

# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE**



**ANNUAL PURSUIT REPORT  
2022**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
A Message from the Chief	3
Overview	4
2022 Pursuit Analysis	5
Suspect Analysis	8
Notable Analysis	10
Summary	11

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Anyone who has watched a movie or TV show has probably seen a police pursuit. With sirens screaming and lights flashing, police cruisers tear through a city or across the countryside, mile after mile at high speeds until the perpetrator is either caught or their vehicle has crashed.

Here's the reality: Most police chases last less than five minutes and cover five miles or fewer. Statistics show that over the last two years, 36% of pursuits ended within one or two minutes and 26% within five to ten minutes. Similarly, 48% of pursuits ranged from one to three miles.

As you will see in this report, there were 67 pursuits in 2022. That's higher than the 10-year average for our Department and is likely due to increases in felony offenses such as stolen vehicles, drug/narcotic offenses, and weapons offenses as the pandemic eased.

Of that total, 45 (69%) involved officers in pursuit of someone suspected of a serious crime, and 17 (25%) involved drivers suspected of driving while intoxicated.

For historical comparison, since 2018, 58% were for subjects eluding police who were involved in felony offenses such as stolen vehicles, while 35% of pursuits were for individuals suspected of driving under the influence, and the remaining percentage were for other offenses or violations, such as weapons offenses and narcotics-related offenses.

We take pursuits very seriously, so much so that apprehension is not the primary aspect of a police vehicle pursuit; the safety of the officer and the public are the most important aspects since the risks are high for all. Officers and supervisors must balance the inherent safety risks with the urgency to apprehend the driver.

In 2022, suspects successfully evaded police officers in 34 of the 67 pursuits (51% of the time) compared to 46% in 2021. Typically, this included driving at extremely high rates of speed, fleeing on foot once the vehicle stopped, being involved in a collision, or police supervisors terminating the pursuits for various reasons.

A supervisor will monitor and decide whether to continue the pursuit. Safety is the primary concern, whether the safety of the public, the safety of the officer, or the safety of the person(s) fleeing. The MCPD conducts an in-depth review of every vehicular pursuit to ensure those guidelines are followed, and if not, appropriate follow-up actions are promptly taken.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. G. Jones'.

Marcus G. Jones  
Chief of Police

## OVERVIEW

The information 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.

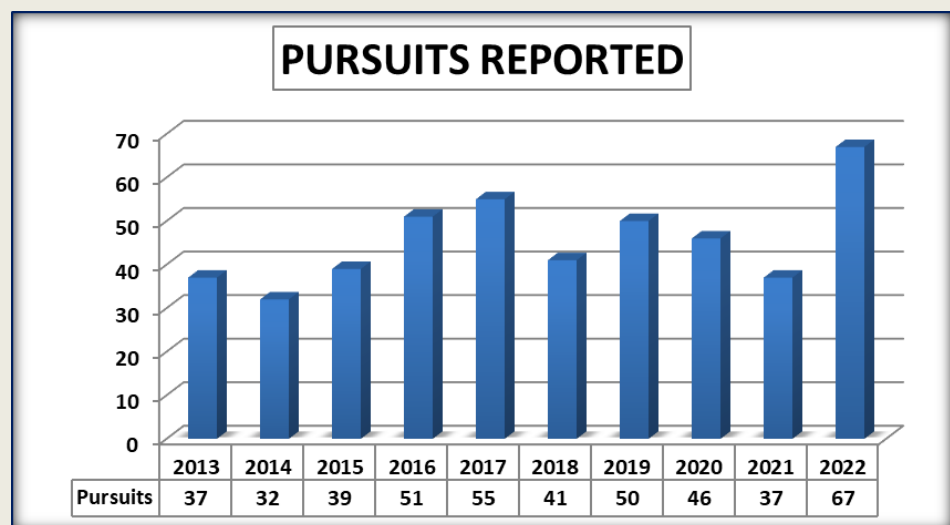
The Department's policy defines a vehicle pursuit as *an active attempt by an officer in a vehicle to apprehend an occupant of a moving motor vehicle who exhibits a clear intention to avoid apprehension by maintaining elevated speed, increasing speed, and using evasive tactics.*

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*, the 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: For 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*).

