



## **SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE**

**TO:** Jo Custead, Chairperson  
Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Troy Cooper  
Office of the Chief

**DATE:** 2022 May 09

**SUBJECT:** Final Review – 2021 Evade Police Incidents

**FILE NO.:** 10,040

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### **ISSUE:**

Criminal and non-criminal evade police incidents/pursuits create special concerns for police agencies due to the risk to the public, persons, and the officers involved. The reasons for evade police incidents vary from violent criminal acts, such as home invasions, robberies, and assaults to property offences, including possession of stolen vehicles, as well as impaired driving. The goal of the Evade Police Review Committee is to ensure all evade police events are conducted in a manner as safe as possible, lawful, and in line with the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) Policy and Procedure.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That this report is received as information.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

This report focuses on the core theme of Crime and Safety, with specific attention to maintaining core-policing operations and addresses community concerns that affect public safety.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Evade Police Review Committee consists of four senior members of the SPS. Three of the members are of the rank of Staff Sergeant and the Committee is chaired by an Inspector that oversees the Investigative Services Division. All Committee members work under the umbrella of Criminal Investigations, separated from operational Patrol oversight, where the vast majority of evade police incidents originate. The separation from Patrol is viewed as a benefit, providing the Committee with objective oversight, critical evaluation, and constructive feedback.

## **“PUBLIC AGENDA”**

The Committee reviews every pursuit incident to evaluate police officer conduct in terms of the legal authority, SPS Policy and Procedure, and public safety. The Committee reviews supervision, communication, and accountability involved in these incidents and where required will make recommendations. SPS Policy is consistent with provincially mandated guidelines and is designed to provide supervisory accountability while balancing public safety with effective law enforcement.

When an officer becomes engaged in an evade police incident, outside of the initial incident response, a reporting mechanism is triggered where the monitoring Sergeant initiates an Evade Police/Use of Force form. This form is completed by the Sergeant in charge of the incident, the Sergeant in charge of the Communications Section, and the Staff Sergeant (Watch Commander) in charge of the shift. The supervising Staff Sergeant reviews the incident for both completeness and adherence to Policy and Procedure. Should any major or minor violations occur, it is addressed at the time.

Upon completion, the form is forwarded to the Inspector in charge of the Investigative Services Division who ensures it is complete and assigns it to one of three Committee Staff Sergeants for final review. After final review, including viewing in-car cameras, gps data, occurrence reports, and radio communication, the evaluating Staff Sergeant submits a memorandum to the Inspector with recommendations. The recommendations are reviewed by the Inspector who designates a date for the Committee to meet and collectively review all evade police incident recommendations. Once an incident is presented to the Committee; which includes a representative member from the Saskatoon Police Association, the file is either concluded, or when deemed necessary, the involved officers are given coaching, advice, training, or discipline. Any discipline is referred to the Chief of Police for evaluation.

