day	
0am-6am	1891 (27.8%)
6am-12pm	858 (12.6%)
12pm-6pm	1265 (18.6%)
6pm-12am	2261 (33.2%)
Unknown	526 (7.7%)
Duration	
Mean (SD)	6.85 (33.8)
Median [Q1, Q3]	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]
Median (Min, Max)	3.00 (0.170, 1720)
Unknown	1426 (21.0%)
Maximum speed	
Mean (SD)	75.9 (26.6)
Median [Q1, Q3]	80.0 [60.0, 95.0]
Median (Min, Max)	80.0 (1.00, 160)
Unknown	1606 (23.6%)

The most common reasons listed for initiating pursuits were traffic infractions (30.7%) and misdemeanors (28.4%). Major felony crimes were the listed reason for 7.1% of pursuits, lesser felony offenses, including vehicle theft, was listed for 10.6%, and other felony offenses was listed for 17.7%.

Table 5: Reasons for Initiating Pursuits

		Overall (N=6801)
Major Felony Crimes		485 (7.1%)
Homicide	25 (5.2%)	
Arson	5 (1.0%)	
Robbery	224 (46.2%)	
Kidnapping	32 (6.6%)	
Rape	4 (0.8%)	
Burglary First Degree	6 (1.2%)	
Assault 1st/2nd Degree/with deadly weapon	233 (48.0%)	
Warrant for above offenses	9 (1.9%)	
Lesser Felony Crimes		724 (10.6%)
Vehicle theft	572 (79.0%)	
Theft	74 (10.2%)	
Burglary other	78 (10.8%)	
Assault 3rd Degree	10 (1.4%)	
Unlawful possession of Firearm	5 (0.7%)	
Warrant for above offenses	3 (0.4%)	
Misdemeanors		1931 (28.4%)
Assault 4th Degree	9 (0.5%)	
Domestic violence unspecified	58 (3.0%)	
DUI	999 (51.7%)	
Reckless driving/endangerment	663 (34.3%)	
Hit and run	57 (3.0%)	
Crime unspecified	238 (12.3%)	
Misdemeanor other	215 (11.1%)	
Unlawful possession of drug	15 (0.8%)	
Order violation	24 (1.2%)	
Warrant for above offenses	7 (0.4%)	
Vehicle Prowl	13 (0.7%)	
Obstruction	12 (0.6%)	
Felony Other		1203 (17.7%)
Felony other	1147 (95.3%)	
Assault other	44 (3.7%)	
Malicious Mischief	12 (1.0%)	
Sex Offense	2 (0.2%)	
Felony warrant unspecified		50 (0.7%)

Traffic Infractions	2085 (30.7%)
Warrant unspecified	223 (3.3%)
Assist other LEA	117 (1.7%)
Unknown	238 (3.5%)

Twelve percent of the pursuits were terminated because of safety concerns, including public safety, weather, speeding, and road conditions; 5% were terminated because of the agency's policy; 11% were stopped by LEA pursuit interventions and tactics; and 15% were stopped by suspect's vehicle crash (Table 6).

Table 6 The reasons for termination

	Overall (N=6801)
Terminated without a listed reason	1148 (16.9%)
Suspect's vehicle crashed	1035 (15.2%)
Terminated for safety concern	834 (12.3%)
Stopped by intervention	782 (11.5%)
Suspect stopped	665 (9.8%)
Suspect fled	476 (7.0%)
Terminated for policy	330 (4.9%)
Suspect abandoned vehicle	334 (4.9%)
Suspect's vehicle malfunctioned	95 (1.4%)
Transferred to another LEA	62 (0.9%)
Lea's vehicle crashed/malfunctioned	11 (0.2%)
Suspect identified	25 (0.4%)
Suspect arrested	1 (0.0%)
unknown	1003 (14.8%)

Most pursuits did not involve technical interventions (77.6%), 19% used one intervention, and 4% used two or three interventions (Table 7). The most common interventions were spike strips and/or stop sticks (tire deflation devices) (13%) and PIT (10%); other interventions included ramming, box-in, roadblock, air support, drone, and star chase.

Table 7: Interventions used in pursuits

	Overall (N=6801)
Number of interventions used	
0	5277 (77.6%)
1	1290 (19.0%)
2	214 (3.1%)
3	20 (0.3%)
PIT	672 (9.9%)
Stop Stick/ Spike	872 (12.8%)
Ramming	63 (0.9%)
Box In	47 (0.7%)
Roadblock	33 (0.5%)
Air support/drone	22 (0.3%)
Star chase	33 (0.5%)
Unspecified	36 (0.5%)

Of the pursuits that were known and ended with criminal charges: 20% ended with one charge, 10% with two charges, and 9% with more than two charges. Six percent of the pursuits with known charges were for major felony crimes, with 12% lesser felony crimes, and 6% for other felonies. The most common charges at 24.4% were for misdemeanors. Traffic Infractions were 11.5% of the charges, and unspecified Warrants were 3% of charges. Criminal charges were unknown in 15.3% of cases.

Table 8: Charges (other than eluding) of suspect

	Overall (N=6801)
Major Felony Crimes	390 (5.7%)
Homicide	21 (5.4%)
Arson	3 (0.8%)
Robbery	172 (44.1%)
Kidnapping	54 (13.8%)
Rape	6 (1.5%)
Burglary First Degree	6 (1.5%)
Assault 1st/2nd Degree/ with deadly weapon	168 (43.1%)
Warrant for the above offenses	3 (0.8%)
Lesser Felony Crimes	809 (11.9%)
Vehicle theft	523 (64.6%)
Theft	143 (17.7%)
Burglary unspecified	81 (10.0%)

Assault 3rd Degree	24 (3.0%)
Unlawful possession of Firearm	115 (14.2%)
Warrant for above offenses	3 (0.4%)
Misdemeanors	1660 (24.4%)
Assault 4th Degree	22 (1.3%)
Domestic violence unspecified	41 (2.5%)
DUI	727 (43.8%)
Reckless driving/endangerment	419 (25.2%)
Hit and run	245 (14.8%)
Crime unspecified	7 (0.4%)
Misdemeanor other	72 (4.3%)
Unlawful possession of drug	229 (13.8%)
Order violation	51 (3.1%)
Vehicle prowl	13 (0.8%)
Obstruction	405 (24.4%)
Warrant for above offenses	14 (0.8%)
Felony Other	431 (6.3%)
Felony other	186 (43.2%)
Assault other	188 (43.6%)
Malicious Mischief	93 (21.6%)
Sex Offense	4 (0.9%)
Felony warrant, unspecified	42 (0.6%)
Traffic Infractions	780 (11.5%)
Warrant unspecified	202 (3.0%)
Number of charges	
0	3934 (57.9%)
Elude Only	132 (1.9%)
1	1387 (20.4%)
2	709 (10.4%)
≥3	639 (9.4%)

*Note: 0 = all recorded pursuit incidents in our sample that had no charges listed including data sets that did not report charges, pursuits in which suspect(s) successfully evaded police capture and were not apprehended, and suspects who did not receive any criminal charges after police stopped the pursued vehicle**.**
*Elude Only = pursuits that suspects had no other charges than Felony Elude.

Regarding the information of officers requesting permission or notifying supervisors for continuing pursuit, 58% of the pursuits did not collect it in the agency's data system, 30% of them did request/notify supervisors, and 5% did not notify supervisor (Table 9). Among those requested/notified supervisors, 87% were granted permission for continuing pursuits, 5% were not requesting permission, and 6% were not granted permission (including 31 % due to out-of-policy, and 50% due to public safety). The information was unknown for 7% of cases.

Table 9: Requested permission /notified supervisor for continuing pursuits

	Overall (N=6801)
Requested permission/notified supervisor	2065 (30.4%)
Permission granted	1805 (87.4%)
Not ask for permission, notified supervisor	109 (5.3%)
Suspect vehicle crashed before time to respond	1 (0.0%)
Permission denied	121 (5.9%)
Denied due to out of policy	*37 (30.6%)*
Denied due to public safety	*60 (49.6%)*
Denied due to other reason	*16 (13.2%)*
Denied reason unknown	*8 (6.6%)*
Permission granted unknown	29 (1.4%)
Did not request permission /notify supervisor	306 (4.5%)
Not Collected in agency's system	3972 (58.4%)
Unknown	458 (6.7%)

Table 10 shows that about 30 – 55 % of the records of pursuit did not have the number of agencies, LEA vehicles, officers, suspects' vehicles, passengers involved because the agency's data system did not collect the data. Nearly half of the pursuits involved only one agency (41%), 38% involved only one LEA vehicle, 35% involved only one officer, 64% were confirmed to involve only one suspect vehicle and 28.5% did not have passengers in the fleeing vehicles. Due to some pursuits involving multiple agencies, data may be shared by multiple agencies or in some cases duplicated. This can be due to current recordkeeping practices, and the lack of a unified statewide recordkeeping system. However, due to the variance of available vehicular pursuit incident data each agency, the proportion of duplicated pursuit incidents cannot be estimated.

Table 10: Characteristics of Pursuits

	Overall (N=6801)
Number of LE agencies involved	
1	2814 (41.4%)
1 or more	13 (0.2%)
2 or more	1410 (20.7%)
Unknown	2564 (37.7%)
Number of LE Vehicles involved in the pursuit	
1	2603 (38.3%)
1 or more	63 (0.9%)
2	1018 (15.0%)
2 or more	48 (0.7%)

3 or more	942 (13.9%)
Unknown	2127 (31.3%)
Number of LE officers involved	
1	2409 (35.4%)
1 or more	61 (0.9%)
2	1003 (14.7%)
2 or more	49 (0.7%)
3	518 (7.6%)
3 or more	1 (0.0%)
4 or more	491 (7.2%)
Unknown	2269 (33.4%)
Number of suspect vehicles involved	
1	4373 (64.3%)
1 or more	6 (0.1%)
2 or more	76 (1.1%)
Unknown	2346 (34.5%)
Number of passengers in the fleeing vehicle	
1	760 (11.2%)
0	1937 (28.5%)
1 or more	14 (0.2%)
2 or more	333 (4.9%)
Unknown	3757 (55.2%)

*1 = 1 confirmed agency, vehicle, or personnel by Research Team (RT).
*2 = 2 confirmed agencies, vehicles, or personnel by RT.
*3 = 3 confirmed agencies, vehicles, or personnel by RT.
*1 or more = 1 known and confirmed agency, vehicles, or personnel by RT but due to the lack of specificity in the data there could be more agencies, vehicles, or personnel that were not reported.
*2 or more = 2 known and confirmed agencies, vehicles, or personnel by RT but due to the lack of specificity in the data there could be more agencies, vehicles, or personnel that were not reported.
*3 or more = 3 known and confirmed agencies, vehicles, or personnel by RT but due to the lack of specificity in the data there could be more agencies, vehicles, or personnel that were not reported.
*4 or more = 4 known and confirmed agencies, vehicles, or personnel by RT but due to the lack of specificity in the data there could be more agencies, vehicles, or personnel that were not reported.

Table 11 shows that the majority of pursuits did not result in injuries, deaths, or property damage. Suspect drivers were injured in 7.6% of pursuits. Officers were injured in 2.4%, passengers were injured in 2.5%, and bystanders were injured in 2.6%. The most common property damage was to suspect driver's vehicle at 25%, followed by other resultant property damage at 12%, with damage to LEA vehicle being only at 9%. Our sample reported 22 deaths with the highest number being suspect drivers (17).

Table 11 Pursuits that resulted in injury, damage, or death

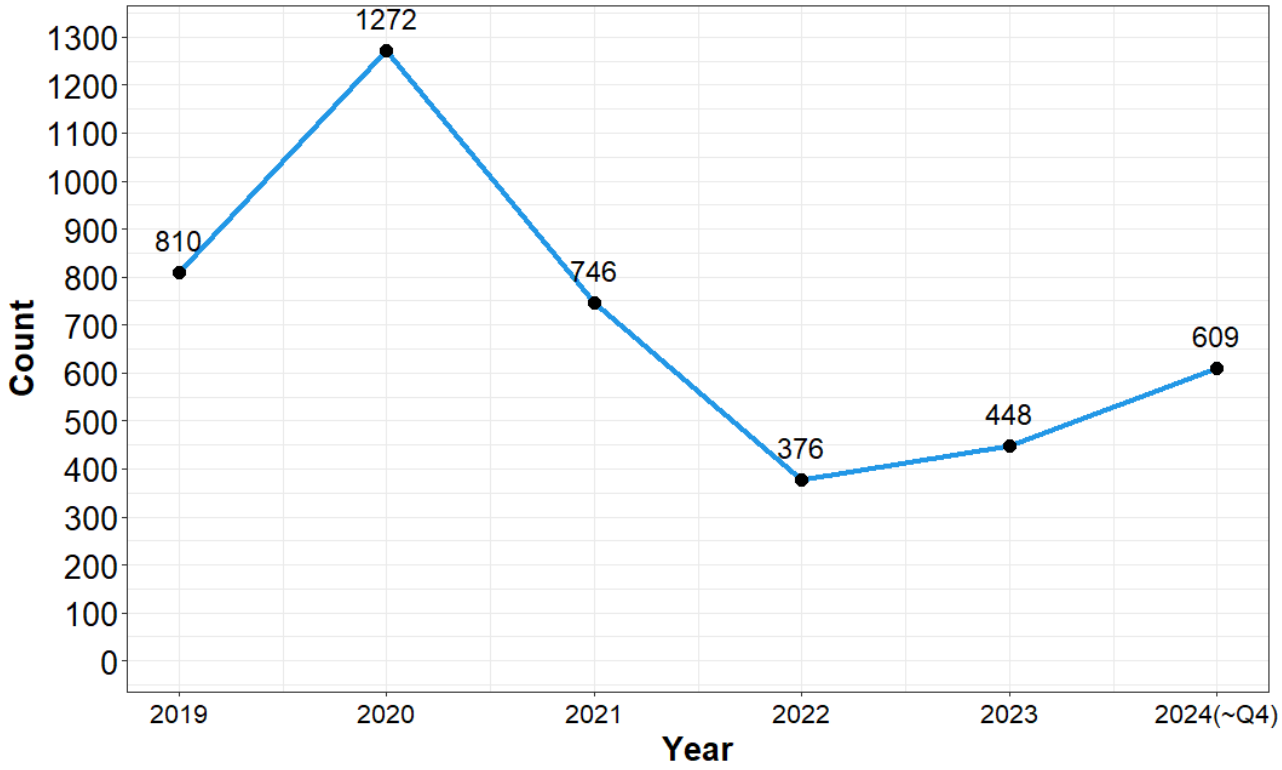
	Overall (N=6801)
Officer injury	
No	6416 (94.3%)
Yes	161 (2.4%)
Unknown	224 (3.3%)
Suspect injury	
No	6191 (91.0%)
Yes	515 (7.6%)
Unknown	95 (1.4%)
Passenger injury	
No	5618 (82.6%)
Yes	169 (2.5%)
Unknown	1014 (14.9%)
Bystander injury	
No	6333 (93.1%)
Yes	176 (2.6%)
Unknown	292 (4.3%)
Damage to LEA vehicle	
No	5596 (82.3%)
Yes	609 (9.0%)
Unknown	596 (8.8%)
Damage to suspect vehicle	
No	4642 (68.3%)
Yes	1710 (25.1%)
Unknown	449 (6.6%)
Property damage	
No	5300 (77.9%)
Yes	837 (12.3%)
Unknown	664 (9.8%)
Death of officer	
No	5930 (87.2%)
Yes	1 (0.0%)
Unknown	870 (12.8%)
Death of suspect	
No	6044 (88.9%)
Yes	17 (0.3%)
Unknown	740 (10.9%)
Death of passenger	
No	5922 (87.1%)
Yes	2 (0.0%)

Unknown	877 (12.9%)
Death of bystander	
No	5923 (87.1%)
Yes	2 (0.0%)
Unknown	876 (12.9%)

Pursuits by Washington State Patrol

Similar to data from the LEAs in the state, the highest number of pursuits by the WSP during the study period was in 2020. This number decreased by 70% to 376 in 2022.

Figure 2: Number of WSP Pursuits between 2019 and 2024



Most of the pursuits by the WSP occurred in the evening or night. Pursuits were generally short, lasting for an average of four minutes, and 75% were 10 minutes long or less. The speed of the pursuits was high at an average of 90 mph, with 25% estimated at greater than 110 mph.