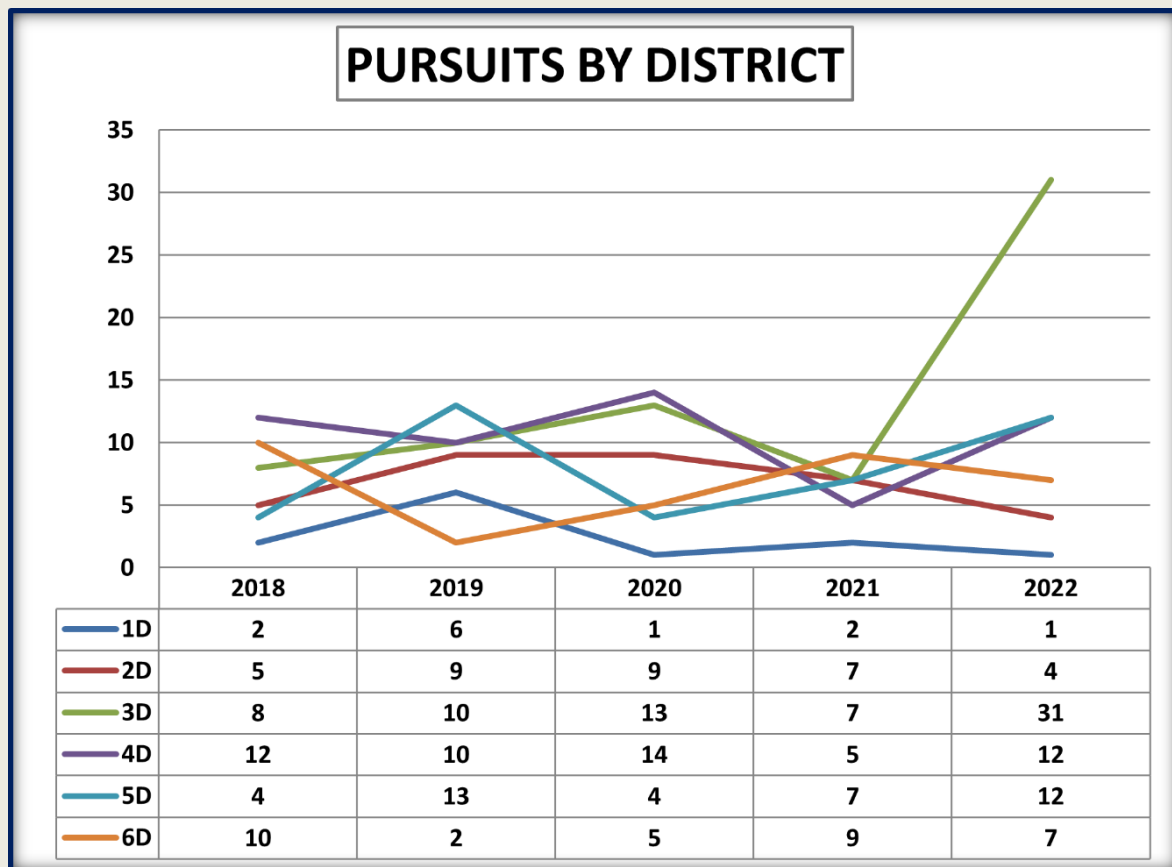
In 2022, there were 67 pursuits, thirty (30) more pursuits than reported in 2021, or an increase of 81%. This is the highest number of pursuits in 10 years and is above the Department's 10-year pursuit average of 46 pursuits per year. In 2022, five pursuits were deemed to be non-compliant with FC 135. Corrective action was taken for each non-compliant pursuit.



