

SALEM • POLICE • DEPARTMENT

# 2022 VEHICULAR PURSUIT REPORT



Prepared by the  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & TRAINING SECTION

## INTRODUCTION

The Salem Police Department prepares an annual report on the Department's police vehicular pursuits. This report provides the Chief of Police and Command Staff an opportunity to review the cumulative actions of the Department's sworn personnel regarding vehicular pursuits. The information is evaluated to address any needed changes to procedures, training, supervisory, and/or administrative practices on vehicular pursuits.

Vehicular pursuits present risks to the community, the officer, and the pursued subject; therefore, they must be balanced with comprehensive policies, directives, procedures, training, and compliance. To achieve this balance, the department evaluates available data from pursuit reports and has an internal process for evaluation of these activities by its training staff. This is to ensure the department is in parity with Oregon Revised Statutes, relevant case law, and proven practices throughout the law enforcement community.

Further, all pursuits are reviewed by the Applied Tactics Review Board. The Professional Standards and Training Lieutenant chairs the Applied Tactics Review Board. Department Directive 5.05 describes the duties of the board members, which include reviewing incidents and making recommendations regarding training, tactics, equipment, and department mandates.

The information in this report pertains to pursuits initiated by the Salem Police Department (SPD). Surrounding agencies may also pursue a vehicle into the city and may have expectations for our assistance or the assumption of the primary responsibility of their pursuit. To ensure interagency communications and expectations as to pursuits, Salem participates in a multiagency agreement with the Oregon State Police, Marion County, and the cities of Keizer, Woodburn, Silverton, Stayton, Mount Angel, Aumsville, Hubbard, Gervais, and Turner.

This report covers the various aspects of a police pursuit, including details about the subjects and patterns regarding when and where pursuits occur in the city of Salem. The data is derived from the reports submitted by the primary officer involved in the event.

Additionally, Directive 4.02 (Emergency Vehicle Operation), was updated on October 7, 2022. In substance, two areas of the directive were updated.

The first area addresses the justification for a pursuit and the following language was added:

*Unless otherwise approved by a supervisor, sworn officers will only initiate a pursuit when the justification for the stop is a violent crime or there is reasonable suspicion the suspect poses an imminent threat of serious physical injury to the public. Officers will not enter into a pursuit when the justification for the stop is only a traffic violation or a non-violent crime.*

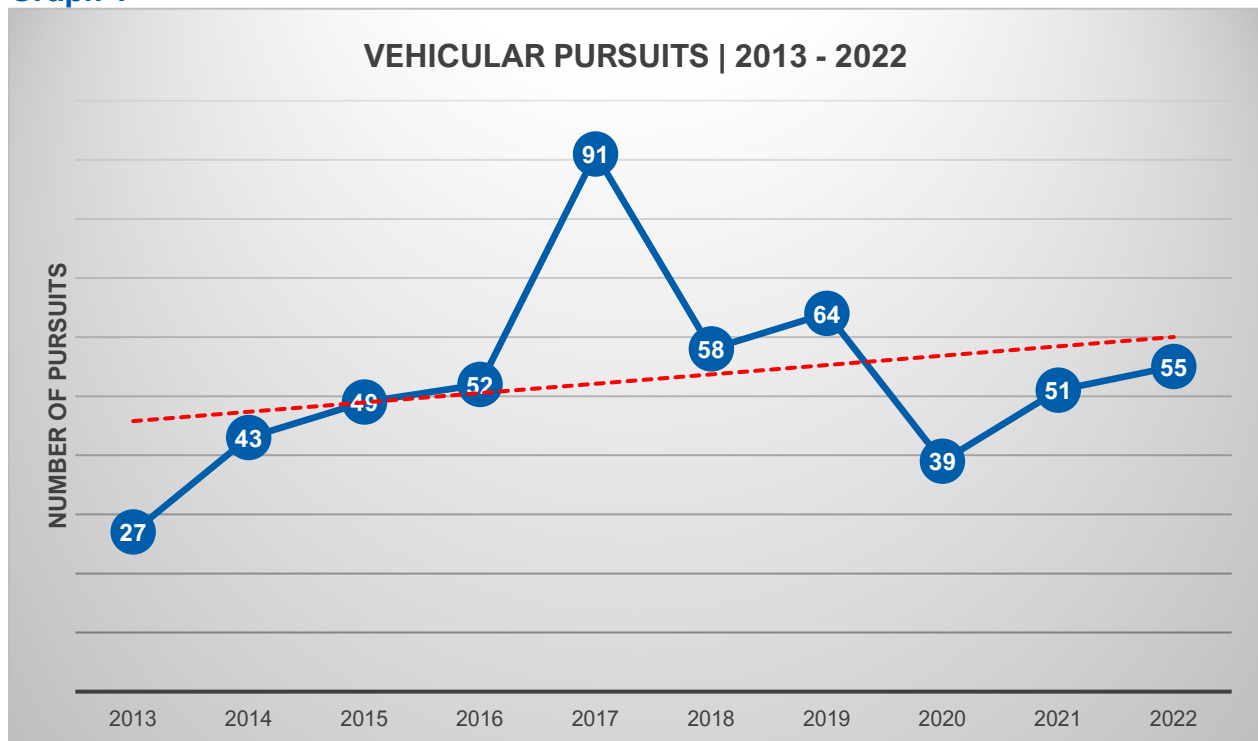
The second area addresses *boxing in* a subject vehicle and the following language was added:

*Considerations for boxing in need to include, but are not limited to, the crime being investigated, suspect history if known, the location of the suspect vehicle, and the equipment available to the officers at the time of the boxing in.*

## OVERVIEW

The department has been collecting data on vehicular pursuits since the year 2000. As shown in Graph 1, the number of pursuits has fluctuated over the last ten years with a high of 91 in 2017. In 2022, Salem police officers were involved in 55 vehicular pursuits, a slight increase over 2021. The sharp increase of vehicular pursuits in 2017 appears to be an outlier and not representative of the statistical trends. The drop in 2020 is likely due to the decrease in vehicular traffic and the limitations on proactive policing activities during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is also not representative of the statistical trends over the past ten years.

Graph 1

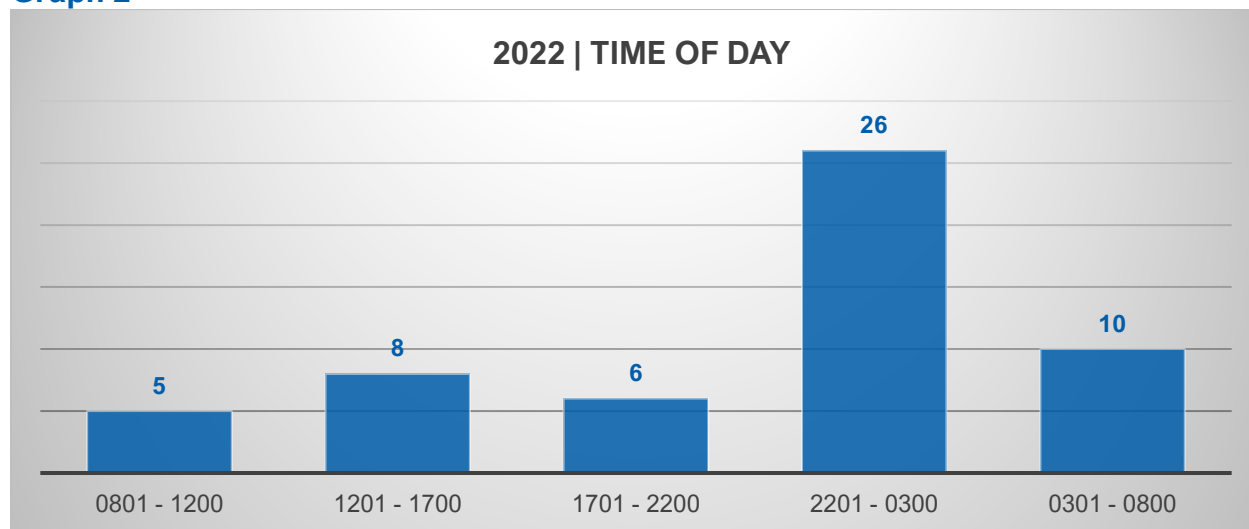


Graph 1 The dotted trendline shows a gradual rise in the number of vehicular pursuits over the last ten years.

## WHEN AND WHERE PURSUITS OCCURRED

The graph below depicts the most active timeframe for pursuits in 2022 was between the 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. Twenty-six, or 47.3%, of all pursuits occurred during that period. This timeframe for highest pursuit activity has remained consistent for the past five years.

