

TABLE 2

Characteristics of Surveyed Police Agencies  
(N = 35 responding agencies)

<u>Agency Type</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
State Police	1	2.9%
County Sheriff's Depts.	4	11.4%
County Sheriff's Police	4	11.4%
Municipal Police	22	62.9%
Campus Police	4	11.4%
<u>Size Category</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1-10 Sworn Officers	3	8.6%
11-30 " "	8	22.9%
31-50 " "	5	14.3%
51-100 " "	10	28.6%
101-300 " "	7	20.0%
301-1000 " "	1	2.9%
<u>Rural/Urban Area</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Urban	18	51.4%
Rural	17	48.6%
<u>Population of Service Area</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
up to 20,000	9	29.7%
21,000-99,000	17	48.6%
100,000-999,000	7	20.0%
1 million and over	2	5.7%
<u>Geographic Area</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
less than 10 sq.mi.	12	34.3%
10-100 sq.mi.	14	40.0%
101-1000 sq.mi.	7	20.0%
over 1000 sq.mi.	2	5.7%
<u>Service Orientation</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Crime Control	21	60.0%
50/50 Mixture	8	22.9%
Social Service	6	17.2%
<u>Military Structure</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
NO	1	2.9%
YES	34	97.1%

table, most of the departments surveyed are municipal-level agencies (22 out of 35 responding agencies). Two additional notes about the types of agencies are necessary. One is that county-level police were divided into two categories--county sheriff's offices and county police departments. This distinction reflects different and very distinct organizational structures and operating styles. County police departments are located almost entirely in urban counties; county sheriff's offices are located in more rural areas. However, because there are few of each type, they may be combined into a single county-agency category in some instances. The second note is that the Illinois State Police (ISP) were listed and counted as one agency. In fact, the administrative survey was completed at ISP headquarters in Springfield by command staff personnel. However, the officer survey actively involved four separate State Police districts, each larger in terms of personnel and geographic coverage than most large police departments.

Table 2 also shows the distribution of agencies by their organizational sizes (measured by the total number of sworn personnel in each). As already mentioned, the survey includes fewer small departments and more medium-large departments than is characteristic of Illinois statewide. The most frequent agency size in this study involves between 51 and 100 full-time officers (about 29% of the responding agencies); in contrast, approximately 4% of the actual departments in Illinois fall in that size category. As indicated above, it is in larger departments that pursuit policy is likely to be well-developed

and a more essential part of the standard operating procedure; also record-keeping should be more explicit. We included more of these departments to insure a wider sampling of such policies and more complete data. We recognize that agency size must be taken into account in formulating an overall picture. Looking at pursuits without regard for agency size could lead to very spurious findings, since our field interviews suggest that the practices of smaller departments are widely variable and almost entirely undocumented in the available research. It is entirely possible that officers working for the smallest departments, unassisted by formal written policy, have the highest rates of involvement (per officer) in police vehicular pursuits. But, due to the paucity of adequate data, we cannot verify or disconfirm this prediction. To complete the picture, further studies of the pursuit phenomenon will need to adequately address the problem of missing information for very small police departments.

The police agencies in the survey are fairly evenly divided between rural and urban areas (as characterized by administrative respondents in the telephone survey). While departments were forced to describe themselves in an urban rural dichotomy, this classification is useful for describing only some of the agencies, having somewhat different meanings in different contexts. County sheriff's departments/police are commonly perceived as serving rural areas. While this may generally be true, consider for example, Sheriff's departments/police in urbanized counties or state police whose areas of jurisdiction have large arterial highways/freeways running through major

metropolitan areas. In addition, some municipal departments perceived themselves as serving an urban environment while being located in traditionally and predominantly rural counties (populations under 100,000). These types of rural/urban labels are meaningful only when comparing types of departments by areas of jurisdiction related to pursuits; for example, comparing rural county agencies with other rural county agencies and urbanized county agencies with other urbanized county agencies.

