

Police Department
City of Keene, New Hampshire

Date: February 6, 2018
To: Steven Russo – Police Chief *SR-140*
Through: Steven Stewart – Captain *SMS #156*
Through: Todd Lawrence - Captain *TL #23*
From: Steven Tenney Jr. - Lieutenant *ST #142*
Subject: Annual Vehicle Operation Report, CY-2017

SECTION I - PURSUITS:

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

Number of Pursuits:

Between the time period of January 2017 through December 2017, Keene Police Officers were involved in five pursuits. This is up from two reported pursuits in CY 2016. Again this year, all five pursuits were initiated by Keene Police Officers and were single officer pursuits. Also again this year, there were no pursuits that originated in other jurisdictions that entered the city.

Suspect vehicles of CY 2017 consisted of; 3 – motorcycles, 1 – passenger vehicle and 1 – pickup truck

Initial Contact:

The reason/circumstances for each pursuit vary; therefore they will be broken down individually for better clarity on how/why they began.

May 11th – A two man car was on uniformed patrol when they observed two motorcycles operating erratically and for misuse of power type operation. Further, one of the officers recognized one of the operators as not having a valid motorcycle endorsement on their license. Upon initiating a motor vehicle stop, the driver of the motorcycle without the valid license accelerated and began to flee from the officers traveling north on Route 12 toward the town of Westmoreland.

July 4th – An officer was on uniformed patrol on Main Street when he observed a motorcycle “riding a wheelie” down the roadway. Upon seeing the officer, the driver of the motorcycle returned to both wheels and began to accelerate at a high rate of speed. When the officer attempted to initiate a stop of the motorcycle, it accelerated more and fled from the area.

July 16th – An officer was on uniform patrol when he attempted to stop a pickup truck for a speeding violation on Winchester Street. Upon activating his emergency lighting the vehicle extinguished its headlights and continued to accelerate and speed away from the officer onto Pearl Street.

September 4th – An officer was on patrol when he observed a vehicle drive on the wrong side of the road for a short distance while making a turn and other erratic operation. When the officer attempted to stop the vehicle it attempted to flee from him on Main Street.

September 14th – An officer was clearing an unrelated call for service on Eastern Ave when he heard a motorcycle revving its engine and then subsequently pass by him at a high rate of speed. Further as it passed, the officer observed that it had a defective tail light. Upon making these observations the officer entered his cruiser and attempted to initiate a motor vehicle stop on the motorcycle.

Terminated:

Each of CY 2017's pursuits ended differently. Each is broken down below for clarification.

May 11th – A two man patrol unit was on patrol stopped at the traffic light on West Street and Central Square when they observed two motorcycles accelerate north on Main Street through Central Square and then at a high rate of speed onto Court Street and then Mechanic Street. The officers followed the motorcycles for additional violations and observed erratic operation and misuse of power violations while doing so. Further, they were able to run the plates of the motorcycles and learned that one of the operators did not have a valid motorcycle endorsement. Ultimately, while traveling north on Route 12, the officers initiated a motor vehicle stop of the motorcycles in an attempt to make contact with the unlicensed driver. Upon doing so, the motorcycle they intended to stop accelerated at a high rate of speed and attempted to flee from the officers.

They pursued the motorcycle into the town of Westmoreland, ultimately losing sight of it in the area of Route 12 and Goodrums Crossing Road. Cheshire County dispatch was made aware and several minutes later, the officers hear that Walpole PD had made contact with the motorcycle and had it stopped on Route 12 in their town. The officers were able to go to the Walpole stop and confirm it was the same driver and motorcycle that they had pursued. The driver was charged by both agencies.

July 4th – A Keene Police Sergeant was on uniformed patrol on Main Street when he observed a vehicle traveling south riding a "wheelie". Upon seeing the officer, the driver returned to both wheels and began to accelerate in speed. The officer turned his cruiser around and attempted to stop the motorcycle. As he did, the motorcycle increased in speed and fled from the officer. The officer was able to pursue the motorcycle onto lower Main Street where the officer terminated the pursuit due to the speed being traveled. The driver is still not known at this time.

July 16th – A Keene Police officer was on patrol on Winchester Street when he attempted to stop a pickup truck for a speeding violation. Upon activating his emergency lighting the pickup truck extinguished its headlights and accelerated in speed onto Pearl Street. When the vehicle approached the sharp turn on Pearl Street it failed to negotiate the turn and traveled off the roadway and rolled over. The officer performed a felony stop of the vehicle and ordered the driver out of the vehicle. He was then taken into custody without incident.