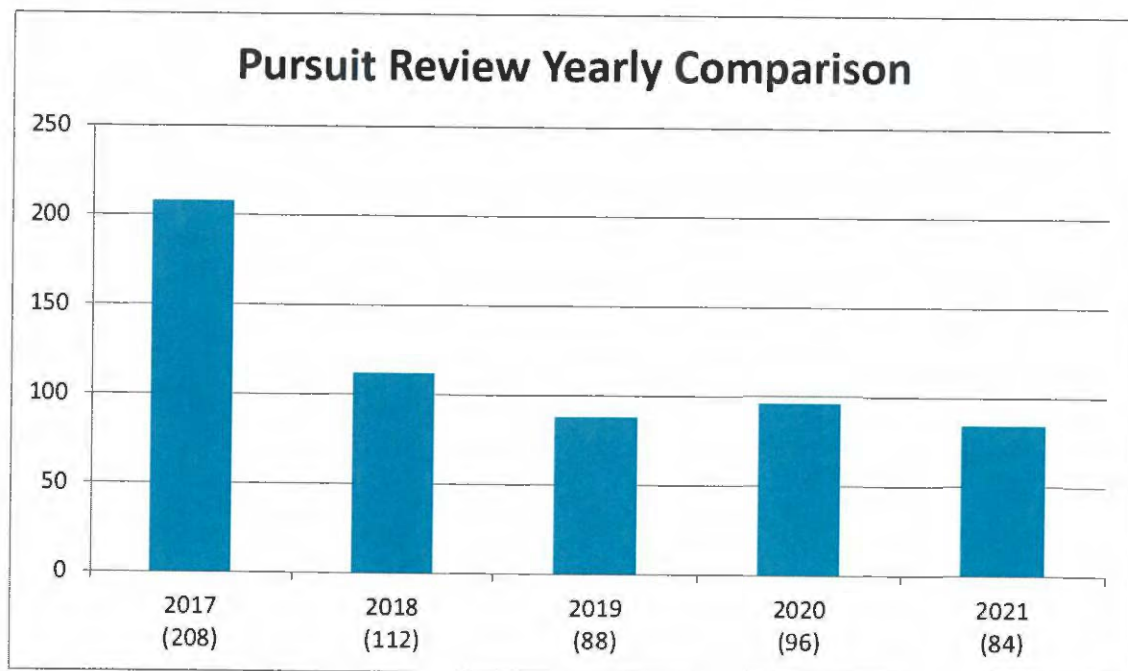
In 2021 there were no files requiring review by the Professional Standards Division to be forwarded to the Chief of Police. There were a total of 25 policy violations which were all relatively minor in nature, compared with 18 policy violations in 2020, and 31 in 2019. The officers involved were provided coaching or further training in response to these infractions.

### **Comparison of 2021 to 2020 Evade Police Incidents**

<b>Pursuits</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Number of Pursuits	84	96
Pursuits in the City	84	95
Average time in City Pursuit	3 minutes 32 seconds	2 minute 59 seconds
Pursuits Leaving City	12	5
Average time of Pursuit leaving the City	20 minutes 36 seconds	30 minutes 1 seconds
Pursuits Aborted	61	52

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Arrests	79	95
Injuries	17	7
Injury breakdown	Police (1), Suspect (15), Civilian (1)	Police (0), Suspect (7), Civilian (0)
Damaged Vehicles	52	37
Damage breakdown	Police (17), Suspect (33), Civilian (2)	Police (5), Suspect (25), Civilian (7)
ASU Assistance	17	24
Canine Assistance	37	27
Confirmed Stolen Vehicles	34	41
Policy Violations	25	18
Professional Standards Investigations	0	0



As illustrated above, there was a 13% decrease in pursuits in 2021 as compared to 2020. Of note, 41% of all pursuit incidents involved a stolen vehicle, which is a decrease from 2020 wherein there was a total of 43%. Stolen vehicles remain a significant driver overall of evade police incidents.

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When reviewing the 6-year pursuit activity breakdown, an overall decrease is noted. The years 2016-2018 averaged 158 pursuits, compared to 88 in 2019, and 96 in 2020. In 2021, there were 84 pursuits, a decrease of 46% compared to the 2016-2018 average of 158 pursuits, and a slight decrease from 2020. Not captured in the above information were 87 incidents in 2021 where officers initiate a vehicle stop for offences concerning a municipal bylaw, a provincial statute, or regulation where the suspect vehicle failed to stop, the officer disengaged, and no pursuit ensued. Of the 84 pursuits, either the officer involved or a supervisor terminated 61.

The engagement of an evade incident by the police requires a criminal code threshold had been met. Examples include impaired drivers, stolen vehicles, and known operators wanted for criminal code offences/warrants, and fleeing the scene of a criminal act. In all cases, however, pursuits are to be aborted when the concern for the safety of the public, offender, or the police exceeds the need to apprehend the suspected criminal. Pursuits can be self-terminated by the originating officer or at the discretion of a supervisor.

The average 2021 pursuit time within the city marked a duration increase at 3 minutes and 32 seconds, compared with the 2020 incident time of 2 minutes and 59 seconds. The Air Support Unit (ASU) assisted in 17 incidents for an average time of 25 minutes. Of note, ASU's assistance in the 17 incidents resulted in 25 arrests of suspects directly engaged in the incident.

A few in-town incidents pushed the overall evade duration time up, driven specific incidents where officers were permitted to continue the evade activity beyond normal time parameters due to slow speeds coupled with time of day and overall traffic conditions. It should be noted that the majority of evade incidents are aborted due to public safety concerns (73%). The vast amount of SPS officers show excellent judgment, not only with self-terminating incidents when the need for apprehension is outweighed by safety concerns but in overall approach and tactics.