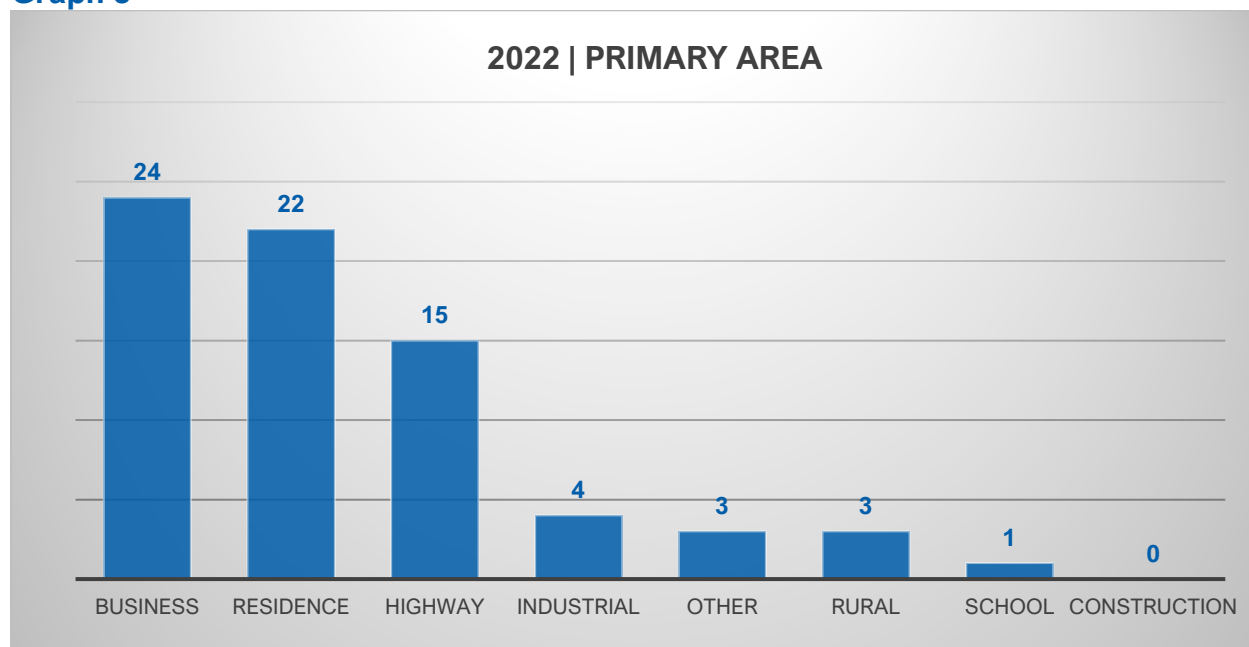
**Graph 2**



*Graph 2 demonstrates the time-of-day vehicular pursuits occurred in 2022 as shown in 24-hour clock time frames.*

As shown in Graph 3, vehicular pursuits occurred most often within business districts and residential areas.

**Graph 3**



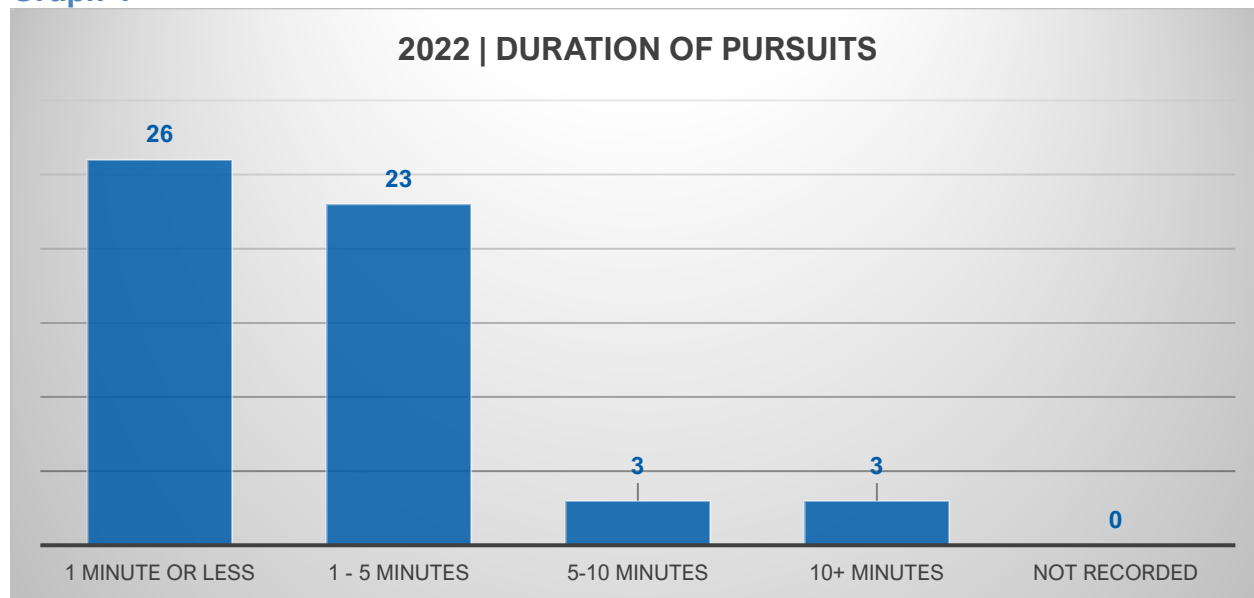
*Graph 3 indicates primary pursuit areas. Officers can select more than one option when reporting the primary area.*



