

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



**ANNUAL PURSUIT REPORT
2017**

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

People pay attention to police chases whether they observe a police car “expediting” down the highway with lights and sirens on or hear about a high-speed pursuit on the news. The public has an interest in knowing about the chase.

As you will see in this report, most vehicular pursuits don’t last very long, and end without incident. However, when a pursuit doesn’t end well, the public and the media often have questions:

- Why was the officer chasing the person?
- How fast were they going?
- Did it end in a crash?
- Was anyone hurt?

The MCPD does a review of every vehicular pursuit, and we in fact, ask all these questions and more. Our pursuit policy, summarized on page 4, has clear guidelines on the circumstances that authorize a pursuit.

In addition, a supervisor will monitor and decide on whether to allow the chase to continue. Safety is the primary concern. The safety of the public, the safety of the officer, and the safety of the person(s) who are fleeing.

Again, as you will note in this report, most of our pursuit end without incident. But when a police pursuit ends with a crash or someone getting injured or killed, the public will be asking questions and demanding accountability.

Rest assured; those are the same questions and the same accountability that the MCPD brings to each police pursuit we engage in.



J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police

OVERVIEW

The information contained in this report is obtained from the MCP 610, *Motor Vehicle Pursuit Report*, the form completed by a supervisor from the district where a police pursuit originated. All reports are reviewed to verify compliance with department policy by the supervisor, a District executive, and the Assistant Chief of the respective bureau.

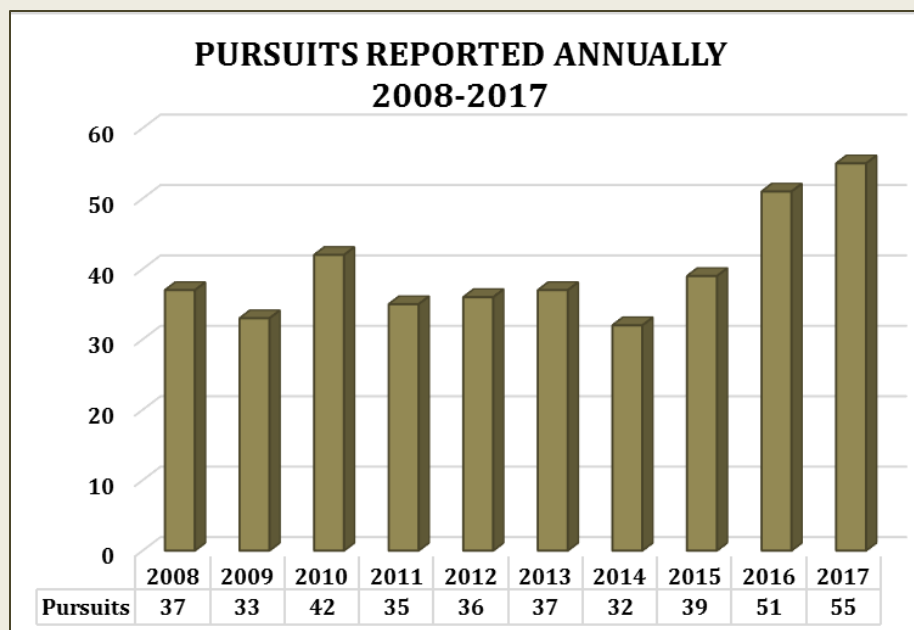
A vehicular pursuit is defined by policy as ***an active attempt by an officer in a vehicle to apprehend an occupant of a moving motor vehicle who exhibits a clear intention to avoid apprehension by maintaining elevated speed, increasing speed, and/or using evasive tactics.***

On an annual basis, the Montgomery County Department of Police reviews and analyzes the data collected from the MCP 610 forms obtained in that calendar year and the pursuit policy (Function Code 135).

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

1. **Criminal:** Felony or the officer has reason to believe a felony has occurred or is occurring. Note: In order for 2nd Degree Assault on a Police Officer to be a felony, physical injury means “any impairment of physical condition, excluding minor injuries”, and “a person may not intentionally cause physical injury to another if the person knows or has reason to know that the other is a law enforcement officer engaged in the performance of the officer’s official duties.”
2. **Traffic:**
 - a. Driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics (misdemeanor).
 - b. Hit-and-run, personal injury collision when the officer has reasonable cause to believe serious physical injury has occurred (felony).

