

independent and effective investigations and reviews



Police Investigations &
Review Commissioner

7 June 2009

PIRC Investigation Findings

Serious Injury Following Police Contact
22 November, 2018
Cleland/Newmains

BACKGROUND

About 0312 hours on Thursday 22 November 2018, Police Scotland received a report that a Skoda car had been stolen in Wishaw by a man who was reported to be drunk.

About 0328 hours two officers were on patrol in a marked police car on the A73 Glasgow/Carlisle Road, Bellside, Cleland, when they saw the Skoda car stationary at a roundabout. The officers activated the emergency blue lights of the police vehicle indicating to the driver to stop.

However, the stolen car was driven off at high speed southwards towards Newmains. The officers then followed the stolen car with the emergency blue lights of their police vehicle activated. This constituted a pursuit within the meaning of Police Scotland's procedures. The officers were not trained or authorised to undertake vehicle pursuits.

After a distance of approximately one mile, the driver of the Skoda car lost control and was involved in a high speed collision on Westwood Road at the roundabout with McCarrison Road, Newmains. The car collided with a crash barrier, left the road, rolled upside down and was extensively damaged. The driver of the stolen car was trapped inside and freed by Fire Service personnel. He was then taken to hospital by ambulance, having sustained serious injuries in the crash. Hospital drink/drive procedures could not be completed due to the severity of injuries sustained by the driver.

The man was charged and later convicted.

REFERRAL TO THE PIRC

On 22 November 2018, Police Scotland referred the above incident to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) in terms of the Police and Fire Reform Act 2012 and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Investigations Procedure, Serious Incidents and Specified Weapons) Regulations 2013.

PIRC INVESTIGATION

The PIRC investigation examined the actions of the officers involved in the pursuit. PIRC investigators obtained statements from the relevant police officers. They also examined Command and Control incident logs, Airwave recordings, briefing papers and Standard Operating Procedures and collision reports.

FINDINGS

Following investigation the Commissioner finds that:

- The man was driving a stolen Skoda car on 22 November 2018 on the A73.
- Police officers who had heard a lookout request for the car, found it stationary on the A73 at Clelland.

- When police officers stopped beside the stolen car and activated the emergency blue lights on their police car, the man then drove off at high speed.
- One of the officers told the Area Control Room that he was a 'standard driver', meaning he was trained to engage in a vehicle pursuit. The officer was in fact a 'basic driver' meaning that he was not trained to engage in a pursuit. This would appear to have been a genuine error.
- After a distance of one mile and before any decision could be taken by ACR supervisors as to whether or not to authorise a pursuit, the man lost control of the car and crashed at high speed seriously injuring himself.
- The officers engaged in a vehicle pursuit as defined in the Police Scotland Vehicle Pursuits Standard Operating Procedure, although they were not trained or authorised to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner recommends to Police Scotland that:

- The officers involved in this incident receive refresher driver training, with a particular emphasis on roles, responsibilities and guidance on vehicle pursuits.
- Reports to the Commissioner within 3 months of the date of issue of this report on action taken to implement the above recommendations.