## PURSUIT DURATION AND DISTANCE

As shown in Graph 4, the vast majority of pursuits lasted less than five minutes. In 2022, 47.3% (26) of pursuits ended within one minute and 41.8% (23) lasted between one and five minutes.

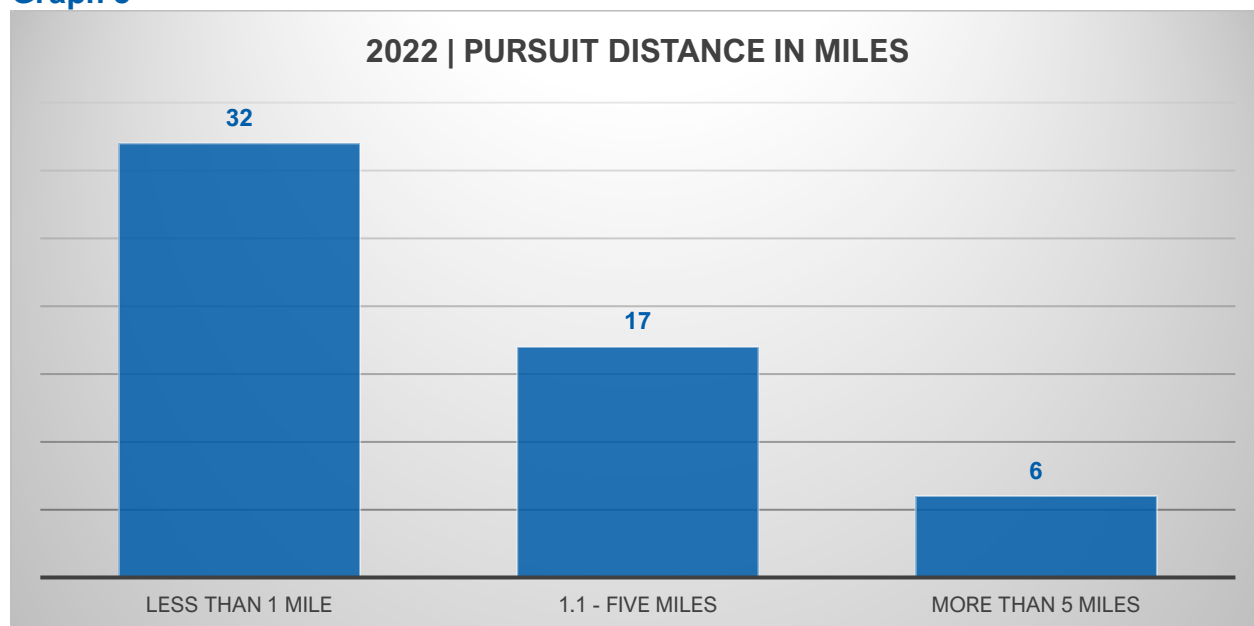
**Graph 4**



*Graph 4 indicates the infrequency of a pursuit that occurs for five or more minutes.*

As shown in Graph 5, 89.1% (49) of the pursuits traveled less than five miles. Only six pursuits traveled more than five miles.