## 2022 PURSUIT ANALYSIS

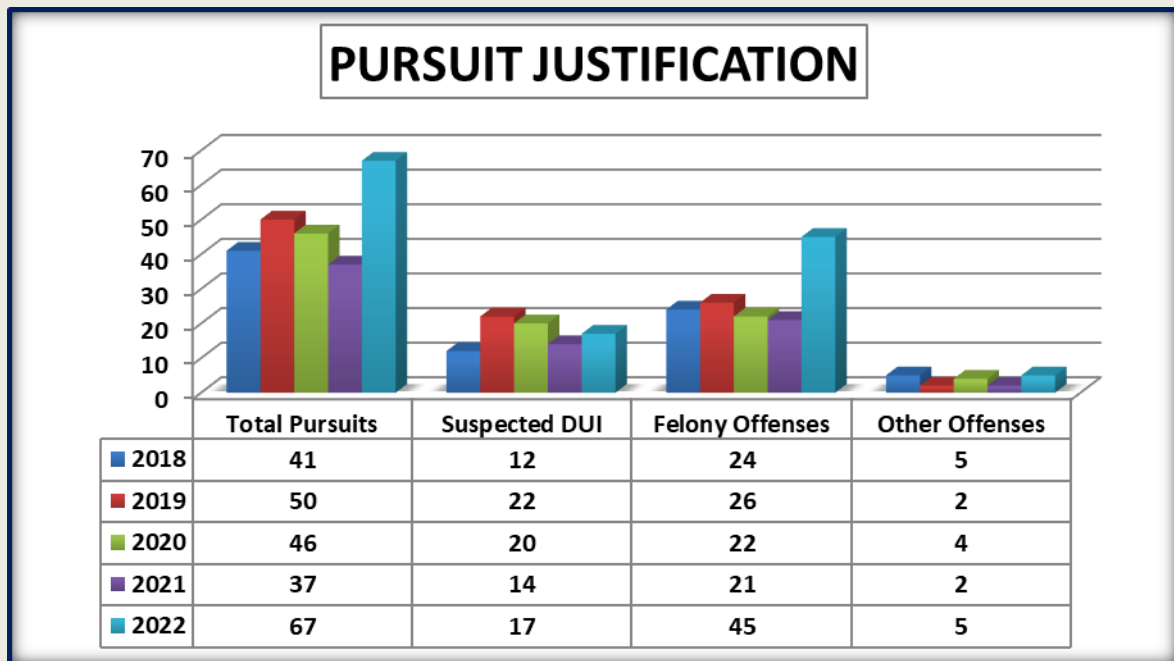
### By District

The graph below illustrates the frequency by the district in which Montgomery County police officers initiated a pursuit in 2022 and highlights trends over the last five years. In 2022, the number of pursuits increased in three districts, 3D (*Silver Spring*), 4D (*Wheaton*), and 5D (*Germantown*), while decreases were noted in the remaining districts. The largest decrease in pursuits (43%) occurred in 2D (*Bethesda*). All districts except 1D (*Rockville*) and 2D (*Bethesda*) recorded totals higher than their five-year averages in 2022. Ten pursuits initiated in 2022 crossed into another district. Since 2018, the total number of pursuits has increased by 63%.



The following table shows all districts' five-year pursuit averages (2018 - 2022).

DISTRICT	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PURSUIT
1	2
2	7
3	14
4	11
5	8
6	7



### By Justification

In 2022, apprehension of suspects engaged in various *felony offenses* and suspected of *driving under the influence* (DUI) were the primary reasons officers-initiated pursuits (69% and 25%, respectively). The remaining four pursuits (6%) were initiated for traffic-related offenses and pursuing a wanted subject.

Since 2018, 35% of pursuits by officers were for individuals suspected of *driving under the influence*; 58% were for subjects eluding police who were involved in *felony offenses* such as stolen vehicles; and the remaining percentage were for other offenses or violations, such as *weapons offenses* and *narcotics-related offenses*.