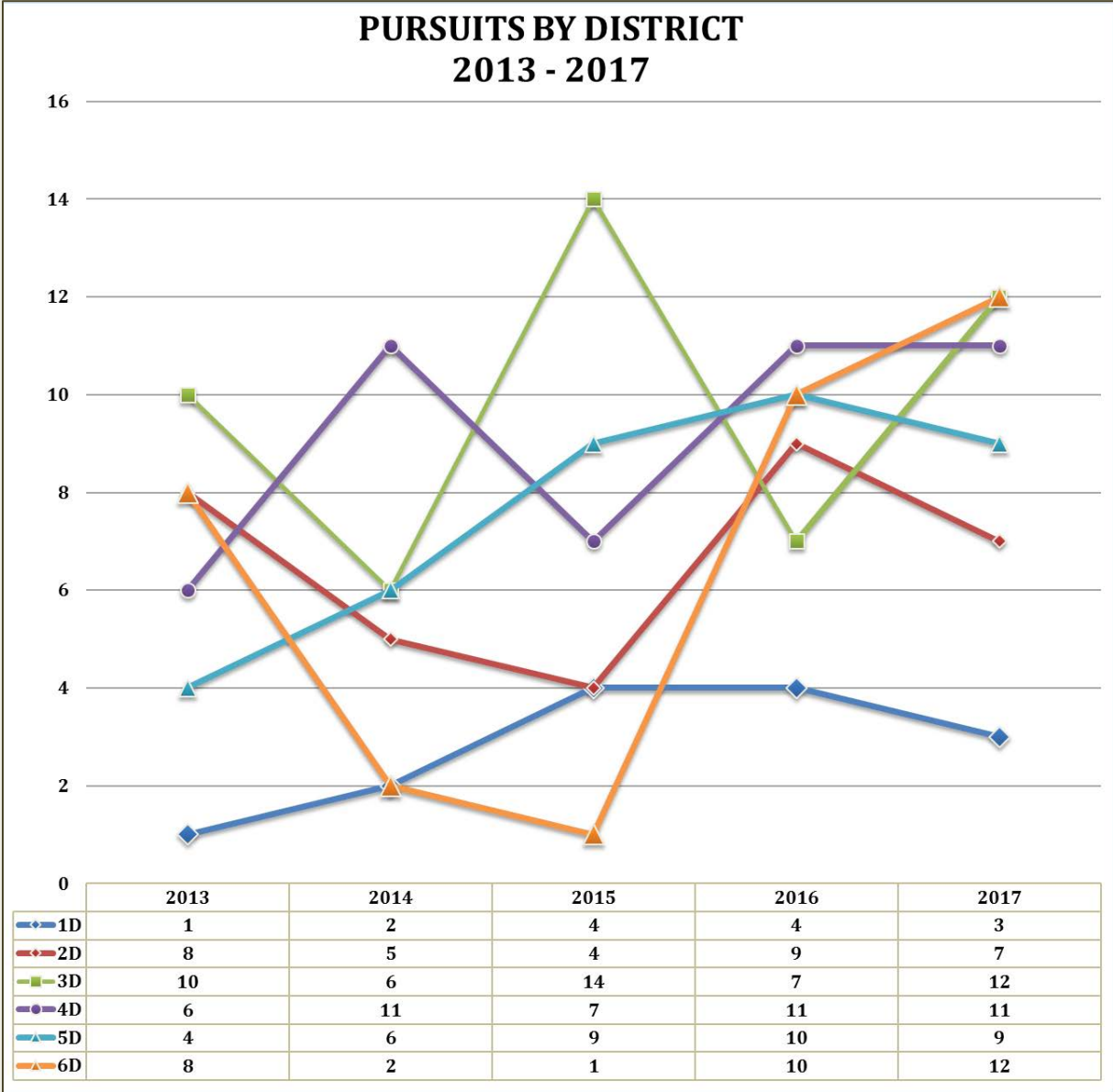
In 2017, there were 55 pursuits, four more pursuits than 2016, or an increase of 7.8%. The number of pursuits remains higher than the department’s 10-year pursuit average of 39.7 pursuits per year.