As a general rule, evade incidents leaving the city limits are aborted by the officers involved or their supervisor, depending on the offence related circumstances. In the majority of incidents leaving the city, ASU is engaged as the primary unit monitoring the suspect vehicle from a distance, undetected. Patrol units on the ground are directed as required by ASU until the suspect has stopped, or until the RCMP is in a position to assume responsibility for the incident.

There were 52 vehicles with reported damage resulting from an evade police incident, 33 of which were damaged to suspect vehicles, generally limited to tire damage caused by tire deflation devices that were used to safely conclude the incident. There were 17 incidents where a police vehicle was damaged, most of which were a result of a low-speed contact. Of note, five occurrences were responsible for 14 of the 17 police vehicle damage reports. The occurrences included events where the suspect either rammed a police vehicle in an attempt to flee or drove through areas not suitable for vehicle traffic. Unrelated civilian vehicles were damaged in two incidents, at low speeds, parked, and unoccupied.

There was one injury reported in 2021 to a civilian. The event relates to a publicized occurrence where four police vehicles were damaged. The lone subject stole two separate vehicles, one of which was a cubed van. The cubed van ultimately struck a house in the 800 block of Ave S North. An occupant in the basement suite suffered minor injuries when the kitchen cabinetry fell

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from the wall onto the resident after the house was struck. Further details of the event are listed below in the SPS Media Release:

- *Dangerous Driving/Evade Police/Stolen Auto:*

*September 21, 2021 12:47 PM*

*In addition to the information in the previous release, a second vehicle was involved in this incident.*

*At the time he returned to the location where the first vehicle, a Ford Escape, was stolen, the suspect abandoned that vehicle and was reported to have stolen a second one. A GMC cube van was stolen and was the vehicle involved in the collisions with police vehicles and the home.*

**Release 2021-0511**

*September 21, 2021 11:46 AM*

*A 27 year old Saskatoon man is in custody following an incident in which the driver of a stolen vehicle refused to stop for police.*

*At approximately 7:40 p.m., September 20, 2021, Police received a report that a vehicle had been stolen from a business in the 2600 block of Avenue C North. The Ford Escape SUV was equipped with GPS which allowed officers to locate it driving near 33rd Street and Junor Avenue. A tire deflation device was deployed but was not successful. The stolen vehicle then made it's way to Confederation Drive, while being driven erratically. The vehicle then traveled to Clancy Drive before leaving the road and entering a park. It then traveled on Fairlight Drive where another tire deflation device was used and was successful in disabling two tires. The driver continued driving and made his way back to the location on Avenue C where the vehicle was stolen from. It then left the location where a third tire deflation device was successfully deployed. The suspect vehicle struck two police vehicles and then a third before colliding with a house in the 800 block of Avenue S North.*

*The suspect was found to be in possession of a knife and was brought into custody. He is now facing charges of Possession of Stolen Property, Assaulting a Police Officer x 4, Dangerous Driving, Theft, and breach of court conditions.*

*No one was seriously injured. (Occurrence Number: 21-100782)*

As commented on earlier in this report, stolen vehicles continue to be an aggravating factor in evade police incidents. A larger percentage of incidents involve a stolen vehicle, 40% in 2021, which is a decrease from 43% reported in 2020. Annually, SPS provides messaging and education campaigns to the public, focusing on not leaving keys in vehicles, or leaving vehicles running and unattended.

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### **CONCLUSION:**

In the collective view of the Evade Police Committee, officers are educated and extremely aware of their role and responsibilities during evade incidents. The officers are mindful of the high standard and continuous engagement review held by this Committee. The safety of the public, the suspect, as well as members of the SPS will continue to be our highest priority when balancing the need to apprehend offenders.

**Written by:** **James Oliver**  
**Inspector, Investigative Services Division**

**Approved by:** **Patrick Nogier**  
**Superintendent, Criminal Investigations**

**Randy Huisman**  
**Deputy Chief, Operations**



**Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Troy Cooper**  
**Chief of Police**

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**May 9, 2022**