



## Annual Review of Use of Force & Vehicle Pursuit Incidents

This submission is made in accordance with Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of the Attorney General’s Use of Force Policy (April 2022) (“Use of Force Policy”), and Sections 12.2 and 12.3 of Addendum B to the Attorney General’s Use of Force Policy (April 2022) (“Vehicular Pursuit Policy”).

**County:** Sussex

**Law Enforcement Agency:** Vernon Twp PD

**Date of Report:** 1/15/2026

**Year of Data Covered in this Report:** 2025

**Report has been reviewed by and endorsed by the agency’s law enforcement executive:** Yes

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## Use of Force Annual Review: Written Report

### Section One: BWC/Video Audit

***Your review must include a brief description of your agency's random and risk-based audit process (e.g., how videos are selected, who reviews the videos, etc.). If your agency did not conduct a risk-based and/or random BWC/video audit last year, please indicate how you plan to remedy that in the coming year.***

In 2025, the Vernon Township Police Department used the following process for random and risk-based audits of BWC and Video for Use of Force incidents:

The Vernon Township Police Patrol Lieutenant or Captain (when two levels removed is required) directly oversee Vernon Township Police Officers, review BWC and videos for all Use of Force incidents as part of the meaningful review process.

For random and risk-based audits of BWC and videos of non-Use of Force incidents, Sergeants in charge of officers under their command will review each month a random selection of BWCs and videos of their officers to ensure they are working in compliance with department policies and procedures and A.G. directives. In addition, they will also review risk-based incidents to ensure the officers under their command are working in compliance with department policies and procedures and A.G. directives. The Sergeant reports to the Patrol Lieutenant any issues found when reviewing random or risk-based audits of BWC or video. Based on the issue found, a determination is made on how to best address the issue; ex. retraining or other discipline.

In 2025, each Sergeant submitted a quarterly notification to the Patrol Lieutenant confirming the completion of the random and risk-based audit of BWC and videos. A report was generated to document what random or risk-based selected videos were reviewed, the officer involved, and any outcome or action taken (if any).



## Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints

*Your analysis must include a review of internal affairs complaints related to use of force incidents and must include the following:*

- 1. Number of IA complaints filed related to use of force incidents**
- 2. Number of such complaints filed by civilians**
- 3. Number of such complaints initiated by the agency**
- 4. Number of such complaints sustained**
- 5. Number of such complaints still pending**

In 2025, there were zero (0) internal affairs complaints related to use of force incidents in the Vernon Township Police Department. Zero (0) IA complaints were filed by civilians and zero (0) incidents were initiated by our agency. All of the incidents where some level of force was utilized were reviewed at the operational and administrative level for compliance with policies and procedures. Additionally, each incident was reviewed for training and/or equipment deficiencies. Zero (0) incidents were deemed to be out of compliance, zero (0) of which were referred to internal affairs, and zero (0) of which were addressed as a performance deficiency. Any incidents where minor training issues were discovered were addressed via non-punitive measures.



### Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Uses of Force

***Section 7.5 of the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy requires that every use of force must undergo a meaningful command level review. Your annual review should include a brief description of your agency's meaningful review policy. If your agency was not able to conduct a meaningful review of each use of force incident, please explain why you were unable to do so and please indicate how you plan to do so going forward.***

The Vernon Township Police Department conducts meaningful reviews of all use of force incidents. The Detective Sergeant who is the Internal Affairs officer for our agency conducts the meaningful reviews, and forwards them to the Patrol Lieutenant for a second level review (two levels above patrol officer). Unless the use of force incident involves a sergeant, in those instances two levels above the sergeant, the Police Captain, conducts the meaningful review. All use of force incidents in 2025 underwent a meaningful review by the Detective Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant and/or Police Captain. Pursuant to the meaningful review, the Patrol Lieutenant or Police Captain reports directly to the Chief of Police with their findings. After review and recommendation from the Chief of Police, the Patrol Lieutenant or Police Captain will move forward as appropriate:

1. Initiate an internal affairs complaint and handle the matter accordingly; or
2. Meet with the involved officers and their immediate supervisor (Sergeant), collectively review the use of force incident and discuss any possible alternatives in future similar encounters. The Captain or Patrol Lieutenant will also during this meeting address any minor training issues that were discovered.

A completed package for the use of force meaningful review is given to the Chief of Police. The Chief signs off on the meaningful review indicating he approves it along with the final action taken.