2017 PURSUIT ANALYSIS

By District

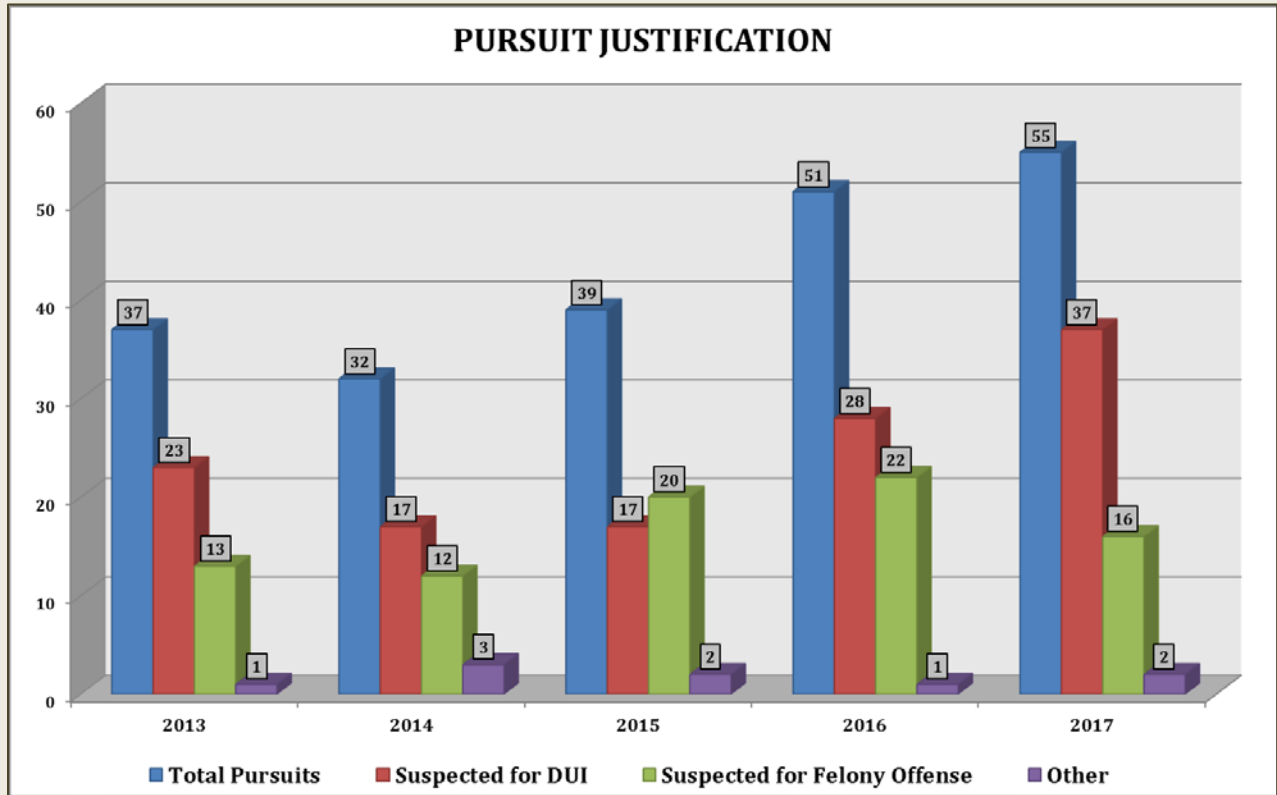
The graph below illustrates the frequency by district in which Montgomery County police officers initiated a pursuit in 2017 and highlights trends over the last five years. The 3rd and 6th Districts each recorded 12 pursuits in 2017. The number of pursuits in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Districts in 2017 remains higher than the five-year average for each of those districts. The total number of pursuits in the 6th District is nearly twice the district’s five-year average of 6.6 pursuits per year.



Note: One pursuit in 2017 began and ended in another county and is not reflected on this chart.

By Justification

In 2017, suspicion of a subject driving under the influence (DUI) was the primary reason for initiating 37 of the 55 pursuits (67.3%). Sixteen other pursuits (29.9%) were initiated for apprehension of a felony suspect. In 2017, two pursuits were initiated to assist another agency already engaged in a pursuit (other).



The last five years have a similar trend: suspected impaired driving is the primary reason for the initiation of a pursuit. 57% of pursuits occurring during the past five years were initiated for this reason, while 38.8% were initiated for reason to believe a felony had occurred, and 4.2% were initiated for other reasons.

