

Lago Vista Police Department



2023 Pursuit Analysis



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis of the 2023 Lago Vista Police Department's Vehicle Pursuits was conducted in compliance with the Texas Police Chief's Association Best Practices Accreditation Program Best Practice 7.14. This review analyzes data from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Vehicle Pursuits are inherently dangerous to both the officers involved and the public. The Lago Vista Police Department takes its obligations seriously to provide the most effective and efficient police service with the least adverse impact on our citizens. The Lago Vista Police Department is committed to protecting our citizens but, at the same time, ensuring the manner in which we do so does not place the public at risk of greater harm. This process requires continuous evaluation of the risks and benefits of each action. This analysis is conducted each year to comply with Texas Law Enforcement Best Practice 7.14 and to attempt to identify methods for reducing the number of vehicle pursuits and the inherent risks involved.

During 2023, there were no pursuits reported. Officers are trained by the department in pursuit tactics and emergency driving. We identified no need to conduct additional training or make minor updates to the current pursuit policy. Accreditation and our review process provide us with various opportunities for policy and procedure review and updates when changes are warranted.

The Lago Vista Police Department takes seriously its obligations to protect citizens while being mindful of the possible risk that actions, or a decision not to take action, can sometimes present. This balance requires continuous risk-benefit analysis not only during the event but also as we review situations where a vehicle evades – regardless of whether or not our officers engage in a pursuit with the vehicle.

As part of our department's commitment to excellence and transparency, we have added the Lago Vista Police Department's Pursuit Policy manual to our website.

VEHICLE PURSUIT POLICY

In November 2022, the Department updated its policy regarding pursuits to be more in line with established law enforcement best practices.

Texas Law Enforcement Best Practice 7.13 and Lago Vista Police Department General Policies 7.13, 7.14, 7.18, and 7.19 require a written report to be completed anytime an officer pursues a vehicle.

Whenever an officer calls a pursuit, department policy requires the dispatch center to notify a supervisor immediately. The Supervisor is required to monitor the Pursuit and act as an uninvolved decision-maker regarding its danger. The officer and Supervisor are charged with continuous evaluation of the Pursuit as it occurs and are required to call off the Pursuit when they believe the risks to the officer or public outweigh the need for immediate capture of the suspect.

Each Pursuit Report is immediately reviewed by the Officer's Supervisor and through the Chain of Command to the Chief of Police. At the time of the incident, the Pursuit was reviewed to ensure the use was appropriate and within the guidelines of Department Policy. If the officer initiates a pursuit inappropriately, a departmental investigation is required, and the officer may receive additional training or, in some cases, discipline up to and including termination from employment.


This annual analysis is not intended to determine if an officer acted inappropriately but to identify department-wide trends that may suggest policy, training, equipment, or supervision changes.

CONCLUSION

Vehicle pursuits are low-occurrence, high-liability incidents that require careful and thorough examination to reduce future liability exposure. During 2023, the Lago Vista Police Department responded to 8,191 citizen-initiated calls for service and conducted 3,413 traffic stops. Of these 12,283 encounters, 0 resulted in vehicle pursuits.

Additionally, we did not identify any situations where officers would have engaged in a pursuit if our policy had allowed for it.

Upon completing the 2023 Vehicle Pursuit Analysis, a recommendation was made to keep the vehicle pursuit policy set into place in 2022.



Gary A. Boshears, M. P. A., LCC
Chief of Police, Lago Vista Police Department

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