

Vehicle Pursuit Analysis 2011

This report analysis was completed for the purpose of reviewing the San Angelo Police Department's Vehicle Pursuits for the calendar year 2011. The data collected for this report was generated from the L. E. A. Data Technologies Administrative/Internal Affairs Suite, Intergraph Public Safety ILeads Records Management System (RMS), the San Angelo Police Department Pursuit Critique Database and IAProfessional software suite.

Vehicle pursuits are reported by the officer who initiates the pursuit in each instance in the ILeads RMS Field Reporting module. All other officers who take an active role in pursuits report their actions in a supplemental report in the ILeads RMS Field Reporting module. It is required of each officer on duty while a pursuit is in progress to have their Mobile Video Recording System (MVRS) activated whether they are actively involved in the pursuit or not.

An on duty supervisor then completes a Pursuit Critique in the San Angelo Police Department Pursuit Critique database. After the pursuit critique is completed by the supervisor, both his report and the related incident reports and supplemental reports are forwarded through the chain of command for review. After the command level review is done, the reports and pursuit critiques are filed in the Office of Professional Standards.

There were twenty-eight (28) vehicle pursuits recorded by officers during the calendar year 2011. All twenty-eight (28) of those pursuits were initiated by officers assigned to the Patrol Division, either on a Patrol Company or the Canine (K-9) section of the Patrol Division.

This analysis was completed to meet the Texas Police Chief's Association Best Practices 7.14.1 (Vehicle Pursuits).

Pursuit Initiation

• Misdemeanor	10	36%
• Felony	7	25%
• Intoxication	0	0%
• Warrant	1	4%
• Suspicious Activity	2	7%
• Traffic Violation	8	29%

Though all reasons for pursuits initiated by the San Angelo Police Department are listed above, it is important to understand that each of those pursuits terminated with the apprehension of a driver also involved other offenses besides the initial reason. In most all of the cases, there was also a felony charge of Evading in a Motor Vehicle added to the list of charges filed against the violators.

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Also, there were pursuits that were initiated during which the violators escaped capture or there were other reasons for the drivers to have been released from the scene. On one occasion in 2011, an elderly individual did not immediately stop and a pursuit was called in because he did not have his hearing aids on and did not hear the audio warning devices used by the officer stopping him.

Pursuit Termination

2011-009 – The supervisory review did not list a termination technique used at the end of the pursuit. The officer, in his initial incident report, stated that he intentionally ran into the rear of the suspect vehicle contacting it with the push bumper on the patrol vehicle. This was listed as “rammed” for this report.

2011-023 – The supervisory review listed a firearm as a termination tactic used. However, the officer initiating the pursuit did not use the firearm to terminate the pursuit. The officer pointed his firearm at the suspect ordering him to submit to authority after the pursuit ended.

2011-025 – The supervisory review listed spikes as a termination tactic used. The suspect had already rammed a patrol vehicle and two private vehicles. An officer attempted to deploy Stop Sticks but the suspect vehicle approached him too fast. The Stop Sticks were not actually deployed and there was an officer safety issue addressed with the officer attempting to deploy the pursuit termination technique.

2011-028 – The supervisory review listed PIT/Other as a termination tactic used. In reviewing the critique, I immediately learned that the vehicle stopped on its own in a private parking lot. There was no PIT maneuver or any other pursuit termination technique used during the incident.

Property Damage

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There were seventeen (17) pursuits recorded during which a police vehicle, suspect vehicle or private property damage occurred. Ten (10) pursuits resulted in a suspect vehicle being damaged either by a crash or due to pursuit termination tactics (Ramming) being utilized. Two (2) pursuits resulted in minor damage to police vehicles because of crashes. Five (5) pursuits resulted in private property being damaged due to the pursuit.

2011-006 – Two tires on the suspect vehicle were blown out at the termination of the pursuit because of the way the suspect stopped the vehicle.

2011-007 – The suspect vehicle struck a parked car at the termination of the pursuit damaging the parked car and the suspect vehicle.

2011-008 – An officer lost control of his vehicle and struck a utility pole turning during the pursuit. The patrol vehicle and utility pole were damaged.

2011-009 – The suspect vehicle went off the road and high centered a large gravel pile causing minor damage.

2011-012– The suspect vehicle was struck with an expandable baton which broke out a window.

2011-013 – The suspect vehicle crashed into a tree attempting to make a turn during the pursuit.