By Location

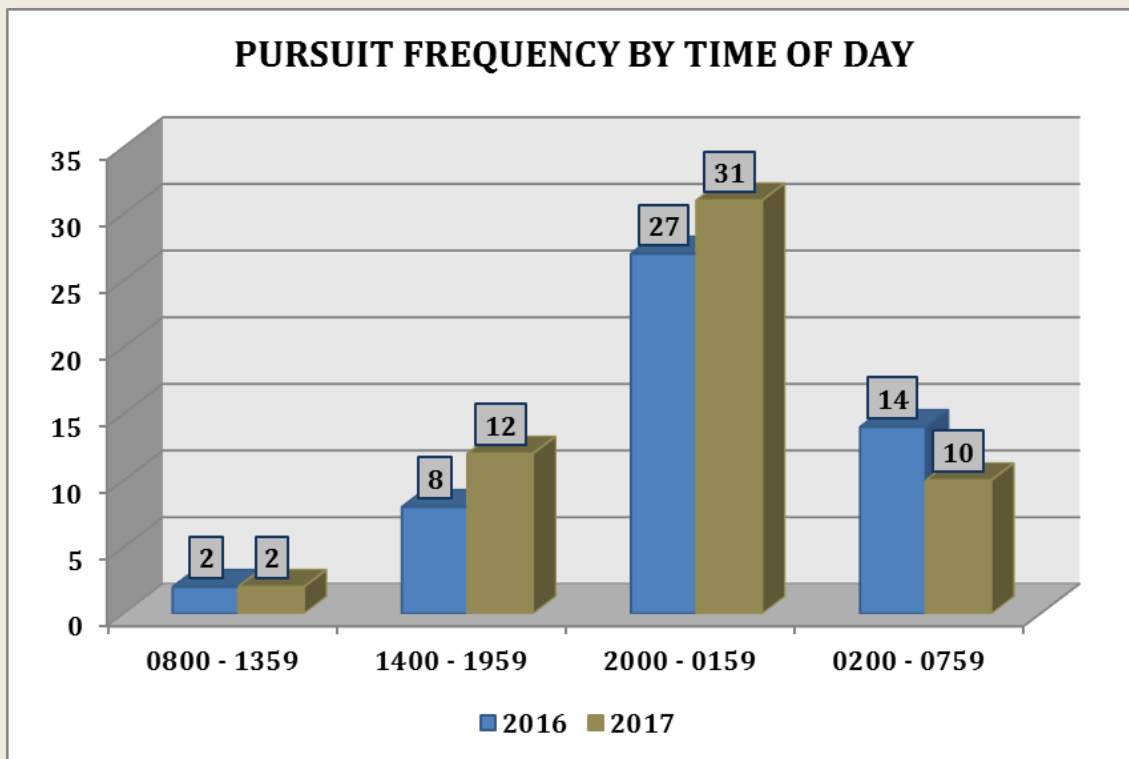
In 2017, Montgomery County police officers pursued subjects outside the county's jurisdictional boundaries in five separate incidents. Function Code 135 states that "Officers may pursue into a neighboring jurisdiction only when an officer has probable cause to believe the crime committed was a felony of a violent type."

- One of the five pursuits occurred entirely outside Montgomery County: the Repeat Offenders Unit (ROU) was attempting to serve a felony warrant in Prince George's County for an armed home invasion when the subject failed to comply with a traffic stop and fled approximately one quarter of a mile until detectives were able to effectively block him in and make the apprehension.

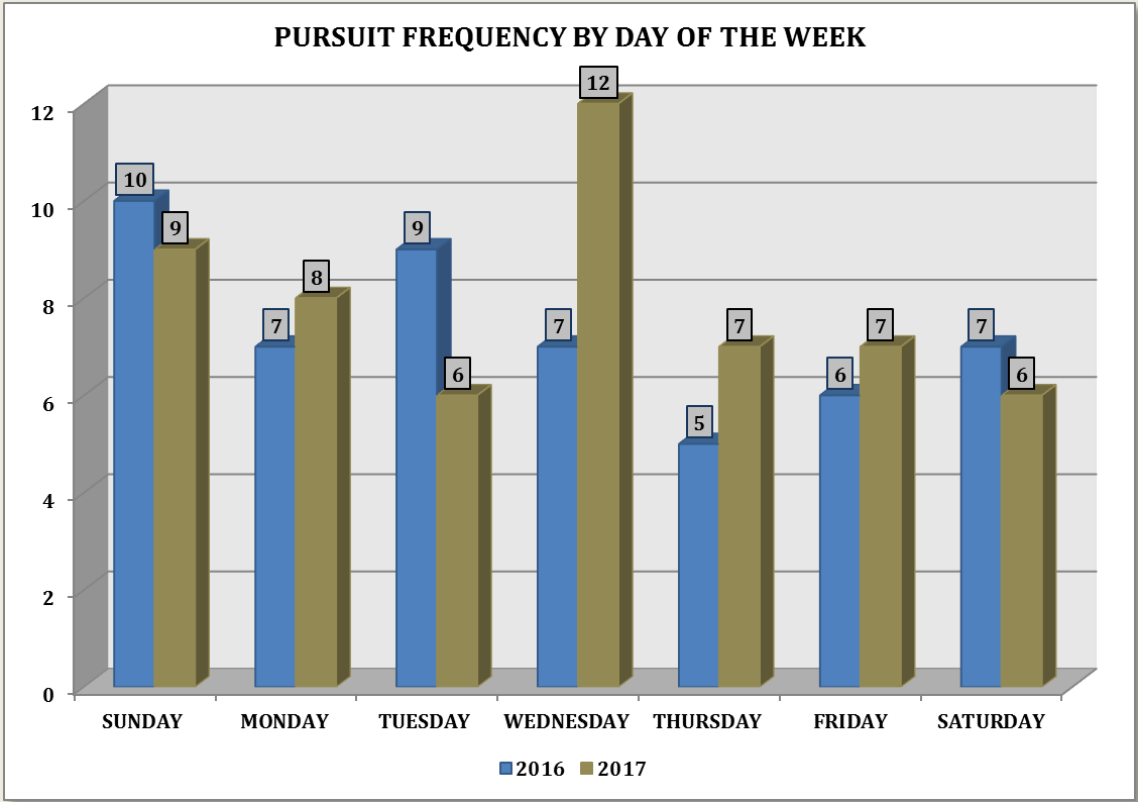
- Four of the five pursuits outside the county resulted in a collision. All five collisions involved the suspects' vehicles, and two of the collisions involved the department's vehicles, but no one was seriously injured. All the suspects were apprehended.
- One of the pursuits that travelled outside Montgomery County was not in compliance with Function Code 135. In this case, the officers pursued the respective vehicle after receiving a computer return that the vehicle was stolen. Although the pursuit was initially authorized, a stolen vehicle is not considered to be a felony of a violent type, and thus should have been terminated at the county line.
- Two other pursuits (in-county) were also not in compliance with the department's policies and procedures. Both were for suspected DUI, and both resulted in collisions, one in which the suspect was seriously injured. Appropriate disciplinary actions were taken in both cases.

