

Police Department
City of Keene, New Hampshire

Date: January 27, 2025

To: Steven Stewart – Police Chief 

From: Benjamin Nugent - Lieutenant 

Subject: Annual Vehicle Operation Report, CY-2024

SECTION 1 - PURSUITS:

This section contains data compiled from Pursuit Reports (KPD Form 41-2) covering the period as noted above, completed in accordance with Department Pursuit Policy 4104F, Section IX, Post-Pursuit Actions.

Number of Pursuits:

During the period of January 2024 through the end of December 2024, Keene Police Officers were involved in (12) pursuits. This is two more pursuits than were reported in CY 2023. Of the twelve pursuits this year, all but two of them were initiated in the City.

The suspect vehicles of CY 2024 consisted of (2) Motorcycles, (10) passenger vehicles

Initial Contact/Terminated:

The reason/circumstances for how each pursuit was initiated and ultimately terminated vary; therefore, they will be broken down individually for better clarity.

Apprehension:

The driver was arrested in six of the twelve reported pursuits. Of the six that were not apprehended, two had suspects developed but could not be proven, three are pending investigation and one was unidentified.

Number of Officers:

When we look at this piece of data, we are actually looking at two different items: the number of officers actively involved in pursuing the offender, and the number of officers who assume tactical roles; such as the deployment of deflation devices. Our policy allows for two marked police units to be actively involved in the pursuit itself, but it allows any number of officers to assume peripheral roles to help resolve it.

In all pursuits from CY 2024 Officers adhered to the above-mentioned policy and if not engaged in the pursuit took up positions of support.

This annual review of our driving and pursuit policies shows that officers are effective in this area and are reacting and attempting to respond accordingly and effectively.

Distance:

The distances traveled during the twelve pursuits are approximate figures, and noted in miles as follows:

6 miles

5 miles

16 miles

2.8 miles

3.4 miles

12 miles

12.2 miles

13.3 miles

0.5 miles

11.5 miles

10.8 miles

0.3 miles

The average distance traveled was 7.82 miles. This is an increase from 2023 average of 2.7 miles. This increase can be attributed to the increase in pursuits that leave Keene city limits. Six of the twelve left the city attributing to distance totals of 16,12,12,13,11 and 10 miles. This is five more than the pervious year when only one left the city.

Separating these two (those that remain within the city and those that go beyond the city line) provides a clearer picture of pursuit lengths. The average distance of pursuits that do not leave Keene is 3 miles, the average of those that do is 12.6. There are a lot of factors that can add to these longer pursuits once they leave the city. Assistance from surrounding towns, availability of KPD back up units to accompany the pursuing officer out of town, and the increased speeds achievable on the larger

roadways are some of them. When a suspect vehicle remains within the city limits the likelihood of other KPD officers being able to assist increases. Once we leave our city, we are at the mercy of mutual aid to have officers working, in position and able to assist.

Speed/Unwarranted Risk to Public Safety:

Speeds traveled during a pursuit are critical to their management and potential outcome.

Regarding safety and the deciding factors to terminate (or not), it would appear that speed was a factor in the outcome of two of the pursuits this year, in which the Keene officer or the Supervisor determined to terminate the pursuit due to the speed traveled by the suspect in a densely populated area and/or with heavy pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic.

Weather/Pavement/Traffic:

In reviewing each incident reported in CY2024, weather/pavement was not a factor.

Other Data:

There remains no pattern as to where and when pursuits occur within our City; CY 2024 saw twelve incidents occur. Based on the low frequency of the pursuits, the varying times in which they occur, and the unknown actions of individuals, it is not possible to predict or prevent a pursuit from occurring. Further, in reviewing the officers' reports and actions when deciding to stop the suspected vehicles, it appears that they are using the appropriate techniques and decision-making skills when deciding to initiate a stop or waiting for backup.

Policy Compliance:

All reported incidents in 2024 were within compliance of our General Order (GO 4104) Pursuits. Our policy remains effective in the safe conclusion of pursuit-related incidents.

