

# ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Cleveland Spruill, Sr.  
Chief of Police

## MEMORANDUM

Date: June 22, 2021

To: Cleveland L. Spruill, Sr.  
Chief of Police

From: Lieutenant Stewart Heard  
Office of Professional Standards

Subject: Annual Report on Vehicle Pursuits for 2020

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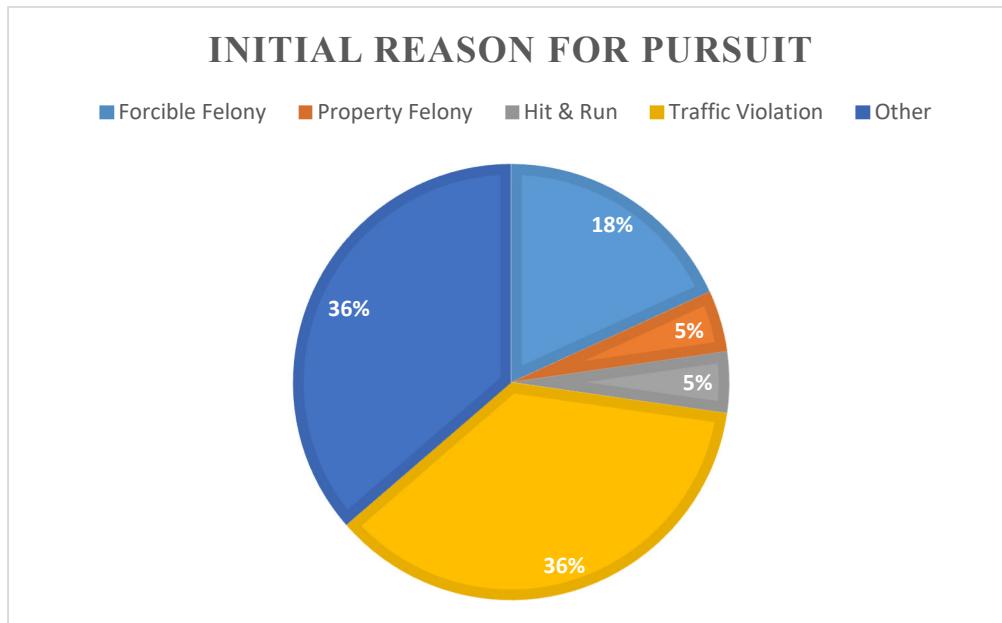
The purpose of this memorandum is to report the annual review and analysis of vehicle pursuits for the Athens-Clarke County Police Department (ACCPD) during the year 2020. Pursuant to ACCPD Written Directive 6.08.09 (F), the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) conducted an annual analysis of the reported vehicle pursuits and reviewed the existing pursuit policies and reporting procedures. The current reporting period is January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

