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# EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

## REPORT TO THE EDMONTON POLICE COMMISSION

DATE: 2012 June 19

SUBJECT: 2011 Criminal Flight Incident Analysis

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### RECOMMENDATION(S):

That this report be received for information.

### INTRODUCTION:

The EPS Traffic Section conducts an annual review of all criminal flight incidents which occurred over the course of the year. The analysis of the data is geared towards enabling a better understanding of the factors which contribute to criminal flight events and the subsequent results. Ultimately, this information can be referred to when making decisions regarding policies, training, and techniques.

### BACKGROUND:

*Due to the complexity of the topic the background information is presented in the following manner.*

***Criminal Flight [Criminal Flight Event]*** occurs when:

- a. a member believes that the driver of a motor vehicle is attempting to evade them and the member has not directed the driver to stop, and the driver is operating the vehicle unlawfully or
- b. a member attempts to direct the driver to stop and the driver is aware of the member's action and refuses to obey the member.

**Criminal Flight Response [Flight Response]** occurs when:

- a. a member chooses to follow someone in *criminal flight*.

**Criminal Flight Prevention Techniques [Prevention Technique]** are approved activities used by police to attempt to stop a suspect from fleeing in a vehicle.

Approved prevention techniques are:

- Disable / tow parked suspect vehicle
- Deliberate Contact ['Box In', 'PIT', Pinning]
- Using vehicle factory installed GPS services [if known]
- Use of Air 1 or Air 2 [Flight Operations]

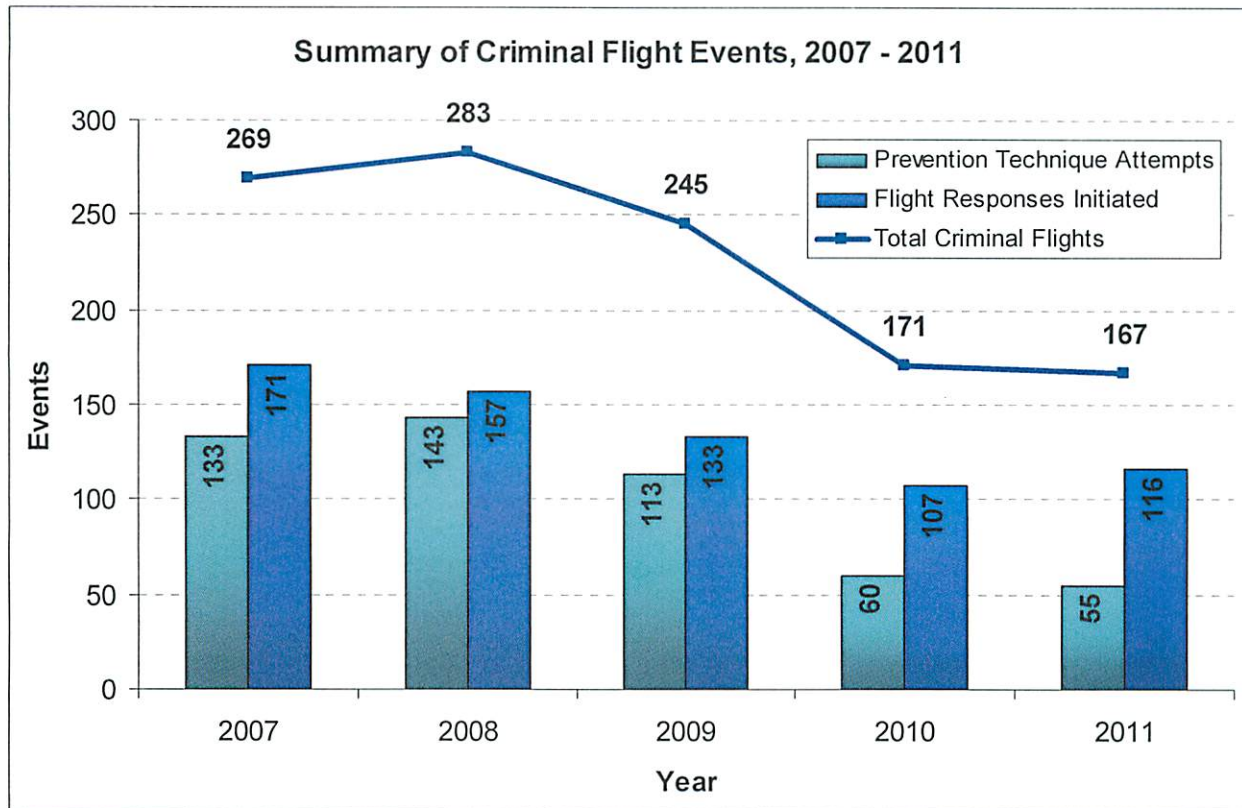
Because statistics on **Prevention Techniques** are captured as well as **Flight Responses**, the occurrences in this report include the following possible sequences of events:

1. A member performs a successful **Prevention Technique** and the suspect has no opportunity to flee. Therefore no **Flight Response** occurs.
2. A member attempts a **Prevention Technique** but is unsuccessful. The suspect flees but the member does not initiate a **Flight Response** due to safety or policy considerations.
3. A member attempts a **Prevention Technique** but is unsuccessful. The suspect flees and the member initiates a **Flight Response**.
4. A member does not attempt a **Prevention Technique** (e.g. no opportunity) and the suspect flees. The member initiates a **Flight Response**
5. A member does not attempt a **Prevention Technique** (e.g. no opportunity) and the suspect flees. The member does not initiate a **Flight Response** due to safety or policy considerations.

**COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:**

The following chart shows a summary of *Criminal Flight Events and related activities [Prevention Techniques and Flight Response]* for the past five years (2007 – 2011).

**Chart 1: Summary of Types of Criminal Flight Events, 2007 – 2011**



- Total Criminal Flights includes all files where a suspect fled
- Prevention Technique Attempts includes all incidents where an EPS member attempted a *Prevention Technique*, whether or not it was successful
- Flight Responses includes all incidents involving an EPS member initiating a *Flight Response* after a suspect flees.

Compared to 2010, there were three primary measures which saw a decrease in 2011.

**Table 1:**  
**Primary Criminal Flight Event Measures which Decreased in 2011**

| Category                            | 2010 | 2011 | Change (%) |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------------|
| Total Criminal Flight Event Files   | 171  | 167  | -2.3%      |
| Total Prevention Technique Attempts | 60   | 55   | -8.3%      |
| Prevention Technique Success Rate   | 77%  | 66%  | -14.3%     |

The decrease in the total number of criminal flight events is very small (four files) and is not conclusive of any trend.

The number of total **Prevention Technique** attempts saw a small decrease. This number is also primarily affected by the specific elements of each occurrence (i.e. whether the opportunity for a **Prevention Technique** was present) as well as training and decision-making by members on the street.

This year's decrease was small (five events) but this category should be monitored for future decreases. A decrease in **Prevention Technique** attempts alone is not cause for concern, however if accompanied by an increase in **Flight Responses**, it may indicate that members are not utilizing their training to its full capacity.

The success rate of **Prevention Technique** attempts also decreased in 2011, by 14.3%. The 2011 success rate of 66% represents a 12% decrease from the five-year average. The way the data has been historically captured does not allow for an in-depth analysis but the theory is;

- The state of the junior workforce in 2011 does not have the operational experience to apply this skill on a more efficient basis as compared to the 5 year average.

**As well the 5 year average is affected by the results of the Tactical Response to Auto Theft Prevention team (TRAP). The success rate for the application of Prevention Techniques by this team was extremely high. This team was discontinued in 2009.**

The success or failure of a **Prevention Technique** is highly dependent on training and the police members experience in the application of the **Prevention Technique**.

Preliminary analysis does not highlight any trending issues however detailed information on the success rates of the various **Prevention Technique** will be made available to Training Branch in order to inform them on technique utilization by EPS members.

There were also four primary measures which saw increases in 2011:

**Table 2:**  
**Primary Criminal Flight Event Measures which Increased in 2011**

| Category                                      | 2010  | 2011  | Change (%) |
|---|-------|-------|------------|
| Total Flight Responses Initiated by EPS       | 107   | 116   | 8.4%       |
| Air 1 - 2 Utilized                            | 29    | 45    | 55.2%      |
| Total Flight Response Collisions              | 25    | 32    | 28.0%      |
| Arrest Rate – Suspect Driver Flight Responses | 73.8% | 82.8% | 12.2%      |

After a four-year downward trend, 2011 saw a slight increase in **Flight Responses** of 8.4% (nine events). However, the 2011 total remains lower than in years prior to 2010 (see **Chart 1**) and is 15.2% below the five-year average.