Table 12: Time, duration, and maximum speed, WSP pursuit data 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Time	
0 am-6 am	1324 (31.1%)
6 am-12 pm	602 (14.1%)
12 pm-6 pm	589 (13.8%)
6 pm-12 am	1239 (29.1%)
Unknown	507 (11.9%)
Duration	
Mean (SD)	10.4 (42.4)
Median [Q1, Q3]	4.00 [2.00, 10.0]
Median (Min, Max)	4.00 (0, 953)
Unknown	13 (0.3%)
Speed	
Mean (SD)	90.1 (27.1)
Median [Q1, Q3]	96.0 [70.0, 110]
Median (Min, Max)	96.0 (0, 175)
Unknown	14 (0.3%)

Traffic Infractions were more than half the reasons WSP initiated pursuits with 64% pursuits being initiated for infractions such as speeding, unsafe lane travel, and other traffic violations. Misdemeanors were the next most common reason for initiating a pursuit at 21%. Major felonies were the reason for initiating 3% of the pursuits, and lesser felonies were 8%.

Table 13: Reasons for initiating pursuits, WSP pursuit data 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Major Felony Crimes	140 (3.3%)
Homicide	12 (8.6%)
Arson	2 (1.4%)
Robbery	45 (32.1%)
Kidnapping	9 (6.4%)
Rape	2 (1.4%)
Assault 1st/2nd Degree/ with deadly weapon	74 (52.9%)
Lesser Felony Crimes	331 (7.8%)
Vehicle theft	294 (88.8%)
Theft	26 (7.9%)
Burglary other	6 (1.8%)

Assault 3rd Degree	5 (1.5%)
Misdemeanors	880 (20.7%)
Assault 4th Degree	11 (1.3%
Domestic violence unspecified	2 (0.2%)
DUI	391 (44.4%)
Reckless driving/endangerment	387 (44.0%)
Hit and run	60 (6.8%)
Crime unspecified	6 (0.7%)
Misdemeanor other	21 (2.4%)
Unlawful possession of drug	8 (0.9%)
Order violation	3 (0.3%)
Warrant for above offenses	1 (0.1%)
Vehicle Prowl	2 (0.2%)
Obstruction	3 (0.3%)
Felony Other	19 (0.4%)
Felony other	6 (31.6%)
Assault other	13 (68.4%)
Felony warrant unspecified	6 (0.1%)
Traffic Infractions	2727 (64.0%)
Warrant unspecified	1 (0.0%)

The WSP data does not provide reasons for terminating pursuits at the same level of granular detail that LEAs in the state generally provided.

Table 14: Reasons for termination, WSP pursuit data, 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Pursuing vehicle and/or pursued vehicle crash	772 (18.1%)
pursued vehicle voluntarily stopped	907 (21.3%)
pursued vehicle disabled	791 (18.6%)
pursued vehicle escaped	640 (15.0%)
pursuit continued by another agency	109 (2.6%)
WSP or LEA terminated pursuit	1888 (44.3%)

In 65% of pursuits by WSP, no interventions were reported being used (Table 15). Most commonly used were spikes and PIT maneuvers. Other interventions were used much less commonly. No data was supplied on use of air support.

Table 15: Interventions used, WSP pursuit data, 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Number of interventions used	
0	2770 (65.0%)
1	1134 (26.6%)
2	351 (8.2%)
3	6 (0.1%)
PIT	708 (16.6%)
Spike	1124 (26.4%)
Ramming	9 (0.2%)
Roadblock	13 (0.3%)

The WSP data only provides the most serious charge to the suspect driver. The charge of Felony Elude, which is willingly and knowingly evading a LEA vehicle, was the most common serious charge at 56%. Major felony crimes were 5% of the pursuits, lesser felony crimes were 6%, and Misdemeanors were 5%. Traffic Infractions were only 1.6% of pursuits and the charges were unknown for 28% of the pursuits. It is important to note that a pursuit is only initiated when the suspect driver takes actions to evade a stop by WSP when drivers take evasive actions. It is quite possible that while a simple traffic infraction was the original impetus to initiate the contact, the evading vehicle occupant was involved in something more serious, made the decision to evade, and the traffic infraction was no longer the primary reason or focus for any subsequent citation/arrest.

Table 16: Charges (other than eluding) WSP pursuit data, 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Major Felony Crimes	208 (4.9%)
Homicide	17 (8.2%)
Arson	1 (0.5%)
Robbery	36 (17.3%)
Kidnapping	15 (7.2%)
Rape	1 (0.5%)
Burglary First Degree	2 (1.0%)
Assault 1st/2nd Degree/with deadly weapon	138 (66.3%)
Lesser Felony Crimes	262 (6.1%)
Vehicle theft	204 (77.9%)
Theft	9 (3.4%)
Burglary unspecified	6 (2.3%)
Assault 3rd Degree	21 (8.0%)
Unlawful possession of Firearm	25 (9.5%)

Misdemeanors	194 (4.6%)
Assault 4th Degree	2 (1.0%)
DUI	128 (66.0%)
Reckless driving/endangerment	24 (12.4%)
Hit and run	12 (6.2%)
Crime unspecified	5 (2.6%)
Misdemeanor other	2 (1.0%)
Unlawful possession of drug	29 (14.9%)
Order violation	1 (0.5%)
Obstruction	6 (3.1%)
Felony Other	182 (4.3%)
No charge other than eluding	2371 (55.6%)
Traffic Infractions	69 (1.6%)
Charges unknown	1200 (28.2%)

There was one WSP officer death in a pursuit over this five-year period, occurring in 2020. Three suspects died during the pursuit, and one passenger/bystander was killed. Injuries were fairly common, with 9.3% of the WSP pursuits resulting in a trooper being injured, which was twice as high as the proportion of pursuits resulting in suspects injured. WSP vehicles were damaged in about 1 in every 50 pursuits. The WSP did not include property damage.

Table 17: Injury, death, and vehicle/property damage, WSP pursuit data, 2019-2024

	Overall (N=4261)
Injury	
Trooper	397 (9.3%)
Suspect	178 (4.2%)
Passenger/bystander	29 (0.7%)
Death	
Trooper	1 (0.0%)
Suspect	3 (0.1%)
Passenger/bystander	1 (0.0%)
Damage	
WSP vehicle	102 (2.4%)
Suspect vehicle	528 (12.4%)
Property damage*	NA

* WSP does not collect property damage data

Reports used for internal review of pursuit statistics

The legislative study direction required the research team to review available data on internal reports utilized by LEAs to analyze vehicular pursuit statistics. According to WASPC (WASPC 2025 Accreditation Policy and Procedures, pg. 23), all accredited agencies are required to conduct an annual review of vehicular pursuit events at the command staff level as a part of obtaining and maintaining their accreditation. WASPC states:

> *Agencies require ongoing first-level supervisory and administrative review of these high liability incidents [Vehicle Pursuits, Use of Force Incidents, Internal Investigations, and Bias Based Profiling Incidents]. Additionally, an annual review and analysis of these incidents shall be conducted at the command level, with approval by the CEO, and can be used as an early warning system. Agencies should address policy, procedure, training and/or personnel issues identified during this review process.* (pg. 23)

The annual review process is not standardized, creating variation in this practice among accredited agencies. However, in reviewing the accreditation manual and checking with WASPC, an annual review of vehicle pursuits by accredited agencies should include:

- A review of the facts of each pursuit event.
- How those facts reflected the training and practices of law enforcement officers and their adherence to vehicular pursuit policy and LEA vehicular pursuit procedures.
- How the above may reveal patterns or trends in the LEA's vehicular pursuit practices, and a reflection of how those practices can be amended for future improvement.

After contacting the 117 accredited and unaccredited agencies and the WSP (n=118), 61% (n=72) agencies shared an internal vehicular pursuit analysis report with the research team, 32% (n=38) reported they did not have such a report, and 7% (n=8) did not respond, and were categorized as "unknown." These details are documented in Table 18.

Table 18: Vehicular Pursuit Internal Analysis Reports

Overall	**(N=118)**
Internal Report Analysis Report Time Frame	
Yes	**72 (61%)**
Annual	63 (87.5%)
As Needed/Annual	7 (9.7%)
Quarterly	1 (1.4%)
Monthly/YTD/Annual	1 (1.4%)
No	**38 (32%)**
Unknown	**8 (7%)**
Internal Analysis Report Format	
Yes	**(N=72)**

Annual Report	28 (38.9%)
Memo to LEA leadership	34 (47.2%)
RMS Report	5 (6.9%)
Other	5 (6.9%)

Data Elements in Agencies with Internal Reports			
Yes	**(N=72)**		
	Present	Not Present	Unknown
Case/Incident #	20 (27.8%)	51 (70.8%)	1 (1.4%)
Date	18 (25%)	53 (73.6%)	1 (1.4%)
Violations	53 (73.6%)	18 (25%)	1 (1.4%)
Termination	58 (80.6%)	13 (18.1%)	1 (1.4%)
Interventions	46 (63.9%)	25 (34.7%)	1 (1.4%)
Speed	16 (22.2%)	55 (76.4%)	1 (1.4%)
Injuries	30 (41.7%)	41 (56.9%)	1 (1.4%)
Collision	42 (58.3%)	29 (40.3%)	1 (1.4%)
Conditions	24 (33.3%)	47 (65.3%)	1 (1.4%)
In/Out Policy	55 (76.4%)	16 (22.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Training	45 (62.5%)	26 (36.1%)	1 (1.4%)
Narrative Summary	23 (31.9%)	48 (66.7%)	1 (1.4%)
Tables	32 (44.4%)	39 (54.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Visuals	17 (23.6%)	54 (75%)	1 (1.4%)
Supervisor Notification	39 (54.2%)	32 (44.4%)	1 (1.4%)

All 118 LEAs who participated in this study were asked if they utilized an internal reporting system for analyzing vehicular pursuit statistics and trends. The team defined an internal analysis report as a summary of vehicular pursuit trends over a set period, a level of analysis beyond reviewing each vehicular pursuit incident after it occurs. For example, a higher level of vehicular pursuit internal analysis could include (but may not include all the following points and are not limited to them): a short narrative of vehicular pursuit incidents over a year, graphs and tables summarizing times in which vehicular pursuits are likely to occur, reflection on available vehicular pursuit intervention equipment and methodology, reflection on recordkeeping practices, ideas for future training, and reflection on the LEA's vehicular pursuit policy. All 118 LEAs review vehicular pursuit incidents after they occur, however this portion of the report required asking if LEAs had a more systematic internal analysis. WASPC-accredited agencies must have some sort of internal analysis of vehicular pursuits, though WASPC does not specifically define the format of analysis.

The timeframe varied for LEAs reporting they utilized an internal analysis report for vehicular pursuit incidents. 87.5% (n=63) reported utilizing an annual time frame, 9.7% (n=7) reported utilizing an as needed/annual format, in which the analyzed vehicular pursuit incidents on a collective rolling basis, and then for an entire year. 1.4% (n=1) reported utilizing a quarterly

time frame. 1.4% (n=1) reported using a mixed internal analysis time frame of monthly, year to date, and annual analysis.

The format of the internal analysis of vehicular pursuit incidents varied among agencies who replied they utilized such a report. Of the agencies who utilized an internal analysis report of vehicular pursuit incidents (n=72), 38.9% (n=28) characterized their internal analysis as an annual report; 47.2% (n=34) characterized their internal analysis as a memo to LEA leadership; 6.9% (n=5) utilized a report drawn from the RMS system; and 6.9% (n=5) were characterized by the team as "other." LEAs in the other category may have used a table created in Excel, an analytical Word Document, a PowerPoint report, or other executive summary to express and analyze their vehicular pursuit incident data internally. It should be noted that the level of detail, length, and availability of different elements of analysis varied widely within each category. For example, two different LEAs might categorize their internal analysis of vehicular pursuit incidents as "memo," but the content and length of those memos differed. Therefore, these above formats should be considered generalized categories, not exactly delineated internal report types.

The data elements contained within each internal analysis report for vehicular pursuit incidents (n=72) varied widely by LEA. There is no statewide standard, or even a requirement for an internal analysis of vehicular pursuit incidents. LEAs are free to choose (1) if they have an internal analysis report for vehicular pursuit incidents, and (2) the format for that internal analysis. For example, some LEA's internal analysis reports of vehicular pursuit incidents took the shape of a written narrative spanning one or several pages, while others included graphs, tables, and short reflections. Some were a blend of those formats. The wide variety of internal analysis report formats presented challenges to the research team in identifying and studying key data elements across the reports.

The following data elements were chosen by the research team as common enough between the internal reports that they could be displayed here for analysis purposes. For purposes of this study, if a data element such as "termination," defined as how a vehicular pursuit ended, was present either in a written narrative, table, or visualization (such as a bar graph), it was categorized as "present." Counter to this, if a data point was not available in a written narrative, table, or visualization it was marked "not present." "Unknown" was utilized if an agency told the research team they had an internal analysis report of vehicular pursuit statistics yet, had not furnished the report to the team in time for analyzing the data elements within the report. The following list describes the presence of each of the common elements identified by the research team across the LEAs' internal analysis reports of vehicular pursuit incidents.

- **Case/Incident #:** Defined as specific vehicular pursuit incident's identifying case or incident numbers, which would allow someone reading the internal analysis report to go back and look at a specific case file in more detail, these identifiers were present in 27.8% (n=20); not present in 70.8% (n=51); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.

- **Date**: Defined as the specific date of a vehicular pursuit incident, dates were present in 25% (n=18); not present in 73.6% (n=53); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Violations**: Defined as the suspected violation of the driver pursued in a vehicular pursuit incident, violation details were present in 73.6% (n=53); not present in 25% (n=18); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Termination**: Defined as a description or categorization of how a vehicular pursuit incident ended, termination details were present in 80.6% (n=58); not present in 18.1% (n=13); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Interventions**: Defined as a description or categorization of the equipment and techniques utilized by an LEA to end a vehicular pursuit, intervention details were present in 63.9% (n=46); not present in 34.7% (n=25); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Speed**: Defined as an exact measure of the speed of a vehicular pursuit incident, a range of speeds in a table or visualization, or a description such "a high rate of speed" or "over the posted speed limit," speed details were present in 22.2% (n=16); not present in 76.4% (n=55); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Injuries**: Defined as bodily injuries to anyone directly or indirectly involved in a vehicular pursuit incident, mentioned in a narrative, or listed in a table or visualization, injury details were present in 41.7% (n=30); not present in 56.9% (n=41); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Collisions**: Defined as vehicle collisions mentioned in a narrative, or listed in table or visualization, collision details were present in 58.3% (n=42); not present in 40.3% (n=29); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Conditions**: Defined as one or more of weather, roadway, and traffic conditions described in a narrative, or listed in a table or visualization, conditions details were present in 33.3% (n=24); not present in 65.3% (n=47); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **In/Out of Policy**: Defined as the mention of an LEA officer's actions during a vehicular pursuit being in or out of an LEA's vehicular pursuit policy, described in a narrative, or listed in a table or visualization, in and out of policy elements were present in 76.4% (n=55); not present in 22.2% (n=16); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Training**: Defined as the mention of training, proactive or otherwise, in a narrative, or listed in a table or visualization, training details were present in 62.5% (n=45); not present in 36.1% (n=26): and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.

- **Narrative Summary**: Defined as a written narrative summary of one or more vehicular pursuit incidents, regardless of length, narrative details were present in 31.9% (n=23); not present in 66.7% (n=48); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Tables**: Defined as one or more tables of categorical or percentage numerical data of vehicular pursuit incidents, tables were present in 44.4% (n=32); not present in 54.2% (n=39); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Visuals**: Defined as one or more graphs or charts displaying vehicular pursuit incident data, visuals were present in 23.6% (n=17); not present in 75% (n=54); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.
- **Supervisor Notification**: Defined as the mention of a law enforcement officer driving in a vehicular pursuit notifying a supervisor in a narrative, or displayed in a table or visualization, supervisor notification elements were present in 54.2% (n=39); not present in 44.4% (n=32); and unknown in 1.4% (n=1) among the LEAs who shared internal vehicular pursuit incident analysis reports.