2011-017 – The suspect vehicle was driven into a concrete pillar at the beginning of the pursuit.

2011-018 – The suspect vehicle struck a fence damaging it.

2011-025– The suspect vehicle rammed a patrol vehicle and two privately owned vehicles damaging all of them during the pursuit.

Injuries

• Bystander	0	0%
• Officer	0	0%
• Passenger	0	0%
• Suspect	2	7%

There were two (2) pursuits that resulted in injuries occurring to those involved. Both these pursuits involved the suspects being injured. One (1) was injured being tackled by officers after a short foot chase and the other was injured during a fight prior to the chase beginning.

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There were no officers listed as injured during any of the vehicle pursuits critiqued for calendar year 2011.

Result

- Apprehension 21 75%
- Non-apprehension 3 11%
- Officer Terminated 1 4%
- Supervisor Terminated 3 11%

Of the twenty-eight (28) total pursuits recorded by officers during the calendar year 2011, twenty-one (21) resulted in the offender being apprehended. On one occasion, the officer initiating the pursuit cancelled it because he lost contact with the violator. One two (2) other occasions, a supervisor terminated the pursuits because the motorcycle that was evading capture was driving at extremely high rates of speed and it was a danger for officers to continue the pursuit.

The offenders immediately apprehended as a result of the pursuits were charged with twenty-three (23) felony offenses, twenty-three (23) misdemeanor offenses and two (2) charges for warrants.

Three (3) of the pursuits ended with non-apprehensions of three suspects. Those suspects were not identified and were not charged.

Pursuit Policy

During the calendar year 2011, there were no significant changes in pursuit policy made by the department.

Policy Violations

Total Pursuits	28	
Policy violations	17	61%

During the review of pursuits conducted in the calendar year 2011, there were no significant issues related to policy violations that arose.

There was what appeared to be a large increase in policy violations noted during pursuit critiques offered by supervisory personnel.

There was one (1) violation listed for Stop Sticks because they were not properly deployed and some officer safety issues arose. Those safety issues were addressed at the shift level with remedial training.

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A very large number of the policy violations listed for calendar year 2011 were related to the Mobile video recording System (MVRS). There were changes in how two of the patrol shifts addressed these issues because many of the officers on those shifts were violating the policy. The MVRS violations noted included about an even number of violations related to not turning the system on at all, not initiating the microphone for audio recording or playing the AM/FM radio or other music device thereby interfering with the systems ability to make clear and unobstructed audio and video recordings of incidents as they occurred.

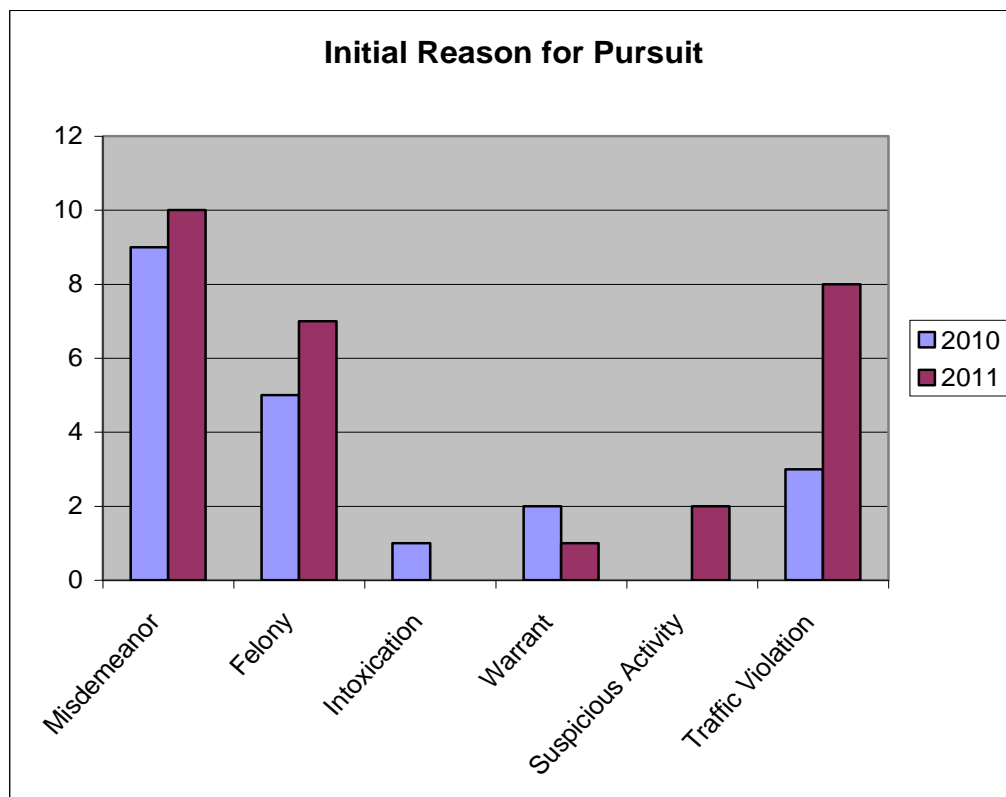
The minor policy violations noted during the supervisory reviews did not result in property damage or injury to any person. Because some officers that had been previously counseled for MVRS violations continued to violate the policy, two (2) complaints were forwarded to Professional Standards. Those complaints were investigated and discipline in the form of Letters of Reprimand were issued by Professional Standards at the direction of the Chief of Police.

