



# Poulsbo Police Department

Honor \* Integrity \* Teamwork \* Professionalism

Ron Harding, Chief of Police

## 2021 Use of Force and Vehicle Pursuit Analysis

### USE OF FORCE

The Poulsbo Police Department reviews every use of force. When an officer uses force, it is documented in their report and a supervisor is notified. The supervisor will review all related documentation, review body camera video, and interview involved parties when necessary. The supervisor will complete a policy review, which is forwarded through the Chief to ensure the actions of the officer hold true to current law, policy, and best practice.

In 2021, the Poulsbo Police Department documented and reviewed eleven incidents requiring officers to use force.<sup>1</sup> Of the eleven, all were found to be within policy.

Use of Force: Type of Force	
Physical Control	9
Taser: Probe deployment	2
Taser: Contact deployment	0
OC/Chemical	0
Impact Weapons (Baton)	0
Personal Strikes	0
Impact Munitions (Bean Bag)	0
Vascular Neck Restraint	0
Vehicle	0
Firearm	0
Total	11

Use of Force by Ethnicity	
Caucasian	9
African American	0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2
Asian	0
Hispanic	0
Unknown/Other	0
Total	11

<sup>1</sup> Poulsbo Police Department Policy - §300 - Use of Force

Use of Force by Gender	
Male	9
Female	2
Unknown	0

Use of Force - Associated Factors	
Intoxicated/Drugs	3
Mental Health	8

Use of Force - Call Types	
Officer Initiated Contact (car stop)	0
Misdemeanor Crime Response	4
Felony Crime Response	4
Other Response (i.e. mental health)	3

		Treatment			
Use of Force Injuries		Injuries (visible or complaint of pain)	On scene Aid	Hospital	Deceased
Suspect	3	1	3		
Officer	1	1		1	

#### Additional Notes/Trends:

- There were a total of 11 uses of force for 2021, up from 8 in 2020<sup>2</sup>
- Pousbo Police Officers responded to 8,706 calls for service<sup>3</sup>
- Percent of 2021 incidents in which force was used: 0.13%

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The way we analyze and evaluate all uses of force is critical. It assists in developing training plans, ensuring accountability of our employees, and most important, it builds trust between our department and the community.

In 2021, we maintained focus on training as an agency. Some of the training directly related to the use of force included: Daily Training Bulletins on policy, defensive tactics (OC Spray and Baton), handgun and rifle qualifications, and classroom lectures on the use of force, deadly force, and the expectations for our employees.

In 2021, we had a total of eleven applications of force. This was roughly a 27% increase from 2021. One incident resulted in minor injury to the officer, treatment at a hospital, and some time on light duty. Two

<sup>2</sup>2021 Use of Force Analysis

<sup>3</sup>Kitsap 911 – 2021 Law Enforcement Activity Report

applications of a Taser resulted in minor skin damage from the probe strike. One application of force resulted in skin abrasions to the suspects forehead that did not require treatment. The remaining 7 applications of force resulted in no reported injuries to the suspects.

Most applications of force (9 of 11) involved officers using physical control (taking uncooperative suspect to the ground). This is a tactic used to control aggressive or uncooperative suspects so they can be placed in handcuffs.

There were no significant trends noted as part of this analysis.

### **DISPLAYS OF FORCE**

The Poulsbo Police Department takes a conservative approach in our documentation and review of all uses of force. This includes documenting any time an officer displays force, such as pointing a firearm or Taser at a suspect, without any other physical force being applied. Our intent is to emphasize the impact of our decision-making process and to promote an understanding of the significance of our actions, even when physical force is not used.

There were no “displays of force only” in 2021.

## **VEHICLE PURSUITS**

### **RCW [10.116.060](#) : Vehicular pursuit.**

(1) A peace officer may 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 as defined in RCW [9.94A.030](#), or an escape under chapter [9A.76](#) RCW; or

(ii) There is reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a driving under the influence offense under RCW [46.61.502](#);

(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. The officer in consultation with the supervising officer must consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit. The supervisor must consider the justification for the vehicular pursuit and other safety considerations, including but not limited to speed, weather, traffic, road conditions, and the known presence of minors in the vehicle, and the vehicular pursuit must be terminated if any of the requirements of this subsection are not met;

(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. The officer must consider alternatives to the vehicular pursuit, the justification for the vehicular pursuit, and other safety considerations, including but not limited to speed, weather, traffic, road conditions, and the known presence of minors in the vehicle. The officer must terminate the vehicular pursuit if any of the requirements of this subsection are not met.

(2) A pursuing officer shall comply with any agency procedures for designating the primary pursuit vehicle and determining the appropriate number of vehicles permitted to participate in the vehicular pursuit and comply with any agency procedures for coordinating operations with other jurisdictions, including available tribal police departments when applicable.

(3) A peace officer may not fire a weapon upon a moving vehicle unless necessary to protect against an imminent threat of serious physical harm resulting from the operator's or a passenger's use of a deadly weapon. For the purposes of this subsection, a vehicle is not considered a deadly weapon unless the operator is using the vehicle as a deadly weapon and no other reasonable means to avoid potential serious harm are immediately available to the officer.

(4) For purposes of this section, "vehicular pursuit" means an attempt by a uniformed peace officer in a vehicle equipped with emergency lights and a siren to stop a moving vehicle where the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be aware that the officer is signaling the operator to stop the vehicle and the operator of the moving vehicle appears to be willfully resisting or ignoring the officer's attempt to stop the vehicle by increasing vehicle speed, making evasive maneuvers, or operating the vehicle in a reckless manner that endangers the safety of the community or the officer.

#### **Poulsbo Police Department [Policy §307](#) – Vehicle Pursuits**

- An event involving one or more law enforcement officers attempting to apprehend a suspect, who is attempting to avoid arrest while operating a vehicle by using high-speed driving or other evasive tactics, such as driving off a highway, turning suddenly or driving in a legal manner but willfully failing to yield to and officer's emergency signal to stop.

Our policy only allows officers to initiate a pursuit under the new legal restrictions noted above. There are numerous factors for the officer and supervisors to consider such as the risk to community safety should the suspect escape, and whether other methods would be safer and more effective.

All pursuits are reviewed by a supervisor and command staff to ensure they hold true to the law, policy, best practice and department expectations.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

There were no police pursuits initiated by the Poulsbo Police in 2021. New restrictions on patrol officers under RCW 10.116.060 were followed throughout the year and a process to document circumstances where a pursuit would have been initiated in the past will start in 2022.