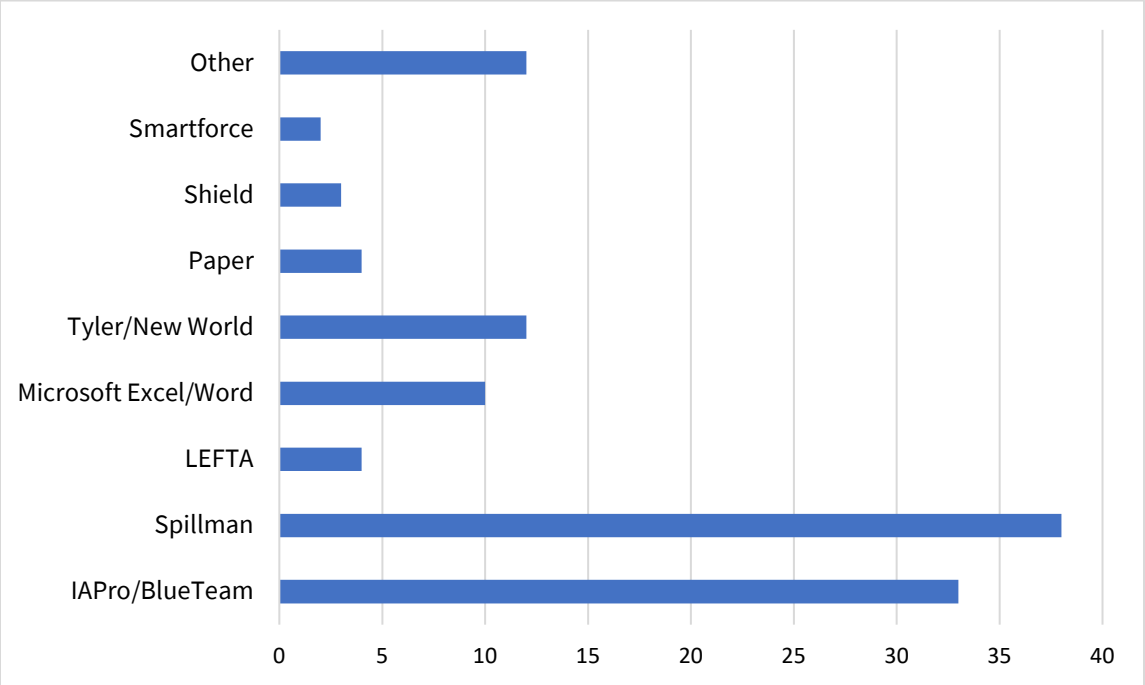
Record management systems used by LEAs

As per the legislative study direction, we collected information on the recording management systems used by agencies. The Recording Management System (RMS) Spillman was the most common RMS with 32.2% (n=38) of LEAs reporting they used this system to track and monitor vehicle pursuits. Spillman is a single-source database that is used to track investigations, reports, and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data (*Spillman Records Management – Motorola Solutions,* n.d.).

IAPro was the second most used RMS, which 28.0% (n=33) of our sample reported using to track pursuits. IAPro is software that was released in 1998 to meet the requirements of professional standards and internal affairs units (*The IAPRO Solution*, 2023). BlueTeam, the front-line software of IAPro, is a web-based application which LEA personnel can use to input and manage incidents of pursuits, use-of-force, vehicle accidents, and complaints.

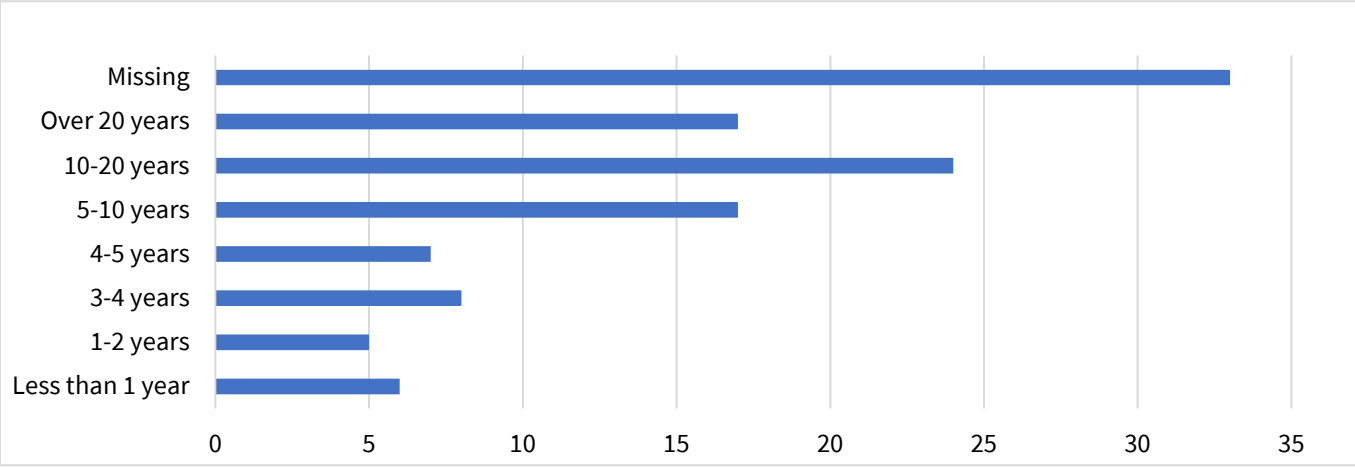
Of the remaining LEAs in our sample, 10.2% (n=12) reported using Tyler/New World as the their RMS system for pursuits, 8.5% (n=10) reported using Microsoft Office programs, 3.4% (n=4) reported using LEFTA, , 3.4% (n=4) reported using paper documents, , 2.5% (n=3) reported using Shield, , 1.7% (n=2) reported using Smartforce, and 10.2% (n=12) reported using a different RMS system than the previously mentioned systems.

Figure 3: Record Management Systems Reported Used by LEA (N=118)



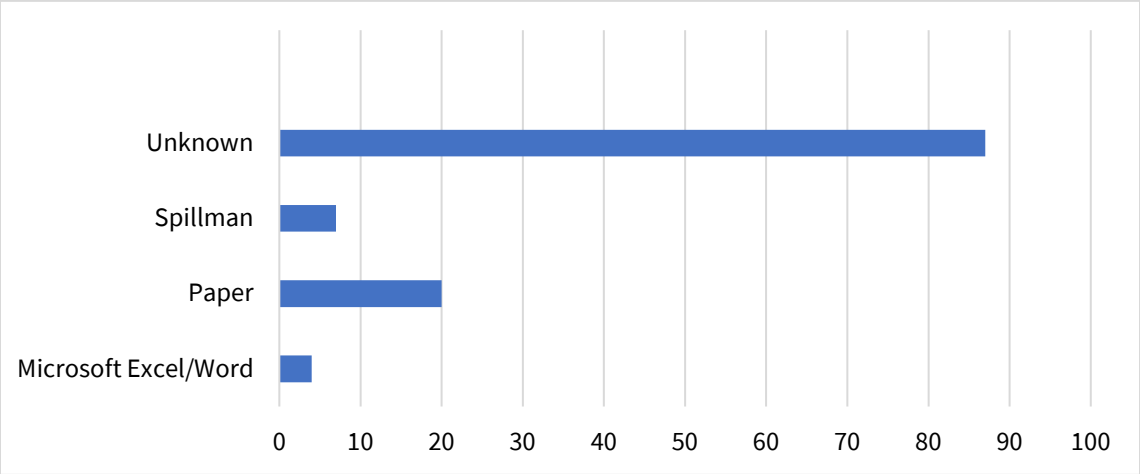
What year and the duration of time the LEA's started using their current RMS varied. Of the LEAs in our sample, 20.3% (n=24) reported using their current RMS for 10–20 years and 14.4% (n=17) reported 5–10 years, 5.9% (n=7) reported using their current RMS for 4–5 years, 6.8% (n=8) reported 3–4 years, 4.2% (n=5) reported 1–2 years, and 5.1% (n=6) reported having their current RMS for less than 1 year. The remaining 28.8% (n=34) of LEAs was reported as "Missing" due to either the LEA did not provide the information or were unable to recall when RMS came into practice.

Figure 4: Record Management System History (N=118)



Most LEAs in our sample did not recall or provide information of their previous RMS, with 73.7% (n=87) RMS is reported "Missing." Paper documents were the most common form of RMS for pursuits with 16.9% (n=20) LEAs reporting they used paper before their current system. Of the remaining LEAs, 5.9% (n=7) reported Spillman, and 3.4% (n=4) reported Microsoft Excel/Word as their previous RMS for pursuits.

Figure 5: Previous Record Management System Use Reported by LEA (N=119)



Interviews

The legislative study direction stipulated the research team gather information from those with "lived experience" in police vehicular pursuits. These were individuals who had direct experience in police vehicular pursuits which occurred within the geographical boundaries of Washington state. Potential "lived experience" participants were recruited from two groups: (1) law enforcement officers involved in pursuits, and (2) those who were connected to a police vehicular pursuit through other means. The groups were chosen to represent a balance between law enforcement and non-law enforcement perspectives. Those who were selected and consented to the interview process participated in a semi-structured qualitative interview for 30 to 45 minutes.

Identification of Interviewees

Interview participants for the "lived experience" portion of this included two groups; (1) law enforcement officers, and (2) those who were connected to a pursuit through other means. This second group included three categories: (A) suspects and passengers in pursued vehicles; (B) close relatives of those in pursued vehicles or impacted by vehicular pursuits; and (C) bystanders and witnesses of pursued events. Several methods were used to recruit, identify, and screen interview participants of both groups.

Group 1: Law Enforcement Recruitment

Law enforcement officers were recruited through convenience sampling. Leaders of law enforcement agencies who had established open dialogue with the research team were asked if there were officers and deputies who were willing to participate in interviews with the research team. The study's IRB approved consent and recruitment form (Appendix 1) was then sent to those law enforcement leaders for distribution among staff. Potential participants were then able to review the consent and recruitment form and use the contact information on the form to communicate with a member of the research team if they had questions about the study and wished to participate in an interview. These participants were then screened to determine if they met eligibility criteria. While not explicitly included in the contract of this research project, the research team determined it was necessary to include law enforcement perspectives in the qualitative portion of the study because officers and deputies also have "lived experience" in police vehicular pursuits. Their input was considered key in having a more accurate picture of police vehicular pursuits in Washington state. Their viewpoints included valuable information on the reasons for engaging in a pursuit, the pursuit event itself, law enforcement pursuit policies, and reasons why pursuits continued or were terminated, among other factors.

Eligibility criteria for law enforcement interviews included currently serving members of a law enforcement agency in Washington state; participated in a police vehicular pursuit within the January 2019 through December 2024 timeframe of the study; the pursuit occurred within the geographic boundaries of the state of Washington; and fluency in the English language. If a law enforcement officer met those criteria and consented to participate, an interview was scheduled at a mutually agreed upon date and time.

Group 2: Those Connected to Pursuits

Recruiting group 2, those connected to pursuits outside of law enforcement, was a complex and multimodal process. The inclusion of these individuals' perspectives was required by legislative direction. Three methods were attempted to recruit participants, including (1) contact though community and professional groups, (2) posting fliers in public places, and (3) direct contact through searches of public records. These extensive measures were taken because of the team's commitment to recruiting those with lived experience, both to fulfill the study assignment and to gather the important perspectives of those involved in vehicular pursuits in Washington state.

First, indirect outreach was conducted through police reform advocacy groups, defense attorney groups, and online. Researchers from our team met with these groups via Zoom, email, and phone calls to explain the purpose of the study, and to distribute our recruitment and consent flier. These groups then distributed our recruitment and consent flier (Appendix 1) to their members who were encouraged to contact the research team. A recruitment announcement with a link to our recruitment materials was also posted on social media and

our center's website to encourage potential participants to contact us. Follow-up meetings and calls with these groups were also scheduled to maintain open lines of communication about the study.

Second, the research team posted recruitment announcements in several local newspapers throughout Washington state with an email address and phone number so potential participants could contact us for more information. Newspapers were chosen for a balance of geographic distribution to reach a wide and diverse group of people in the state. Classified ads in these newspapers were run in printed physical newspapers and posted in the newspapers' websites for a period of several days to one week, depending on the policies and publishing costs of the newspaper. Fliers were also posted in select public libraries in the state to encourage participants to contact the study team, with the approval of library staff.

Third, potential participants were directly recruited through a search of publicly available records. These public records included police reports, judicial filings, and news reports. Contact information for potential participants was either gleaned from those sources, or names were used to find contact information through online databases like *White Pages*. Identified potential participants were then mailed a letter explaining the study and providing information to contact us. If potential participants did not respond to the first letter, a second follow-up letter was sent. If a potential participant was non-responsive after the second letter, no further letters were sent.

Potential participants in group two were also subject to inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included: connection to a police vehicular pursuit which occurred within the geographic boundaries of Washington state within the January 2019 through December 2024 period of study; the participant was above the age of eighteen; and the participant spoke the English language fluently.

Exclusion criteria included if the potential participant connected to police vehicular pursuit was a juvenile; the pursuit was connected to firearms, domestic violence or violent crimes, illegal drugs; or the potential participant was currently incarcerated. Potential participants' eligibility was screened through an online survey if the research team was contacted through social media or a posted flier, a brief pre-interview phone call if the participant called or emailed the research team, or through a thorough review of publicly available records.

The Interview Process

Once a participant had been identified as meeting eligibility criteria and consented to participate, an interview was scheduled for a mutually agreed-upon time. Interviews lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. Each interview utilized a semi-structured qualitative interview script. Specific qualitative scripts were written for law enforcement participants (Appendix 2), drivers and passengers (Appendix 3), and bystanders and family members of those involved in

pursuits (Appendix 4). The interview scripts for law enforcement officers and drivers and passengers of pursued vehicles were partially based upon the interview guides written by Jacobs, et al. (2022) in their study of police vehicular pursuits in the State of Minnesota.

Interviews were conducted over recorded Zoom sessions or phone calls. At the start of each interview, a member of the research team would again briefly describe the purpose of the study, go over the consent and recruitment letter, and make sure the participant consented to participate in the interview. The above-mentioned qualitative scripts were utilized during the interview process to standardize each session and confirm the participant's consent to participate. If the team member conducting the interview needed clarification on an answer shared by a participant, they would ask follow-up questions like "tell me more about that," or "when you said [blank], can you provide me with more detail?" At the end of each interview, the participant was given an opportunity to provide additional details about their experiences with vehicular pursuits if they felt something was not covered in the question protocol. Then, the interview was concluded, and the recording equipment was turned off.

Interview Analysis

Qualitative analysis of participant interviews was conducted over several steps. Broadly, this study used an inductive (Brinkmann, 2013; Hatch, 2002) and phenomenological (Brinkmann, 2013) approach to uncover the "lived experiences" of those involved in police vehicular pursuits. First, participants were identified and interviewed using a standardized semi-structured interview protocol and automatically generated transcripts were checked for accuracy against the original audio recordings. Second, interview transcripts were analyzed using qualitative coding software. Third, codes and themes were analyzed and reported. Broadly, this study followed qualitative research and analysis procedures laid out by several scholars in the qualitative research field (Brinkmann, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002).

First, each recorded interview was uploaded to an automated and secure transcription service to create a written transcript of the interview to analyze. Following this, transcripts of each interview were double-checked against the audio recording for accuracy. Then the audio recordings were deleted and participants' names, locations, agency names, and other identifiers were removed for confidentiality. During this process, a member of the research team would begin to make notes of each interview to begin an early analysis of each participant's experiences.

Second, transcripts were uploaded into a secure qualitative analysis coding software, Atlas.ti. Analysis of participants' "lived experiences" of vehicular pursuit events utilized an inductive and phenomenological approach. Induction involves identifying meaning and patterns in a dataset through repeated analysis (Brinkmann, 2013; Hatch, 2002). A phenomenological approach seeks to uncover the essential concepts of a participant's experiences by establishing meaningful concepts and themes from their interview data (Brinkmann, 2013).

Together, these approaches allowed the research team to thoroughly describe the “lived experiences” of participants involved in police vehicular pursuits.

In all, nine law enforcement officers and deputies were interviewed to provide their lived experience perspectives of vehicular pursuit events. However, due to a recording error, one interview was not fully captured for transcription and analysis. Therefore, eight interviews were analyzed for this report. These themes and findings will be reported in a subsequent section. All efforts were made to recruit officers and deputies from demographically, professional experience level, organizational positionality, and geographically diverse backgrounds across the state of Washington. For confidentiality purposes, the research team will not reveal specific identifying factors of law enforcement participants. However, the research team was able to recruit a diverse group of officers and deputies across those factors to provide a diversity of backgrounds of law enforcement lived experiences.

