



WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD

TO: Chair, Winnipeg Police Board

FROM: Chief Gene Bowers

SUBJECT: 2025 Criminal Flight Pursuits and Armoured Rescue Vehicle Operations Report

DATE: May 22, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received as information by the Winnipeg Police Board (WPB).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications within this report.

BACKGROUND

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) standards require written procedures for conducting criminal flight pursuits. These include guidelines for pursuit termination, supervisory and dispatcher responsibilities, and administrative oversight for each pursuit. CALEA also stipulates regular training for officers and an annual evaluation of policy and operational outcomes.

Every year, the Service compiles a report on criminal flight pursuits and a summary of Armoured Rescue Vehicle (ARV) operations. This report is provided to the WPB and the public for information, context and transparency.

DISCUSSION

Criminal flight pursuits occur when officers attempt to stop a vehicle and the driver refuses, prompting pursuit to stop or identify the vehicle. Pursuits are considered a last resort due to safety risks for the public, officers, and suspects. A pursuit may be justified if the suspect's escape poses a threat to human life or can cause serious injury.

Winnipeg Police Service policies align with CALEA standards, outlining conditions for initiating and terminating pursuits. The procedures also suggest alternatives, such as requesting aerial support, and mandate risk assessment before and during pursuits.

After each pursuit, officers and supervisors must submit reports to the Police Vehicle Operations Program Manager (PVOPM), with potential review by the Pursuit Review Board (PRB). This oversight ensures accountability and identifies training needs or procedural updates.

Pursuits resulting in serious injury or death are investigated by the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU). In 2025, two pursuit reports were referred to the IIU.

The Police Vehicle Operations Program (PVOP) trains officers in theoretical and practical police vehicle operations, including driving dynamics, pre-pursuit tactics, and risk assessment. Recertification every two years ensures officers stay current with safety practices and procedures.

2025 PURSUIT RESULTS

In 2025, the Winnipeg Police Service reported 47 pursuits, a decrease from the prior year (64). The number of pursuits has decreased each year since the policy and procedure was updated in 2019. The past five years of continued training, information sharing and reinforcement have impacted the number of pursuits annually.

Pursuits Summary	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5-year average		2025	
						#	%*	#	%*
Criminal Flight Pursuits	122	91	79	66	64	84		47	
Pursuits aborted	62	42	48	46	48	49	58%	31	66%
Forcible stop attempted	81	48	50	30	30	48	57%	31	66%
Reason Initiated:									
Criminal Code Offences	88	70	66	53	53	66	79%	36	77%
Traffic/HTA Offences	34	21	13	13	11	18	21%	11	23%
Outcomes:									
Arrest events	57	40	27	20	16	32	38%	15	32%
Collision events	41	22	13	9	17	20	24%	19	40%
Injury events	15	8	4	2	2	6	7%	4	9%
Reviewed by Pursuit Review Board	11	7	4	4	7	7	8%	9	19%

* Percentage refers to the number of actions, reasons initiated, or outcomes over the number of criminal flight pursuits

In 2025, the Service aborted 31 out of the 47 reported pursuits (66%). This represents an 8% increase over the 5-year average (58%), suggesting that members more often determined that continuing a pursuit posed a greater risk to public safety than allowing suspects to temporarily evade custody. Forceable stopping techniques, such as using a stop stick or implementing a containment stop was attempted in 31 of the 47 reported pursuits (66%).

REASON INITIATED

According to WPS policy, members will only initiate a pursuit for a known *Criminal Code* or *Controlled Drug and Substances Act* offence, considering the seriousness of the offence. Consistent with previous years, pursuits were initiated by members 77% of the time due to *Criminal Code* offences.

In 2025, 18 of the 47 pursuits (38%) involved stolen vehicles.

Year	Pursuits	Stolen Vehicles	%
2020	122	35	29%
2021	91	38	42%
2022	79	38	48%
2023	66	30	46%
2024	64	31	48%
2025	47	18	38%

OUTCOMES

The safe apprehension and arrest of a suspect is the preferable outcome to any pursuit event. In 2025, 15 out of the 47 pursuits resulted in an arrest (32%). This rate is higher than the prior year and meets expectations given the upward trend of aborting pursuits.