By Time of Day & Day of Week

The pattern related to the time of day when pursuits occur has been consistent over the last three years. Pursuit data in 2017 indicated that most pursuits continue to occur during the overnight hours. In 2017, 74.5% of the pursuits occurred overnight (8pm to 8am); 73.2% of those that occurred overnight happened between the hours of 11pm and 3am. It is also noteworthy to note the 50% increase in pursuits that occurred between 2pm and 8pm, as reflected in the chart below. This can be attributed to the six pursuits that occurred in the 5pm hour. This was the most active hour, outside of the overnight trend noted above.



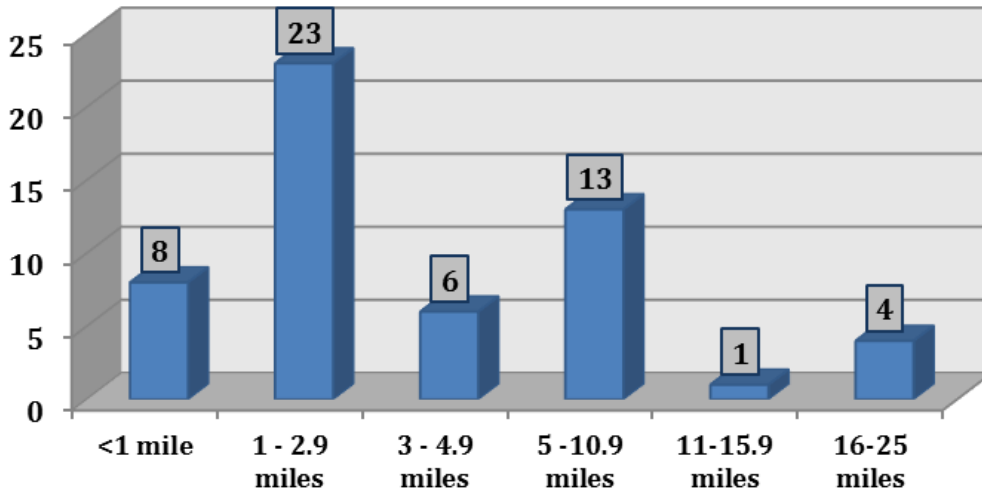
In 2017, there was another shift in the frequency trends according to the day of the week on which the pursuits occurred. In 2015, most pursuits occurred on Thursday (9), Saturday (7), and Wednesday (5); 54% of the pursuits in 2015 occurred on one of these three days. In 2016, Thursday had the fewest pursuits occur (5), and Sunday (10) and Tuesday (9) had the most pursuits. In 2017, the most pursuits occurred on Wednesday (12) and Sunday (9), and the fewest pursuits occurred on Saturday (6) and Tuesday (6).