Considering a growing city population, as well as a 3% increase in sworn EPS members in 2011, this increase is not considered to be cause for concern but will be monitored throughout 2012.

The increased use of Air 1 or Air 2 [Flight Operations] (up 55.2% in 2011) is a positive outcome; **however these figures may be partially due to improvements in data reporting.**

Flight Operations was utilized in 38.8% of **Flight Responses** in 2011, up from 27.1% of events in 2010. These increases reflect risk-effective decision making by EPS members and a strong regard for public safety.

The number of collisions during the course of a **Flight Response** increased by seven incidents, from 25 to 32 (+28.0%). Three (3) of the 32 collisions were minor injury collisions and the remainder were property damage only.

The way the data is reported through the **Criminal Flight Response Form** does not allow for a specific analysis to occur as to the reason for the increase but. The theory for the increase is;

- In 2011 the decrease in the success of the application of **Prevention Techniques [See page 4 Table 1]** has led to an increase in the number of times that the suspect has fled from the police. Theoretically this situation creates a greater probability of collision during the course of the flight.

The 32 collisions are broken down into;

| <b>Flight Responses by Collision Involvement</b> |             |               |             |               |                   |              |
|--|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>Category</b>                                  | <b>2010</b> |               | <b>2011</b> |               | <b>Difference</b> |              |
|  | <b>#</b>    | <b>%</b>      | <b>#</b>    | <b>%</b>      | <b>#</b>          | <b>%</b>     |
| Suspect Vehicle Only                             | 14          | 56.0%         | 19          | 59.4%         | 5                 | 35.7%        |
| Suspect & 3rd Party Vehicle                      | 6           | 24.0%         | 6           | 18.8%         | 0                 | 0.0%         |
| Suspect & Service Vehicle                        | 5           | 20.0%         | 5           | 15.6%         | 0                 | 0.0%         |
| Service, Suspect, & 3rd Party Vehicle            | 0           | 0.0%          | 1           | 3.1%          | 1                 | n/a          |
| Service & 3rd Party Vehicle                      | 0           | 0.0%          | 1           | 3.1%          | 1                 | n/a          |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>25</b>   | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>32</b>   | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>7</b>          | <b>28.0%</b> |

The increase this year is important to note and efforts should be made to remind EPS members of collision risk factors and the importance of the continued utilization Flight Operations when possible.

The increase in the arrest rate for suspect drivers (up 12.2%) is another positive outcome.

In 2011, 96 drivers who had fled from police were arrested compared to 79 in 2010.

This figure may have increased as a result of the increased use of helicopter support. As well, the increase in collisions would also increase the arrest rate, as when a fleeing driver crashes it often leads to apprehension.

### **CONCLUSION:**

After years of decreasing numbers, ***Flight Responses*** increased slightly this year, reminding us of the need to continue to be vigilant in our training, supervisory oversight and adherence to policy in order to respond safely to these often risky situations. However the analysis does not show any specific trending.

In 2012, the EPS will be undertaking an extensive review of current criminal flight practices.

This will include examination of policy and procedure, as well as the criminal flight review process. The data collection and analysis procedures will also be examined, with potential improvements including:

- tracking monetary impact of ***Flight Responses*** that result in collisions
- streamlining the process for identifying officers involved in multiple events
- more detailed information on policy breaches in order to;
  - strengthen supervisory oversight of this activity
  - identify trends and/or lapses in training,
  - amend individual member(s) behaviour and decision making on the topic

**ATTACHMENTS**

Traffic Section manages the collection and analysis of detailed criminal flight data. Attachment 1 contains the following information:

- Quarterly Breakdown of **Prevention Techniques** and **Flight Responses**, 2010 and 2011
- Geographic Breakdown: Criminal Flight Events by Division, 2011
- Summary of Event Types (Reason for Initiation), 2011 **Flight Responses**
- 5-Year Trend: **Prevention Technique** Attempts and Success Rates
- 5-Year Trend: **Flight Response** Collisions and Collision Involvement\*

\*Collision involvement (suspect vehicle, police vehicle, and/or third party civilian vehicle) is not available for years prior to 2009.

