



2024 Annual Fail to Stop Review and Analysis

Lethbridge Police Service
Support Services Section

Submitted by Staff Sergeant Meyers
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1.0 Introduction

Pursuits create a risk to the police officer, offender and the general public due to the dynamic nature of the event. In order to mitigate this risk, it is important to have policies and training in place that address vehicles that fail to stop for police and regulate the rules around preventing and initiating a pursuit. The trend for data continually shows Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) members rarely engage in pursuits for a number of factors including public risk, seriousness of the offence, and risk to the subject and officers. More commonly the data shows our members are involved with vehicles that simply fail to stop and flee from police. In 2024 the pinning technique again showed to be an invaluable tool to proactively prevent a Fail to Stop or pursuit from occurring.

LPS policy outlines that pursuits will only be initiated as a last resort and when all other alternatives are unavailable or unsatisfactory. The police officer involved must have reasonable grounds to believe that the seriousness of the offence and the necessity of immediate apprehension outweigh the level of danger created by the pursuit to those involved and the public. Public safety must prevail when deciding to engage in a pursuit and when considering whether to continue or terminate a pursuit. In accordance with these strict policies, LPS rarely engages in pursuits and officers need to weigh the risk to the public, officers, and subject vehicle drivers. In 2024, LPS engaged in two pursuits apprehending offenders in both circumstances.

It is also important to review incidents where drivers have failed to stop for police (no pursuit initiated) to determine if police action was appropriate and if there were any policy breaches identified.

This annual report evaluates statistical trends to determine if there are areas of concern that should be addressed. This includes determining the initial reason for initiating a VIT or pursuit, the driver's actions, and the Police Officer's response.

This review encompasses all Fail to Stop reports submitted for 2024. A Fail to Stop report is categorized into three different event/incident types summarized below from lowest to highest risk:

- 1. Fail to Stop:** A Fail to Stop occurs when a Police Officer attempts to stop or follows a vehicle with the intent to stop or identify the vehicle or driver, and the driver, being aware of police actions, initiates evasive action or ignores directions to stop/avoid apprehension, and the Police Officer *terminates immediately*.
- 2. Vehicle Intervention Technique (VIT):** A maneuver used by an officer that is intended to *prevent* a subject from fleeing, or to prevent or terminate a pursuit.
- 3. Pursuit:** When a Police Officer attempts to stop or follows a vehicle with the intent to stop or identify the vehicle or driver, and the driver, being aware of police actions, initiates evasive action or ignores directions to stop/avoid apprehension. The moment a Police Officer *makes the decision to continue to attempt* to stop the vehicle or to continue following rather than terminating immediately, a police pursuit has begun.

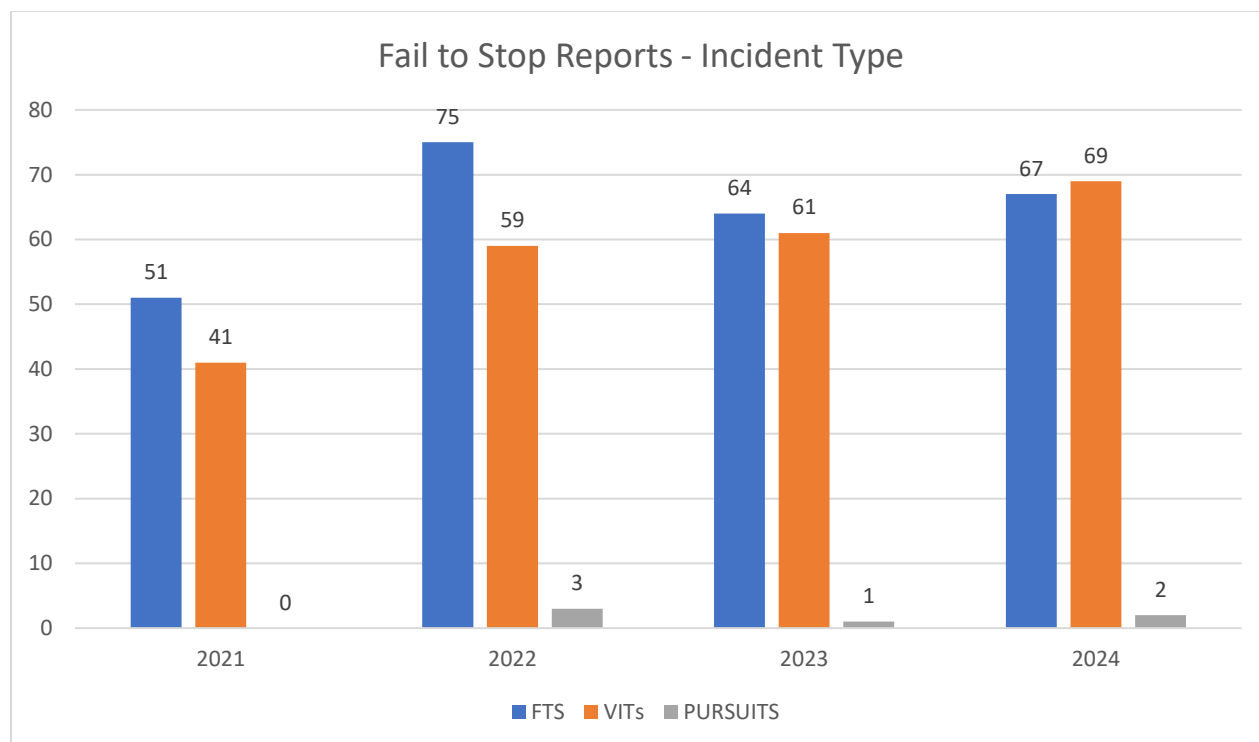
The following analysis will speak to Fail to Stop reports (inclusive of all three event categories), then the three categories will be individually reviewed later in the document.