### By Location

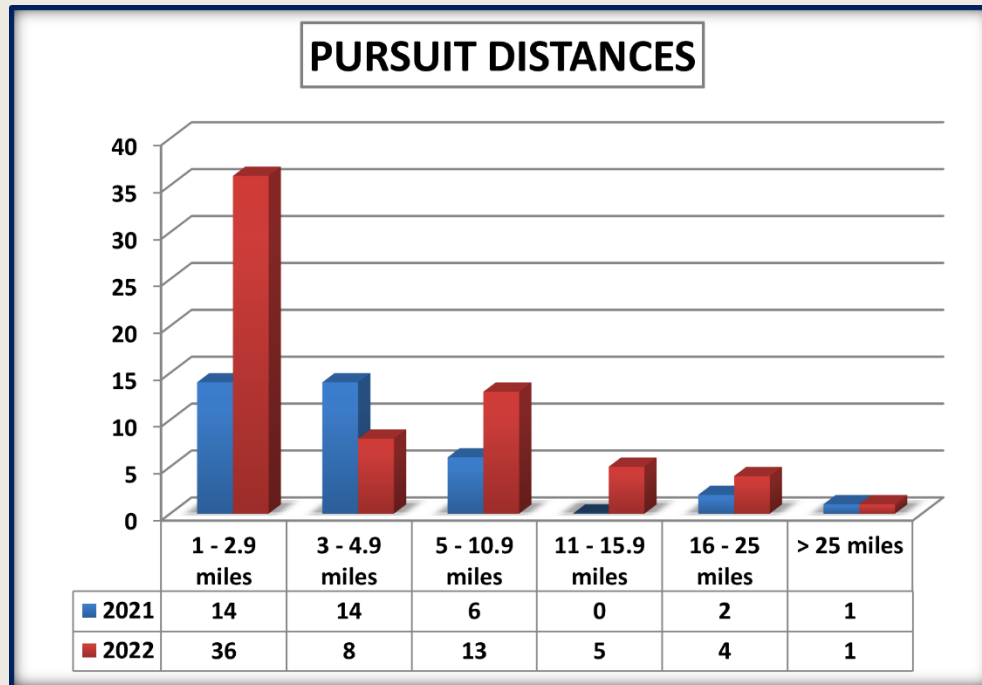
Function Code 135 states, “Officers may pursue into a neighboring jurisdiction only when an officer has probable cause to believe the crime committed was a felony of a violent type.”

In 2021, there were three incidents in which Montgomery County police officers pursued suspects outside the county’s jurisdictional boundaries. In 2022, in compliance with FC 135, eight (12%) incidents crossed the county boundary, and eight pursuits were terminated at or before the county line.