## Section Four: Non-Discriminatory Application of Force

***Your review must include an explanation of how you concluded whether force was applied in a non-discriminatory manner based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Your analysis should include a review of your community's demographics and demographic data from the Use of Force portal. If you conclude that any use of force was applied in a discriminatory manner, please explain what steps you have taken and will take to address this conclusion.***

In 2025, there were three (3) use of force incidents and one (1) show of force incident by the Vernon Township Police Department, in which five (5) use of force reports and one (1) show of force report were generated by officers. Zero (0) incidents resulted in injury to the involved subject. Two (2) of the use of force incidents involved subjects who were Caucasian, and one (1) incident involved an African American female. This is within the acceptable range of race demographics. Of the three (3) use of force incidents, two (2) incidents involved female subjects and one (1) incident involved a male subject.

In my review I found that all of the use of force incidents in 2025 were applied in a non-discriminatory manner. To support this, I specifically point to the condition of the subjects in which force was required; two (2) of the use of force incidents involved the subject having a mental health incident, and the other use of force incident occurred during an active Domestic Violence incident in which force was required to protect the victim from an active assault by an aggressor. The one (1) show of force incident was for a crime in progress, in which the suspect was subsequently arrested after a foot chase for burglary, theft and resisting arrest.



## Section Five: Overall Review of Use of Force

***Please utilize as much space as needed to conduct a thorough review of your agency's use of force during the preceding calendar year. Your review should evaluate whether force was used in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy and your agency's policy. Even if the use of force itself was compliant with those policies, your review should include any recommendations for training, equipment, or room for improvement (e.g., additional de-escalation efforts could have been made).***

A complete review of all use of force incidents and their meaningful reviews for 2025 was conducted, and are in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy and our agency's policy.

The reasons for physical force techniques are that officers are attempting to use the minimum amount of force necessary to control and de-escalate situations, especially those involving subjects that are experiencing psychological emergencies or are actively engaged in a Domestic Violence incident in which they are causing injury to a victim.

Also, the interactions occur quickly, which requires immediate action to maintain control over the scene. Minimal physical force is required during some psychological emergencies to limit the harm a subject may do to themselves or the involved officers. Additionally, minimal physical force was required to safeguard a victim from an active attack during a Domestic Violence incident.

I reviewed the five (5) Use of Force Reports submitted by the officers who were involved in the three (3) use of force incidents for 2025. The incidents involved the officers deploying minimal physical force to gain control of suspects. One (1) incident involved mechanical force, the use of OC spray. All of the supervisory and administrative meaningful reviews of the officers' Use of Force Reports revealed that the officers did, in fact, use force; however, the use of force was justified in controlling the situations. My collective review of all the incidents also did not find any concerning trends or patterns of concern in the involved officers' behavior and actions. In 2025, there were zero (0) subjects who reported minor injuries as a result of the use of force used on them. This is compared to three (3) subjects in 2024 and zero (0) subjects in 2023. In 2025, none of the subjects required prompt medical attention as a result of the use of force. There were no complaints of excessive force made against any officers in 2025, nor did our agency initiate any IA complaints after a meaningful review of each incident. In conclusion, I also found that while use of force incidents are low overall for the past three years, there were no injuries to subjects in 2025 and 2023.

The Vernon Township Police Department handled 24,079 calls for service in 2025. Of which there were three (3) use of force incidents, and one (1) show of force incident. Only 0.012% of the calls for service resulted in a use of force situation; and of those three incidents, all of the officers utilized minimum physical force to gain control of the situation.

My recommendation is for our officers to continue to use the tools and training provided to them; including ICAT/ABLE, peer support, verbal commands, verbal judo and any other de-escalation technique at their disposal to reduce Use of Force incidents. In 2025, all Vernon Township Police Officers were trained in Verbal Judo, giving them another tool in their toolbox of de-escalation techniques.



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## Section Six: Further Action

***Please explain what further action your agency has taken, or will take, to implement any changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment you have deemed appropriate. These actions can include department-wide changes, or changes applicable to specific officers or divisions.***

The Use of Force Reports showed that the officers of the Vernon Township Police Department, in all of the incidents, utilized physical force with suspects/persons, and one (1) officer used mechanical force, specifically OC spray. This pattern has been consistent over the past 3 years. The reasons members are mostly choosing to utilize physical force, in lieu of a higher level of force when justified, include time/distance variables encountered during their interactions, and the ability for the members to resolve the situation utilizing de-escalation techniques and the minimal force necessary to effectively control the situation.