September 4th - A Keene Police Officer was on patrol when he observed a Honda CRV turn from Jennison Street onto Marlboro Street. The officer's attention was drawn to this vehicle as it traveled in the wrong lane for a distance (approx. 300ft) after making the turn. The officer followed the vehicle

toward the Marlboro/Main Street rotary. When the vehicle got to the rotary, the driver put the vehicle in reverse and began to accelerate. Fearing a collision, the officer activated his emergency lighting. The vehicle then accelerated forward into the rotary. The vehicle lost control while in the rotary and crashed into the curbing. Once crashed, the driver exited the vehicle and fled on foot.

The driver was not identified this night but was later identified by another agency and charged for the above incident.

September 14th – A Keene Police Officer was out of his cruiser, having just cleared a call for service, when he heard a motorcycle revving its engine and subsequently pass by the officers location at a high rate of speed on Eastern Ave. The officer also noted a defective tail light as the motorcycle passed. The officer entered his cruiser and attempted to catch up to the motorcycle to initiate a motor vehicle stop. The motorcycle continued north onto South Lincoln Street and by the time the officer was able to turn onto South Lincoln Street the motorcycle was traveling at such a high rate of speed that it was already to the Church Street intersection. The officer now activated his emergency lighting.

The motorcycle continued onto Roxbury Street and then onto Franklin Street. Speeds were estimated to be near 70mph. The officer continued to pursue the motorcycle to Beaver Street. Once on Beaver Street, the motorcycle slowed and came to a stop. The driver was ultimately taken into custody without incident.

Apprehension:

Of the five incidents reported above, the driver was arrested in all but one of the incidents. The one that was not arrested was the incident on July 4th when the officer terminated the pursuit due to the speed of the suspect motorcycle.

Number of Officers:

When we look at this piece of data, we're actually looking at two different items; 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 in an attempt to help resolve it.

This year we find that four of the incidents were reported to be single officer events. However, the reports associated with these events show that support officers began to respond. The fifth incident, the motorcycle pursuit that was terminated in Westmoreland and subsequently intercepted by Walpole PD shows that Keene PD officer's followed correct procedure in notifying outside agencies as the pursuit exited the city, resulting in a successful culmination of the incident.

Annual review of our driving and pursuit policies remains effective in this area and officers are reacting and attempting to respond accordingly and effectively.

Furthermore, due to the short duration of each incident and/or the location in which it was initiated, the Stinger Spike mat system was not able to be deployed in any of this year's pursuits.

Distance:

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

7.5 miles

1.0 mile
0.4 miles
0.1 miles
0.85 miles

The average distance traveled was 1.97 miles. This is an increase from CY 2016 pursuits, which was 1.0 miles. The reason for the increase can be attributed to the distance traveled in the first pursuit, which was on a highway and traveled out of town. All other incidents occurred near the downtown area.

Speed:

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

In regards to safety and a deciding factor to terminate (or not), it would appear that speed was not a factor in two of this year's incidents which involved motorcycles.

Weather/Pavement/Traffic:

In reviewing each incident reported in CY2017, it would appear that weather/pavement/traffic was not a factor in the eventual outcome in any of the incidents.

Other Data:

There remains no pattern as to where and when pursuits occur within our City; CY 2017 saw five incidents occur. Based on the low frequency of the pursuits and the varying times, and the unknown actions of individuals, it is not possible to predict or prevent a pursuit from occurring. Further, in reviewing the officer's reports and actions when deciding to stop the suspected vehicles, it appears that they were using the appropriate techniques and decision making skills when deciding to initiate a stop or waiting for backup.

In all cases, the vehicles were committing common traffic violations and there was no known information at the time of the decision to stop that would cause the officer concern to wait for other units to stage or be in the area prior to making the stop.

Policy Compliance:

All reported incidents in 2017 were within compliance of our General Order (GO 4104) Pursuits. Our policy remains effective in the safe conclusion of pursuit related incidents.

Decision Making:

It would appear 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 or was or how it was terminated, that 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 timeliness of the reporting.

Conclusions:

Officers are responding appropriately when faced with pursuit situations and, by all accounts, 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 why. The fact that the pursuit policy itself is drafted to a standard of reasonableness also plays a role.

In reviewing this year's reports and previous year's reports, it shows that officers are making sound decisions in regards to pursuits. It further shows that backup officers are deploying appropriately to assist in ensuring a successful resolution to a pursuit.

PURSUIT REPORT

Date:
Time Pursuit Reported:
Day of Week:
Location Where Pursuit Began:
Location Where Pursuit Ended:
Approximate distance traveled:
Initial Basis of Pursuit:
This report submitted by:

Road Conditions:
Pavement: Dry Wet Ice Snow
Traffic: Light Medium Heavy
Weather: Rain Snow Ice Fog Clear Cloudy

Call Number:
Offense Number, and/or:
Arrest Number, and/or:
Accident Number (if any):

Officer Initiating Pursuit:
On-Duty Supervisor:
Other Officers Involved in Pursuit:

Pursuit was terminated (check the most appropriate response)
 At the discretion of the pursuing officer.
 At the discretion of the supervisor.
 When suspect vehicle stopped.
 When pursuing officer lost sight of suspect vehicle.
 Pursuit began and continued into another jurisdiction.
 When suspect vehicle crashed.
 When suspect vehicle ran over tire deflation device.
 Other (explain)

Suspect Data (check the most appropriate response):
 Suspect/Operator known to police when pursuit began.
 Suspect/Operator unidentified.
 Suspect developed not proven.
 Investigation pending.
 Suspect/Operator arrested at conclusion of pursuit.