*The complete 2011 Criminal Flight Incident Analysis is available upon request.*

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**Date:**

**Comments:**

**Reviewed By:**  \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Chief Danielle CAMPBELL

**Date:** 2012 June 28

**Comments:** *Approved. Forward to A/Chief Simpson for final approval.*

**Chief of Police:**  2012-JUNE-28  
Acting Chief Brian SIMPSON

**Date:**

**Comments:**



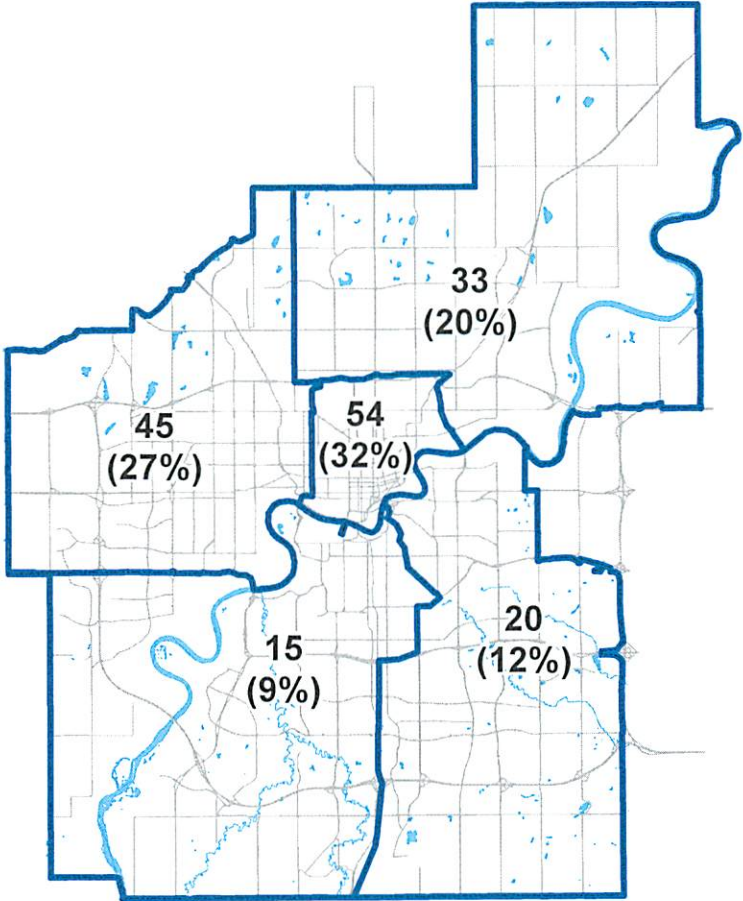
Appendix 1

**Chart 2: Quarterly Breakdown of Prevention Techniques and Flight Responses, 2010 and 2011**

| Prevention Techniques by Quarter, 2010 and 2011 |         |        |       |        |             |
|---|---------|--------|-------|--------|-------------|
| Year  | Quarter |        |       |        | Grand Total |
|   | Q1      | Q2     | Q3    | Q4     |             |
| 2010  | 22      | 14     | 15    | 9      | 60          |
| 2011  | 16      | 10     | 21    | 8      | 55          |
| Change (#)                                      | -6      | -4     | 6     | -1     | -5          |
| Change (%)                                      | -27.3%  | -28.6% | 40.0% | -11.1% | -8.3%       |