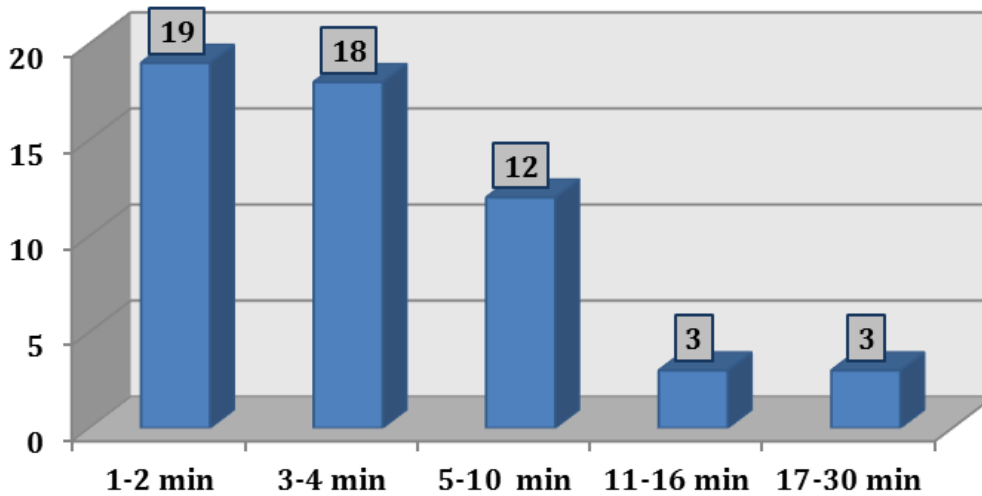
By Distance & Duration

The frequency of pursuit distances and times is similar to last year. In 2017, approximately 67.3% of the pursuits in Montgomery County lasted less than five minutes. There were only six pursuits that lasted longer than 10 minutes in 2017. The longest pursuit in 2017 was 20 minutes long and traveled 24 miles.

**PURSUIT FREQUENCY BY LENGTH OF PURSUIT
(DISTANCE)**



**PURSUIT FREQUENCY BY LENGTH OF PURSUIT
(TIME)**



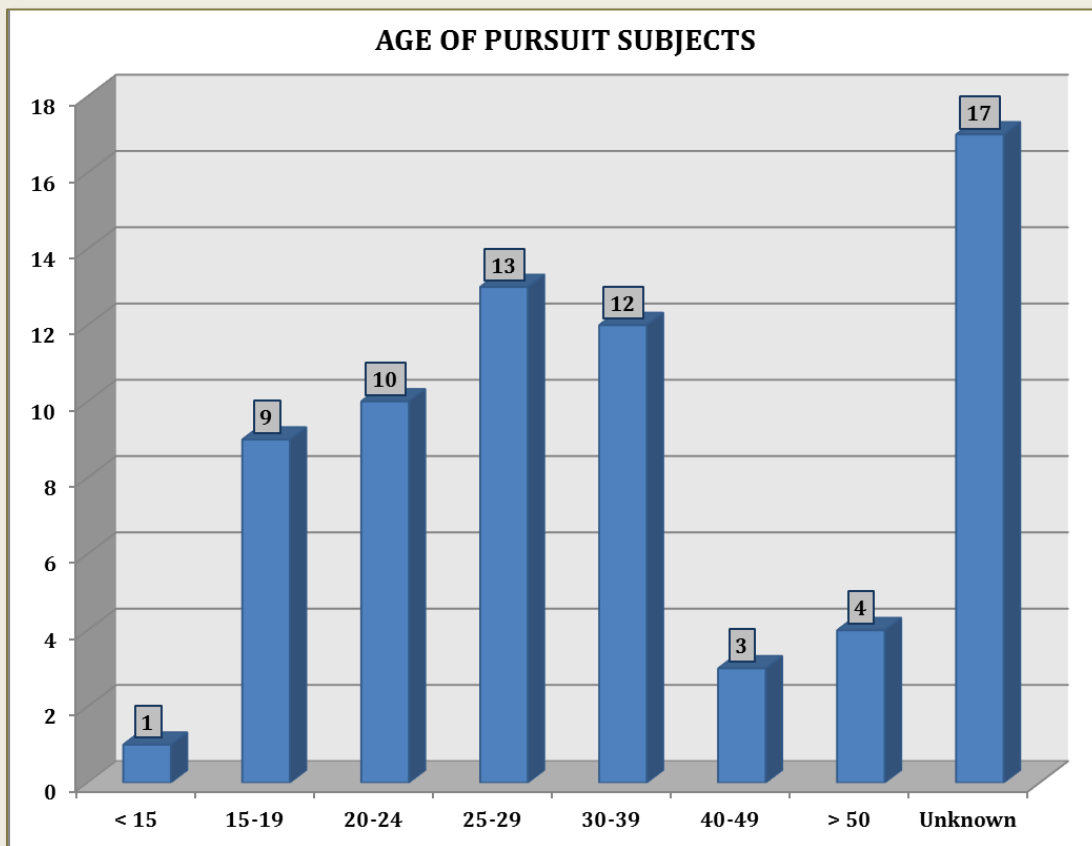
SUSPECT ANALYSIS

Apprehension is not the primary goal of a police vehicle pursuit. The safety of the officer and the public are the most important aspects; the risks are high for all involved. Officers and supervisors must balance the safety risks with the urgency to apprehend the driver. In 2017, suspects were able to successfully evade police officers in 13 of the 55 pursuits (23.7% of the time). In four incidents, the