Despite extensive recruitment efforts of passengers, family members and bystanders described above, the research team was unable to recruit enough participants from those groups to provide for reliable details of lived experience of pursuit events for the purposes of this study. The research team was unable to precisely determine why recruiting from these groups proved unsuccessful despite extensive effort.

Law Enforcement Interview Findings

All efforts were made to recruit officers and deputies from demographically, professional experience level, organizational positionality, and geographically diverse backgrounds across the state of Washington. For confidentiality purposes, the research team will not reveal specific identifying factors of law enforcement participants. However, the research team was able to recruit a diverse group of officers and deputies across those factors to provide a diversity of backgrounds of law enforcement lived experiences. All law enforcement participants were actively serving in a law enforcement agency in the state of Washington at the time of the study.

Recruitment was done primarily through a combination of convenience sampling and an emphasis on recruiting officers from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations within Washington state. Law enforcement agencies that had previously shared vehicular pursuit data with the research team were again contacted via email with the participant recruitment flier attached for distribution among officers in their agencies. No two participants came from the same law enforcement agency, and participants came from different sized agencies from regions throughout Washington state. Experience in law enforcement among participants ranged from seven to 33 years, with an average service time of 16 years. This allowed for a diverse variety of regional, agency size, and experience-level perspectives. It was decided to frame their interview results as “lived experiences of law enforcement officers connected to pursuit events.” This was done to provide a broad yet clear basis for analyzing and reporting

the interview data of law enforcement participants throughout the qualitative process. This allowed us to develop themes that are generalizable to other officers conducting pursuits.

Introduction

Analysis of the law enforcement participant interviews reveals several themes. First, the participants' decision-making and concerns during a vehicular pursuit are explored. Second, concerns about public safety. Third, the notification process between an officer or deputy in pursuit, and their supervisor. Fourth, the participant's understanding and reflections of vehicular pursuit policies. Fifth, the use of spike strips and PIT maneuvers during vehicular pursuits. Last, factors leading to the termination of vehicular pursuits are explored.

Decision-Making and Concerns

All law enforcement participants expressed multiple factors contributing to their decision to engage in a vehicular pursuit, and their concerns when engaging in a pursuit. These factors included their jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy, the violations they believed the suspect committed, if their supervisor allowed the pursuit to continue, any background information they may have on the suspect, the suspect's driving behavior, if another law enforcement officer is able to assist them, roadway conditions, speed, the likelihood the suspect could be apprehended in a vehicular pursuit, alternatives to a vehicular pursuit such as capturing the suspect in another manner, and the danger of the vehicular pursuit to the public at large. An officer with over 10 years of experience described their decision-making this way:

> *I would say, continuing part of being in a pursuit is, they [the fleeing suspect] have to have the reckless driving. In my mind the reckless driving, is like you're a danger to the community. I'm going to continue pursuing as long as my supervisor says "yes, you can." Or again, we get to the point where it's too dangerous for me to continue. Then, having the like self-awareness of like, okay, well, I'm getting to a point where nobody's going to be able to assist me. We're driving too fast. I need to be mature enough to understand that this isn't worth it, and I need to be responsible enough to say: "Okay, you can end it now without having that supervisor maybe being there ready to say, terminate."*

In describing their decision-making around engaging in vehicular pursuits, this officer also mentioned their own self-awareness, which was based on the vehicular pursuit they were describing, and professional experience prior to that specific pursuit. Additionally, several law enforcement participants who served in supervisory or training capacities also mentioned the experience level of the lead officer driving in a vehicular pursuit as another decision-making factor for supervisors, and the officers themselves. Several officers reported that more job experience better allows them to evaluate the totality of factors in continuing a vehicular pursuit and deciding to terminate, where a younger officer might not yet have the same ability, or may be more likely to have their vehicular pursuit terminated by a supervisor.

A deputy with over 15 years of experience described how they weighed their jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy, other legal factors, training, and the level of suspected crime into their decision to engage in a vehicular pursuit:

> *Well, several things that I look at are: One is the pursuit within law? Obviously state law and law itself are priorities, right? We're law enforcement officers, we're here to uphold the law, so we need to make sure we're following law. And what that looks like is we provide training in case law and federal lawsuits where we can determine whether or not a law enforcement officer acted appropriately. So essentially what I'm looking at is law and case law. Then I'm looking at what crime is the person committing, what are they doing, what have they done?*

Like this example, law enforcement participants expressed knowledge of their jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy and its impact on their ability to pursue a fleeing suspect. Then, if the potential vehicular pursuit is within policy, they begin to assess the totality of additional factors such as roadway conditions, speeds, presence of bystanders, location, and the need to apprehend the suspect at the time. However, the importance of public safety when engaging in a vehicular pursuit was expressed consistently among all law enforcement participants throughout their interviews.

Public Safety

All law enforcement participants expressed the importance of public safety during their interviews about police vehicular pursuits in Washington state. Most participants framed this issue as balance of the totality of factors during a vehicular pursuit event, and that event's impact on the safety of the public as a whole. Like their decision-making factors, public safety factors included the level of crime committed by the fleeing suspect driver, the roadway conditions, location, presence of others in the area, time of day, the vehicular pursuit policy of the law enforcement agency of the participant, as well as the need to capture the fleeing suspect at that moment or apprehend them at another time.

A deputy with over ten years of law enforcement experience described it this way:

> *You know we're always evaluating [during the vehicular pursuit event]: our policy says that you must always evaluate the need to capture this person right now versus the risk to the public, because there is always a risk to the public when you're driving at high speeds with an unpredictable [fleeing suspect] driver. And, if at any point the risk to the public outweighs the need to catch the suspect, you must terminate by our policy.*

Other officers also weighed the risk to the public's safety of letting a fleeing suspect escape during a vehicular pursuit. Some expressed that terminating a vehicular pursuit and allowing a fleeing suspect driver to escape could potentially cause more harm to the public. These officers acknowledged the danger of the vehicular pursuit itself, and their ability to terminate

it, and expressed concern that allowing a dangerous driver to flee could cause more damage down the road. This damage could include collisions, injuries, and deaths of those in or outside of the vehicular pursuit event.

An officer with over ten years of law enforcement experience described their decision-making around public safety when deciding to terminate or continue a vehicle pursuit:

> *I mean, the public is the number one concern, right? Because they're [the general public] driving on the road, and they have no idea, they always see the [fleeing suspect's] car. And they're like: "Oh, that car is being chased by the police." But, they don't realize how much danger they could be in, and so it's a concern to have this [fleeing suspect's] car driving crazy on these roads and at any point bystanders could get hit. But also when you stop pursuing, that doesn't necessarily mean that this [fleeing individual's] person's behavior is going to change. At the same time, they're still going to drive crazy because they think the cops are going to find them, and they're still trying to get away.*

The theme of public safety in conjunction with vehicular pursuits was expressed throughout the law enforcement participant interviews and they all reported it was one of their top concerns. Public safety appeared to be their overall goal during vehicular pursuit events, but whether public safety was achieved by terminating a vehicular pursuit without an arrest or capturing a suspect to end the pursuit seemed to be based on the experiences and knowledge of each law enforcement participant and the unique factors of each vehicular pursuit event.

Supervisor Notification and Communication

All law enforcement interview participants expressed the importance of notifying a supervisor at the outset of a vehicular pursuit event. A supervisor may terminate a vehicular pursuit at any time. Officers and deputies driving in the vehicular pursuit are also able to terminate at any time. Interview participants who were also supervisors expressed the importance of officers or deputies under their command quickly establishing communication when a vehicular pursuit begins. Participants described the necessary factors communicated between officers or deputies driving in the vehicular pursuit and monitoring supervisors.

After supervisor notification had been established, officers and deputies driving in the pursuit kept the supervisor updated on the status of the vehicular pursuit event, and this information could be used by the supervisor to allow the vehicular pursuit to continue or terminate the pursuit. The information communicated included: what suspected violations instigated the pursuit, location(s), road conditions, weather conditions, light conditions, speeds, traffic conditions, behavior of the suspect driver, presence of the public at large, and the availability of backup law enforcement to assist the lead officer or deputy in pursuit. A supervisor with almost 20 years of experience described what they wanted to know from officers calling in a vehicular pursuit: "I want to know the reason for the stop or reason for pursuit right away. I

need to have updates on where they're at, what their speeds are" and said that "If they [the officers in pursuit] can't tell me what I need, I'm going to terminate it [the vehicular pursuit]." This demonstrates that a supervisor requires clear, constant, and precise information from the officer driving in a vehicular pursuit to justify allowing the pursuit to continue. Multiple participants reported that supervisors require constant updates from law enforcement drivers in vehicular pursuits. The wide range of factors communicated between law enforcement drivers in a vehicular pursuit and supervisors indicate that vehicular pursuits are live events that require a steady flow of information to allow the pursuit to continue or terminate it.

Vehicular Pursuit Policy and Restrictions

During their interviews, all participants were asked about their law enforcement agency's vehicular pursuit policy, any changes to their policy over the last six years, and the impacts of those changes as they applied to their practice of vehicular pursuits. Most participants were able to articulate an outline of their current vehicular pursuit policy and described how changes to their vehicular pursuit policy altered police vehicular pursuit events and practices in their jurisdiction. As described in detail in the Background section of this report, under Legislative Changes (page 6), the Washington State Legislature placed restrictions on vehicular pursuits in 2021. These restrictions were later amended in 2023 and 2024. The following section reports how participants articulated their current vehicular pursuit policy, their knowledge of the vehicular pursuit policy of other agencies, and their reflections on how the above-mentioned legislative restrictions affected their work while those restrictions were in place.

General Vehicular Pursuit Policy Reflections

All participants could articulate elements of their law enforcement agency's vehicular pursuit policy and how those factors would apply in vehicular pursuit events. These elements included: the impact of Washington state law on their jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy, the reasons for engaging in a vehicular pursuit, factors to consider during a vehicular pursuit, and when and how to terminate a vehicular pursuit. All participants expressed that their local jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy mandates their thinking when deciding when to engage in a vehicular pursuit, and that a supervisor has the decision-making power to terminate a vehicular pursuit at any time. Participants also reported they could choose to terminate a vehicular pursuit at any time without approval from a supervisor, given their own assessment of the conditions and factors at play in a vehicular pursuit event.

A supervising officer with almost 20 years of experience described how their jurisdiction's policy informs their thinking when allowing officers to engage in a vehicular pursuit. This officer's interview also presents the view that the vehicular pursuit is a tool to only be used in

certain situations, and based on an evaluation of the suspected level and type of offense, while prioritizing public safety:

> *Now we can chase any violation of the law. However, our policy is: [the violation] has to be a felony crime. Now, felony crime could be fraud, which I don't believe the need to capture a fraud suspect would outweigh the need to protect our community.*

Later in their interview, the officer elaborated further on their role as a supervisor, with the decision-making power to allow or terminate vehicular pursuits of officers under their command:

> *And our current policy is, we can pursue for any violation, any crime that would be a felony, and then any domestic violence assault, or reasonable suspicion, DUI. And other than that, and a lot of even felony pursuits, I may not allow. Even our felony crime pursuits, especially if we know who the guy is or the female, anybody.*

This interview participant and others expressed that if a fleeing suspect driver was known and could be appended later, they would terminate a pursuit in the interest of public safety. The level of suspected criminal offense also factored in most interview participants' responses about policy, and the general practicality of engaging in a pursuit. One participant noted they would not pursue for vandalism or malicious mischief, because in their view it didn't rise to the threshold of criminality for a vehicular pursuit. It should be noted that vehicular pursuit policies are bounded by Washington state law and the vehicular pursuit policy decisions by the leadership of each local jurisdiction's leadership. Neighboring agencies could have similar or different vehicular pursuit policies given unique factors to their leadership's decisions on their vehicular pursuit policy, location, population density, roadways, and the level of suspected criminal offense that jurisdiction would consider appropriate to warrant a vehicular pursuit. These variations are described further in the next section.

Vehicular Pursuit Policy Variations

Vehicular pursuit policies vary by law enforcement agencies, due to some capacity for local decision-making within the bounds of Washington state law. Most participants were able to describe some details and differences of the vehicular pursuit policies of neighboring jurisdictions with their own. Some participants described their jurisdiction's vehicular policy as restrictive compared to other jurisdictions, while some explained their policies allowed a wider window for vehicular pursuits.

An officer with over 20 years of experience compared their vehicular pursuit policy with neighboring agencies, and provided a specific point of comparison:

> *I would say, we're probably pretty consistent [in vehicular pursuit policy alignment] with our region. In the past, I know some of our local agencies had a little less restriction. They also had PIT [pursuit intervention technique] maneuvers for eluding [suspect*

drivers] where they could use that PIT maneuver to stop or to end a pursuit where we have not had that in our arsenal.

To provide context, most interview participants reported their law enforcement agency had the ability to use a PIT (pursuit intervention technique) maneuver during a vehicular pursuit event. A PIT maneuver is the act of a law enforcement officer using the front of their law enforcement vehicle to contact the rear of a fleeing vehicle, to destabilize the fleeing vehicle and cause the suspect driver to lose control of their vehicle and ideally stop the vehicular pursuit. This participant viewed their vehicular pursuit policy as historically more restrictive than their neighboring agencies and felt they were less impacted overall during the legislatively mandated restrictions compared to their neighbors.

A participant with over 10 years of experience as a county deputy felt their vehicular pursuit policy is less restrictive when compared to other agencies in the state:

I believe some of the [neighboring jurisdictions] agencies believe we are a little bit too gung-ho with chasing cars. I'm not sure why that perception is the case. I believe they just don't have the full information. And once I actually explain to them the :circumstances of the case, it's just like that game of telephone they're like, "Oh, [the county] is chasing another car again. I wonder what it's for?" Their frame of reference is also different right? We are chasing people on rural roads where there's not much traffic control. There's not many people around. It's easy for a city cop who is used to a very urban environment [to choose not to engage in a vehicular pursuit]. That is one of the biggest factors in whether or not you should chase a car is the danger to the public. And in a city where there are cars everywhere, and people are driving like a bat out of hell, you're more likely to cause harm to somebody versus where we are. There's just not as much danger.

This deputy described how their jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy is driven by a rural population, low traffic, and danger to the public. The deputy also noted that an urban environment with more risk factors like heavier traffic and higher population density, creates additional risks for the public during vehicular pursuit events. This deputy expressed that it was challenging when they entered urban locations in their county with different pursuit policies. By their own policy, the deputy was allowed to continue pursuing a suspect while the local officers in that city were restricted from pursuing by their own jurisdiction's policy. Another rural officer expressed similar insights to the example above. This example and similar statements from other participants point to the fact that vehicular pursuit policies are shaped locally, within the bounds of Washington state law, and are often based on environmental factors like population and decisions made by local law enforcement leadership.

Legislative Restrictions on Vehicular Pursuits

Most participants expressed that the restrictions the Washington State Legislature placed upon vehicular pursuits in 2021 heavily impacted their work in law enforcement. These restrictions were later amended or reduced in subsequent legislative sessions in 2023 and 2024. Most participants reported that restrictions on vehicular pursuits created challenges in their law enforcement work, corresponding with a reported increase in criminal activity. Some participants described how restrictions on vehicular pursuits caused law enforcement agencies to change and reflect on their practices.

Most law enforcement interview participants reported a correlation between an increase in criminal activity and the legislatively restricted period on vehicular pursuits. During their interviews, participants described this increased activity as a more emboldened suspected criminal element, vehicles fleeing from the police, more shoplifting, and stolen cars. An officer with over five years of experience in law enforcement described this theme with an example from their community:

> *We go to a shoplift. They [the suspects] get into this vehicle, and we go to Walmart. We can't stop that vehicle because we haven't based our probable cause on that vehicle, and we can't chase it. So, we did have a lot of suspects leaving. They were essentially untouchable until we could establish our probable cause.*

Most participants described similar themes. They described suspects who were emboldened by the restrictions on vehicular pursuits to flee from suspected crimes in vehicles from the police. Several participants described the time required to obtain probable cause from victims, rather than reasonable suspicion, provided suspects with the time needed to flee apprehension. Multiple law enforcement participants reported criminal activity increased in their jurisdictions during the legislative restrictions on vehicular pursuits.