Decision Making

The data shows that officers are making good decisions relative to pursuits. Taking into consideration the environmental and traffic conditions, officers are continually evaluating the nature of the pursuits and making reasonable decisions concerning termination or continuation.

Pursuit Reporting:

It is currently the policy of the Keene Police Department that all pursuits shall be reported in an Offense or Arrest report, and that no matter the length of the pursuit nor how it was terminated, a Pursuit Report (KPD form 41-2) be completed prior to the end of the officer's shift. These two methods have proven to be very effective in the collection of data and the timeliness of the reporting.

Conclusions:

Officers are responding appropriately when faced with pursuit situations and are taking appropriate action as the circumstances may dictate. It can be reasonably concluded that the established annual review of our pursuit policy is a reason for this. The fact that the pursuit policy itself is drafted to a standard of reasonableness also plays a role.

In reviewing this and previous years' reports, it shows that officers are making sound decisions regarding pursuits. It further shows that backup officers are deploying appropriately to assist in ensuring a successful resolution to a pursuit. We also saw that supervisors continue to closely monitor incidents such as these and are making appropriate decisions concerning turning pursuits over to other agencies, canceling multiple units, or terminating the pursuit, for example.

SECTION 11 - CRUISER ACCIDENTS/DAMAGE:

This section contains data compiled from Keene Police Department collision/damage reports (KPD Safety Report, commonly referred to G-I's) involving police cruisers and unmarked police vehicles, covering the period January 2024 through December 2024.

Number of Cruiser-Involved Collisions/Damage to Cruisers:

Keene Police vehicles were involved in (6) Six incidents during CY 2023. This number is one more than reported in CY2023. All but one of the collisions/damage were minor in nature and did not require the city-owned vehicle to be taken out of service until repairs could be scheduled. One sustained damage to the wheel/tire and was taken out of service out of an abundance of caution until it could be inspected by Fleet services.

This year two unmarked / administrative vehicles were involved in minor motor vehicle collisions. One of the two was involved in two of the six total collisions.

This year, three collisions/damage occurred during an emergency, pursuit, or stressful driving situation. Two of the three were from the same incident on two different vehicles. The damage was minor and there were no injuries.

The rest of the collisions/damage were low-speed, low-stress accidents with two being parked and unoccupied police vehicles.

Actions Being Performed By Officers at Time of Collision:

March 10th – Vehicle was parked and unoccupied when it was backed into by another driver.

March 18th – During a pursuit the officer attempted to pass the suspect vehicle to perform a boxing maneuver. While passing the suspect vehicle it swerved to the left contacting the cruiser. Then once the boxing maneuver was complete the suspect attempted to continue to flee and in doing so struck the rear driver's corner of the marked cruiser.

March 18th – After a boxing maneuver was performed by other officers on a suspect in a pursuit. Officer used the front passenger corner of the unmarked police vehicle to pin the suspect vehicle and prevent it from continuing.

May 21 – While acting as the primary back up to the initiating officer in a pursuit, the officer took the slip lane to 101WB too fast and struck the granite curbing.

July 26 – Unmarked police vehicle parked and unoccupied when a civilian vehicle backed into it.

August 30 – Officer in a marked police cruiser was turning around on a vehicle to make a stop and struck a signpost.

Weather:

The weather did not play a factor in any of the reported collisions/damage for this calendar year.

Policy Compliance

This year there were no violations of the General Order governing the Operation of Police Vehicles (G04103G).

It is the policy of this Department to counsel or issue Letters of Guidance to Officers/Employees when they become involved in a preventable motor vehicle accident. This practice serves to reinforce accountability. By the same token, one must take a step back and balance the fact that Officers routinely spend a much greater amount of time on the road and thus the odds of becoming involved in a collision, however minor in nature, increase greatly. To bring this more into perspective, I offer the following CY 2024 mileage figures for the Department's fleet, as provided by the City's fleet services division:

Total miles driven by all police department vehicles —281,882 miles
Total miles driven by marked police cruisers only — 221,040 miles.