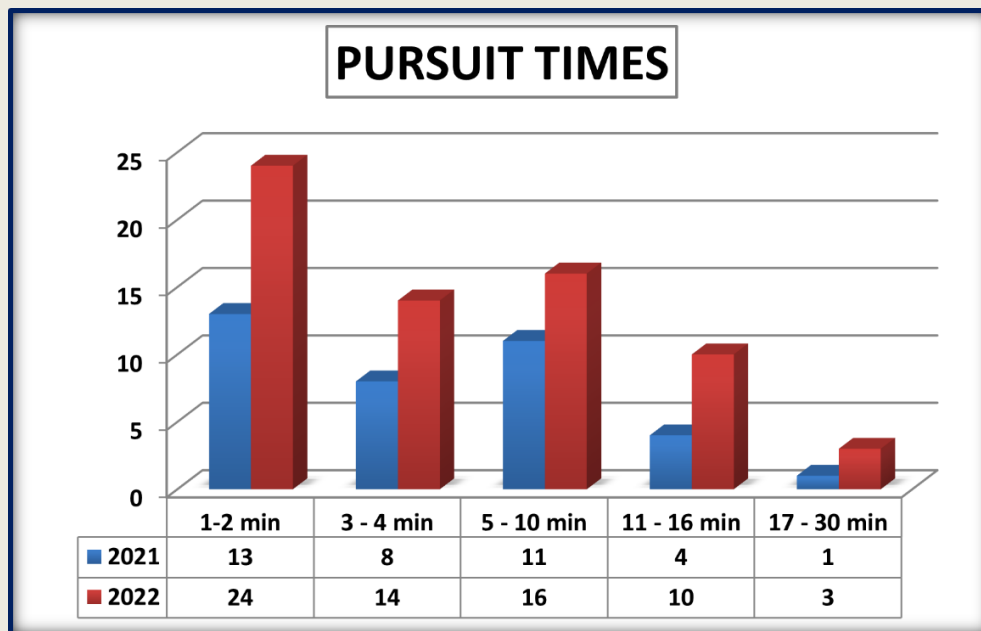
### By Distance & Duration

The frequency of pursuit *distances* and *times* in 2022 was consistent with those in 2021, in which approximately 57% of the pursuits in Montgomery County lasted less than five minutes each year. There was an increase (75%) in pursuits lasting three to four minutes in 2022 and a 150% increase in pursuits lasting between eleven and sixteen minutes. Thirteen pursuits lasted longer than 10 minutes in 2022, eight more than the number of pursuits reported in 2021. The longest pursuit in 2022 was 35 minutes long, and the farthest distance traveled during the pursuit was 29 miles.

The *distances* and *times* for all pursuits reported in 2022 are reflected in the following charts.



The data shows that, on average, from 2021 - 2022, most vehicle pursuits (48%) ranged from *one* to *three* miles.



The data shows that, on average, for the two years, most pursuits (36%) ended within *one* to *two* minutes or *five* to *ten* minutes (26%).