2.0 Overall Statistics

In 2024 there were a total of 138 reported events categorized as follows:

- Fail to stop (no pursuit) – 67
- Vehicle Intervention Technique – 69
- Pursuit – 2

A four-year data trend of Fail to Stop events shows relatively consistent reporting numbers over the past three years, with VIT showing a steady increase.



3.0 Fail to Stop Statistics

There was a total of 67 incidents where members tried to stop a vehicle, the vehicle failed to stop, fled the scene, and members terminated their attempt to stop by parking the police vehicle and advising their supervisor via radio. No significant trends or issues were observed with the submission of these reports. Officers are recognizing the need to terminate without the need for supervisory direction. Officers attempting to pull over a subject vehicle for a violation or offence are proactively recognizing when the stop does not meet the threshold to justify a pursuit. (I.e. Provincial Offences, stolen vehicles, risk to public etc.)

The 67 Fail to Stop incidents in 2024 is consistent with numbers of 2023 (64 were reported in 2023). However, there was noted reduction in the number of traffic stops conducted by officers in 2024. The reduced number of traffic stops caused the percentage of fail to stop events vs traffic stops to increase from 1.0% in 2023 to 1.4% in 2024. Traffic stop numbers have continued to see a decline over the past three years. The cause for this is unknown but with increased officers hired over the course of 2024 it will be tracked to see if traffic stops numbers increase in 2025 with the increased staffing numbers.

YEAR	# of Traffic Stops	# of Fail to stop incidents	% of FTS vs T-stops
2020	9677	80	0.8%
2021	6916	51	0.7%
2022	7228	75	1.0%
2023	6009	64	1.0%
2024	4762	67	1.4%

The percentage of subjects who fail to stop for police continues to be close to 1%. Overall, almost 99% of vehicles still stop for Police Officers.

4.0 Vehicle Intervention Techniques (VIT)

Vehicle intervention techniques include all preventative actions such as Stop Sticks, pinning, boxing in, funnel roadblocks, ramming, pitting and blockades. In 2024 there were a total of 69 Vehicle Intervention Techniques Applied. They were categorized as follows:

- Pinning – 63
- Stop stick – 4 (2 of these events also included a PIN)
- Box In – 1
- Police Immobilization Technique (PIT) - 1

In the review of all VIT events only one was unsuccessful in stopping or preventing the subject vehicle from fleeing. This event was file number 24055594 where members of the criminal investigative section had attempted to PIN the vehicle of a subject wanted for numerous offences. This subject was a highly motivated offender who broke containment of the PIN. An operational review of this event was completed where several training issues were identified, first and foremost was an improper application of the PIN which allowed for the offender to escape. All matters in the operational review were addressed with training and debrief and no policy breaches were identified during the review. The lone PIT event will be addressed in the pursuit section of this report.

Overall 98% of VITs executed by LPS were successfully applied and resulted in the suspect vehicle being immobilized.

A summary of reasons for application of a VIT are listed below:

REASON FOR VIT	# of VITs
Stolen Vehicle and/or License Plate	19
Suspected Impaired Driver	33

Wanted (DV, CDSA, Dangerous Dr, Suspended Dr, etc.)	16
Mental Health	1

*When impaired and another reason are both listed for stop the event is counted within the additional reason for stop. Suspected impaired driver events are solely for that reason.

5.0 Pursuits

There were two pursuits in 2024, both matters were subject to operational reviews as per LPS policy.

The first pursuit was for file 24012780 where officers responded to a break and enter in progress where the subjects were reported to be armed with firearms. Upon arrival the officers observed the subjects leaving the scene in a vehicle and a traffic stop was initiated in which the subjects fled. Given the factors presented to officers a pursuit was initiated and approved by the supervisor. Road conditions, vehicle traffic and time of day supported this decision and at the beginning of the pursuit the subjects operated their vehicle in a safe manner. After a brief period of pursuit, the subject vehicle accelerated rapidly and conditions for public safety outweighed the continued pursuit of the vehicle and the pursuit was terminated by the pursuing officer. An operational review confirmed the majority of the pursuit was in compliance with the exception being the initial airing of information by the pursuing officer missing some details. These details were obtained by the supervising officer during their evaluation and approval of the pursuit. This deficiency in the initial airing information was addressed at a training level with the officer.