In 2025, there were 19 pursuits that resulted in a motor vehicle collision - 2 more than the previous year and higher than the five-year average pursuit collision rate of 24%.

Collision Classification	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Suspect vehicle with Police vehicle or multiple police vehicles	14	10	4	4	12	6
Suspect vehicle with third-party vehicle or multiple vehicles	9	2	4	3	1	5
Suspect vehicle with Police and third-party vehicle	2	0	0	0	2	2
Suspect vehicle with fixed or temporary object	13	10	4	2	1	4
Police vehicle with suspect vehicle	1	0	0	0	0	2
Police vehicle with fixed or temporary object	2	0	1	0	1	0

*Review of reports and classifications is an on-going process which may result in minor variations over time.

In 2025, four pursuits resulted in injuries to six individuals. The injury rate from pursuits increased from the previous year and was higher than the five-year average of 7%.

Injuries	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Pursuits	122	91	79	66	64	47
Injury Rate	12%	9%	5%	3%	3%	9%
Injured Officers	12	2	0	2	1	3
Injured Suspects	16	7	3	1	2	2
Injured Third-Parties	1	1	3	2	0	1

The post-pursuit file review evaluates all involved members based on the circumstances of each pursuit. Officers with high overall compliance are categorized as "Compliant". Those with minor procedural concerns fall under "Supervisory Review" and receive coaching and feedback from a supervisor to address issues. Non-compliant incidents are escalated to the Pursuit Review Board (PRB) for further action. In 2025, 9 out of 47 pursuits were referred to the PRB.

There were no significant policy or training changes in 2025. Mandatory PVO in-service training continues to reinforce the importance of clear communication and emphasizes the requirement to consider whether the need to apprehend a suspect outweighs the risk to the public when initiating or continuing a pursuit.

The administrative review process is working as intended and continues to effectively identify opportunities for enhanced training and education, supporting the safe and compliant conduct of vehicle pursuits.

FLIGHT OPERATIONS UNIT (AIR1)

Since 2011, the Flight Operations Unit helicopter (AIR1) has been an invaluable asset to the operational and investigative services of the WPS. AIR1 can travel from one side of the city to the other in a matter of minutes. The onboard equipment allows aircrews to get “eyes” on an active high-risk event almost instantaneously from distances as far as 10-15 kilometres away¹.

During pursuits, AIR1’s objective is to acquire visual containment of the suspect’s vehicle. Once achieved, AIR1 coordinates ground units to disengage from the pursuit, substantially reducing the risks associated with a pursuit event. AIR1 continues monitoring the suspect until they stop and exit the vehicle, allowing ground units to safely make the arrest.

AIR1 is budgeted for 1,000 flight hours per year, or approximately 11% of operational hours. In 2025, AIR1 was involved in 5 out of 47 reported pursuits (11%), contributing to an overall increase in pursuit arrest rates from 24% without AIR1 to 100% with AIR1. Importantly, pursuit events involving AIR1 did not result in injuries to officers, suspects or third parties.

For further details on AIR1’s capabilities and its effectiveness as an alternative pursuit resource, refer to the [Flight Operations Unit’s Annual Operational Report](#).

ARMoured RESCUE VEHICLE

Acquired in 2015, the ARV is a tool used to ensure that Service members have the appropriate equipment when dealing with potentially volatile and violent situations. During tactical deployments, the ARV primarily functions as a protected rescue vehicle, safely transporting Tactical Support Team members to and from high-risk environments and extracting injured officers or citizens to safety.

ARV Deployment

In 2025, the ARV was deployed 79 times for tactical operations. These included 58 planned events for *Criminal Code* or *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* search warrants. Additionally, there were 21 unplanned events, of which 13 involved suspected or confirmed firearms.

Community Engagement

The ARV participated in 2 community events during 2025, including the Children’s Hospital Foundation and Make-A-Wish fundraisers.

Training

In 2025, the ARV was used during 13 training events, including gas deployment strategies and rescue tactics.

Gene Bowers
Chief of Police

¹ <https://winnipegpolice.substack.com/p/air-1-helicopter-flight-operations>