One (1) pursuit was terminated by an officer for safety reasons and two (2) pursuits were terminated by supervisors for safety reasons. It is important that supervisors did observe behavior that might lead to someone being injured during a pursuit if not dealt with. Among issues identified during the pursuits were issues related to driving without due regard for other motorists on the roadway. There were notations in the reviews about officers driving well in excess of the posted speed limits and entering intersections without slowing down to determine if it was safe to proceed. Though none of the issues led to a major problem, they were identified and were addressed by supervisors at the shift level in an attempt to correct the behavior before a preventable crash or injury occurs.

Also noted in the supervisory reviews were instances where vehicle pursuit policy violations occurred because of the officer's lack of knowledge or understanding of the contents of the policy itself.

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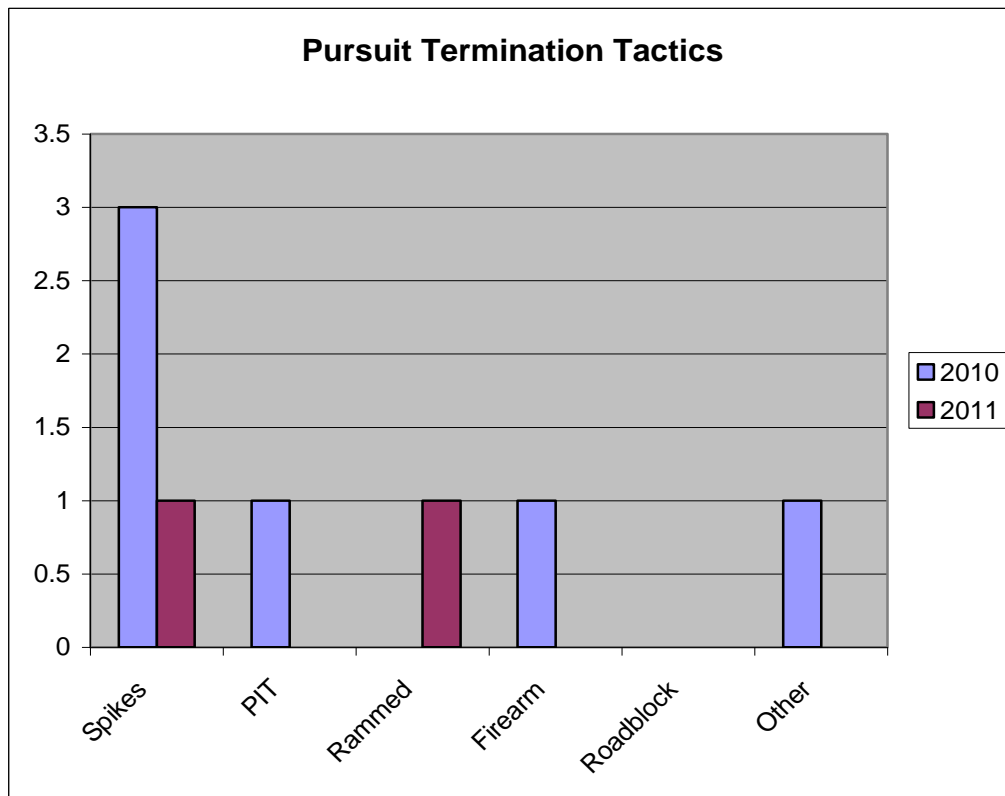
Comparisons 2010 – 2011



The initial reasons for officers initiating a pursuit from Calendar year 2010 to 2011 remained rather consistent. The number of pursuits initiated in 2011 increased by eleven (11) from the previous year. The Felony category decreased by two (2) from one year to the next, the Misdemeanor category increased by one (1) and the Warrant category decreased by one (1) in 2011. The Intoxication category decreased by one (1) occurrence in 2011.