If suspect was arrested list offenses charged.

List any damage to any vehicle or other property and any injury to any person that occurred as a result of this pursuit.

SECTION II – CRUISER ACCIDENTS:

This section contains data compiled from Keene Police Department collision reports (KPD Safety Report, commonly referred to G1's) involving police cruisers and unmarked police vehicles, covering the time period January 2017 through December 2017.

Number of Cruiser Involved Collisions:

Keene Police cruisers and unmarked vehicles were involved in 9 collisions during CY 2017. This number is down from 13 from CY2016. Furthermore, all of the nine collisions were very minor in nature and did not require the city owned vehicle to be taken out of service.

This year showed that eight of the nine collisions involved marked cruisers and only one collision involved an unmarked staff car that was the victim of a hit and run accident while parked.

Actions Being Performed By Officers at Time of Collision:

2/17/17 – An officer was patrolling on Main Street. At the time, he was following another vehicle when it stopped abruptly for pedestrians in the crosswalk. The officer did not have time to stop for the stopped vehicle and rear ended it. There was no injury or damage to either vehicle.

2/23/17 – An officer was leaving the station when he was backed into by a vehicle leaving a parking spot. The accident was the fault of the other driver. There was no damage to either vehicle and no injury to either operator.

2/25/17 – An officer was stopped at a crosswalk waiting for pedestrians to cross the road when he was struck from behind by another driver. The cruiser sustained a scratch on the bumper and other other vehicle had no damage. No injury to either operator.

4/9/17 – An officer arrived at a routine call for service. While attempting to pull off the roadway, the officer struck the granite curbing and damaged the cruiser tire.

6/17/17 – An officer was leaving the parking lot of the Monadnock Co-op. As he was backing out of the lot, he struck the curbing and damaged the cruiser tire.

7/12/17 – When arriving at a minor motor vehicle accident, an officer struck the curbing while pulling off the roadway damaging the front and rear driver side tires.

10/16/17 – Members of the department were conducting driver training at the Keene Airport. Part of this training was to familiarize officers with the Department's Bearcat vehicle. During this time, one of the officer's attending the training moved the Bearcat to set up for another driving exercise and struck one of the taxiway markers. There was minor damage to the marker and no damage to the city vehicle.

10/24/17 – An unmarked staff car was parked unoccupied at Keene State College for a meeting. It was later found that this vehicle was a victim of a hit a run accident during this time. The driver of the other vehicle was identified and charged.

11/13/17 – An officer was on routine patrol, exiting a business parking lot when he struck the granite curbing and damaged a tire.

Weather:

It would appear that inclement weather did not have a factor in any of this year's reported incidents.

Policy Compliance

There have been no deviations from the General Order governing Operation of Police Vehicles (GO4103A). It is the policy of this Department to 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 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 2017 mileage figures for the Department's fleet, as provided by the City's fleet services division:

Total miles driven by all police department vehicles - 306,408 miles
Total miles driven by marked police cruisers only - 264,768 miles

This year showed that all of the collisions reported were minor in nature, with most at slow or idle speeds. This is important to note due to the fact that vehicles did not require to be taken out of service until repairs could be made. It should also be noted that no accidents occurred during stressful or emergency driving situations.

SECTION III – 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:

This year, the department fielded one complaint of a cruiser's operation during regular patrol duties. This complaint was that a cruiser was driving recklessly and speeding during a code response on Winchester Street to a fight/disturbance call.

Methods of Reporting:

This complaint was phoned into the station by the complainant and the supervisor met him in person later that night

Location/Date/Time of Complaints:

This complaint was called in on October 28th at approximately 2300hrs. It was reported to have occurred on Winchester Street through the college area.

Complaint Disposition:

The initial basis of this complaint was closed as "Unfounded" for the reckless driving. However, while investigating this incident, the supervisor noted a minor internal policy violation that was sustained with the officer counseled.

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 citizenry.

- 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 driving training annually. In speaking with the head of our city's fleet services, this training, coupled with the improved all-wheel drive powertrain platform of our cruisers have contributed significantly to the low number and severity of our accidents and vehicle repairs overall.
- Continue to review available options in regards to pursuit termination tools and stay on top of the leading technology as it becomes available.