



TOWN OF HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

15 East Street, Hadley, Massachusetts 01035 Telephone 413-584-0883 Fax 413-582-9053

MICHAEL A. MASON
Chief of Police

2023 Vehicle Pursuit Report

To: Chief Michael Mason

From: Lt. Mitchell Kuc

Re: Annual Vehicle Pursuit Report, CY 2023

Chief,

As required by our Vehicle Pursuit Policy, please find here a summary of the annual Vehicle Pursuit data for calendar year 2023. Vehicle pursuits are defined as clear incidents of motorists attempting to evade capture by using high speeds and other abrupt and illegal actions to defeat traffic in order to facilitate escape. Incidents where officers are attempting to catch up to vehicles where there is no clear indication of attempts to evade are not considered motor vehicle pursuits and are not considered for this report.

In 2023 there were five total reported vehicular pursuits. No injuries of officers were reported, and one cruiser was damaged by a piece of flying debris, requiring minor repair. In that same pursuit where the cruiser was damaged, the vehicle caught fire as a result of driving on a flat tire at extreme high speeds. No injuries of any offenders were reported.

The operators of three of the five incidents were referred to the criminal court system for prosecution. One was never captured or identified, and another was wanted by another agency.

The first pursuit occurred on March 17th and the vehicle had fake license plates attached and was initially suspected to be an impaired driver. Officers successfully deployed tire deflation devices, although the driver continued on flat tires onto I-91 south until the vehicle could no longer be driven. The occupants fled on foot and were captured, and found to be part of a catalytic converter theft ring. The next occurred on April 14, and the motorist was suspected to be impaired, was on probation for drunk driving and had a suspended driver's license. The motorist was captured at home a short time after fleeing the initial traffic stop. Another pursuit occurred on April 17 when Amherst Police was pursuing a vehicle into Hadley. Hadley Officers successfully deployed tire deflation devices, and the driver crashed on I-91 and was apprehended. On October 6th, Officers stopped a motorist driving with a suspended driver's license and had also observed indicators of impairment. When asked to step out of the vehicle, he fled the motor vehicle stop leading police on a multi-town pursuit. The pursuit slowed significantly after a tire was damaged after likely hitting a curb in Amherst, and the driver was seen throwing drugs out of his window. Once captured in Pelham, he was found to have significant amounts



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of drugs in the car and was charged with serious drug offenses. The final pursuit of the year involved a vehicle with fake license plates. The officer terminated the pursuit on I-91 and the driver was never identified.

Demographics

Of the five pursuits, two were Caucasian, one was Asian, and two were African American. The one Hadley Resident was Caucasian.

Continuation/Discontinuation

Officers self-terminated one of the five pursuits after the vehicle fled on I-91 at extremely fast speeds. The one Hadley resident that ran from police did so with incredibly dangerous speed and disregard for safety. Officers being aware of where the resident lived allowed for them to use care, and instead of trying to catch up to the offender, they simply drove to his residence where he was apprehended. One pursuit was another community's incident that we deployed tire deflation devices for and followed until the vehicle could no longer drive and assisted in taking the driver into custody. The remaining two incidents involved incidents involved possible impairment.

Justification

Of the three incidents that originated in Hadley that officers did not terminate, each had showed signs that would tend to indicate, or observed outright indicators of alcohol impairment. Based on our 2023 Pursuit Policy, pursuing is allowed in these circumstances.

Conclusion

Based on the information compiled for CY 2023, I recommend some changes to our Vehicular Pursuit Policies following trends of motor vehicle pursuits continuing onto Interstate 91 and attaining very high speeds. Those changes were recommended and adopted in the beginning of 2024, which include that motor vehicle pursuits involving solely motor vehicle charges will terminate at the Hadley Town line. For the community's information, the law allows for continued and hot pursuit into other cities and towns, although our policy can be more restrictive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lt. Mitchell Kuc