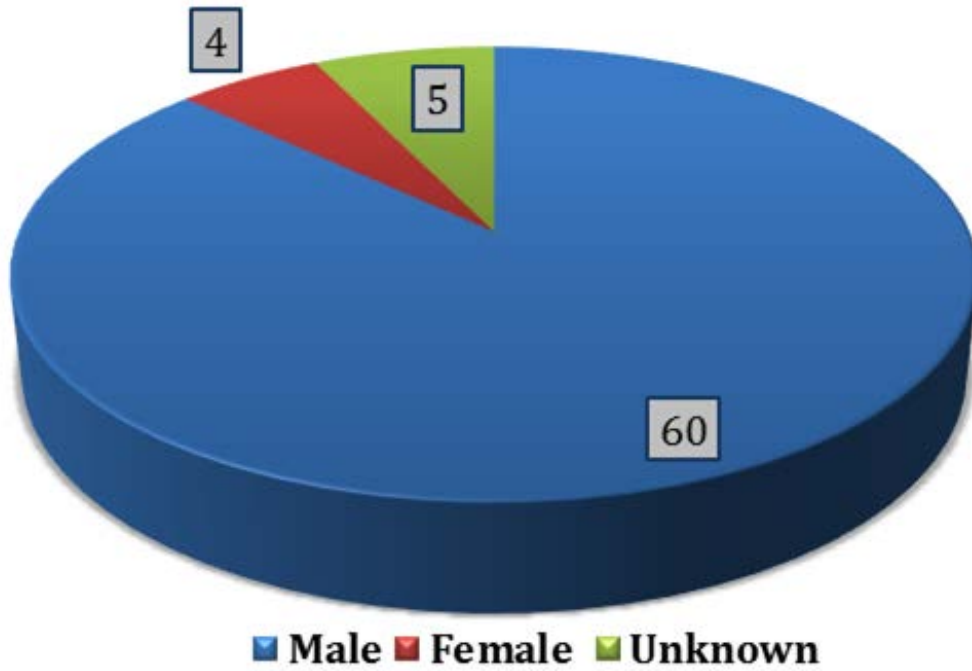
suspect(s) evaded the police by driving at extremely high rates of speed. In three other incidents, the suspect(s) bailed out of the vehicle and evaded apprehension by the police. And in the six remaining incidents, the pursuits were terminated by the supervisors for various reasons, generally due to crossing jurisdictional boundaries or traffic conditions.

Officers were unable to identify the suspects in five of these 13 pursuits but were able to provide some demographic details in several of the incidents. In one incident over the summer, the 1st District Special Assignment Team was working a residential burglary trend and observed a suspicious vehicle in the area. Based on the officers' training and experience, the team attempted a traffic stop and the vehicle began to flee, purposely crossing a median, performing an illegal U-turn, and driving on the wrong side of the road to bypass other traffic. The suspect vehicle accessed I-270 and sped off, at which time the pursuit was terminated. Officers were able to obtain the license plate number and determine that the vehicle was rented from a location in Virginia and had not been returned. Through additional investigation, the vehicle was located in the District of Columbia, and proceeds from the Montgomery County burglaries were found at a residence connected to the rental vehicle in Prince George's County, and multiple arrests were made, including the two suspects who had been driving the rented vehicle that had originally led officers on a pursuit.

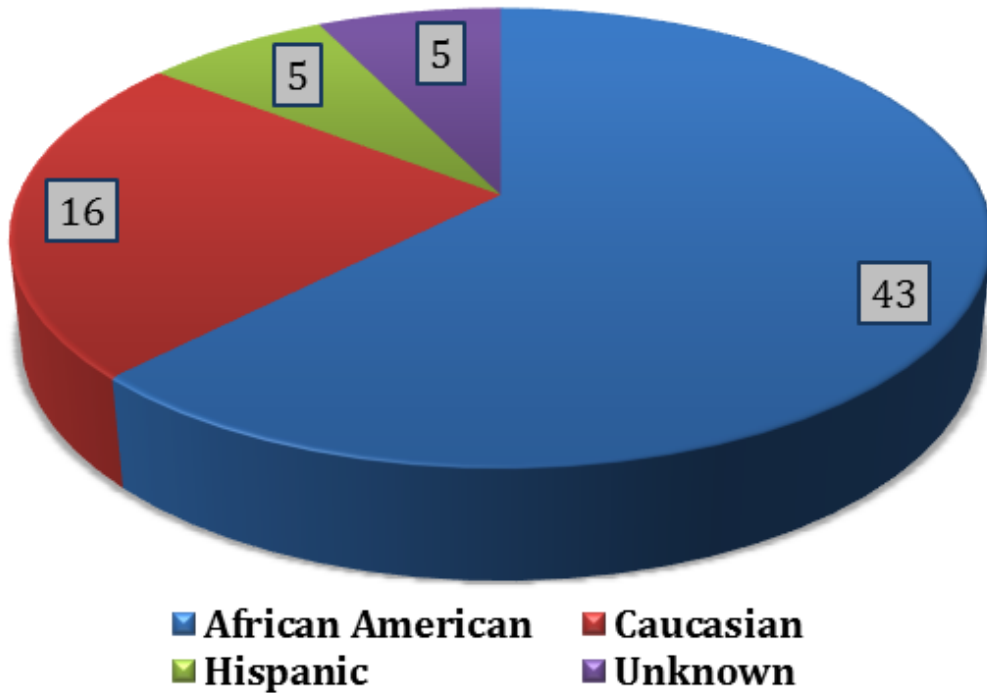
The demographic data below reflects information for the 53 subjects that were apprehended during the pursuits, as well as the random data that was known about 11 of the suspects who were able to elude apprehension.