The second pursuit was for file 24022446 where officers were dealing with a subject who committed a carjacking in front of them which resulted in pursuit occurring. This pursuit occurred for several minutes and involved the subject vehicle travelling the wrong way on a divided highway multiple times and attempting to ram civilian vehicles. Ultimately officers ended the pursuit by completing a Police Immobilization Technique (PIT) on the subject vehicle. The PIT was successful in stopping the subject vehicle but caused a rollover of the police vehicle and significant damage to both vehicles. An operational review of that event was conducted and identified several areas of concern and room for improvement. These included the initial airing of information on the pursuit, pursuit entering a divided roadway against the flow of traffic, supervisor failing to remain stationary while managing the pursuit and application of the PIT at the top acceptable speed. In the end the majority of the matters were address through remedial training/debriefs while the managing supervisor was issued a written counselling for their decisions/actions.

6.0 Damages

In some cases, the application of VIT resulted minor damages to subject and police vehicles are noted. These minor damages include small dents and paint scratches. There was one VIT event that resulted in major damage to an LPS vehicle which was the failed VIT in file 24055594. The two LPS vehicles sustained a total of \$11,500.00 damage, however LPS is only responsible to pay for the GST on those repairs due to insurance covered.

The PIT maneuver in file 24022446 resulted in significant damage to the patrol vehicle which resulted in it being deemed no longer roadworthy and wrote off by the insurance company. LPS incurred a total cost of a \$5000 deductible in that matter.

The cost of damages to subject vehicles is not captured in LPS reporting however minor damage was noted in 11 events and major damage in two events (the failed VIT and PIT execution). Of the four stop stick events, three resulted in damage to the subject vehicle's tires while in the fourth event the stop sticks were only placed near the subject vehicle but did not come into contact with the tires. The stop stick tire deflation events were classified as minor damage and included in the 11 events.

7.0 Injuries

No injuries were reported to officers or subjects during the VIT or pursuits. Even with the rollover event all parties were medically cleared at hospital with no injuries reported.

8.0 Collisions

No collision reports were submitted in 2024.

Damages resulting from VIT applications are not considered motor vehicle collisions. Incident reports are submitted in the case of any damages or injuries to members, subject vehicle occupants, or third parties. Damage occurring during police-initiated contact is not considered a collision.

9.0 Policy

Two events were identified as non-compliant with some portion of LPS policy, these were both of the pursuit events in 2024. In the first pursuit the failure to communicate all required information at the onset of the pursuit was a breach of LPS policy and addressed through training. In the second pursuit, again the initial communication of information was identified as a policy breach and addressed through training.

Additionally, in that event the supervisor was identified as breaching policy on two points which have already been spoken to.

10.0 Training

There was no service wide training provided on emergency vehicle operation, VIT or pursuits in 2024. Training in these areas is conducted every three years, last occurring in 2022. The next service wide training in emergency vehicle operations will occur in 2025.

Training in emergency vehicle operation and VIT occurred for two new cadet classes, along with one experienced officer class.

There was one initial advanced level II vehicle operator course completed in 2024 with seven members trained.

There was one advanced level II vehicle operator recertification conducted in 2024.

Pursuit policy for LPS members is assigned yearly on Power DMS for review by officers.

11.0 Equipment

No equipment issues were noted in 2024.

12.0 Recommendations

The 2023 annual report outlined recommendations for 2024.

Long-Term Recommendations:

1. Partner with the Lethbridge Polytechnic to complete the EVOC driving simulator project (Ongoing).
 - Software and hardware delays experienced by Lethbridge Polytechnic have pushed back completion of the project to April 2025.

Short Term Recommendations

From 2023 - The Property Crime Unit (PCU) has recently become outfitted with vehicles capable of executing Level II VIT maneuvers. In response to this, it would be prudent to have members of PCU take part in the Level II course this upcoming year. This recommendation will be communicated to the supervisors of that area.

- Unfortunately, due to staffing challenges this was not achieved in 2024 and will be carried over to 2025.

New recommendations

1. It was identified in the two pursuits that the initial communication of information on a pursuit had not been managed properly by responding officers. This matter will be brought forward during service wide training in 2025.
2. It was noted that during the review of events, LPS pursuit policy is poorly organized with information directly applicable to officers located later on in the policy. The EVOC instructors have been tasked with completing a policy review in 2025.

13.0 Conclusion

As identified in this annual review, LPS officers continue to make proper, safe and effective decisions in relation to fail to stop and vehicle intervention techniques. VIT continued to see great success in their application with a 98% success rate contributing to increased public safety.

The two pursuits executed by LPS in 2024 show room for improvement and will be addressed through individual and service wide training in 2025.

Overall the conduct of officers in 2024 showed continued dedication and professionalism in the area of fail to stop, VIT and pursuit management.