### Pursuit Analysis

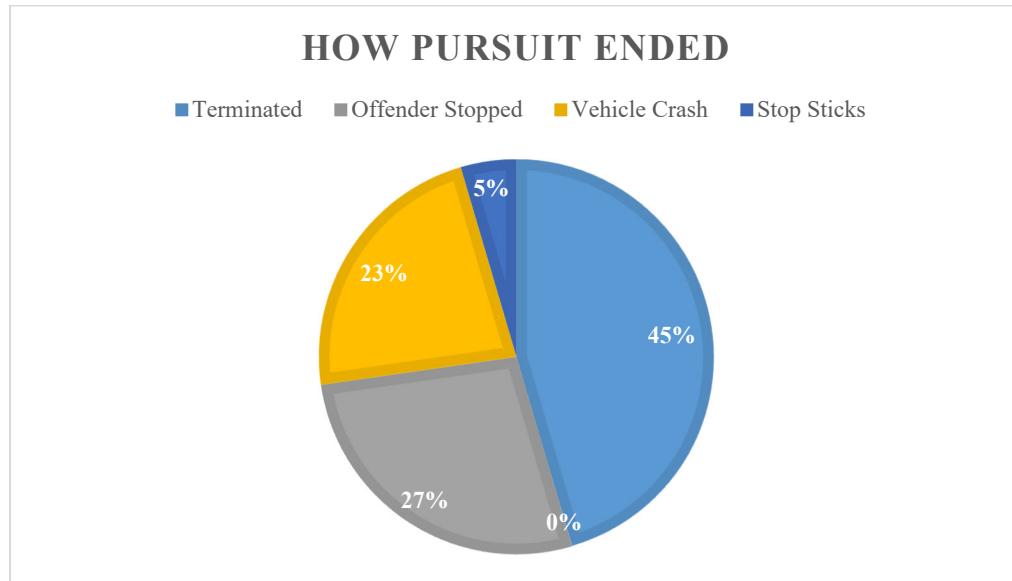
In 2020, ACCPD officers reported initiating twenty-two (22) vehicle pursuits. A vehicle pursuit (or *simply referred to herein as “pursuit”*) is defined as “*an active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend a suspect, who is fleeing or evading apprehension, provided the officer reasonably believes that the suspect is refusing to stop and is willfully fleeing capture by high-speed driving or other evasive maneuvers.*”

Every pursuit has unique factors and circumstances impacting the dynamics of that pursuit. However, this analysis focused on several key factors for the twenty-two (22) pursuits in 2020. These factors are **a)** the initial reason for the pursuits; **b)** how the pursuits ended; **c)** whether or not any vehicle crashes occurred as a result of the pursuits; and **d)** whether or not there were injuries that occurred as a result of the pursuits.

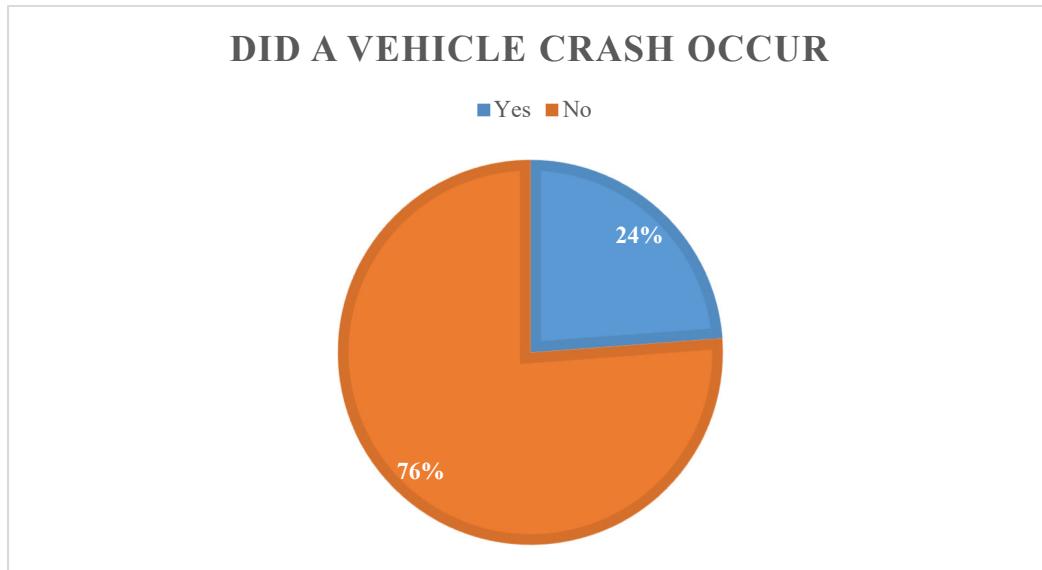
Officers reported that a “traffic violation” was the reason for initiating their traffic stop attempts in a majority of the pursuits. The next most selected initial reason was “other”. When these initial reasons were reported by the officers, the reports indicated that officers justified the pursuit by **a)** due to reckless or dangerous driving engaged in by the driver of the suspect vehicle prior to the officer’s involvement; or **b)** since the driver’s actions were deemed failing to yield. See the pie chart below:



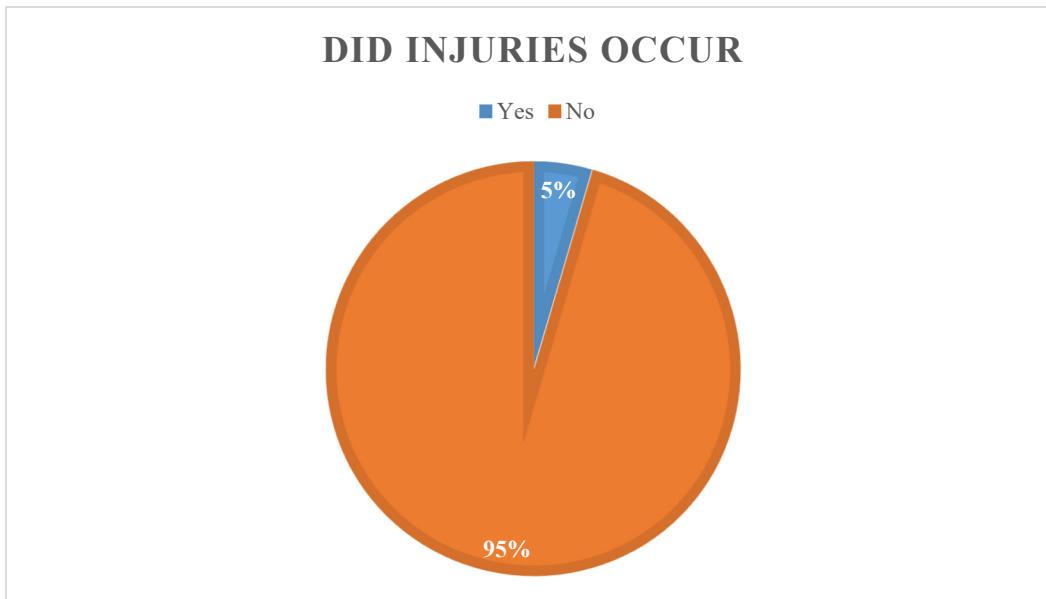
Officers reported that **a)** Ten (10) pursuits were ultimately terminated either by the pursuing officer or the monitoring supervisor; **b)** Six (6) pursuits ended when the offender stopped the vehicle to surrender or to flee on foot; **c)** Five (5) pursuits ended when the suspect vehicle crashed; **d)** One (1) pursuit ended by the use of stop sticks. See the pie chart below:



Even when it was not the terminating event of the pursuit, officers reported that vehicle crashes occurred in five (5) pursuits. See the pie chart below:



Officers reported one (1) pursuit that resulted in any known injuries. In that single case, the Barrow County Sheriff's Office was pursuing a suspect vehicle into Athens-Clarke County. The suspect vehicle crashed into an ACCPD officer's vehicle while the officer was stopped at a red light. This collision resulted serious injuries to the officer. No ACCPD officers were directly involved in the pursuit. See the pie chart below:



## **Pursuit Policy**

The ACCPD Written Directive 6.08 governs departmental policy on Emergency Vehicle Pursuits. The policy clearly identifies specific circumstances when officers are permitted to engage in a pursuit, as well as, specific offenses and circumstances when officers are restricted from engaging in a pursuit. The policy provides clear and appropriate procedures and guidelines for responsibilities, decision making, tactics, and other matters related to initiating, conducting, terminating, and reporting pursuits. There are no further policy recommendations at this time.

## **Reporting Procedures**

The ACCPD Written Directive 6.08.09 governs vehicle pursuit reporting and compliance procedures. The current policy clearly details reporting procedures that cover **a)** when reports are required; **b)** the manner of reporting; and **c)** oversight and review of procedures. There are no further concerns or recommendations for reporting procedures at this time.