In viewing the chart, the data is not exactly reflective of the total number of pursuits in 2010. Remember that there was one pursuit reviewed during 2010 that listed multiple initial reasons for the pursuit beginning thus skewing the total numbers from 2010 from seventeen (17), which is the actual number, to twenty (20).

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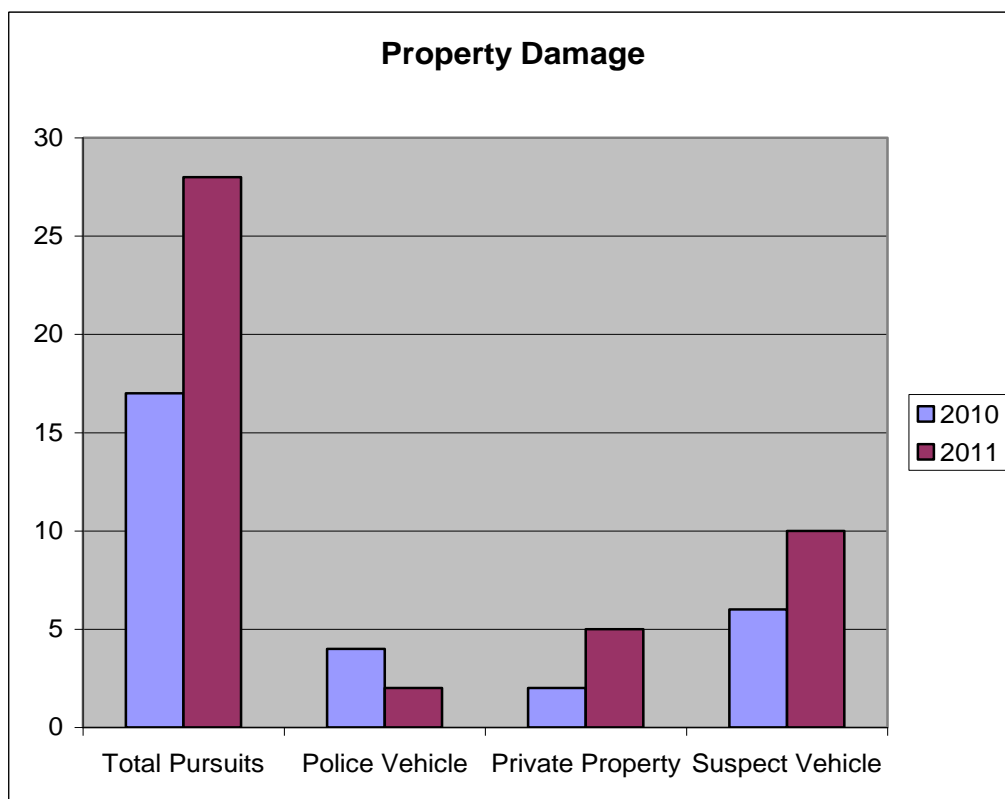


In reviewing data from 2010 and 2011, the number of pursuits terminated by ramming increased by one (1) and roadblocks remained at zero. This is important because those two categories are covered more in depth by case law that might further restrict an officer's termination of a pursuit using those tactics to situations involving the increased justification to use deadly force.

There was not a significant increase in any of the other categories. Spikes were used two (2) fewer times in 2011 than 2010. PIT was utilized one (1) fewer times in 2011 than in 2010. In 2010, the Other category had an entry from a pursuit review that listed the officer's vehicle coming into contact with the suspect vehicle after the suspect vehicle stopped. In that case, the officer was shot by the suspect as they both exited their vehicles. There were not any entries in the other category for 2011.

The Firearm category showed one (1) entry in 2010. However, the firearm was not used to terminate the pursuit. The officer involved made a threat of force with his firearm after the pursuit was terminated as he was attempting to remove the suspect from the suspect vehicle. The 2011 data does not show an entry on the chart for a firearm terminating a pursuit though one critique erroneously reported that a firearm did end a pursuit. This occasion was exactly like the instance reported in 2010.