**Graph 5**

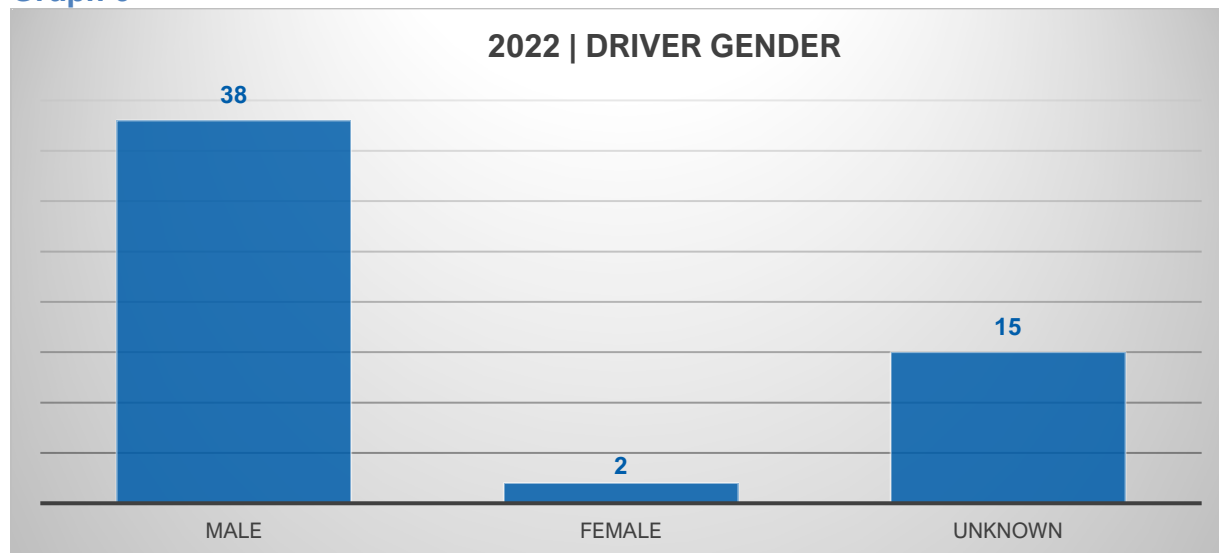


*Graph 5 demonstrates the distance traveled in the majority of vehicular pursuits in 2022 was less than a mile.*

## SUBJECT INFORMATION

As shown in Graph 6, subject drivers were most likely to be male, comprising 69.1% (38) of identified drivers in 2022. The data is consistent when compared with previous years. In 27.3% (15) of pursuits, the driver’s gender could not be determined.

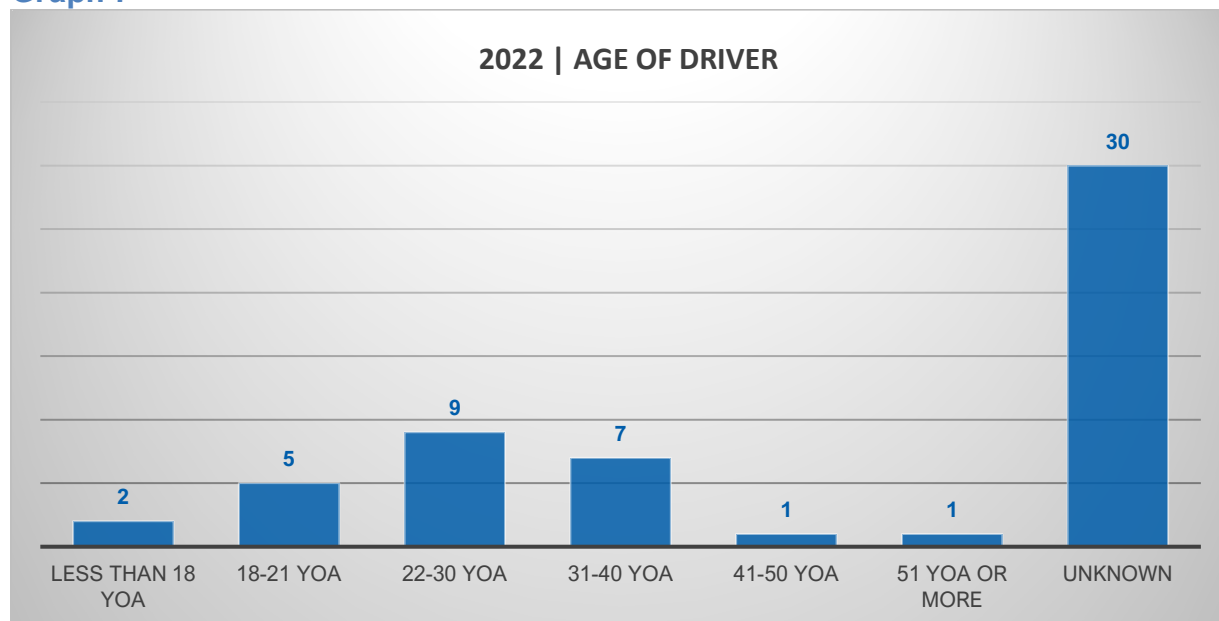
Graph 6



**Graph 6** Of the incidents in which the gender of the driver could be determined by the officer, male drivers were most likely to be involved in a vehicular pursuit.