The surveyed agencies are located in areas of widely varying population sizes and densities; however, the largest number of departments are located in moderately populated areas with between 20,000 and 100,000 persons. The departments also involve a wide variety of different size areas of service coverage, ranging from less than three square miles (for a small municipal department) to over 56,000 square miles (for the State Police). The wide variety of population and geographic coverages by agencies mean that they cannot be described very accurately by a simple rural-urban dichotomy. Police departments are situated in a multitude of physical and demographic contexts that differentially affect their policies and practices.

Departments in the survey were also categorized according to their organizational structure and orientation using answers provided by administrators on the telephone interview:

Departments were categorized dichotomously according to whether they employed the traditional paramilitary rank hierarchy, the corresponding organizational structure of communication, authority, and decision-making, with adherence to a strict chain

of command. While the figures in the table indicate the overwhelming dominance (97%) of the traditional paramilitary model, the follow-up telephone interview revealed that several departments were considering dismantling their paramilitary organizational structure or already were in the process of doing so. However, at the time of the survey, only one police agency had developed a nonmilitarized structure, done in response to the changing mission of that agency as perceived by the chief administrator.

Finally, agencies were also categorized according to their Service-Enforcement orientation, reflecting their general orientation with respect to departmental mission. As one question on the follow-up telephone interview, each department was placed by the administrative respondent on a five point Likert Scale ranging from solely Crime Control (1) to solely Service-oriented (5), with a 50/50 Mixture being the midpoint (3). For intelligibility and simplicity, the five categories were collapsed to a three point scale. As Table 2 shows, the vast majority of police agencies perceived their primary mission as law enforcement/crime control while less than a fifth (17.2%) viewed their primary role as social service.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY: FORMAL POLICY FINDINGS**

Examining the sample of agencies just described, what kinds of vehicle pursuit policies and procedures are used within Illinois police departments? Are there substantial variations or divergences across the different departments? The universal importance of formal and explicit organizational policy for

police work is reflected in the overwhelming reports of agencies in our sample (34 of the 35 responding) that they had formal policies to shape departmental practices. Only one department in our sample reported having no generalized written formal policy. However, the policies supplied by departments showed wide variation in their content, specificity, and comprehensiveness. Further, few administrators (representing 13 agencies or 37% of those surveyed) indicated that they had a clearly articulated mission statement for their department listing its goals and functions; 40% (14) of the agencies responded "no" to this question and 23% (8) more were uncertain about it. Ostensibly, formal policy development regarding proper police procedures will be difficult to develop without some specific indication of what the agency is supposed to accomplish.

**Pursuit Policies.** Regarding formal written policy specifically relating to vehicular pursuits, only 74% of the survey agencies indicated they had such policy, while slightly over one-fourth did not. Again, considerable variation was shown in the explicitness and content of such policies. For instance, only about half (51%) of responding departments attempted to define explicitly what constitutes a "pursuit" within their policy. To differentiate the content of pursuit policies, departments (i.e., those reporting some formal policy regarding pursuits) were further categorized into three widely described types (following Fennessy and Joscelyn, 1972): Discretionary (allows individual officers to make their own decisions when and how to pursue); Restrictive (places some specific restrictions on

officers' judgments and decisions); and Discouraging (severely restricts or discourages any pursuits, except in the most extreme circumstances). The distribution is as follows:

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**Types of Departmental Pursuit Policies**

<u>Type of Policy:</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No. Agencies</u> (N=35)
Discretionary	25.7%	(N= 9)
Restrictive	57.1%	(N=20)
Discouraging	17.1%	(N= 6)

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Pursuit Restrictions. These various types of pursuit policies included a wide range of specific restrictions on pursuits, including the following factors (along with the percentage of 32 responding departments that cited them):

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**Policy Restrictions on Pursuits**

<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=32)
Reason for Stopping/Pursuing	84%
Weather/Road Conditions	80%
Traffic Conditions	80%
Pedestrian Traffic	76%
Geographic Locale	72%
Time of Day/Night	52%
Type of Officer	52%
Road Type	48%
Availability of Backups	24%
Type of Police Vehicle	20%
Supervisory Permission	4%
Speed Involved	4%

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Jurisdictional Agreements. A particularly troublesome area of vehicular pursuits involves an agency's responsibility for chases that either enter or leave its jurisdiction. Of those departments indicating they had a formal pursuit policy, 73.1% or 19 out of 26 respondents indicated that their policy covered such

interjurisdictional situations or procedures. This number represents a majority of the pursuit policy departments but still seems surprisingly low considering that once an officer leaves his or her jurisdiction, it is often undetermined who is in charge of the pursuit.