A significant number of participants expressed that the time when vehicular pursuits were restricted by the Washington State Legislature led to challenges and frustrations in their law enforcement work. A deputy with over 15 years of experience described how the shift in 2021 to requiring probable cause, which is a higher standard than previously required reasonable suspicion, limited their agency's ability to pursue suspects affected agency morale:

> *I got promoted shortly before the laws took effect. As a [supervisor], I'll tell you, it was one of the hardest periods of time to be a supervisor to try to keep officers motivated to work.*

This participant's experience of the restricted time on police vehicular pursuits was mirrored by most participants. They described how they and their coworkers experienced low morale and frustration in their jurisdictions because the restriction of probable cause for a vehicular pursuit, rather than reasonable suspicion, allowed many suspects to flee. In their view, this led to higher criminal behaviors in their jurisdictions, much like the example above.

Reflection and Re-Thinking During Legislative Restrictions

Interestingly, more than half of the law enforcement participants interviewed expressed that the legislatively restricted time on vehicular pursuits caused their jurisdiction or others to shift their thinking or practice regarding vehicular pursuits. For some participants, this involved a change in tactics and equipment utilized on the ground. One officer with over ten years of experience reported:

> *With that [legislatively restricted time on vehicular pursuits], we had to change our tactics when we go to these [potential vehicular pursuits] right away of either 'A' pinning in cars so they can't flee, or we've purchased equipment [to avoid a vehicular pursuit]. It's called a rat trap. We purchased that to give to all the officers to so they could put it underneath tires. When we go to these calls, where people are passed out in their cars on drugs, to help eliminate those pursuits.*

This participant detailed one effect of the restrictions on police vehicular pursuits: it caused their agency to change tactics. Others described similar thinking, acknowledging vehicular pursuits were inherently dangerous, and that officers and deputies could consider alternative approaches like avoiding a pursuit in the first place, when possible.

An experienced officer with over five years of experience described the legislatively restricted time as a "wakeup call for us" to reflect on the reasons their agency would engage in a vehicular pursuit. Further, this officer thought the restricted time caused other law enforcement agencies to "tighten up some policies for agencies that were a little more free [in their vehicular pursuit practices]." Another officer reported their agency's leadership and training around vehicular pursuit practices are informed by what they see as an overeagerness by other jurisdictions in Washington state to engage in vehicular pursuits. This caused their agency's leadership to be clearer with officers about what they will and will not pursuit for. While these sentiments were not universally expressed, they do demonstrate a reflective and adaptive approach to police vehicular pursuits for these interview participants. In this sense, some aspects of the legislative restrictions on police vehicular pursuits may not have been totally frustrating to all the interview participants and prompted a reconsideration of vehicular pursuit policies and practices in some jurisdictions.

All law enforcement participants described an understanding of their current vehicular pursuit policy, and how that policy directs their thinking toward a vehicular pursuit event. Further, participants described that not all vehicular pursuit policies were uniform across their regions, though they are all grounded in Washington state law. Law enforcement participants described the legislatively restricted time on vehicular pursuits as challenging for their work, and in the view of many, corresponded with an increase in criminal activity in their communities. However, other participants described that restricted time as a period of reflection on their vehicular pursuit practices, and an opportunity to consider alternatives to vehicular pursuits.

Equipment: Spike Strips and PIT Maneuvers

All law enforcement interview participants described equipment or techniques they could utilize to end a vehicular pursuit. The most discussed were tire deflation devices and the PIT (precision immobilization technique) maneuver. Tire deflation devices are used to puncture the tires of the fleeing suspect's vehicle to prevent a vehicular pursuit, or to disable the fleeing vehicle and eventually stop the pursuit. The PIT maneuver involves the officer or deputy making contact between the front fender panel of their patrol vehicle with the rear quarter panel of a fleeing vehicle, to destabilize the fleeing vehicle and bring it to a stop. Interview participants discussed additional equipment or techniques their jurisdictions could utilize to terminate a pursuit. However, because interview participants most often discussed tire deflation devices and PIT maneuvers as part of their lived experience in a vehicular pursuit, only those two will be elaborated upon below. Other equipment and techniques agencies would use to terminate a vehicular pursuit are listed in Table 7.

Law enforcement interview participants described the use of spike strips and stop sticks during an active vehicular pursuit as dangerous. This is because it requires an officer or deputy to enter the roadway during an active vehicular pursuit, deploy the device, and then find suitable cover to protect themselves from the vehicles in the pursuit. A police officer with almost 20 years of experience described spike strips: "So, like our pursuit alternatives, we have spike strips available in almost all of our cars. They are dangerous for the officer, but it's a tool when safely done." Law enforcement interview participants reported that deploying spike strips requires law enforcement agencies to anticipate the pathway of a fleeing vehicle. They must have prior knowledge of locations in their jurisdiction that allow them to take cover behind a jersey barrier, guardrail, or other solid features to provide protection from the vehicles in pursuit. Additionally, fleeing suspect vehicles can try to avoid the spike strips, and do not always immediately stop when their tires are punctured. Tire deflation devices are readily available, according to these interview participants and can be dangerous to deploy.

PIT maneuvers were mentioned by all law enforcement interview participants. Only one participant's agency did not utilize the PIT maneuver. Utilizing PIT maneuvers requires specialized training and the permission of a supervisor to employ during a vehicular pursuit. Law enforcement interview participants described receiving PIT training as part of their Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC). Law enforcement participants who utilized the PIT maneuver described it as a technique that must be purposely deployed, given the dynamics of the vehicular pursuit and the environment it is taking place in. Officers and deputies driving in a vehicular pursuit must consider speed, the size of the vehicle they may attempt to PIT, the presence of passengers in the vehicle, traffic and weather conditions, and the presence of bystanders. Officers and deputies driving in a vehicular pursuit must have permission from their supervisor to conduct a PIT maneuver.

A supervisor with over five years of experience described part of their thought process in allowing an officer to conduct a PIT maneuver:

> *You want to make sure that this officer is both skilled and has the ability to PIT somebody. As a supervisor, I would much rather have them ask for a PIT, and know they're in a good location. Are they requesting to PIT because they have the timing, right?*

This supervisor further went on to describe how a PIT maneuver in a city center would be dangerous to pedestrians in a crowded area, and that both the officer and supervisor could be held accountable for any negative outcomes of a PIT maneuver. This participant and others described the PIT maneuver as a tool that must be carefully deployed given a multitude of factors, with public safety being a major consideration. A PIT maneuver can be a way to stop an unsafe suspect driving during a pursuit, and it must be weighed against any damage, injury, or loss of life that may result from conducting the maneuver.

Termination of Pursuits

Law enforcement participants described reasons for the termination of vehicular pursuit. A jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy mandates the reasons and means for termination. Washington RCW 10.116.060 also directs the pursuing officers and deputies, along with the monitoring supervisor, to develop a termination plan for the vehicular pursuit as soon as possible. In some cases, equipment or techniques could be used to stop a fleeing suspect vehicle, including tire deflation devices or techniques such as PIT maneuvers. The end of a pursuit could result in the apprehension of a fleeing suspect or terminating without apprehension. A deputy with over 10 years of experience described their thinking when considering terminating a vehicular pursuit: "If the traffic conditions are okay, we're going to stick with it [the vehicular pursuit] until it's not okay, or there's a resolution. Our office specifically has a lot of great tools to allow us to stop a pursuit very quickly." This demonstrates how conditions and safety factors into the deputy's thinking around termination, along with the tools the deputy has available to stop a suspect in a fleeing vehicle. Officers and deputies can choose to self-terminate or can be terminated by a supervisor, the rate of either type of termination varies by jurisdiction and conditions. Officers and supervisors described terminating vehicular pursuits for policy reasons, public safety reasons, the availability of backup support, or if the suspect was known and contact could be made with them later. Vehicular pursuits could also end if a fleeing suspect vehicle crashed.

Additionally, half of enforcement interview participants noted the experience level of the pursuing officer or deputy factored into the termination of the vehicular pursuit. These participants noted it was more likely that a less experienced officer or deputy would have their vehicular pursuit terminated by a supervisor. Reasons for experience-linked termination included lack of clear, quick communication and familiarity in driving in a vehicular pursuit. A supervisor with almost twenty years of experience explained: "Younger officers are still processing, it's [the vehicular pursuit event] a lot to process." This supervisor and other

interview participants noted that a vehicle pursuit creates a heightened emotional and physical state in the pursuing officer deputies. Another supervisor noted: “Usually me as a supervisor, I am terminating the pursuit because of the lack of experience or lack of vehicle pursuits that they’ve [newer officers] been into.” Both supervisors and others described how a newer officer or deputy is still learning how to stay focused, calm, and look at the pursuit event as a whole. These participants noted officers must look at the totality of a vehicular pursuit event, such as public safety, driving conditions, and the availability of backup, which takes time to learn.

Conclusion from the police officers’ interviews

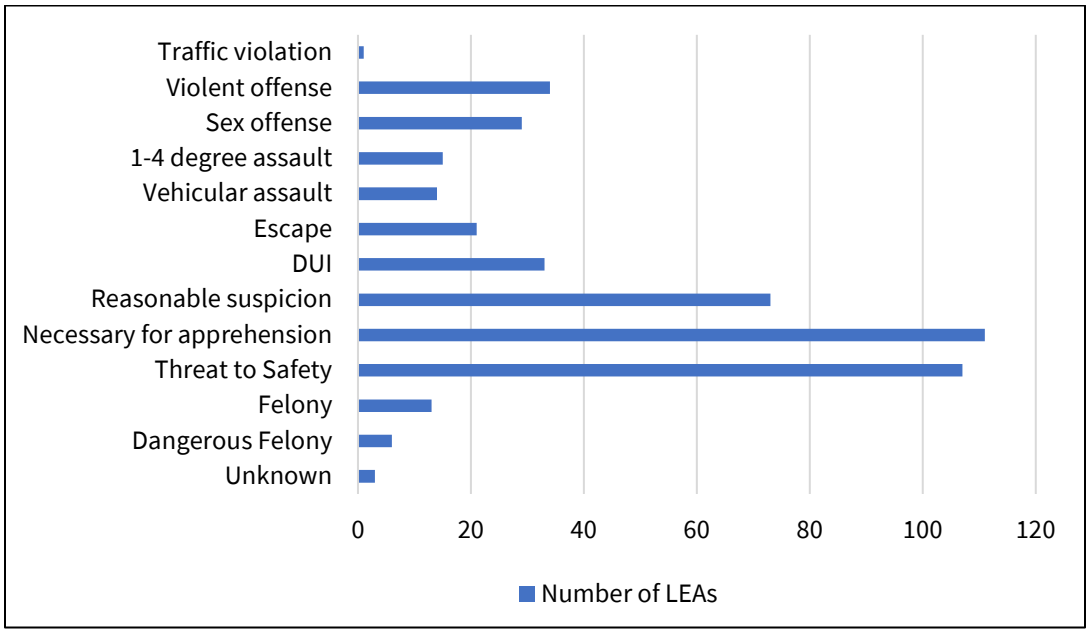
Law enforcement participants described their lived experience in vehicular pursuits as complex, requiring the evaluation of multiple pieces of information in a fast-moving environment. Participants expressed the importance of public safety during a vehicular pursuit, and the importance of communication between the officer or deputy in pursuit and the monitoring supervisor. Further, participants expressed their understanding of vehicular pursuit policies, and the impact restrictions on vehicular pursuit policies impacted their work. Finally, participants described the termination of vehicular pursuits. The understandings and insights provided by these law enforcement participants create an understanding of vehicular pursuits as they experience them in their jurisdictions in Washington state.

Pursuit Policies

The LEA pursuit policies were obtained from available electronic copies of policies on public LEA government websites, public disclosure requests, and direct contact with LEAs. First, the researchers extracted all available pursuit policies readily available on LEA officiated websites. Next, researchers contacted LEA administrative and records staff personnel to acquire the pursuit policies. Finally, for policies not publicly available on LEA officiated websites and for LEAs that the research team was unable to establish direct contact, public disclosure requests were formally filed to obtain the remaining pursuit policies. The variables of interest for the LEA pursuit policies for analysis were year of publication, reasons for initiating pursuits, reasons for terminating pursuits, pursuit factor considerations, supervisor notification, and authorized pursuit tactic interventions. LEAs from which we obtained data were asked to supply us with the pursuit policies in place after July 2024. These were then reviewed to categorize them on allowable reasons for initiating a pursuit, allowable reasons for terminating a pursuit, and allowable methods to stop the fleeing vehicle. We have received policies and extracted data from 123 LEAs.

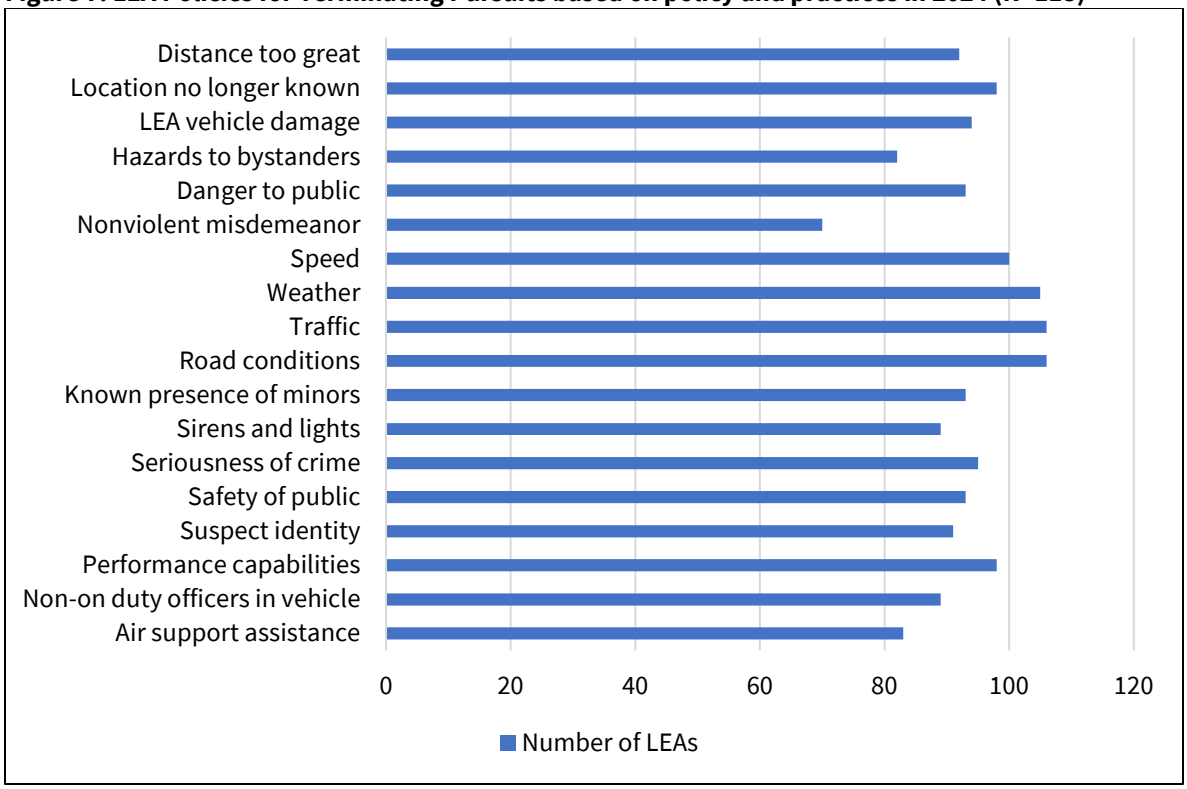
In current policies, the most common allowable reasons for initiating pursuits were “necessary for suspect apprehension,” “threat to safety,” and “reasonable suspicion.” (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Allowable reasons for initiating pursuits based on current policy and practices in 2024 (N=118)



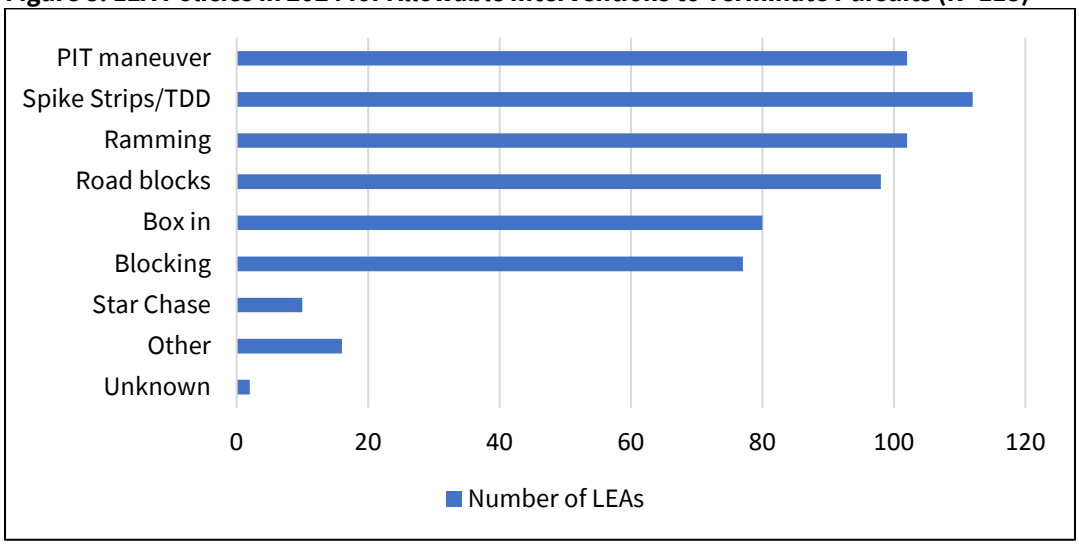
Policies allowed multiple reasons for officers to terminate a pursuit, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: LEA Policies for Terminating Pursuits based on policy and practices in 2024 (N=118)



Most agencies allowed officers a variety of methods to terminate pursuits (Figure 8). They included spike strips and other tire deflation devices, PIT maneuvers, ramming, roadblocks, boxing in and blocking. Relatively few agencies used Star Chase.