The approach to de-escalation techniques to help minimize the requirement of Use of Force is fostered through all ranks of the police department as our best approach. This has helped to create a more modern-day culture of how to deal with incidents by our police officers. If there is no urgency to quickly resolve an incident due to safety concerns of the suspect and/or officers, officers are trained and encouraged to take as much time as needed to work to resolve the incident in a non-confrontational manner with minimal force. While not all situations can be resolved without requiring an officer to use force, it has helped to make officers more aware of their options and to utilize the lowest means of force possible to effectively and safely handle the situation they are dealing with. To build on de-escalation techniques and provide additional tools for our officers, in 2024, one of our officers was trained as a "train the trainer" for Verbal Judo. Our agency then trained all sworn police officers in Verbal Judo in 2025.



# Vehicle Pursuit Annual Review: Written Report

## Section One: BWC/Video Audit

***Your review must include a brief description of your agency's random and risk-based audit process (e.g., how videos are selected, who reviews the videos, etc.). If your agency did not conduct a risk-based and/or random BWC/video audit last year, please indicate how you plan to remedy that in the coming year.***

In 2025, the Vernon Township Police Department used the following process for random and risk-based audits of BWC and Video for Vehicle Pursuit incidents:

The Vernon Township Police Lieutenant or Captain (when two levels removed is required) who directly oversee Vernon Township Police Officers, review BWC and videos for all Vehicle Pursuits as part of the meaningful review process.

For random and risk-based audits of BWC and videos to ensure compliance with our policies and procedures, Sergeants in charge of officers under their command will review each month a random selection of BWCs and video of their officers to ensure they are working in compliance with department policies and procedures and A.G. directives. In addition, they will also review risk-based incidents to ensure the officers under their command are working in compliance with department policies and procedures and A.G. directives. The Sergeant reports to the Patrol Lieutenant any issues found when reviewing random or risk-based audits of BWC or video for guidance on how to proceed.

In 2025, each Sergeant submitted a quarterly notification to the Patrol Lieutenant confirming the completion of the random and risk-based audit of BWC and videos. A report was generated to document what random or risk-based selected videos were reviewed, the officer involved, and any outcome or action taken (if any).



## Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints

*Your analysis must include a review of internal affairs complaints related to vehicle pursuit incidents and must include the following:*

- 1. Number of IA complaints filed related to vehicle pursuit incidents***
- 2. Number of such complaints filed by civilians***
- 3. Number of such complaints initiated by the agency***
- 4. Number of such complaints sustained***
- 5. Number of such complaints still pending***

In 2025, there were zero (0) internal affairs complaints related to vehicle pursuit incidents in the Vernon Township Police Department. Zero (0) IA complaints were filed by civilians and zero (0) incidents were initiated by our agency. There was one incident which generated the creation of a vehicle pursuit report by three officers and it was reviewed at the operational level and administratively for compliance with policies and procedures. Additionally, the incident was reviewed for training and/or equipment deficiencies. Zero (0) incidents were deemed to be out of compliance, zero (0) of which were referred to internal affairs, and zero (0) of which were addressed as a performance deficiency. Any incidents where minor training issues were discovered were addressed via non-punitive measures.



### Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Pursuits

***Section 12.1 of the Attorney General’s Vehicular Pursuit Policy requires that every vehicle pursuit must undergo a meaningful command level review. Your annual review should include a brief description of your agency’s meaningful review policy. If your agency was not able to conduct a meaningful review of each vehicle pursuit incident, please explain why you were unable to do so and please indicate how you plan to do so going forward.***

The Vernon Township Police Department conducts meaningful reviews of all vehicle pursuit incidents. The Detective Sergeant who is the Internal Affairs officer for our agency conducts the meaningful reviews, and forwards them to the Patrol Lieutenant for a second-level review (two levels above patrol officer). Unless the vehicle pursuit incident involves a sergeant, in those instances, two levels above the sergeant, the Police Captain, conducts the meaningful review. All vehicle pursuit incidents in 2025 underwent a meaningful review by the Detective Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant or Police Captain. Pursuant to the meaningful review, the Patrol Lieutenant or Police Captain reports directly to the Chief of Police with his findings. After review and recommendation from the Chief of Police, the Patrol Lieutenant or Police Captain will move forward as appropriate:

1. Initiate an internal affairs complaint and handle the matter accordingly; or
2. Meet with the involved officers and their immediate supervisor (Sergeant), collectively review the vehicle pursuit incident and discuss any possible alternatives in future similar encounters. The Captain or Patrol Lieutenant will also during this meeting address any minor training issues that were discovered.

A completed package for the vehicle pursuit meaningful review is given to the Chief of Police. The Chief signs off on the meaningful review, indicating he approves it along with the final action taken.