**Caravaning.** "Caravaning" of pursuit vehicles (referring to the bunching together of two or more vehicles into a close pursuit cluster) is especially dangerous and often undertaken without justification. It adds considerably to the risk of an accident but does not seem to appreciably increase the likelihood of overtaking and apprehending a suspect. Only 30% (8 out of 26) of the police agencies had provisions specifically regulating such practices in their existing written policy at the time of the survey. This implies that even when policy exists, it may be incomplete and often inadequate.

**Distance Between Vehicles.** Distances between vehicles--both pursuit vehicles and the offender's vehicle--is of tremendous importance with regard to public safety, the safety of the officer, and that of the offender. And, since the apprehension of the offender is the objective, getting too close often serves no useful law enforcement purpose while escalating the attendant risk factors. Only 30.8% (8 out of 26) of the responding departments had a policy/procedure statement that specified appropriate distances between vehicles involved in the pursuit.

**Vehicle Speed.** Only one department in our sample of 35 agencies (an urban municipal police department) specified restrictions on the maximum allowable speed for pursuit vehicles. This lone

department's restriction amounts to 2.9% of all reporting departments (1 out of 34). Given the high maximum speed capacity for many of today's patrol vehicles, some re-examination of the need for this type of limit may be in order.

**Radio Communications.** Communication guidelines for pursuit situations are necessary for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the use of the radio as an alternative to high-speed or other potentially dangerous pursuits. Since immediate capture of the offender is seldom of primacy, use of radio communication between police may substitute for high-speed driving to monitor the location of fleeing suspects and apprehend them. Although 91.2% of responding police agencies (31 out of 34) report having some policy restrictions on communications, the Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network (ISPERN) is not required by all departments. ISPERN is a radio channel that permits police agencies (often with different radio frequencies) to operate on a single common frequency during emergency situations and is available to all Illinois departments. The following chart illustrates the types of policy restrictions/requirements for communications during pursuits by percentages of responding agencies that list each provision:

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**Specified Communication Guidelines For Pursuits**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=31 agencies)
Role of the supervisor	94%
Radio frequencies used	68%
Who may be on the air	65%
Kinds of things said	63%

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**Termination of Pursuits.** Departmental pursuit policy should clearly indicate not just the reasons for initiating vehicle pursuits but also (and equally important) the reasons for terminating them. Without clear specification of when and where to disengage from a pursuit, a department's policy would offer incomplete direction to officers--analogous to a car with an accelerator but no brake pedal. Correspondingly, 90% (27) of the 30 agencies who have an explicit pursuit policy indicated that it provides some guidelines for termination. However, that also means that 21% (7 out of 34) of the agencies included in the survey (including those with no pursuit policies) do not provide explicit guidelines to officers regarding when to end a pursuit. Note also that even where termination guidelines are provided, they seldom list specific conditions or events that serve as explicit contraindications. Rather, most of the guidelines refer broadly to discretionary judgments and overall perceptions of abstract public risk. The following reasons are cited by the responding agencies in their written procedures for terminating vehicular pursuits:

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**Specific Reasons for Terminating Pursuits**

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=26)
Danger to public safety	100%
Officer judgment of risk	92%
Supervisory judgment	81%
Jurisdictional limits	20%

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Supervisor's Authority. Although the percentages are high, it is unclear why they are not 100%. That is, why would departmental

policy not always provide for the supervisor's authority to order the disengagement from a vehicular chase, since the supervisor is not as emotionally involved as the pursuing officer(s) and has a higher level of authority and responsibility for seeing that departmental policy is observed? At the same time, the concept of police professionalism implies that policy would always provide for the disengagement from a pursuit via the officer's discretionary authority. Regarding the infrequent reference to jurisdictional limits, we note that Illinois is a "hot pursuit jurisdiction." That is, some states such as Missouri do not legally sanction pursuits outside of an officer's or agency's jurisdiction, while the state of Illinois does allow such activity. Since police have historically evaluated their actions in relationship to whether those actions have been legal as opposed to an evaluation as to whether their actions are in the furtherance of the organization's mission, Illinois' police have created a tradition of pursuing.