Figure 8. LEA Policies in 2024 for Allowable Interventions to Terminate Pursuits (N=118)



Existing data systems

The legislative study direction required the researchers to review existing statewide police data reporting systems, including NIBRS, WaTech's police traffic collision reporting system, and the use of force data program.

National Incident Based Reporting System

The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) captures details on each single crime incident—as well as on separate offenses within the same incident—including information on victims, known offenders, relationships between victims and offenders, arrestees, and property involved in crimes. NIBRS collects at all of the offenses within an incident, collects data for 52 offenses, and 10 additional offenses for which only arrests are reported. It collects more detailed information, including incident date and time, whether reported offenses were attempted or completed, expanded victim types, relationships of victims to offenders and offenses, demographic details, location data, property descriptions, drug types and quantities, the offender's suspected use of drugs or alcohol, the involvement of gang activity, and whether a computer was used in the commission of the crime.

While the online FBI Crime Data Explorer (CDE) allows individual police department data to be searched, the data can only be searched by crimes committed. Eluding police is not a crime that is listed, and actions of police pursuits are not recorded in the system.

Washington State Data Exchange

Established by the Washington State Legislature (Chapter 10.118 RCW), the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety (WADEPS) assists agencies in meeting their use-of-force reporting requirements in a flexible, data-driven way that fosters stronger community relationships and evidence-based decision-making. WADEPS is located at Washington State University. By providing a modern, cloud-based platform for collecting, analyzing, and publishing standardized law enforcement interaction data, WADEPS includes data visualization and analytics tools for all Washington agencies. With its modular design, WADEPS is adaptable to all data types beyond use-of-force reports, including computer-aided dispatch data, arrest statistics, traffic stops, and other relevant information. Adhering to the open-source philosophy, the data exchange is vendor-agnostic, allowing agencies to retain their current vendor relationships while benefiting from the platform's analytical resources and tools.

To ensure a seamless and secure experience for users, WADEPS has established robust operational protocols. Points of contact have been designated within general law enforcement agencies, and accounts have been created in the data exchange for the more than 11,000 general law enforcement personnel in Washington, with a bi-monthly updating cycle ensuring the system properly reflects department staffing, and a comprehensive general data use agreement governs information handling within the exchange. The platform has undergone an external security review to meet OCIO standards. It is working towards NIST and CJIS designations as a proactive measure to accommodate any additional data that might be held in the data exchange. WADEPS offers dedicated training for agency personnel, with its curriculum earning in-service credit from the Criminal Justice Training Commission. A help desk is available to address technical queries, and the organization actively engages with undergraduate and professional students through experiential learning opportunities, maximizing the exchange's potential to drive positive change in public safety.

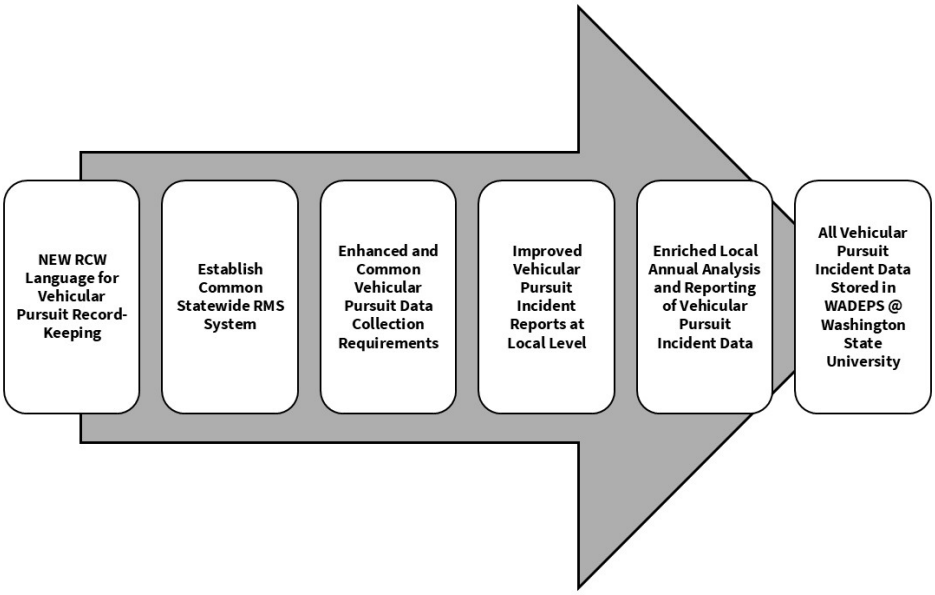
Washington State Patrol Police Traffic Collision Report

The Police Traffic Collision Report (PTCR) was developed to collect data on all vehicle collisions in Washington state investigated by police as required by state law (RCW 46.52.030). State law requires any law enforcement officer to report each collision resulting in injury or death of any person, or damage to the property of any one person of $1000 or more. This database is maintained by the Washington State Patrol. It does not contain information on any non-collision events on the roadway, such as vehicle pursuits.

Recommendations

The study assignment directs the team to: produce a report that includes recommendations to the Legislature regarding "what data should be collected by law enforcement agencies throughout the state so that the Legislature and other policymakers have consistent and uniform information necessary to evaluate policies on vehicular pursuits." The recommendations are to include what data elements should be collected and changes to state law that would facilitate the collection and analysis of data.

After reviewing all collected vehicular pursuit incident data and reports, along with consideration of the utilization of current record management systems (RMS), and the emergence of the WADEPS Database at Washington State University, this research makes the following proposals and recommends that the Washington State Legislature implement its recommended improvements to vehicular pursuit incident reports. The diagram below outlines the recommendations and flow of information on pursuits.



Summary of Recommendations

The creation of a new RCW specifically focused on vehicular pursuits, which establishes the following:

- A common statewide, state-funded and maintained RMS system for all LEAs in Washington state
- Enhanced and Common Vehicular Pursuit Data Collection Requirements
- Improved Vehicular Pursuits Incident Reports at Local Level
- Greater Local Annual Analysis and Reporting of Vehicular Pursuit Incident Data
- All Vehicular Pursuit Incident Data to be stored in WADEPS at Washington State University

The above recommendations are explained in detail below.

RCW Recommendations

In accordance with the study direction: *Recommend any changes in state law to accomplish and facilitate the collection and analysis of the data, including whether to align or integrate the data collection with the use of force data under Chapter 10.118 RCW;* the research team recommends an addendum to Chapter 10.118 RCW, or a new RCW, to include record keeping practices for vehicular pursuits; and to unify the collection, storage, transparency, and analysis of vehicular pursuit incident data from all law enforcement agencies in Washington state.

Current RCW 10.118.010 "Findings," states:

The legislature finds that law enforcement transparency and accountability are vital in maintaining public trust. Data collection is one essential tool to allow the public, law enforcement, and policymakers to analyze the effectiveness of existing police practices, determine which policies and training work and do not work, and avoid unintended consequences by supporting policy decisions with clear and relevant data.

The legislature finds that creating a statewide data collection program that creates a publicly accessible database to track metrics will help to promote openness, transparency, and accountability, build stronger police-community relations, improve trust and confidence in policing services, evaluate specific areas of concern such as biased policing and excessive force, and ultimately improve the quality of policing services. [2021 c 326 s 1.]

This research team recommends that each law enforcement agency in the state must be required to report each vehicular pursuit involving a law enforcement officer employed by that agency. Additionally, if a related collision, injury, or death occurs in connection with a vehicular pursuit incident, however terminated (any supplemental documentation should be clearly attached), the Washington state collision reports and data must be clearly attached to the vehicular pursuit incident report. The Washington state collision report form should be modified to note whether the incident was related to a pursuit. The findings of this report demonstrate that it is possible to measure trends and the impact of policy changes on vehicular pursuit incidents with sufficient data. For a more consistent, complete, and continual data, this team proposes that the following recommendations be implemented in the state of Washington to provide for quality long-term analysis of vehicular pursuit incidents that occur within the state.

Guided by RCW 10.118.030, the research team proposes the following new draft RCW language.

Vehicular Pursuit Incident – Reporting Requirements

The research team proposes the following draft statutory language to support a more comprehensive statewide recording keeping system for vehicular pursuit incidents data.

Additionally, Table 19 below provides for the research team's rationale for each recommended data point.

(1) The State of Washington is to Establish, Fund, and Maintain a Common Recording Management System for all Law Enforcement Agencies within the state to aid in the collection, analysis, and transparency of Vehicular Pursuit Incident data.

(2) Each vehicular pursuit report must include the following information:

(a) The date and time of the incident;
(b) The location of the incident: including the start point of the vehicular pursuit incident, the pathway of the vehicular pursuit, and the termination point, if collected by GPS technology;
(c) The agency or agencies employing law enforcement officers who participated in the vehicular pursuit incident;
(d) The reason for initiating the vehicular pursuit; and any subsequent charges for the suspected fleeing driver in the vehicular pursuit incident;
(e) The age, gender, race, and ethnicity of the person who was pursued, if known;
(f) The vehicle used by the person who was pursued in the incident;
(g) The vehicle(s) used by law enforcement during the incident;
(h) The name, age, gender, race, and ethnicity of the law enforcement officer(s) and supervisors, if known;
(i) The number of additional suspects, minors, bystanders, and others connected to the vehicular pursuit incident, including their age, gender, race, and ethnicity, if known;
(j) When the officer(s) driving in the vehicular pursuit incident contacted their supervisor, and the method of contact;
(k) Vehicle speeds during the vehicular pursuit event, and the corresponding speed limits on the roadway(s) which the vehicular pursuit's path travelled;
(l) The conditions during the vehicular pursuit incident, such as weather, available light, roadway conditions, traffic conditions, presence of bystanders, and other necessary factors;
(m) The reason the vehicular pursuit was terminated;
(n) The method in which the vehicular pursuit was terminated, including all equipment utilized to terminate the pursuit, including PIT maneuvers, even if unsuccessful, if applicable;
(o) Any collisions, injuries, or deaths in connection with vehicular pursuit incidents, and all corresponding reports and forms explaining those details are clearly connected to all vehicular pursuit incident reports.
(p) Any audio or video records of the vehicular pursuit incident;
(q) A detailed narrative of the vehicular pursuit event, written by each law enforcement officer directly involved;
(r) If the vehicular pursuit event met local jurisdiction vehicular pursuit policy guidelines, appropriate Washington State RCWs, and all other applicable statutes, and if those

policies, RCWs and laws were upheld by the law enforcement officers and supervisors participating in the vehicular pursuit event in question or not;

(s) Any training, reprimands, or other appropriate interventions given to law enforcement officers if the local jurisdiction vehicular pursuit policy guidelines, appropriate Washington State RCWs, and all other applicable statutes were violated.

(3) The creation of a common Vehicular Pursuit Incident Data Collection Form, which include the datapoints listed above in section 2, to be mandated for use in all Law Enforcement Agencies in the State of Washington;

(4) The requirement that all Law Enforcement Agencies in the State of Washington Conduct an Annual Internal Analysis of Vehicular Pursuit Incidents using a common reporting process;

(5) Further, this research team recommends a state-wide vehicular pursuit database be developed through Washington State University's WADEPs project. WADEPs has staffing, expertise, and systems to allow for the sensible addition of Police Vehicular Pursuits data from Washington State.

RMS Recommendations

As of the writing of this report in the spring of 2025, law enforcement agencies in Washington state utilized a variety of Record Management Systems (RMS) for their vehicular pursuit incident data, and other law enforcement data. The reported status of RMS distribution and deployment from participating law enforcement agencies in this study (n=118) is shown in Figure 3 earlier in this report. As Figure 3 demonstrates, there is a wide variety of reported RMS systems utilized in Washington state. The two most common systems include Spillman, utilized by 32.2% (n=38) of LEAs, and IAPro at 28% (n=33). This team recommends the Washington State Legislature mandate and continuously fund a common statewide RMS system for use by all LEAs in the state of Washington, for all law enforcement data.

This reason for this proposal of a common statewide RMS system is based on this research team's experiences during this project. LEAs participating in this project utilized a wide variety of RMS systems, which presented challenges in assembling and analyzing their vehicular pursuit data into a common dataset. A common statewide RMS system would allow for uniform law enforcement data entry and storage across the entire state of Washington. LEAs would utilize the same datapoints, entry procedures, and review procedures for all law enforcement data, including their vehicular pursuit data. LEA law enforcement officers and other staff would then have common training and language with which to enter and analyze data. This would further allow transparency and ease of data gathering and analysis at a statewide level in a statewide Vehicular Pursuit Incident database, which this team proposes to be housed at Washington State University's WADEPS system. The Washington State Data Exchange is currently used for the collection, management, and storage of use of force data from LEAs. It was established by a prior legislative statute and has been developed to accept data from all vendors used by LEAs in the state. It has robust protocols for maintaining data

accountability and confidentiality. It could easily accommodate additional vehicular pursuit incident data.

Additionally, a common and state-funded RMS system would allow all LEAs in Washington state to use modern tools for vehicular pursuit incidents and other law enforcement data. In our conversations with LEAs across the state, many expressed the expense required in upgrading and maintaining a new RMS system. A state-funded universal system would allow all LEAs in Washington state, some of which still use paper forms and word-processing software for recordkeeping, to enter a modern data managing era. This will also allow for greater law enforcement transparency across Washington state. In addition to mandating and continuously funding a statewide RMS system, this team recommends the Washington State Legislature provide funding for LEAs to train their law enforcement officers and staff in the use of the system.

As the study direction focused on vehicular pursuit data and incidents across the state of Washington, the following details our specific recommendations for the system and data entry points we propose for vehicular pursuit data. This section and the next detail which data points should be collected, and subsequent sections demonstrate how this team recommends the data should be collected and analyzed in practice.

A system should be established in the state by which LEAs would upload data on police pursuits from their existing RMS. The purpose of the collection and analysis of this data includes:

1. Track the number, characteristics, initiation reason, charges and outcomes of police vehicular pursuits in the state of Washington.
2. Determine variations in the number, characteristics, and outcomes of pursuits across LEAs in the state and over time.
3. Track the direct effect on public safety of police pursuits, including property damage, suspect injuries and deaths, and bystander injuries and deaths.
4. Determine the resources needed by LEAs in the state for pursuits.
5. Identify the most effective technology used for police pursuits in the state.
6. Provide the ability to correlate the number of police pursuits with changes in crimes committed in the state of Washington over time.
7. Provide a resource for research and education.