SECTION 111 - CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

This section contains data compiled from citizen complaints pertaining to police vehicle operation, as articulated to the Department by telephone, correspondence, or third party.

Number and Nature of Complaints:

No complaints regarding driving or cruiser operation were made to the Keene Police Department for CY2024. This is the sixth year in a row that we have received no complaints for driving.

Methods of Reporting:

N/A .

Location/Date/Time of Complaints:

N/A

Complaint Disposition:

N/A

Recommendations:

- Continue to post this annual document to the Department's global information-sharing files for all officers to review and to the Department's web page for viewing by all citizens.
- Periodic reminders, via roll call sessions, about the importance of driving safely and avoiding distractions. These reminders should include the importance of non-stress driving as well as emergency driving.
- In-house driving training utilizing our department's driving instructors. We continue to have department-wide driver training annually for all sworn members of the department. We continue to evaluate each accident and adjust the lesson plan of this annual training to adjust to the needs or issues seen during the previous years, as well as adjustments to state and national trends regarding the operation of police vehicles. As shown, this strategy appears to be working. When we analyze the accidents, they typically are very minor, and most times do not require repair.

2024 Pursuit narrative

February 16, 2024 – The officer was working a directed enforcement operation when another officer alerted him to a vehicle pulling off Hancock St. The officer followed the vehicle and tried to initiate a motor vehicle stop on Main St near Water St for suspected drug activity. The target vehicle (TV) continued North on Main St ignoring the officer's emergency lights. In the area of Main St and Eagle Court, the officer activated his emergency siren as well. The TV then began to accelerate to a high rate of speed northbound on Main St. TV continued through Central Sq to Washington St where it continued to flee the pursuing officer. TV continued up Washington St to Route 9 EB and eventually a left onto Rt 10 N reaching speeds of 100 mph. Once the TV entered Gilsum, the shift supervisor called off the pursuit. The vehicle was soon thereafter located and pursued by Alstead Police and when the TV traveled down a dead-end road (by way of a closed bridge) the pursuit came to an end and the Suspect was arrested. Driver was charged with Disobeying an Officer, Reckless operation x2. Driver is also suspected to have been in possession of illegal narcotics which were sent to the State lab for testing.

March 18, 2024 – Officer was assisting with the attempt to arrest a subject on Felony Warrants. The wanted subject was seen driving NB on Route 10 around Market Basket. The officer attempted to stop the vehicle as it turned onto Matthews Road. TV immediately accelerated and tried to elude the officer. TV continued down Matthews Rd with the driver making furtive movements within the vehicle and appeared to be retrieving or concealing something behind him. The vehicle traveled at a high rate of speed often crossing the center line. TV then turned right onto Sawyers Crossing Road and continued driving erratically. County units were able to successfully deploy a tire deflation device on Sawyers Crossing Road and shortly thereafter, the Officer tried to pass the TV to be the lead vehicle in a boxing maneuver. However, as the officer attempted to pass the TV moved to the left briefly making contact with the cruiser. Once in front of the TV the Officer slowed in a effort to slow the TV and allow the tires to deflate prior to reaching route 10. The TV then went off the road to the left, passing the officer and continuing to Route 10. The officer was able to pass the TV again and force the TV NB on route 10 back towards other units. Once on route 10, and when traffic and speeds would allow, the officer passed the TV and began to slow and obstruct the TV from continuing. In a last-ditch effort to escape the TV tried to get around the cruiser but collided with the rear bumper. The TV came to a stop at that point. The driver was arrested on outstanding Felony warrants and turned over to CCSO deputies.

May 21, 2024 – Officers were dispatched to the Co-op on Cypress St for a reported shoplifting. Upon arrival, the suspects fled in a vehicle. The officer attempted to stop the target vehicle in the area of Eagle Court and Main St. TV continued across Main St to Emerald St. TV accelerated to a high rate of speed and continued to Ralston St. The officer with lights and siren activated pursued the TV to Winchester St towards Route 101/9/10/12. TV made an aggressive and last-minute maneuver to use the westbound slip lane and accelerated to a high rate of speed. TV continued westbound at a high rate of speed, passing cars on both the left and right sides. It crossed the double yellow lines and was able to elude the tire deflation strips in the area of Daniels Hill Road. TV continued to the NH/VT line where the pursuit was terminated at the request of the Brattleboro Police Department. TV was last seen traveling to VT Rt91 South. A Suspect was later developed by KPD detectives.