As an exception to the above patterns, the one police agency mentioned above that places absolute and specific restrictions on maximum speeds during a pursuit also places other significant restrictions on officer conduct and vehicle operations during a pursuit. That agency is the only department characterized by a nonmilitary organizational structure and is one of only four having a "discouraging" pursuit policy (out of 30 departments that have pursuit policies). Interestingly, that department has experienced only two pursuits within the past year (compared to the sample average of 8.1 pursuits per department). This seems a

very small number, particularly given the size of the jurisdiction (12 square miles), its population (over 50,000), the size of the department (over 50 officers), and its close proximity to Chicago.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY: PURSUIT PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES**

Because of the highly fragmented nature of police services in Illinois, as well as nationally, a wide range of specific practices may be allowed by various department pursuit policies as well as a variety of specific prohibitions on tactics. It is clear that some practices encouraged by some policies are strictly forbidden by others.

**Vehicle Markings.** For example, some agencies use disabling devices (e.g., tire deflators) and moving road blocks while other agencies forbid both. One observable trend is to allow semi-marked vehicles (i.e., with internal emergency lighting systems) to participate in pursuits as primary vehicles. This is at least partially explainable by the fact that since the 1980s, such vehicles have been increasingly used for routine police patrol. For instance, the Illinois State Police use semi-marked vehicles for general patrol purposes (about 50% semi-marked) and allow for their use in pursuits as primary vehicles. Since many police agencies emulate State Police procedures, the practice has spread. The following frequencies are informative in this regard:

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**Types of Cars Allowed to Pursue**

<u>Car Type</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=35)
Marked Vehicles	100%
Semi-Marked Vehicles	61%
Unmarked Vehicles	38%

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**Supervisor's Role.** The role of the supervisor during pursuits is an issue on which officers and agencies can disagree strongly. Yet, very little variation on this issue appears in departmental policies, as shown in the following chart. The puzzle in this result is, given the problematic nature of vehicular pursuits and their threat to public safety, why supervisors are overwhelmingly assigned only an advisory capacity. A fundamental element of the pursuit issue appears to be this problem of whether to allow pursuits to begin in the first place, rather than how to handle them after they are begun (an after the fact approach). This involves a point in the decision-making process leading into a risky vehicle pursuit where the first-line supervisor (in most cases a sergeant) could conceivably act as an effective filter either allowing or disallowing pursuits. Ideally, this could shortcut many pursuits initiated for what internally feel like serious challenges of legal authority but externally appear to be fairly trivial offenses. At an extreme, this might lead to the development of a state-wide pursuit policy where non-pursuit is the default choice except in the case of a limited number of clearly articulated felonies; these include: (1) serious felonies and (2) clear and present danger to public safety.

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**Formal Role of Supervisor**

<u>Role Description</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=31 agencies)
Supervisor's permission required	3%
Supervisor is advisory only	97%

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**Use of Force.** The tactics that most frequently appear in department pursuit policies are stationary road blocks, ramming, firearms, and moving road blocks. While the first three seem clear enough, there sometimes appears to be confusion as to what exactly is meant by a "moving road block." A moving road block, sometimes referred to as a rolling road block or "boxing in," is a tactic where police vehicles surround the offender's vehicle, often at high speed, and physically force the pursued vehicle to a stop. The following chart, developed from 32 responding departments out of 35, indicates the tactics allowed by their pursuit policies.

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**Allowable Tactics During Pursuits**

<u>Tactics</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=33)
Stationary road blocks	67%
Ramming with vehicle	39%
Firearms	34%
Moving road blocks	47%

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**Pursuit Alternatives.** Alternatives to pursuits have been largely ignored and undeveloped in American policing; Illinois is no exception to this pattern. Some of the alternatives to vehicular pursuits are similar to tactics used during road blocks. Each has its limitations and inherent liabilities, legally as well as

physically. Under existing rules of criminal evidence, video recordings are of little use in U.S. jurisdictions unless they produce a clear image of the driver. Video recordings of the vehicle are limited because only drivers can later be legally arrested--not automobiles. Therefore, a video-equipped police vehicle that happens to be located behind the offender's vehicle (as usually occurs) has little utility. Of the 34 reporting agencies, the following alternatives are suggested by various policy statements.