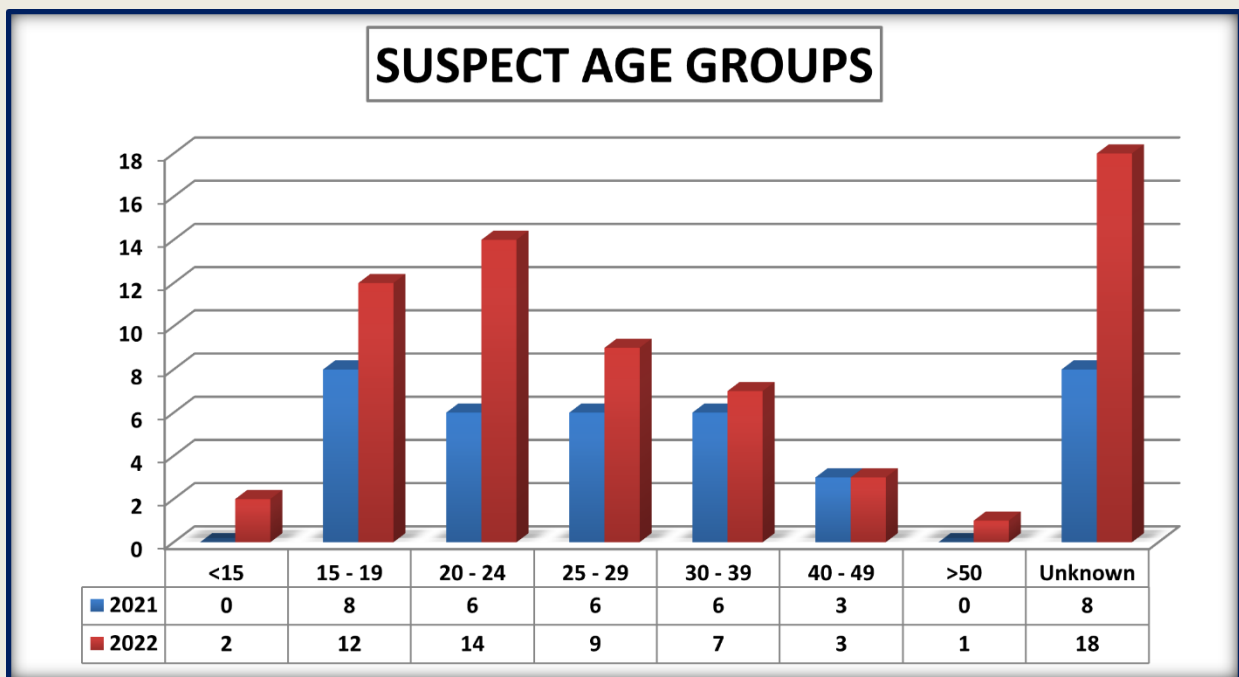
## SUSPECT ANALYSIS

Apprehension is not the primary aspect of a police vehicle pursuit; *the safety of the officer and the public is the most important aspect since the risks are high for all*. Officers and supervisors must balance the inherent safety risks with the urgency to apprehend the driver.

In 2022, suspects successfully evaded police officers in 34 of the 67 pursuits (51% of the time) compared to 46% in 2021. Typically, this included driving at extremely high rates of speed, fleeing on foot once the vehicle stopped, being involved in a collision, or the pursuits being terminated by police supervisors for various reasons, generally due to public safety concerns, crossing jurisdictional boundaries, or traffic conditions.

The demographic data in the chart below reflects information for the suspects apprehended during the pursuits, as well as the random data that was known about the suspects who were able to elude apprehension. In 2022, one suspect was involved in two separate pursuits, yielding 66 suspects.

### Suspect Age Groups

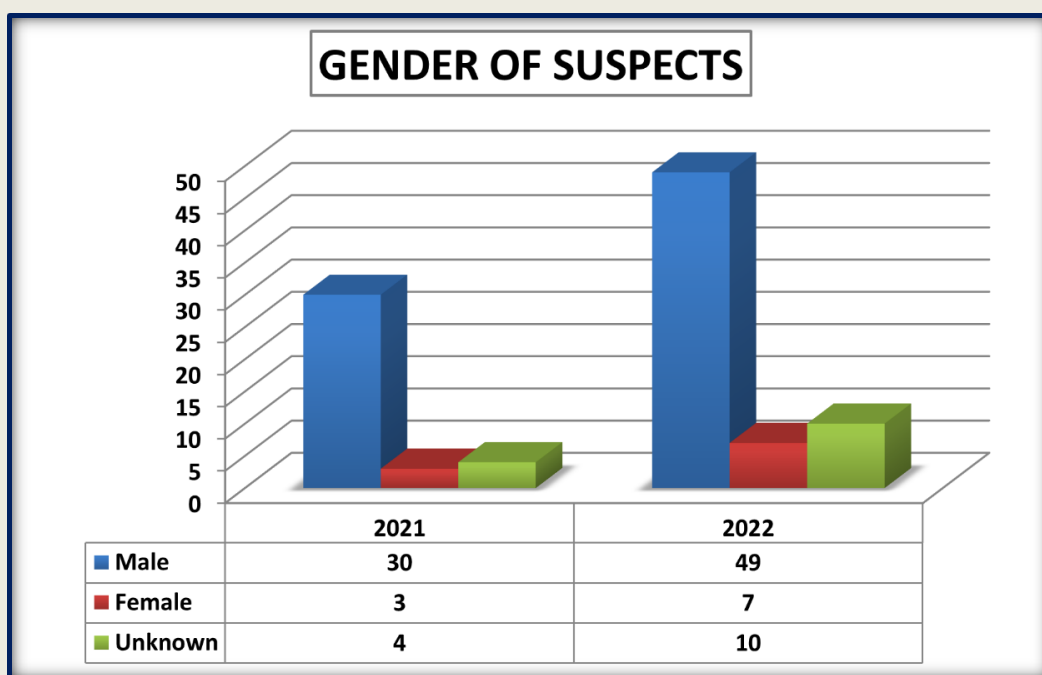


In 2022, the number of suspects ages 15 to 29 increased by 75% compared to 2021, and over the two years, accounted for 55% of the known individuals involved in police pursuits. Suspects in the other age groups over the two years generally remained consistent. In 2022, there were two suspects under the age of 15.