## Section Four: Analysis of Non-Compliant Reports

***Your review must include an analysis of all pursuits determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy, or agency policy, and the steps taken to address the non-compliance. Please indicate whether all non-compliant pursuits were referred to the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability or the County Prosecutor in compliance with Section 12.1(e) of the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy.***

There were no vehicle pursuits by the Vernon Township Police Department that were determined not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Vehicle Pursuit directive.



## Section Five: Non-Discriminatory Pursuits

***Your review must include an explanation of how you concluded whether vehicular pursuits were conducted in a non-discriminatory manner based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Your analysis should include a review of your community's demographics and demographic data from the Use of Force portal. If you conclude that any pursuit was conducted in a discriminatory manner, please explain what steps you have taken and will take to address this conclusion.***

In 2025, there was one (1) vehicle pursuit incident in the Vernon Township Police Department in which three (3) vehicle pursuit reports were generated. Zero (0) incidents resulted in injury of the involved subject. The only vehicle pursuit incident involved a subject who was Hispanic. This is within the acceptable range of race demographics as it reflects our service population. The only vehicle pursuit incident took place during in the evening and involved a male who was later apprehended by law enforcement officers in New York State.

In my review I found that the vehicle pursuit incident in 2025 was applied in a non-discriminatory manner. To support this, I reviewed the incident and what led up to and including the pursuit.



## Section Six: Overall Review of Vehicle Pursuit Analysis

***Please utilize as much space as needed to conduct a thorough review of your agency's vehicle pursuit incidents during the preceding calendar year. Your review should include but is not limited to: the reason the pursuit was initiated; the number of officers who engaged in pursuits; whether supervisors approved or terminated pursuits; role of any outside agencies; length of pursuits by time and distance; top speeds reached; nature of any injuries, crashes, or property damage; reason for termination (if terminated), and the outcome of pursuits. Your review should evaluate whether pursuits were compliant with the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy and your agency's policy. Even if pursuits were compliant with those policies, your review should include any recommendations for training, equipment, or room for improvement.***

The Vernon Township Police Department had one (1) officer-initiated vehicle pursuit in 2025. The pursuit was initiated after officers responded to the area for a report of a U-Haul truck leaving the scene of a motor vehicle crash with significant damage. The initiating officer located the U-Haul truck with obvious signs of damage, traveling on the county highway. The initiating officer activated his emergency lights and sirens, which the driver ignored and continued traveling on the county highway very erratically. The U-Haul driver specifically drove in an unsafe manner by failing to maintain his lane and entering in and out of the oncoming lane of travel, while driving at a low rate of speed. The officer observed heavy debris falling from the U-Haul truck, because the rear roll-up door had been dislodged during the crash. The rear roll-up door was partially tethered by a metal wire and swinging like a pendulum into the oncoming lane of travel. Two other Vernon Police officers arrived in the area and were able to close the oncoming lane of travel to prevent any serious motor vehicle crashes. The driver of the U-Haul truck traveled on the county highway until crossing the New Jersey/New York State line (Vernon Township) into Warwick, New York, where the pursuit lead was taken over by an awaiting Warwick Police officer on County Route 1. Vernon Police officers terminated their involvement in the pursuit after additional support from New York state law enforcement officers arrived. The suspect was ultimately taken into custody after the vehicle became disabled in Goshen, New York.

In total, three Vernon Police officers were involved in the pursuit, which was approved by the on-duty Patrol Sergeant. The pursuit was turned over to New York State law enforcement agencies. The total length of the pursuit involving Vernon Township police officers, beginning in New Jersey and until New York State law enforcement agencies arrived to take over, was approximately eleven (11) miles. The top speed reached was sixty (60) mph. The weather was clear, and the time of day was evening at dusk.

A meaningful review was conducted by the Patrol Lieutenant, and it was determined that the pursuit was compliant with the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy and our agency's policy. The Patrol Lieutenant met with the involved officers and their Sergeant. They reviewed the pursuit and all of the appropriate information to be relayed over the radio during a pursuit. The officers appropriately took every step possible to ensure the safety of other motorists. Although some information was relayed by the lead officer, a more thorough account of roadway conditions could have been reported, even if there was low traffic and no pedestrian foot traffic due to the location



and time of the incident. The suspect was charged with multiple criminal offenses and motor vehicle offenses in New Jersey and New York State.



## Section Seven: Further Action

***Please explain what further action your agency has taken, or will take, to implement any changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment you have deemed appropriate. These actions can include department-wide changes, or changes applicable to specific officers.***

There is no specific departmental action or changes that we needed to address with vehicle pursuits. We continue to conduct annual vehicle pursuit training in compliance with the Attorney General's policy and our agency's policy.