GENDER OF PURSUIT SUBJECTS



RACE/ETHNICITY OF PURSUIT SUBJECTS



NOTABLE ANALYSIS

Additional Resources

Police pursuits can be dangerous. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis nationally on utilizing tactical maneuvers to end police pursuits. Montgomery County Police Department policy prohibits the use of rolling roadblocks and tactical vehicle intervention but does allow tire deflating devices to be used by officers trained in the use of such devices. In 72.7% of the pursuits, there were no special tactics or additional resources used. Ten pursuits involved the use of other resources, including other agencies or aircraft, and in five incidents, the police department deployed stop sticks to end the pursuit. The suspect(s) was still able to evade the police in one of these instances, and a collision occurred in one of the other pursuits in which stop sticks were deployed, without injury to those involved or nearby.

Supervisors terminated nine of the 55 pursuits, primarily when the subject(s) left the county, but also when traffic conditions increased the risk associated with the pursuit, and the dangers to the officers and the public outweighed continuation of the pursuit, in accordance with Function Code 135.

Use of Force

Nineteen of the 55 pursuits (34.5%) in Montgomery County resulted in a “bailout”, which occurs when the subject(s) stop or crash the vehicle and flee on foot. Subject(s) were consequently apprehended in 16 instances. Montgomery County police officers consequently used force during or after **five** of these pursuits/bailouts and a Rockville City police officer used force after one of these bailouts, in which the subjects refused commands or resisted arrest.

There were four separate pursuits in which the suspect did not bailout, but did resist arrest, so officers had to use force (hands/feet) in those incidents to remove the subjects from the vehicle and place them in handcuffs. Overall, there were only nine pursuits in which force was used by Montgomery County officers on the suspects, or only 16.4% of all pursuits in 2017, a slight increase when compared to last year.

Collisions

Of the 55 pursuits that occurred in 2017, 31 (56.4% of pursuits) resulted in a collision, an increase over the 27 collisions (52.9% of pursuits) that occurred in 2016. The 31 collisions were distributed across the following districts:

District	Collisions	Damaged Suspect Vehicles	Suspects Injured	Damaged Civilian Vehicles	Civilians Injured	Damaged MCPD Vehicles	Police Officers Injured
1D	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
2D	4	4	1	2	0	1	0
3D	6	6	3	2	1	7	0
4D	8	6	2	1	0	2	1
5D	5	5	3	3	3	2	1
6D	6	6	1	5	0	0	0
SID (ROU)	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	31	29	10	15	4	13	2

Of the 31 pursuits that ended in collision, the suspect's vehicle was involved in nearly all (93.5%) of the collisions and a total of 10 people (suspects/passengers) were injured in those collisions; only one suspect was injured severely, according to the police report, and transported to a hospital. Damage was incurred upon 15 privately owned civilian vehicles during 10 pursuits, and four civilian bystanders were injured during three pursuits. Thirteen police vehicles sustained damage during nine pursuits, and there were two police officers injured during the pursuits in 2017. None of the injuries sustained by the bystanders or the police officers during any of these pursuits were severe.

SUMMARY

With more than one million people living in Montgomery County and thousands more travelling through the county, pursuits rarely occur. There were more than 110,000 traffic stops in 2017, yet only 55 pursuits, a .05% occurrence rate.

The Montgomery County Police Department continues to be proactive in the area of driver safety, in an effort to reduce the number of law enforcement officer deaths, disabilities, and injuries caused by traffic-related incidents. Through the Public Safety Training Academy, the Montgomery County Police Department continues the **Arrive Alive** initiative: Buckle Up, Slow Down, Pay Attention, Arrive Alive. The effectiveness of this training is also evident in the number of police vehicle collisions, which has declined 18.7% since this program was implemented, while at-fault vehicle collisions have declined 20.6%.

The Montgomery County Department of Police remains dedicated to creating a culture of safety and accountability. As such, a copy of this report will be distributed to all Patrol Services Bureau Commanders and the Director of the Training and Education Division for review and identification of any additional training or policy review which may be necessary on an operational level.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

100 Edison Park Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/>

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