The charts on the following page summarize the *gender* and *race/ethnicity* of the *suspects* involved in pursuits within the past two years.

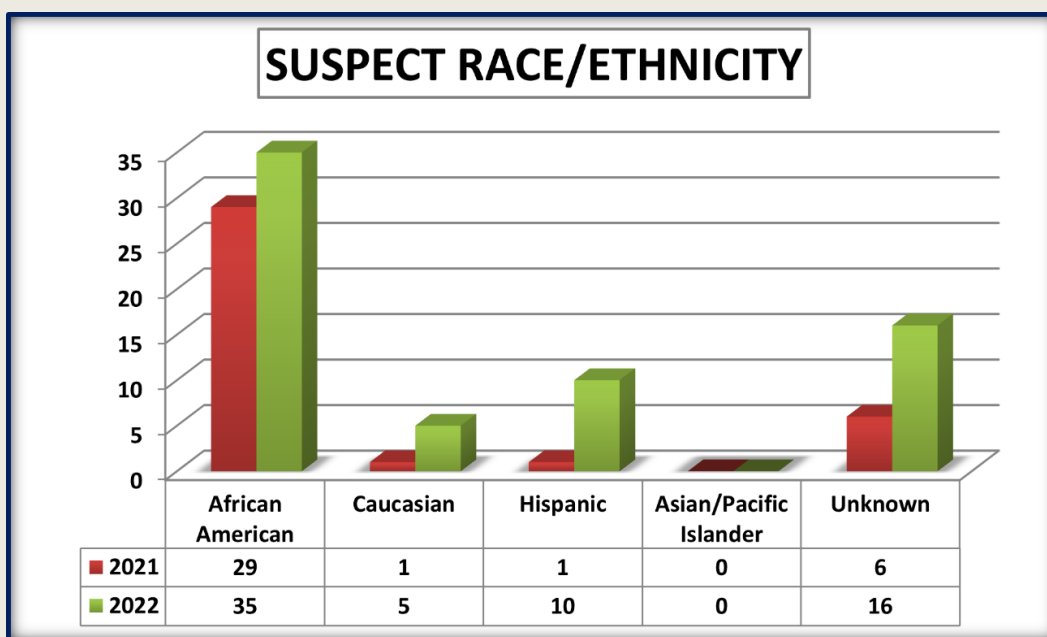


### Suspect Gender



Male suspects accounted for most individuals involved in pursuits (74%) in 2021, compared to 81% in 2022. From 2021 – 2022, males accounted for 77% of the suspects involved in pursuits.

### Suspect Race/Ethnicity



In 2022, 53% of the suspects involved in police pursuits were *African American*, compared to 78% in 2021. *Caucasian* suspects accounted for 8% of the individuals involved in pursuits in 2022, compared to only 3% in

2021.

*Hispanic* suspects accounted for 15% of the suspects involved in pursuits in 2022 compared to only 3% in 2021. For the two years 2021 – 2022, the data shows the following:

- *African American* suspects were involved in 62% of police pursuits.
- *Caucasian* suspects were involved in 6% of police pursuits.
- *Hispanic* suspects were involved in 11% of pursuits.

**Note:** In 21% of police pursuits, the suspect's race/ethnicity was unknown.

## 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. In 83% of the pursuits in 2022, no special tactics or additional resources were used, compared to 78% in 2021.

Seven (10%) of the pursuits reported in 2022 involved using other resources, including other agencies, K9 teams, or aircraft. In four incidents (6%), the police department deployed stop-sticks to end the pursuit safely and successfully. MCPD policy prohibits rolling roadblocks and tactical vehicle intervention but does allow tire-deflating devices (*e.g., stop sticks*) to be used by officers trained to use such devices. Suspects could still evade the police in two of these instances, while the suspects in the other two were apprehended. Three collisions occurred during a pursuit in which stop sticks were deployed, which resulted in damage to both the suspect and department vehicles, but no injuries were reported.