The protocol for this would be as follows:

1. Establish principles of data confidentiality.
2. Develop a data governance agreement that the state and the LEAs would adopt and sign.
3. Develop a definition of what incident constitutes a vehicular pursuit and thus should be captured in data collection. The Police Executive Research Forum in 2023 stated that the definition of a pursuit should include two key components:
    A. Active attempt by the officer to stop the vehicle, e.g., activating emergency equipment (lights, siren, winking headlights)

    B. Driver's refusal to submit to the officer's authority to stop and actions to avoid apprehension, e.g., speeding up, making quick turns, disobeying traffic signals, turning off headlights
4. Develop a list of data collection items and data dictionary
    A. The list of suggested data elements is included above...
5. Each LEA shall protect the confidentiality of data in its possession and as it is transferred to the central data repository.
6. Identify and contract with a vendor to be used for the central database.
    A. The vendor develops the central database and procedures for each LEA to submit their data.
    B. The vendor establishes procedures that make the data readily available to the public using standard open data protocols
7. Data submission: Each LEA establishes procedures and format to submit data electronically on a quarterly basis. These will include a mechanism for the reporting agency to check data for validity and completeness before data is sent to the central database.
8. Data quality: Each LEA establishes mechanisms to evaluate the quality of pursuit data. These mechanisms will include:
    A. Detailed protocols for quality control, consistent with the department's most current data quality guidelines.
    B. Validity studies to assess the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of case identification and data collection.

Common Vehicular Pursuit Incident Data Collection

The University of Washington research team rigorously collected data for this legislatively mandated study. We found that law enforcement agencies were a professional group of individuals who were generally very cooperative in providing the requested data. However, there was a great deal of variation in the information collected by agencies about pursuits conducted by them. As a result, there is significant missing data in many of the tables and figures presented in this report, including important data such as the number of injuries sustained as a result of pursuits. This indicates that a standardized set of data should be developed and collected by all law enforcement agencies in the state.

The research team recommends that the following data elements should be collected for each pursuit event. Including these data elements for each pursuit event will allow for accurate documentation of the pursuit and clear understanding when reviewing the pursuit event. These recommendations are per the study proviso to recommend: *What data should be collected by law enforcement agencies throughout the state so that the legislature and other policymakers have consistent and uniform information necessary to evaluate policies on vehicular pursuits*; and *provide recommendations on what data elements law enforcement agencies should collect;*

Table 19. Recommended data elements to be collected statewide on police pursuits

Element	Rationale
Date the pursuit was initiated	This will document trends in number of pursuits over time.
Time pursuit was initiated	Time of day affects risk of injury to officers involved, general public, as well as the suspect and any vehicle passengers.
Weather at time of pursuit	Important for assessing risk of the pursuit
Types of roads encountered in the pursuit	Important for assessing risk of the pursuit
Duration of pursuit	Important for tracking the resources involved in a pursuit.
Total pursuit miles	Important for tracking the resources involved in a pursuit.
Estimated maximum speed of the suspect during the pursuit	Important for assessing risk of the pursuit
Estimated maximum speed of LEA vehicle	Important for assessing risk of the pursuit
Reason for initiating pursuit	Important to determine if the pursuit followed agency and state policy.
Notification of supervisor	Officers are required by state law to notify their supervisor immediately following any use of force.
Number of officers involved with pursuit	Important for tracking the resources involved in a pursuit
Number of LEA vehicles involved with pursuit	Important for tracking the resources involved in a pursuit
Number of different LEA involved	Important for tracking the resources involved in a pursuit
Reasons for termination of pursuit	Important to understand the pursuit episode, whether it was terminated by the suspect or the LE officer, and for quality control.
Method(s) used to terminate the pursuit	Allows assessment of resources and success of different methods.
Use of drones and air support	Allows assessment of resources and success of different methods.
Number of suspect vehicles involved	Needed to assess impact on police resources
Number of passengers in the vehicle	Important for assessment of criminal activity and safety of the public.
Age of apprehended suspect	Important for tracking criminal statistics
Sex of apprehended suspect	Important for tracking criminal statistics
Race and ethnicity of apprehended suspect	Important for tracking criminal statistics

Charges to suspect in addition to felony elude	Needed to assess the appropriateness of the pursuit
Damage to LEA vehicle	Allows assessment of LEA resources used
Damage to suspect's vehicle	Needed to assess traffic damage statistics
Other property damage	Needed to assess the effect on the public.
Injuries/deaths of LEA	Needed to assess the public health impact of pursuits
Injuries/deaths of suspect	Needed to assess the public health impact of pursuits
Injuries/deaths of passengers in the pursuit vehicle	Needed to assess the public health impact of pursuits
Injuries/deaths of bystanders	Needed to assess the public health impact of pursuits

Vehicular Pursuit Incident Report Recommendations

The study assignment directed the research team to: *Develop a protocol for data collection by law enforcement agencies and provide a statement regarding the use of such data and the purpose for its collection and analysis.* The research team makes the following recommendations as to the collection and reporting of vehicular pursuit incident data in the state of Washington, based on vehicular pursuit incident reports reviewed during this project. The team recommends a common vehicular pursuit incident report form, the implementation of a common state-funded RMS system for all LEAs in Washington state, and a common internal report format for the internal review of vehicular pursuit incident data by LEAs.

In our review of pursuit incident reports, two different LEAs had excellent examples to consider for future adoption by other LEAs. These reports provided clear and succinct templates for officers and deputies to fill out when documenting vehicular pursuits. These are shown in Appendix 5. It should be noted the review of these examples is based on what was shared with the research team from LEAs, whether openly shared or through public disclosure requests. The team could only review the documentation that was shared; if there were additional pages or elements that the team was unaware of, those elements could not be included in this review below.

In Report Example 1 of a Supervisor's Vehicle Pursuit Report, clear headers marked each important section of the report, with supporting data elements under each header. From the review of the report, it appeared to be an electronic document that was completed on a computer and then printed out for review and signatures. The progression, prompts, and details required of the form make it clear to the supervisor writing the report and those reviewing it what the important elements of the pursuit were. Further, the signature section of the report demonstrates how the report moved up the chain of command for review, when

these steps occurred, and if the reviewers determined the deputies participating in the pursuit acted in accordance with departmental policies.

This team does recommend some changes to Report Example 1 to clarify all the details of the vehicular pursuit event. First, in the deputies involved section, it must be clear if the deputies sought permission from their supervisor or notified their supervisor to engage in a vehicular pursuit, if that permission was given by a supervisor to continue, and if the supervisor decided to terminate the vehicular pursuit. Many agency vehicular pursuit policies lay out the steps an officer must take when requesting permission to engage in a vehicular event, and the research team suggests those steps and details should be clearly laid out in a modification of Example Report 1 to explicitly demonstrate those permissions and steps for the review of the pursuit, recordkeeping purposes, and to provide the cleared picture of the pursuit event for reviewers and readers. Second, in the Pursuit Information section, it would be helpful to modify the report to explicitly call out the make, model, license plate, and other relevant details of the pursued vehicle if available to provide a clear picture of the suspect's vehicle early in the report. That way, the reviewer and reader does not have to search in the narrative section for the type of suspect vehicle – it will be easily identifiable early in the report. In the Narrative section, there should be an additional direction point after step 4 describing any injuries to suspect(s), passenger(s), and bystander(s) and how those injuries occurred, to account for all potential injuries beyond those to deputies, if any. Third, in the Pursuit Information section, there is a space for "Injured" for occupants of the pursed vehicle, but it is not clear if this is a yes/no check box, or small space to note injuries. In either section, it is necessary to improve and enhance the details of injury to suspect(s) and passenger(s) for documentation purposes. Additionally, if there are collisions, injuries, or deaths connected to the vehicular pursuit incident, all documentation of those occurrences must be attached to the vehicular pursuit incident report. Including these recommendations will allow for a clearer understanding of the vehicular pursuit incident for both supervisor reviewal, recordkeeping and database purposes, and for those seeking to have a clear picture of the pursuit event.

Report Example 2 consisted of many important details and necessary elements to clearly document and review the details of a vehicular pursuit incident. This example consisted of three major elements which included subjects for a variety of details. (1) memorandum pages (typed on the computer) which included (A) a cover page to provide a short summary of the pursuit; (B) a call summary containing a narrative of the pursuit event; (2) a printed work form that was competed by hand which contained several spaces for details of the pursuit event, conditions, reasons for pursuit, and how the pursuit ended. This also included the pursuing officer's narrative, a street map of the pursuit event (this map was either completed using a tool like Google Maps or a printed map that the pursuit route was traced by hand), and CAD notes. This report was then scanned and attached to the memorandum pages.

The research team found Report Example 2 contained many necessary data elements in logical progression. It is clear from the outset which law enforcement officer wrote the report,

who they were writing the report to, and what the case number of the report was. Further, the report was initialed and dated by the deputy police chief on the top page, indicating it had been reviewed without the reviewer having to search for that information. Each of the sections listed in the report example above included narrative detail, and in the report provided a clear picture of the vehicular pursuit to the research team. The pathway, speeds, reasons for pursuit, LEA vehicular pursuit policy, supervisor approval, and suspect driver's actions were all clearly laid out. The research team recommends the narrative in the call summary section include clearer details (even just a general description) about the fleeing suspect vehicle, as it was not clear what type of vehicle was being pursued in that section, despite the suspect vehicle and driver stopping at the termination of the vehicular pursuit incident. The handwritten attachments in Report Example 2 were also missing any information about the type of suspect vehicle. Suspect vehicle information was present at the very end of the report, in attached Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) files, and the team recommends suspect vehicle information be presented earlier in the report for analysis and tracking purposes. Additionally, the call summary narrative section was missing weather and traffic conditions, which are necessary details for a thorough report. There were checkboxes for conditions in the handwritten attachments, but not for traffic.

The research team recommends that if there are collisions, injuries, or deaths connected to the vehicular pursuit incident, all documentation of those occurrences must be attached to the vehicular pursuit incident report. It was not clear if those elements are included in Report Example 2. For recordkeeping purposes, this research team recommends that all collision, injury, and death reporting information, when occurring, be appended all vehicular pursuit incident review reports by law enforcement agencies in the state of Washington. In this way, it will be easier to review the details of the vehicular pursuit incident reports should the need arise(i.e, in an annual internal review of pursuit events).

Vehicular Pursuit Internal Analysis Reporting Recommendations

The legislative study direction required the research team to review "copies of reports, annual or other frequencies, used for internal review of pursuit statistics." The results of this review are in Table 18 earlier in this report. Of the 118 LEAs participating in this study, 61% (n=72) reported they utilized an internal analysis report of vehicular pursuit incidents that went beyond reviewing each vehicular pursuit incident after it occurred. Further, the formatting and contents of those internal analysis reports varied widely, as Table 18 demonstrates. Some internal analysis reports were single paragraphs on a one-page memo to LEA leadership. Others were multiple page narrative reflections with case numbers, short narrative summaries of vehicular pursuit incidents within a set time frame, which included tables and graphs.

The study assignment also directed the research team to propose recommendations about such reporting. The research team recommends each LEA in Washington state, regardless of size or yearly number of vehicular pursuit incidents, to have an internal reporting system for

analyzing vehicular pursuit data on an annual basis. It is the view of this team that such a reporting system will increase LEA reflection on vehicular pursuit incident practices, lead to better and uniform recording keeping practices statewide, allow for greater analysis and reporting of vehicular pursuit incidents statewide, and increase transparency around those practices and records. The research team makes the following recommendations regarding the internal analysis reports of vehicular pursuit incidents:

- **Implementation Time Frame**: As soon as practicable, the research team recommends all LEAs in the state of Washington be required to have an internal reporting and analysis system for vehicular pursuit incidents.
- **Internal Reporting Frequency**: Each LEA should conduct an annual analysis of vehicular pursuit incident data.
- **Common format and data elements**: Each LEA must have a common format, along with a shared set of data elements within their annual internal analysis report of vehicular pursuit statistics. This common format will allow for statewide clarity, and allow for law enforcement leaders, state leaders, and researchers to easily track, analyze, and compare vehicular pursuit incident data across agencies in the state of Washington (this can be seen in Appendix 6). The report should begin with a paragraph-length summary outlining the findings within the report, to provide clarity of the following contents for LEA leaders.
    - **Case/Incident Numbers**: The inclusion of the chronologically listed case and/or incident numbers, of individual vehicular pursuit incidents over a year, will allow for ease in locating individual vehicular pursuit incident reports, should the need for more detail arise, and will also allow for stronger longitudinal tracking of pursuit data year over year.
    - **Violations and Reasons for Initiation**: Including these elements will allow LEAs to track the primary reason their law enforcement officers are engaging in vehicular pursuits within their jurisdiction. Doing so may point to common violations across the community, allow for a reflection of the LEA's vehicular pursuit policy and practices, and allow for tracking of such elements over the year, and longitudinal comparison across years.
    - **Termination Reason**: Recording and tracking termination within the annual report will allow LEAs to determine the most common reasons for vehicular pursuit termination in their jurisdiction.
    - **Interventions and Equipment**: LEAs should list all available equipment and techniques they can deploy to prevent and/or terminate a vehicular pursuit incident. Further, LEAs should reflect on the deployment of said equipment and techniques in terms of use, success rate, safety, and financial implications. This will allow LEAs to reflect on the practicality, safety, and cost-effectiveness of their equipment and techniques over time.
    - **Injuries, Collisions, and Deaths**: When occurring, LEAs should clearly record all injuries, collisions, and deaths connected to vehicular pursuit events within their jurisdiction. Further, any mention of these elements within their annual

internal review reporting process should be directly connected to specific case/incident numbers. This will allow for tracking and reflection of the human and property costs associated with vehicular pursuit incidents.

- **Conditions, Locations, Speeds, and Time of Day**: LEAs should include the conditions, location, speeds, and time of day of each vehicular pursuit incident within their jurisdiction. Conditions are defined as weather, roadway, and traffic conditions. Location is defined as the initiation point, pathway, and termination point of a vehicular pursuit incident. Speed is defined as the speeds taking place during vehicular pursuit incidents, and the speed limits enforced on the pathway of the vehicular pursuits. Time of day is defined as the specific time within a day a vehicular pursuit incident was initiated, and when it was terminated. This will allow for tracking and reflection on when, where, how fast, and what conditions vehicular pursuits take place within a jurisdiction, and if there are common trends that can be studied.
- **In and Out of Policy**: LEAs should list all in and out of vehicular pursuit policy factors of vehicular pursuit incidents within their annual internal analysis report. This will allow for tracking and reflection on the effectiveness of the jurisdiction's vehicular pursuit policy, if law enforcement officers are adhering to it, and allow for reflection if the policy needs to be changed, or if there needs to be re-teaching of the vehicular pursuit policy for law enforcement officers.
- **Training**: Any instances of training, whether proactive, reactive to vehicular pursuit policy violations, or otherwise should be tracked within the annual vehicular pursuit analysis internal report. This will provide LEAs with the opportunity to track, demonstrate, and reflect upon their training efforts, and the effectiveness of those efforts in their vehicular pursuit practices.
- **Supervisor Notification**: LEAs should track how quickly supervisor notification takes place by law enforcement officers when engaging in a vehicular pursuit incident and how that notification takes place. This will allow LEAs to demonstrate and track their adherence to supervisor notification laws and policies and identify areas for reflection and improvement.
- **RMS Utilization and Reflection**: When reviewing internal reports of vehicular pursuit incidents during this study, the research team observed that some LEAs included reflections and areas for improvement in their RMS utilization. These reflections included the current use of the system, the ease and efficiency in which vehicular pursuit data was recorded by the law enforcement officers, and coding/tagging system utilized for the vehicular pursuit incident data. These agencies used this RMS reflection space to note any changes in their data entry practices, inconsistencies in current data keeping practices, tracking of vehicular pursuit incident data, and their overall compliance with departmental policies and procedures. The research team recommends all LEAs should include a reflection section on their RMS practices in order to track and improve their RMS practices when necessary.

- **Tables and Visualizations**: Tables and Visualizations allow for clear review, reflection, and analysis of large datasets. The research team recommends that LEAs utilize tables and visualizations in their annual internal vehicular pursuit reports to allow for clear reflection and tracking of vehicular pursuit incident data.

Statewide Data Collection Entity

The study assignment directed the team to: *Recommend an entity to collect and manage this data on a statewide basis; and Assess the benefits and drawbacks of each of the existing systems as a possible platform for collecting, reporting, and hosting pursuit open source downloadable data from agencies, and recommend whether any of these, or another system, would be most appropriate.*

We recommend that the **Washington State Data Exchange** be used for the collection, management, and storage of data. It was established by a prior legislative statute and has been developed to accept data from all vendors used by LEAs in the state. It has robust protocols for maintaining data accountability and confidentiality. It could easily accommodate the pursuit data. It is much more suitable for this role than the other existing systems described below.