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**Alternatives to Pursuits Employed**

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=34)
Identify driver and arrest later	97%
Radio data to other police	91%
Road blocks	27%
Video recordings	6%
Disabling devices	3%

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**Pursuit Records.** Effective policy, whether in the area of pursuits or any other, cannot be reasonably or effectively constructed and amended without periodic input (feedback loop) based on sound data and research--this requires record keeping and easy data retrieval for analysis purposes. According to agencies responding to the administrative survey, slightly over half (55% or 18 out of 33) keep some form of running record on pursuits. The majority of these departments do so in the form of a manual file (15 out of the 18 or 47% of all departments). The alternative form of running record, a computerized data file, was found in just under 9% of the departments (3 out of 33).

Despite the fact that a substantial number of departments

reported that they keep some form of manual files, those files seem to be little used by departments for policy development. During the field interview stage of this study it was learned that the data were kept in a variety of bureaus within each department, often used only for disciplinary purposes. Therefore, while many departments did keep some data in manual files, these data were not systematically collected or stored nor was easy information retrieval possible. Lastly, the type of data collected is not systematized, but rather collected in an **ad hoc** fashion for divergent purposes. One statement concerning police vehicular pursuits seem very clear: namely, reliable data on police pursuits are difficult to find.

Additionally, while it is encouraging that even a small number of departments are gathering data on vehicular pursuits, this is not necessarily being done in a systematic or standardized format. These computerized agencies did, however, indicate that they would be willing to maintain a standardized data base file at our request for the purposes of future research. Currently, the police agencies that are maintaining some type of computerized file are using System 36 IBM mainframe computer systems; so, future research on the pursuit issue may have a better data base than one might have expected (at least in these departments).

**Evaluation and Policy Development.** At present, few police agencies are using pursuit review findings for future policy development; although a surprisingly large percentage of surveyed departments indicated that they periodically review pursuits (66%

or 21 out of 32). During field interviews it was learned that none of those 21 departments had a systematic review program for the purpose of policy development regarding this problematic police tactic. For example, departments generally do not have a standing committee that is charged with the responsibility of overseeing pursuit data and that regularly reports its findings and recommendations to a specifically designated administrative unit. Most reviews of pursuits occur as an *ad hoc* result of some particular vehicle pursuit that resulted in a negative outcome, e.g., a well-publicized accident has occurred and or there is pending litigation against the department due to a pursuit.

**Discipline.** Disciplinary sanctions that could occur as a result of negative pursuit outcomes were reported to be part of formal departmental procedures in only 31% of the surveyed police agencies (N=11 out of 35). In those 11 agencies, negative reviews of police pursuits could lead to the following disciplinary sanctions--also included is the percentage of departments reporting a particular sanction:

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**Possible disciplinary sanctions**

<u>Sanctions</u>	<u>Percent</u> (N=11 agencies)
Verbal reprimand	91%
Written reprimand	100%
Suspension	100%
Termination	73%

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Interestingly, no department reported "additional training" as a disciplinary outcome, perhaps because few agencies have well-developed training programs that include a decision-

making/judgmental component.

Again during the field interview stage, we learned that the vast majority of officers receive only a verbal reprimand by the shift commander (most frequently a sergeant) as a result of an unauthorized pursuit, a departmental pursuit policy/procedural violation, or some other errant practice. In fact, a verbal reprimand was all that was administered in nearly every instance where an accident did not occur but where it was obvious the pursuit was in violation of departmental policy/procedure.

Clearly, no running record is kept in these instances, making it exceedingly difficult to estimate the total number of pursuits in police agencies across Illinois. This is why estimating what percent of all pursuits end in negative outcomes (an accident and or litigation of some type) is difficult. Thus, we have no reliable count of the number of pursuits that occurred without accident, a figure that is required to calculate this percentage.