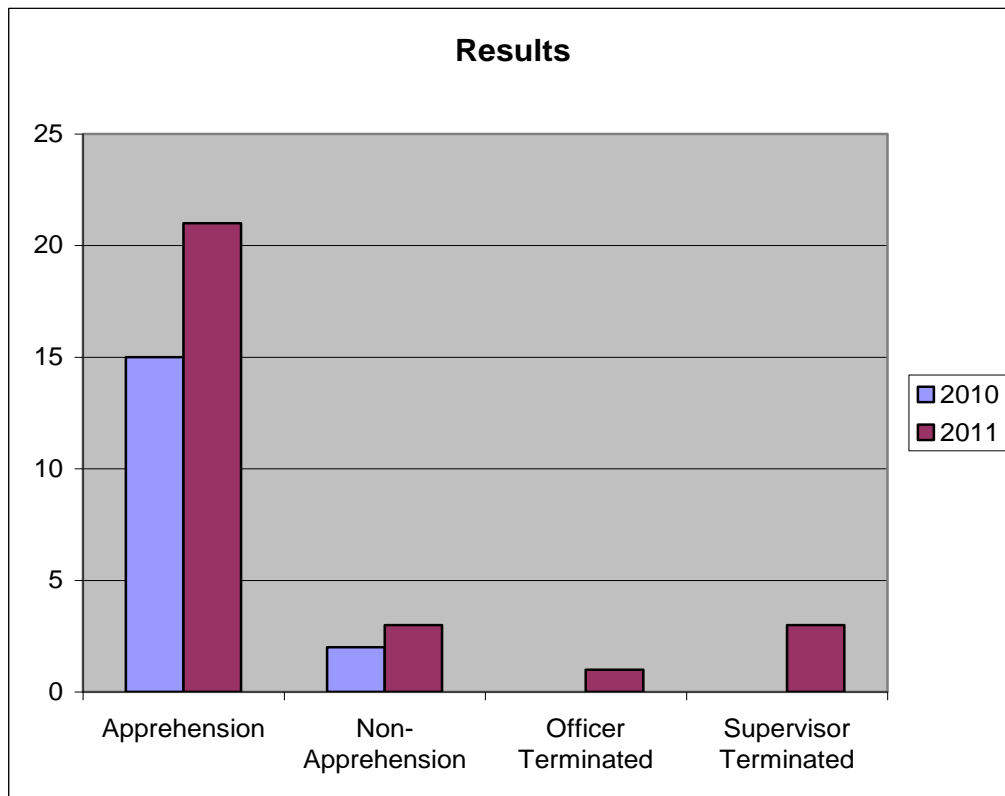
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In 2010, out of seventeen (17) total pursuits, property damage was listed in the reviews of twelve (12). There were six (6) suspect vehicles damaged, four (4) police vehicles damaged and damage to two different properties owned by private citizens. An example of this was damage to a fence when the suspect exited his vehicle while it was still in motion.

In 2011, out of twenty-eight (28) pursuits, property damage was listed in reviews of seventeen (17). There were ten (10) suspect vehicles damaged, four (4) police vehicles damage and there was damage to private property on five (5) occasions.

