

2022 Annual Review of Use of Force & Vehicle Pursuit Incidents

Use of Force Review

The Chester Police Department provides law enforcement services to the Township of Chester and the Borough of Chester. The Department is currently staffed by 23 full-time sworn officers and 2 part-time Special Law Enforcement Officer- Class II officers, serving as School Resource Officers (SROs). The Department patrols approximately 29 square miles, serves over 9,000 residents within Chester Township and Chester Borough and dispatch services are provided by the Morris County Communications Center.

During 2022, the Chester Police Department generated a total 29,304 incidents, recorded five Use of Force reports, and received zero complaints of excessive force. After subtracting those incidents wherein officer-to-person contact was not likely to occur, the remaining incidents to likely result in officer-to-person contact totaled 4,088 incidents. Using this adjusted total, the percentage incidents involving the show or use of force equals .12%.

All Use of Force incidents in 2022 involved both male and female subjects, with the five recorded reports being generated during three separate incidents. Of the three incidents, force was used against a Hispanic male once, once against an Asian male and once against a Caucasian female. One of the incidents occurred during the arrest of a subject, one occurred during a PES medical call, and one occurred while investigating a suspicious subject, possibly armed with a firearm. Alcohol/drug use was involved in two of the three incidents.

This review consisted of the analytical reports from the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal (Benchmark), a review of Body Worn Camera (BWC), Mobile Video Recorder (MVR) files, Records Management System (RMS) files and analysis of whether the uses of force were based on any discriminatory factors. Based on the review of these incidents, the use of force by officers of this agency was found to be justified and in accordance with established guidelines. In furtherance, there is nothing to suggest that any changes to our departmental structure, policies, training, or equipment is required or appropriate.

Vehicle Pursuit Review

During 2022, the Chester Police Department conducted 2,586 motor vehicle enforcement stops and issued 936 traffic and parking citations. During 2022, we had single-officer, motor vehicle pursuit, following the attempted burglary of an occupied residence. The suspect vehicle was described as a black BMW sedan, which had left the residence and was last seen heading towards E. Main Street (CR513). At approximately 0515 hours and while patrolling the area, the uniformed shift supervisor, who was operating a marked patrol car, observed a black BMW sedan traveling southbound on U.S. Highway 206 at a high rate of speed and overtaking other southbound vehicles. The officer proceeded south on U.S. Highway 206 and while closing the distance, observed the sedan overtake a tractor trailer in a single-lane, no-passing zone. Upon observing the sedan overtake the tractor trailer, the officer activated his overhead lights, audible siren, and advised Dispatch that he was in pursuit of the vehicle. Just prior to reaching the U.S. Highway 206/Interstate 287 interchange in Bedminster Township, the officer was able to safely close between himself and the sedan, at which time he observed what appeared to be either New York or Virginia plates on the sedan. The pursuit continued onto Interstate 287 South and was

terminated at approximately 0520 hours when the sedan entered the exit ramp for Interstate 78 East. The officer advised Dispatch that the pursuit was terminated, and the New Jersey State Police were notified of the vehicle's last known location and direction of travel.

This review consisted of the analytical reports from the Attorney General's Use of Force Reporting Portal (Benchmark), a review of Body Worn Camera (BWC), Mobile Video Recorder (MVR) files, Records Management System (RMS) files and an analysis of whether the pursuit was based on any discriminatory factors. During the review of this incident, the officer's decision to initiate the pursuit was found to be justified, as the sedan was possibly involved in a violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:18-2, a crime of the third degree. The pursuit was short in duration, the weather was clear, the roadway surface conditions were dry, traffic was light, no pedestrians were present, and the officer exercised due caution and circumspection, while following all established guidelines. Based upon this review, there is nothing to suggest that any changes to our departmental structure, policies, training, or equipment is required or appropriate.