- The **National Incident Based Reporting System (NBIRS**) operated by the FBI would not be an appropriate data system to house data on police pursuits for Washington state. The data that they collect and house does not have the granular detail that is needed.

- **Washington Technology Solutions** does not house databases *per se* and only provides technical assistance to other state agencies.

- The **Washington State Patrol Police Traffic Collision Report** does not currently collect data on any non-collision events, and of the collision events, does not collect any data on police pursuit actions per se. It does currently collect much of the data suggested above in Table 19 and potentially could be expanded to include the additional incidents and data on vehicular pursuits.

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Appendix 1

Study Recruitment and Consent Form

Information About A UW Research Study
Police Vehicular Pursuits Study

What is this study about?

You are being asked to participate in a research study about Police Vehicular Pursuits in Washington State. Part of this study aims to examine the lived experience of those involved in police pursuits in the State of Washington. The goal is to collect data on police pursuits and include this information in a report to the State of Washington and inform the types of data that should be collected in the future.

It is up to you to decide whether you want to participate. If you decide to enroll, you can stop participation at any time.

We are asking you to be in the study because you have lived experience of a police vehicular pursuit in Washington State. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you several questions relating to your experiences relating to police vehicular pursuits. The interview will help us learn more about police pursuits and the individuals who have experienced them in some way. These interviews will be about 30 to 45 minutes long. Interviews will be conducted in person, over the phone, or over a secure Zoom session.

What will happen to the information you provide?

Participation requires audio recording of your interview. Audio recording does contain the risk of someone identifying you by voice. The risk will be limited by not stating your name during the interview, storing interview files within encrypted systems which require two factor logins to access, and using artificial intelligence to process your interview into text rather than a human transcriber. Further, audio files will be deleted as soon as the interviews are transcribed into text for analysis. Text transcriptions of interviews will not contain your name.

Your identity and any information you share will be kept confidential. Your interview will only be identified by a study number to protect your identity, and the identity of any agency or group you are associated with. Additionally, all the interview materials and data will be securely stored in a password protected system approved by the University of Washington.

What can you do if you want more information?

Talk to the study team. Fred Rivara, MD, MPH is the lead researcher at the University of Washington for this study and can be contacted fpr@uw.edu.

Talk to someone else. If you want to talk with someone who is not part of the study team about the study, your rights as a research subject, or to report problems or complaints about the study, contact the UW Human Subjects Division at hsdinfo@uw.edu or 206-543-0098.

Appendix 2

Interview script for law enforcement personnel

ID (First and Last Names, Contact Information, Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity)

UW Vehicle Pursuits Study

[Script to read before beginning interview questions]

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to collect information from individuals who have lived experiences with police vehicle pursuits in the state of Washington. The type of information we are looking for includes date and time of pursuit, departmental pursuit polices, type of vehicle driven, number of persons involved, how the pursuit ended, and any additional relevant perceptions and concerns regarding the pursuit. All Personable Identifiable Information (PII) will remain confidential. The interview will take approximately [Blank] to [Blank] minutes.

I also want to check to make sure you have signed our interview informed consent form. Signing this form indicates you:

- You are giving your voluntary consent to participate in the study
- You understand the research study and the potential risks and benefits involved
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
- You understand the information given to you in the informed consent form

Remember, your participation in this study is voluntary and you can stop at any time. You can skip questions you do not want to answer. If you chose to stop your participation in this study for any reason, any responses you have provided will be deleted and not included in the study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

[End opening script, begin questions if participant is ready to move forward]

1. Can you tell me about your career in law enforcement?
    a. How long have you been a police officer/state trooper/sheriff's deputy?
    b. How long have you worked at your current law enforcement agency?
2. How many vehicular pursuits have you been involved in in the past year? Including those you initiated or participated in.
    a. What kind of violations or behaviors led to your decision to pursue a suspect?
    b. What would you say is the most common violation or behavior that led to a vehicular pursuit?

    c. How often do you partner with other law enforcement agencies in vehicular pursuits?
3. At what point in the vehicular pursuit do you establish communication with a supervisor?
    a. What factors are communicated between yourself and the supervisor during the pursuit?
4. What factors do you consider in choosing to continue or terminate a pursuit?
    a. What proportion of recent pursuits have been terminated by a supervisor versus yourself?
5. What is your biggest concern when engaging in a vehicular pursuit?
    a. Have you ever been injured in a pursuit? Has anyone you've pursued been injured? A bystander been injured?
    b. Has there been vehicle or property damage because of a pursuit?
    c. What other concerns do you have during a pursuit?
6. How did your most recent vehicular pursuit end?
    a. What factors led to the end of the pursuit? Did it involve any training, techniques, or technology?
    b. How do you record the details of a pursuit once it has ended?
    c. What details do you record about the driver?
    d. Describe the process for reviewing the pursuit in your agency.
7. What is your agency's policy on vehicular pursuits?
    ~~a.~~ From your understanding, how does your department's vehicular pursuit policy compare with the vehicular pursuit policies of other agencies in the state?
    b. Is there any variation among officers' feelings toward the vehicular pursuit policy in your agency?
8. In your perception, have policies around vehicular pursuits changed in your department in the last six years?
    a. In your view, what led to these changes, if any?
    b. How have these changes impacted on your work and the work of your agency?
9. Is there anything else about vehicular pursuits you'd like us to know?

Appendix 3

Interview script for drivers and passengers

ID (First and Last Names, Contact Information, Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity)

UW Vehicle Pursuits Study

[Script to read before beginning interview questions]

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to collect information from individuals who have lived experiences with police vehicle pursuits in the state of Washington. The type of information we are looking for includes date and time of pursuit, type of vehicle driven, number of persons involved, previous interaction with law enforcement, how the pursuit ended, and any additional relevant perceptions and concerns regarding the pursuit. All Personable Identifiable Information (PII) will remain confidential. The interview will take approximately [Blank] to [Blank] minutes.

I also want to check to make sure you have signed our interview informed consent form. Signing this form indicates you:

- You are giving your voluntary consent to participate in the study
- You understand the research study and the potential risks and benefits involved
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
- You understand the information given to you in the informed consent form

Remember, your participation in this study is voluntary and you can stop at any time. You can skip questions you do not want to answer. If you chose to stop your participation in this study for any reason, any responses you have provided will be deleted and not included in the study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

[End opening script, begin questions if participant is ready to move forward]

1) How long have you been driving?
    a) What has your driving history been like?
2) Did you have any interactions with the police before attempting to flee from the police in a vehicle?
    a) How would you describe those interactions on a line from positive to negative?
    b) What ideas or details can you recall from those earlier interactions with the police?
3) I understand that you were involved in a police pursuit. I'd like to talk with you about the most recent time this happened.
    a) <u>What kind of vehicle</u>(s) were you driving?

b) Was there anyone in the vehicle with you?

c) When was it?

d) Where did it happen? What kind of roads was it on: freeways, arterials, city streets, rural roads?

4) Why did you decide to flee in a vehicle from the police?
    a) What was your main reason?
    b) Did drugs, alcohol, or other factors influence your decision to flee?
    c) Were you afraid of being harmed by the police?
    d) If you were afraid, can you tell me the reasons why?
5) Did you have any knowledge or ideas about policies or laws regarding vehicular pursuits before you fled from the police for the first time?
    a) Did you know of any specific actions you could take that would cause the police to stop pursuing you in a vehicle?
    b) How did you gain this knowledge?
    c) What did the people in your life (friends, family, others) think about you fleeing from the police in a vehicle? Have you ever discussed this topic with someone?
6) What were your thoughts and concerns as you fled the police?
    a) As the pursuit continued, did you think about how it was going to end?
7) How did the pursuit end?
    a) What were you thinking and feeling as the pursuit ended?
    b) Did the police end up stopping you? If they did, how?
    c) Did you or anyone else get injured as a result of the pursuit?
    d) Was there any vehicle or property damage?
8) Since the pursuit we have just talked about happened, has your opinion or your ideas about fleeing the police changed?
    a) If so, how has your thinking changed? Did any specific events or ideas change your thinking?
    b) If you haven't changed your mind, what might change your mind about deciding to flee from the police in the future?
    c) What could law enforcement, policies, or rules do that would stop you from fleeing the police in a vehicle in the future?

d) Are there any other things you feel we should know?

If you have no other questions this concludes our interview. Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this research study!

Appendix 4

Interview script for bystanders and family members

ID (First and Last Names, Contact Information, Age, Gender, Race and Ethnicity)

UW Vehicle Pursuits Study

[Script to read before beginning interview questions]

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to collect information from individuals that have lived experiences directly witnessing or have had close relatives experience police vehicle pursuits in the state of Washington. All Personable Identifiable Information (PII) will remain confidential. The interview will take approximately [Blank] to [Blank] minutes.

I also want to check to make sure you have signed our interview informed consent form. Signing this form indicates you:

- You are giving your voluntary consent to participate in the study
- You understand the research study and the potential risks and benefits involved
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
- You understand the information given to you in the informed consent form

Remember, your participation in this study is voluntary and you can stop at any time. You can skip questions you do not want to answer. If you chose to stop your participation in this study for any reason, any responses you have provided will be deleted and not included in the study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

[End opening script, begin questions if participant is ready to move forward]

1. If you witnessed the pursuit, can you please briefly describe where you were and what you were doing at the time of the incident?
    a. Were you walking, riding a bike or motorcycle, or in a car?
    b. Was this in an urban, suburban or rural environment?
2. If you did not directly witness the pursuit, but had a close relative experience the pursuit, can you describe what you know about it?
3. Do you know when and where the pursuit occurred?
    a. What were the conditions during the pursuit?
        i. <u>For example</u>, weather, traffic, vehicle speed(s), time of day.
4. Were either the pursued or police vehicles driving recklessly, erratically, or in any means that could be perceived as dangerous to the public?

a. Do you believe that the pursued driver would have driven in the same manner had he or she not been involved in a police pursuit?

5. Do you know the seriousness of the crime committed by the pursued?
    a. Was it a felony or misdemeanor?
        i. For example, felonies can include sexual assault and exploitation, murder, identity theft, kidnapping, gun theft, 1st to 3rd degree assault (great bodily harm, intentional assault, assaulting a public employee)
        ii. For example, misdemeanors can include shoplifting, disorderly conduct, theft of something less than $750, vehicular prowling, 4th degree assault (harassment, repetitive domestic violence)
    b. Was it a violent or sexual offence?
    c. Do you know if the person pursued committed a crime that posed a threat to the safety of others?
6. What was the outcome of this vehicular pursuit event you are describing?
    a. How did the pursuit end?
    b. Did the driver in the pursued vehicle end it, or did law enforcement?
7. Were you or any others injured as a result of this incident?
    a. If injuries did occur, how did they occur in your perception? Do you know who or what caused the injuries?
    b. Do you know if there was vehicle or property damage? Who or what caused the property damage?
8. Did you or any other bystander, or close relative take or consider taking legal action against either the police or the driver of the pursued vehicle for the injuries sustained because of the pursuit?
    a. If so what action(s) were taken?
9. Are there any other additional comments you would like to make about the circumstances regarding the pursuit including the weather, road conditions, traffic, speed, time of day, or any other relevant information.

Appendix 5

Vehicular Pursuit Incident Report Examples

Report Example 1:

Top of Page				
Names of Law Enforcement Agency		Officer/Deputy Name	Date Written	
Case Number		Date of Event	Time of Event	
Deputies Involved				
Deputy 1 Name	Agency	Badge Number	Unit	
Deputy 2 Name	Agency	Badge Number	Unit	
Deputy 3 Name	Agency	Badge Number	Unit	
Pursuit Information				
Suspect Name		Suspect Date of Birth	Driver's License Number	
Registered Owner of Vehicle				
Suspect Address				Suspect Phone Number
Driver/Suspect Condition		Demeanor		BAC % (Or Refused)
Occupant(s) Name(s)		Injured		Arrested
Initial Violation		Time Pursuit Started		
Maximum Speed Reached		Length of Pursuit Time		
Pursuit Terminated By		Reason for Termination		
Roadway Conditions		Surface Type		Number of Lanes
Traffic Conditions		Temperature		Weather Conditions
Lighting Conditions				
If Accident Occurred – Accident Information				
Damage to Police Vehicle		Suspect Vehicle		Citizen Vehicle
Other		Object Struck	By	
Investigated By		Agency		Photographs
Witness Information				
Name	DOB	Address	Phone	
Name	DOB	Address	Phone	
Name	DOB	Address	Phone	
Narrative of Event				
Directions: Narrative should contain a chronological account of all relevant events/actions including but not limited to: (1) the circumstances which initially brought the subject(s) to the attention of the deputy(s); (2) The behavior of the subject(s) when first observed/contacted by the deputy(s); (3) What caused the subject(s) to resist and what actions were taken by the				

deputy(s); (4) A description of any injury to the deputy(s) and an explanation of how the injury occurred; (5) Any unusual circumstances which contributed to the incident; (6) Include a statement by the preparing supervisor to whether the use of force was justified.
Sergeant Signature
[ ] I have reviewed the actions of the employees involved and find that they acted in accordance with all department polices. [ ] I do not concur with the actions of the employees involved and I recommend that an investigation of the incident be initiated Comments: Print name Signature Date
Undersheriff Signature
[ ] I have reviewed the actions of the employees involved and find that they acted in accordance with all department polices. [ ] I do not concur with the actions of the employees involved and I recommend that an investigation of the incident be initiated Comments: Print name Signature Date
Sheriff Signature
[ ] I have reviewed the actions of the employees involved and find that they acted in accordance with all department polices. [ ] I do not concur with the actions of the employees involved and I recommend that an investigation of the incident be initiated Comments: Print name Signature Date

Report Example 2:

Memorandum – Cover Page
Date (Written): **To:** *Captain/Risk Management* **From:** *Operations Captain*

Subject: *Pursuit Review Summary [includes case number]*
Summary: *The summary consists of the pursuit review case number, names the officers involved in the pursuit, and any actions taken by the supervisor in response to the pursuit incident, and how the case was to move up the chain of command for review.*

Memorandum – Call Summary

Date (Written):
To: *Captain/Risk Management*
From: *Operations Captain*
Subject: *Pursuit Review Summary [includes case number]*
Call Summary: *This section includes (but is not limited to)*

- *Date and time of pursuit incident*
- *Officers involved*
- *Why the officers were called to the scene*
- *The reporting party*
- *Suspect(s) and a description of their disposition and actions taken*
- *License plate of suspect vehicle*
- *Location of incident*
- *When the officer activated their emergency lights*
- *Actions taken by officers*
- *Technology and techniques used by officers to end the vehicular pursuit*
- *Evaluation of risk of the situation*
- *Injuries, collisions, and contacts (if any)*
- *Partner LEAs involved*
- *A description of the route of the pursuit*
- *How the pursuit was terminated or ended*

Time and Distance of Pursuit: *Length of pursuit in miles (using Google Maps) and Computer Aided Dispatch notes, and length of time in minutes*

Reason for the Pursuit: *Description of why the officer engaged in the pursuit, noting the officer was in full uniform with identifying features, in a marked patrol vehicle with emergency lights and sirens, and observations of the suspect driver's response to the officers*

Supervision: *Provided Supervisor approval details*

Authorized Pursuit: *Connected the rationale for authorizing the vehicular pursuit with LEA vehicular pursuit policy.*

Appendix 6

Annual Internal Vehicular Pursuit Report Template

Year: 20XX

Executive Summary:

Case & Incident Numbers Listed Chronologically:

Violations and Reasons for Initiation of Vehicular Pursuits Over the Year:

Terminations of Pursuits Over the Year:

Interventions & Equipment – Availability, Use, & Reflection:

Connected Injuries, Collisions & Deaths (If Occurring):

- **Injuries:**
- **Collisions:**
- **Deaths:**

Conditions, Locations, Speeds & Time of Day:

- **Conditions:**
- **Locations:**
- **Speeds:**
- **Time of Day:**

Vehicular Pursuit Policy – Law Enforcement Officer Adherence to and any Violations:

Training over the Year:

Supervisor Notification:

Each of the above categories could be appended with tables and/or graphs.