As shown in Graph 7, the age of subject drivers was often undetermined. Officers may select the response category of *unknown* when a driver is not positively identified.

Graph 7

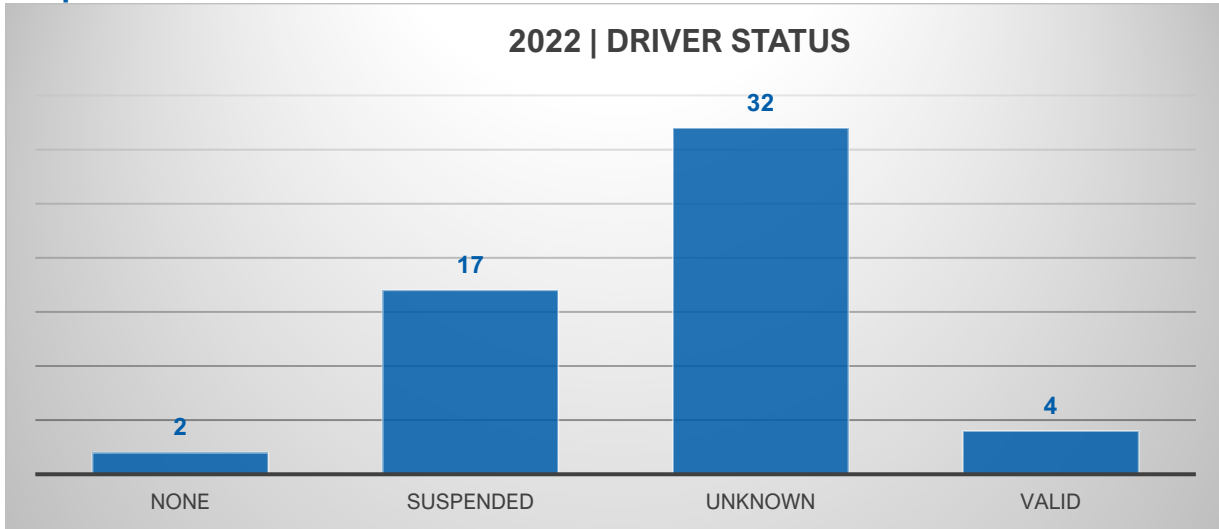


**Graph 7** indicates the age range of the involved drivers. YOA refers to years of age.

## DRIVER STATUS

Graph 8 illustrates that in 2022, 30.9% (17) of known drivers had a suspended license, 3.6% (2) had no license, and 7.2% (4) had a valid license. License status was unknown for 58.2% (32) of the reported pursuits.