**Training.** It is likely that no section of the administrative survey questionnaire was filled out more inaccurately than the section relating to vehicular pursuit training. A caveat is in order at this juncture: no training is currently in place anywhere in the state of Illinois that focuses exclusively on pursuit situations. That is, no training deals with the pursuit situation in a unified and comprehensive manner. Although portions of the basic officer recruit school deal with emergency driving and an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) is offered as advanced training by the State Police Academy and Regional Training Boards throughout Illinois, these are not

pursuit training courses per se. Rather, they deal with general vehicle handling skills under emergency conditions. EVOC courses do not deal with the issues of decision making, cost benefit analysis, legal ramifications, the public safety trade-off, correlation to the police mandate, and many other issues necessary in a pursuit training course.

Training specifically tailored to pursuit situations was clearly absent to some degree in all departments. In those few instances where pursuit training was employed, especially for the purpose of inculcating departmental pursuit policy, it was done in an *ad hoc* mode, and generally during roll call. The surveys discovered only one department in our sample of 35 that has a program developed solely for police vehicular pursuits, and that program was required by the municipality's insurance carrier. It too was administered during roll call or individually when officers could spare the time. The training is comprised of a video recording followed by a written post-test. The only other pursuit training occasionally available to departments occurs periodically on law enforcement cable television channel to which only some agencies subscribe. When queried as to whether pursuit training is either required or provided, responding agencies indicated the following:

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**Training Required or Provided by Agencies**

<u>Specific Training in pursuit driving</u>	<u>Percent</u> (32 agencies)
YES	56% (N=18)
NO	44% (N=14)
<u>Training Location</u>	<u>Percent</u> (18 agencies)
Local recruit training	61%
Police Training Institute	35%
State Police Academy	24%
In department	18%
<u>Officers receiving pursuit training</u>	<u>Percent</u> (17 agencies)
All officers	77%
Patrol officers only	24%

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Of the departments responding to the administrative survey, only three indicated that they had training programs specifically administered within the department itself, including the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course. These three agencies indicated the following regarding the average amounts of classroom and in-the-car training they entail:

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**Formal Training Programs in Department**

<u>Has In-Department Program</u>	<u>Percent</u> (25 agencies)
YES (including EVOC)	12%
NO	88%
<u>Type of Training</u>	<u>No. Hours</u>
Number of classroom hours	2.0
Number of in-car hours	3.7

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Given the public safety risk and the use of deadly force issues inherent in this practice, it is curious that so few departments require either specific pursuit training or pursuit training as an adjunct to the deadly force training that is already required by most departments. Of the 23 agencies

responding to the question as to whether they required specific training in deadly force, 74% (N=23 out of 31 agencies) indicated that they did require deadly force training.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY: VEHICLE PURSUIT EXPERIENCES**

**Initiation of Pursuits.** When asked the offense for which pursuits were most likely to occur, administrative respondents in two-thirds of the departments answering (18 out of 27) said that it would be a felony. This answer corresponds to common images of police pursuits as necessary responses to serious and dangerous situations. However, it seems curious when compared to other pursuit study data, and it contradicts the responding agency's own information reported later in the questionnaire regarding pursuits within the past year (see chart below). Their own data, apparently drawn from agency files, indicates that during the past year only 21 out of 145 reported pursuits (14%) were initiated for felony reasons. This discrepancy may be a function of the fact that the first answer occurred earlier in the questionnaire before respondents checked their agency's records; thus, it reflects commonly held police beliefs and perceptions not based directly on empirical data. The second answer is taken from their agency's records to which administrators do not routinely refer and with which they are not likely to be familiar. Because of this unfamiliarity, their common beliefs have not been challenged or corrected. It may also reflect the fact that most agencies do not keep accurate running records but rather maintain their pursuit data on an ad hoc or episodic basis. Finally, it seems to indicate that

administrative officers' perceptions of an issue such as vehicle pursuits may not correspond to objective realities when that issue is value-laden.