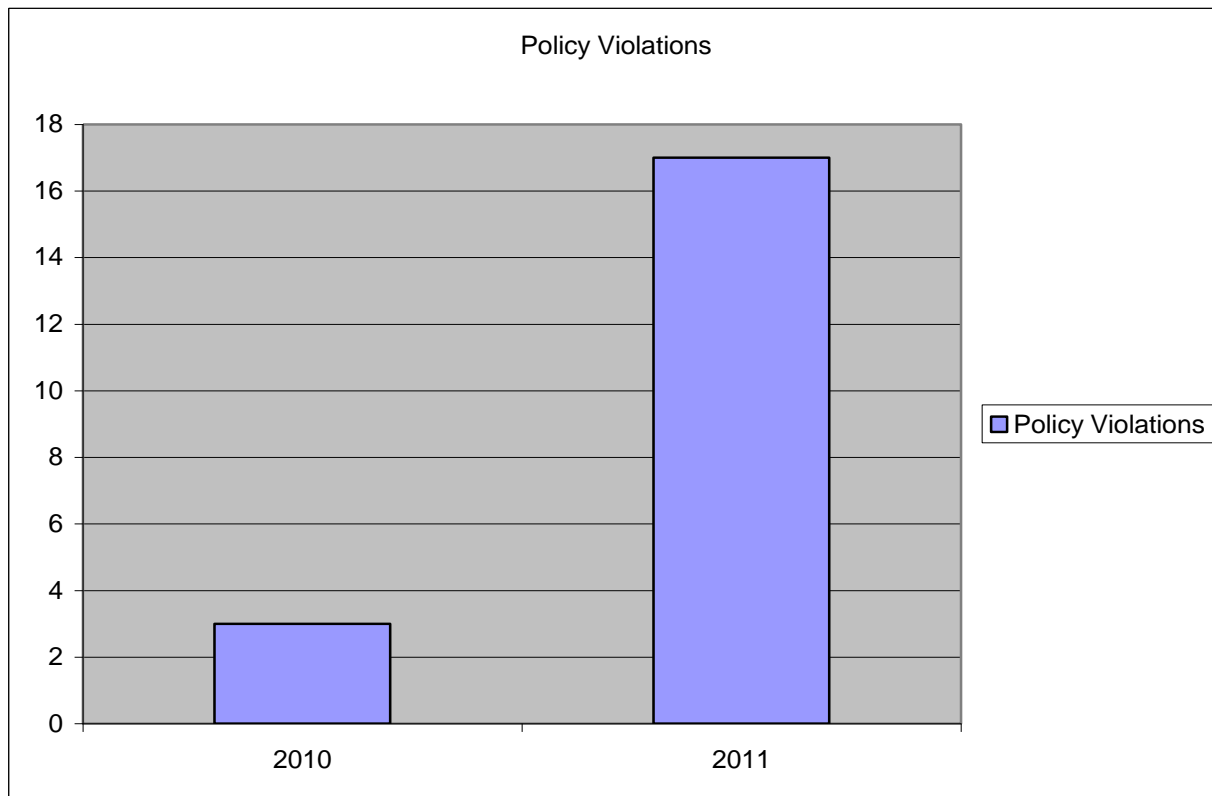
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The results of the pursuits reviewed for 2011 increases in all four (4) categories tracked. The percentage of apprehended violators rose from 2010 to 2011 and the percentage of non-apprehended violators increased as well.

There were three (3) pursuits reviewed during which it was noted that the pursuit was terminated by the officer or supervisor for safety reasons. There was one pursuit that could possibly have been eliminated from the list because the verbally told a violator to stop his vehicle while the officer was outside on foot. The violator fled and the officer could not get to his patrol vehicle in time to engage the violator in a pursuit.

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There were eleven (11) more pursuits recorded in 2011 than in 2010. Along with the increase in the number of pursuits initiated, the number of policy violations also increased.

The issues listed in 2010 as violations were primarily related to the audio recording of pursuits and activities related to them. There were also listed incidences of lack of experience and lack of knowledge of pursuit policy involved in the reviewed pursuits.

In 2011, the policy violations were very similar in nature to those listed in 2010. However, there were more documented instances where officers violated the MVRS policy related to not turning their microphones on or playing their AM/FM radio or other music device which interfered with the systems ability to clearly record what was going on during the pursuits.

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Recommendations

1. Training related to vehicle pursuit policy should be conducted with every new officer hired either at the academy level or during in-service training that follows the academy for those officers that are not certified at the time they are employed.

Training should be conducted for certified officers hired as lateral transfers under contract during some type of employee orientation or in-service training prior to them entering the PTO program or being assigned to a patrol company.

Refresher training can and should be conducted during briefing sessions at the shift level by first line supervisors. All other Divisions or Sections should also conduct scheduled refresher training in pursuit policy on a regular basis.

2. Officers that have not been trained in the use of spikes or Stop Sticks as a means to help terminate a pursuit should be given that training. The training section has training kits for the Stop Stick tire deflation system available for use at the shift level. First line supervisors or proficient officers can utilize those training kits in instructing officers that have not had the training or giving refresher training to those that have been trained but have not used the tire deflation devices for a period of time. Also, because issues have been identified with Stop Stick deployment during the last year, remedial training should be done with officers that have not had in a while.
3. The department should offer training in critiquing pursuits so supervisors will have clear direction about what behavior should or should not be scrutinized during a pursuit critique. There are situations that exist now evidencing that the methods or information looked at are consistent between each patrol shift..
4. All officers should be given driving refresher training at intervals established by the training section or Administration. The refresher training should not only include the actual operation of a vehicle but cover concepts related to speed, braking, following distances and pursuit termination tactics, etc.