June 15, 2024 – An officer on Patrol heard NHSP report motorcycles heading towards Keene at a high rate of speed. The officer responded to the area and was able to locate the motorcycles on radar at 106 MPH, however, due to their high rate of speed and traffic in the area he was not able to pursue them right away. Once it was safe the officer turned and attempted to keep sight of the motorcycles by using his emergency lights to clear traffic. However, he quickly lost sight of them and resumed road speeds. The officer continued at road speeds westbound into Chesterfield but located only two motorcycles and he did not recognize them as the ones he had witnessed speeding. The Officer turned around and headed back to Keene when he had two motorcycles heading towards him at 96 MPH. The officer attempted to conduct a motor vehicle stop on them, but their high speeds and reckless driving were cause for termination of the pursuit by the shift supervisor. The rider of one of the bikes was later located and arrested by NHSP in Chesterfield.

June 17, 2024 – Units from the Keene Police Department heard a pursuit heading towards Keene from Walpole NH. KPD Units positioned near the Keene dump to utilize a tire deflation device. KPD Units were successful in spiking the suspect vehicle as it passed the Keene Dump. Another KPD Officer positioned himself at the Maple Ave exit and as the suspect vehicle passed him, he conducted a “U” turn and took over the lead position in the pursuit at the request of pursuing officers. At speeds reaching 80+ MPH the suspect vehicle continued to try to evade capture and continued Route 12 to the intersection with 101. The suspect vehicle turned left onto Rt 101 EB and at the roundabout at Winchester St could not navigate the turn and crashed into a signpost. The driver exited the vehicle and began jumping around and appeared to be fleeing on foot. Officer Quickly took the subject into custody without incident. The driver was charged with Aggravated DWI and Disobeying an Officer.

July 3, 2024 – Officer initiated a motor vehicle stop on Winchester St in Keene for a defective equipment violation. The suspect vehicle initially pulled to the right and stopped. However, moments after stopping the driver sped off. The Officer began pursuing the suspect vehicle on Winchester St to Route 10 SB. Swanzey Police attempted to use a tire deflation device in the area of Base Hill Road. The attempt either failed or was ineffective as the suspect vehicle continued at a very high rate of speed, in excess of 100 MPH, southbound on Rt 10. Winchester PD was able to successfully deploy a tire deflation device. The officer soon thereafter lost visual of the vehicle. The vehicle was later located by Swanzey Police Officers in Winchester. The driver of the vehicle was identified through a subsequent investigation, and was arrested on a warrant for Disobeying an officer, Reckless operation, Driving after Suspension DUI, AIC Interlock MV not equipped and other minor motor vehicle violations.

July 16, 2024 – Officer observed a motorcycle exit the rotary at Winchester St and Pearl St at what he felt was a high rate of speed. He began following the vehicle making observations of the operator’s operation. He followed the motorcycle onto Route 101 then Route 9 WB. In the area of Whitcomb’s Hill Road the motorcycle had accelerated to approximately 87 MPH. The officer attempted to stop the motorcycle, but it increased it’s speed to over 100 MPH. The pursuit continued into and through Chesterfield as the motorcycle passed vehicles illegally several times and refused to stop. The motorcycle made it to the Brattleboro Vt border and crossed into Vermont. The officer continued far enough to confirm the direction of travel on Route 91 SB. Operator of the motorcycle has not been identified.