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<u>Offense type for which pursuit is most likely</u>	<u>Percent (N=27)</u>
Forcible Felony	41%
Any Felony	26%
Serious Traffic	19%
All Traffic	15%

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**Pursuit Occurrence.** According to the survey's findings, pursuits are relatively rare occurrences: eighteen departments totaling over 1,000 officers reported only 145 pursuits during the preceding year. However, it must be stressed that since most departments do not keep an accurate running record of all pursuits (especially when considering those very small departments that were under sampled) the survey's findings underestimate the overall pursuit picture. Thus, a reasonable assumption is that the pursuit numbers are much larger than reported by this survey, an assumption thoroughly consistent with prior studies (as described in the earlier literature review). Nonetheless, our sample reveals the following regarding the number of pursuits by categories:

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**Pursuits Initiated in the Past Year**  
**(from 18 reporting agencies)**

<u>Pursuit Type</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Pursuits by own officers	130	93%
Pursuits from outside calls	<u>15</u>	7%
TOTAL NUMBER	145	
Initiated for Felony	21	16%
Initiated for Nonfelony	107	84%
Undetermined	<u>17</u>	--
TOTAL NUMBER	145	
Average Number of Pursuits per Department	8.1	

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**State Pursuit Standards.** Virtually all discussions of vehicle pursuit practices take as self-evident that systematic, standardized, and periodic pursuit training is necessary. Given that the majority of police agencies in Illinois very likely do not have formal written pursuit policy (since they are very small in size and have informal organizational structures), it seems obvious that some state-wide standard is necessary. Regulating, mandating, and providing state-wide training is one of the few viable approaches to managing this invasive police tactic. In that small departments (unregulated by pursuit policy and or procedure) may involve higher frequency of pursuits per officer, it is not unreasonable for a state government to legislate statutory training standards in order to control both departmental as well as individual pursuit practices.

Although few departments maintain reliable pursuit records, records of pursuits resulting in negative outcomes (such as accidents or injuries) may be more complete in many departments

simply because these involve events that cannot be officially ignored. Even those departments not maintaining a running record on pursuits are generally able to provide information on pursuits that end with crashes, largely because such events are even rarer occurrences than pursuits themselves, and they require departmental documentation--they leave a detectable "paper trail." Surveyed departments reported the following numbers of pursuit-related accidents:

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**Pursuits Resulting in Accidents in Past Year**  
(from 18 reporting agencies)

<u>Accident Type</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Involving police vehicle only	2	3%
Involving suspect vehicle only	22	59%
Involving both police and suspect	8	21%
Involving other vehicles	<u>6</u>	16%
TOTAL ACCIDENTS	38	
 Average Number of Accidents per Reporting Agency	 2.1	
 Percentage of All Pursuits That Resulted in Accidents (38 of 145 pursuits)	 26.2%	

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**Negative Outcomes.** A negative outcome from a pursuit situation may be either physical (accidents), disciplinary (reprimands, suspensions, and dismissals), litigation against the department, or any combination of these. No agency in the survey reported any disciplinary actions against officers involved in pursuits within the past year. Only 2 (of the 23 reporting agencies) reported litigation against departments for pursuit-related reasons.

Pursuits that result in injuries are also relatively rare

and seem to be statistically anomalous despite common perceptions and media portrayals. There was less than one injury per reporting agency during the past year according to the official data provided on the administrative survey. Further, these indicate that it is most often the offender himself/herself who is the injured party.

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**Pursuits Resulting in Injuries**  
(from 18 reporting agencies)

<u>Type of Injury</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Involving police officers	3	23%
Involving suspects	8	62%
Involving other persons	<u>2</u>	15%
TOTAL INJURIES	13	
 Average Number of Injuries per Reporting Agency	 0.7	
 Percentage of All Pursuits Resulting in Injuries (13 of 145 pursuits)	 9.0%	

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Pursuits that resulted in the death of any parties were drastically less than might be assumed. During the past year no policing agency in our study reported a death resulting from a vehicular pursuit (N=20 reporting agencies). During the field interview stage it was learned, however, that one death had occurred as a result of a pursuit but it had occurred over two years before, and litigation was still pending against the agency. As a point of reference, Auten's (1991) study of 86 Illinois police departments reported 4 fatal pursuits during the same year as our survey data (1990); that corresponds to 1 pursuit fatality per 20 departments, a slightly higher figure