**Graph 8**

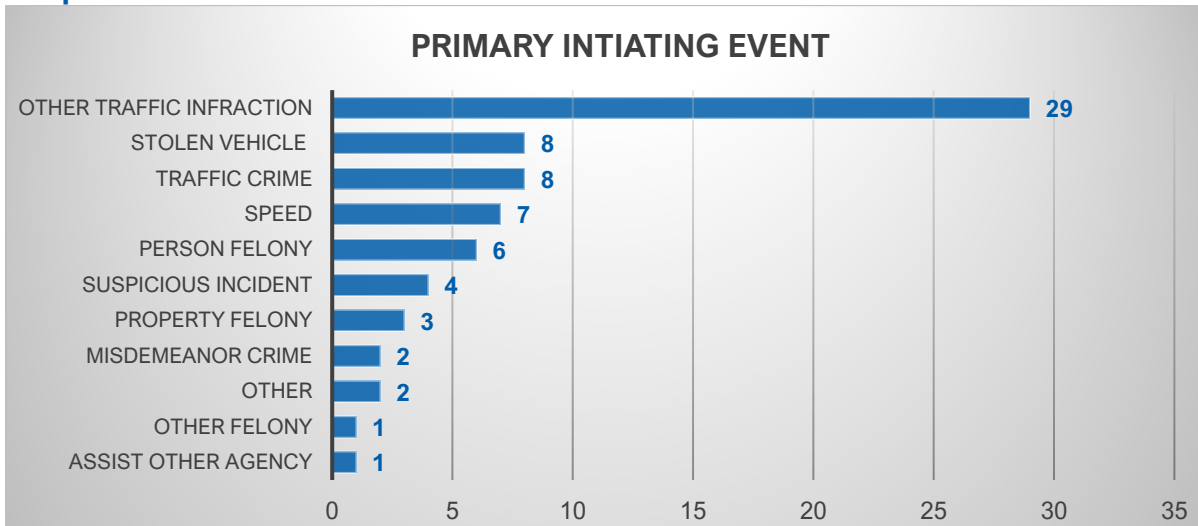


*Graph 8 Historically, the written incident reports of vehicular pursuits have shown that an involved driver is likely to have a suspended driver license.*

## PRIMARY INITIATING EVENTS

Graph 9 illustrates the various initiating event categories and the frequency with which they occurred. Policy changes enacted toward the end of 2022 will likely affect the high number of *Other Traffic Infractions* as the primary initiating event.

**Graph 9**

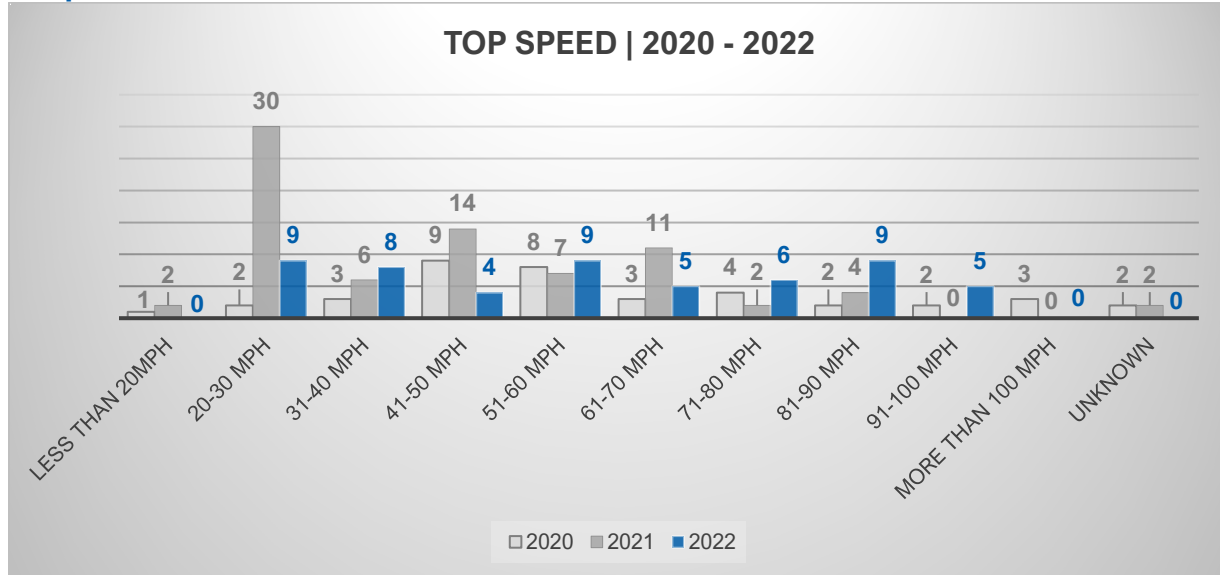


*Graph 9 Officers can select more than one option when reporting the initiating event.*

## PURSUIT SPEEDS

As shown in Graph 10, top speeds during vehicular pursuits in 2022 ranged from 20 to 100 miles per hour.

**Graph 10**



*Graph 10 points to the unpredictability of speeds during vehicular pursuits in 2022.*

## PROACTIVE TACTICS

### Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT):

While attempting to end a pursuit, officers may employ the use of proactive tactics, such as the PIT maneuver, in accordance with policy and training. Of the 55 vehicular pursuits, the PIT maneuver was successfully utilized in three incidents. In 81.8% (45) of all pursuits, the maneuver was not used due to the *lack of opportunity or set-up time*.

### Tire Deflation Devices (Stop Sticks):

The use of stop sticks is another technique employed to bring a vehicular pursuit to a conclusion. In 2022, officers used Stop Sticks six times to end a pursuit. In six other instances, Stop Sticks were deployed, but were unsuccessful in ending the pursuit. The reasons given for not using the technique included 65.5% (36) *lack of opportunity or set-up time*. The number of attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, increased from nine in 2021 to 12 attempts in 2022.