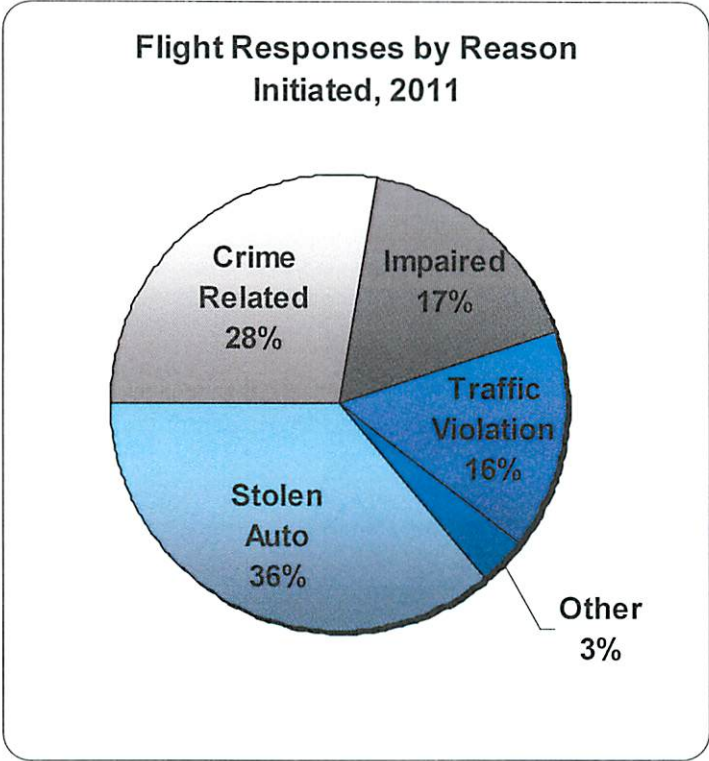
| Flight Responses by Quarter, 2010 and 2011 |         |       |      |       |             |
|--|---------|-------|------|-------|-------------|
| Year                                       | Quarter |       |      |       | Grand Total |
|  | Q1      | Q2    | Q3   | Q4    |             |
| 2010                                       | 26      | 22    | 32   | 27    | 107         |
| 2011                                       | 19      | 39    | 32   | 26    | 116         |
| Change (#)                                 | -7      | 17    | 0    | -1    | 9           |
| Change (%)                                 | -26.9%  | 77.3% | 0.0% | -3.7% | 8.4%        |