September 10, 2024 – Officers working heard cross monitor that Claremont PD was actively trying to stop a vehicle that fled from them. The operator of the vehicle had “No bail” warrants and was actively trying to elude arrest. KPD Officers positioned themselves on Rt 12 near the Keene transfer Station in the event the pursuit continued into Keene. A time later the suspect vehicle, after being successfully spiked by NHSP in Westmoreland, entered Keene and was successfully spiked again by KPD Officers. KPD officers then began to trail the pursuit which at this point was still being led by out-of-town units. As the pursuit continued, KPD units were asked to take over the pursuit. The suspect vehicle, now operating on no more than two tires, was traveling at approximately 30mph but refusing to stop. It continued to the West St overpass where officers attempted to box the vehicle. However, the suspect vehicle swerved to the right and off the highway through the grass. It then traveled the wrong way on the on ramp and exited to West St (EB). It used the Keene Inn parking lot to get turned around and traveled WB on West St to West St extension. The suspect vehicle traveled Base Hill Road towards Swanzy where it was spiked once again. However, this did not stop the suspect. He continued all the way to Winchester where he ultimately had a slow speed crash on a covered bridge. The operator was arrested at the scene and charged with Disobeying an Officer, Reckless Conduct, DUI – impairment, Transport Drugs in Motor Vehicle, Arrest on Warrant and Cntrl Drug: Sched 1-4 Possession.

November 17, 2024 – Officers was conducting stationary radar and monitoring motor vehicle traffic in the area of Washington St and Beaver St. He observed a vehicle traveling North on Washington St at a high rate of speed. He confirmed this with the dashboard radar unit and turned to follow the vehicle as it turned right onto Beaver St. The vehicle accelerated and when the officer initiated a motor vehicle stop, he failed to stop. The suspect vehicle accelerated and extinguished its exterior lights. Speeds reached approximately 80 MPH on Beaver St. The suspect driver continued on Beaver St and tried to turn onto Oak St. The suspect vehicle crashed into a parked unoccupied vehicle on Oak St and fled on foot. The investigation into this is ongoing but a suspect has been developed but not proven.

November 23, 2024 – Officer was patrolling southbound on Mian St approaching the Water St intersection. The suspect vehicle crossed the center median at the intersection almost striking the officers cruiser. The suspect vehicle traveled against traffic (northbound in the south bound lane) to Emerald St. Suspect vehicle turned left onto Emerald St and turned off their exterior lights. It then turned left onto Ralston St and right on to Winchester St. The suspect vehicle used Island St to get to West St and then back towards Central Square. Once on Main St the vehicle continued to try to elude police and traveled to Route 12S towards Swaney. Speeds on Route 12 exceeded 100 MPH. Officer continued to pursue the vehicle to Troy where they began to lose radio signal, and the pursuit was called off by the on-duty KPD Supervisor. A suspect has been developed but not yet proven.

December 24, 2024 – KPD Officers were dispatched to an assault on Gilsum St. During the dispatch it was put out over the radio that the suspect left the scene in a vehicle bearing Massachusetts registration. An officer on patrol believed he located a possible match for the vehicle approaching from behind him on Lower Winchester St. He yielded the way by turning into a parking lot and got behind the vehicle. The vehicle increased its speed and continued southbound. The officer tried to initiate a motor vehicle stop but the target vehicle increased speed and fled. The pursuit continued into Winchester where the officer lost sight of it and terminated the pursuit. A suspect was developed but not proven and the case was closed.

December 30, 2024 – Officers were dispatched to check on the welfare of a subject in a red Volkswagen on West St. When officers arrived, the vehicle was gone. A short time later while on patrol, an officer located a red Volkswagen in the parking lot of Jake's five star on Roxbury St. The officer ran the license plate and learned the registrations had expired in February of 2024. The officer turned around and saw the same vehicle exiting the parking lot. The officer noted that the target vehicle appeared to increase speed and turn onto Norway ave. The officer tried to initiate a motor vehicle stop but the vehicle continued at a high rate of speed and turned onto Carpenter St. When the officer turned onto Carpenter St, he no longer saw the vehicle on the road. He quickly located the vehicle behind 205 Church St and contacted the driver. The driver was arrested and charged with Disobeying an Officer, Driving after suspension, and possession of drug paraphernalia.