## TERMINATION AND CONCLUSION OF PURSUITS

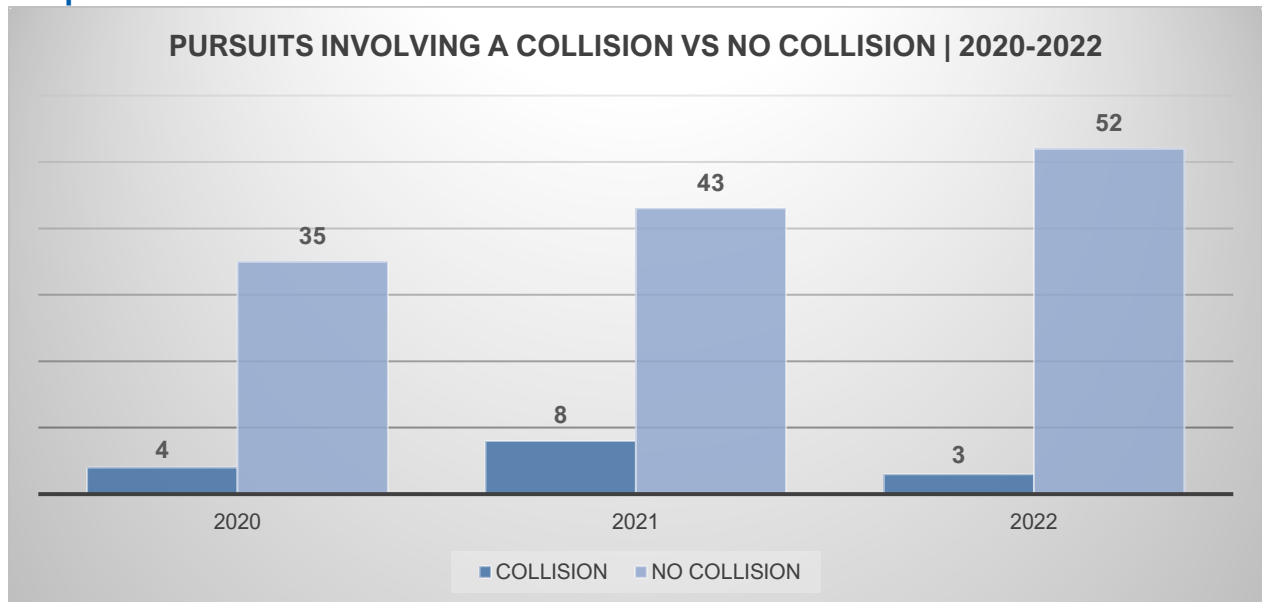
Vehicular pursuits come to an end in one of two ways: termination or conclusion. In termination, the officer or a supervisor decides to stop the attempt to apprehend the driver of a fleeing vehicle. As outlined within policy, termination of a vehicular pursuit is usually done for safety concerns or if the driver has been identified and can be apprehended later. The conclusion of a pursuit means the event continued until the subject vehicle stopped.

When a pursuit is terminated, officers deactivate their overhead lights and siren, and discontinue their attempt to stop the vehicle. In 2022, 83.6% (46) of the 55 pursuits were terminated. Of these, 50.9% (28) were terminated by the pursuing officer and 32.7% (18) by the supervisor. The percentage of pursuits that concluded decreased from 21.6% in 2021 to 16.4% in 2022.

## PURSUIT COLLISIONS

Vehicular pursuits can involve collisions because of unpredictable and evolving circumstances. Graph 11 illustrates the number of pursuits which resulted in a collision during or at the conclusion of the pursuit, compared to those that did not. In 2022, three pursuits resulted in a collision, a 40% decrease when compared to the average over the past three years.

**Graph 11**



*Graph 11 Collisions are a potential result in vehicular pursuits; however, the last three years indicate a low likelihood of a collision occurring.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past twenty years, vehicular pursuits reached a low of 24 in 2012 and a high of 91 in 2017. Removing those two outlier years, the average annual number of pursuits over the past ten years was 51.

While the department's vehicular pursuit directive allows for officer discretion, it is supported by ongoing training that emphasizes continued officer and field supervisor assessments of the risks and benefits of engaging in or continuing a pursuit. The Department anticipates recent policy changes made toward the end of 2022 will reduce the overall number of pursuits in coming years.



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
about this report, please contact the  
Salem Police Professional Standards & Training Section