Supervisors terminated 23 of the 67 pursuits (34%) in accordance with *Function Code 135*, primarily when the subject(s) left the county, exited onto an interstate highway, or fled at a high rate of speed which increased the risk associated with the pursuit. The dangers to the officers and the public outweighed the continuation of the pursuit. This number increased by 77% from the thirteen (35%) pursuits terminated for similar reasons in 2021.

### Use of Force in Response to Resistance

Overall, there were 22 pursuits in 2022 (34%) in which force was used by police officers in response to resistance by suspects, compared to 19% of pursuits in 2021.

Eighteen (18) of the 67 pursuits (27%) in Montgomery County in 2022 resulted in a “*bailout*,” which occurs when the suspect(s) stop or crash the vehicle and flee on foot, compared to 30% of the pursuits reported in 2021. Suspects were subsequently apprehended in approximately 78% of these instances. Nine incidents involving bailouts (64%) also involved collisions, compared to 7 incidents in 2021. These collisions involved damage to suspect vehicles, civilian vehicles, and department vehicles, which also caused injuries to suspects, civilians, police officers, and related property damage.

### Collisions

Of the 67 pursuits that occurred in 2022, 23 (34%) resulted in a collision, compared to 13 collisions (35%) reported in 2021. A detailed breakdown by district of the 23 collisions related to pursuits in 2022 is provided in the table on the next page.

PURSUITS INVOLVING COLLISIONS SUMMARY							
DISTRICT	COLLISIONS	DAMAGED SUSPECT VEHICLES	SUSPECTS INJURED	DAMAGED CIVILIAN VEHICLES	CIVILIANS INJURED	DAMAGED MCPD VEHICLES	POLICE OFFICERS INJURED
1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	11	9	5	4	3	10	4
4	4	4	1	2	2	2	0
5	5	5	2	0	0	1	0
6	2	2	3	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	23	21	13	6	5	13	4

Of the 23 pursuits that ended in a collision in 2022, the suspect's vehicle was involved in 91%, compared to 92% of the collisions reported in 2021. Thirteen people (suspects/passengers) were injured in collisions in 2022, compared to eight people in 2021. Six privately-owned civilian vehicles were damaged, and five civilians were injured in 2022, compared to one civilian injury reported in 2021. Thirteen police vehicles sustained damage, and there were four police officers injured during the pursuits in 2022, compared to three police vehicles damaged and one injured officer in 2021.

## SUMMARY

With more than one million people living in Montgomery County and thousands more traveling through the county each year, police pursuits are a rare occurrence. More than 36,000 traffic stops were made in 2021, yet only 37 pursuits resulted from these encounters, an occurrence rate of 0.1%. Similarly, in 2022, there were only 35,994 traffic stops, but 67 pursuits still occurred, a rate of 0.2%. Although there was a 1.2% decrease in traffic stops, the increase in pursuit frequency is likely due to an overall increase in felony offenses such as stolen vehicles, drug/narcotic offenses, and weapons offenses from the previous year. Surprisingly, the number of DUI-related events remained consistent with the previous year.

The Montgomery County Department of Police continues to be proactive in driver safety to reduce the number of law enforcement officer deaths, disabilities, and injuries caused by traffic-related incidents. In 2020, The Public Safety Training Academy (PSTA) introduced a three-hour driving in-service class focused on vehicle maneuverability, parallel parking, and a review of proper vehicle operations during pursuit driving. The class has continued into 2021, and a biennial version began in 2022. The department has also taken measures to focus on more in-depth data collection and analysis to identify root causes of collisions so targeted intervention and preventive measures can be instituted to reduce the potential for collisions and injuries.

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/>

Follow the [Montgomery County Police](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