**Chart 3: Geographic Breakdown: Criminal Flight Events by Division, 2011**

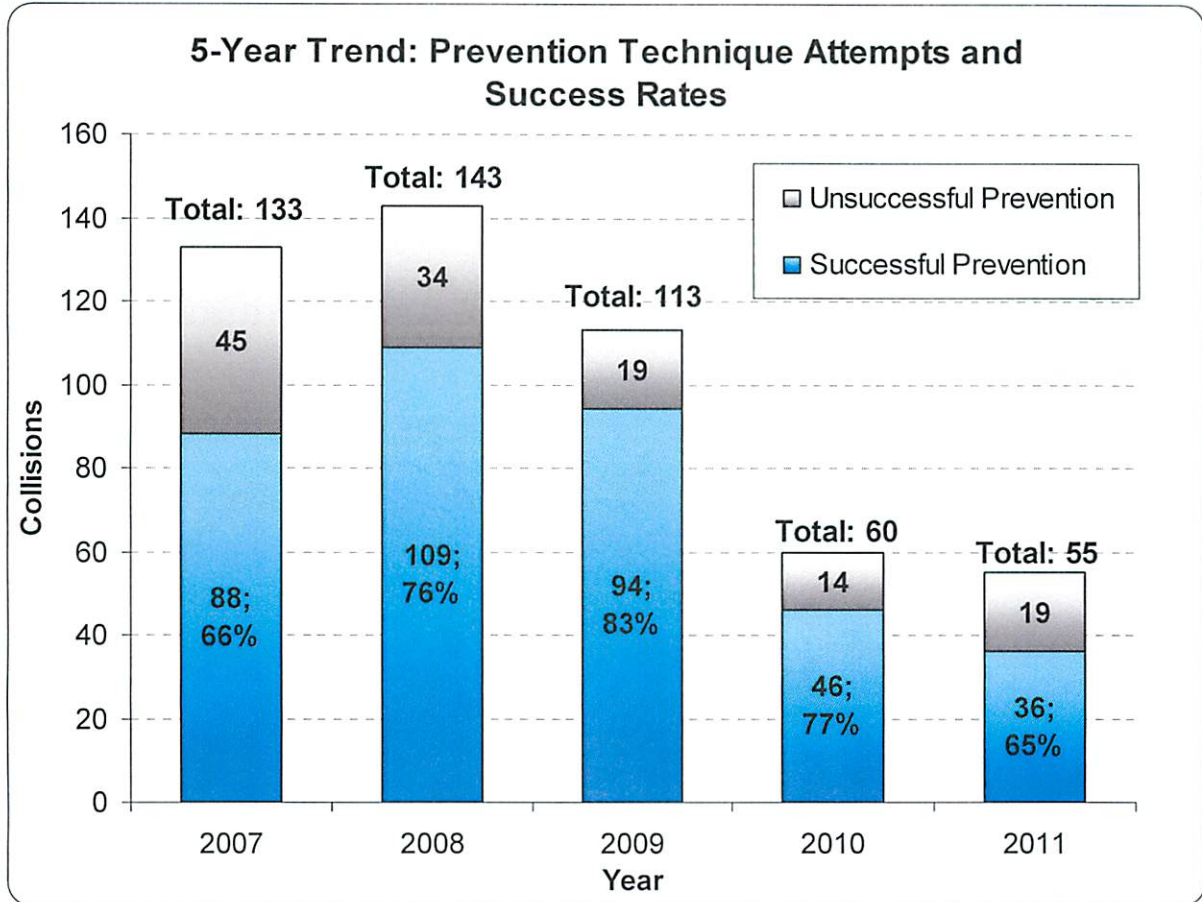


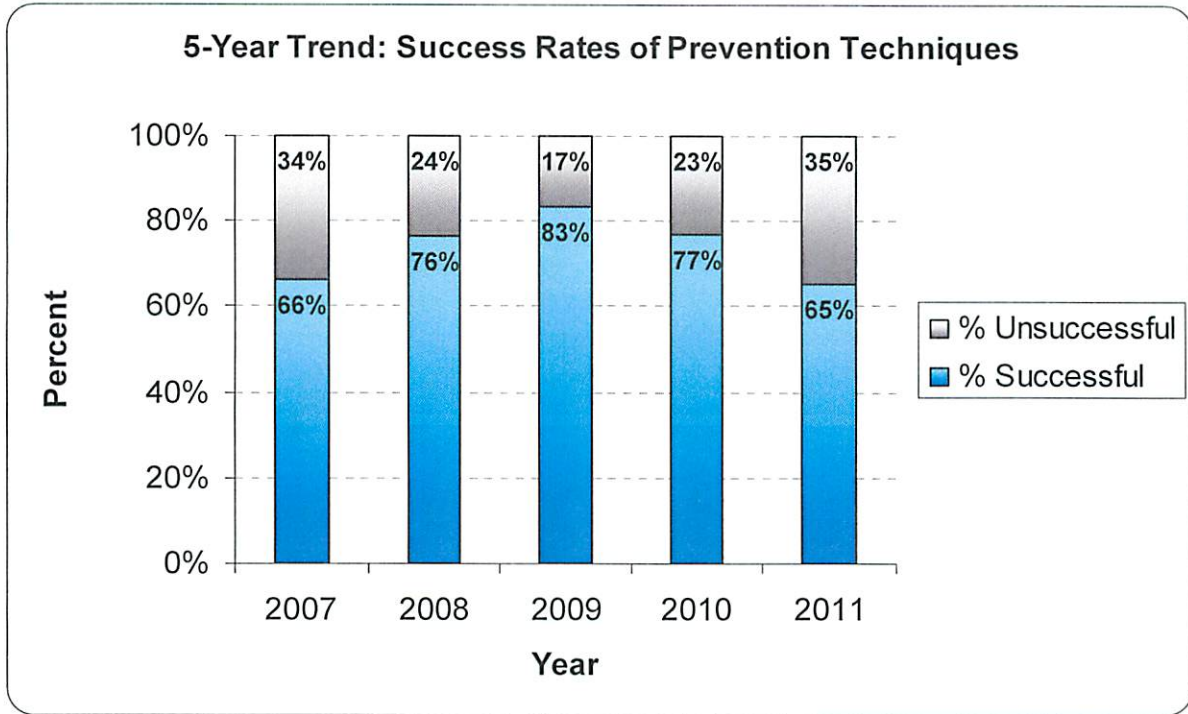
| Criminal Flight Events by Geographic Division at Initiation |        |            |
|---|--------|------------|
| Division  | Events | % of Total |
| Downtown  | 54     | 32.3%      |
| West  | 45     | 26.9%      |
| North   | 33     | 19.8%      |
| SouthEast   | 20     | 12.0%      |
| SouthWest   | 15     | 9.0%       |
| <i>Grand Total</i>  | 167    | 100.0%     |

**Chart 4: Summary of Event Types (Reason for Initiation), 2011 Flight Responses**

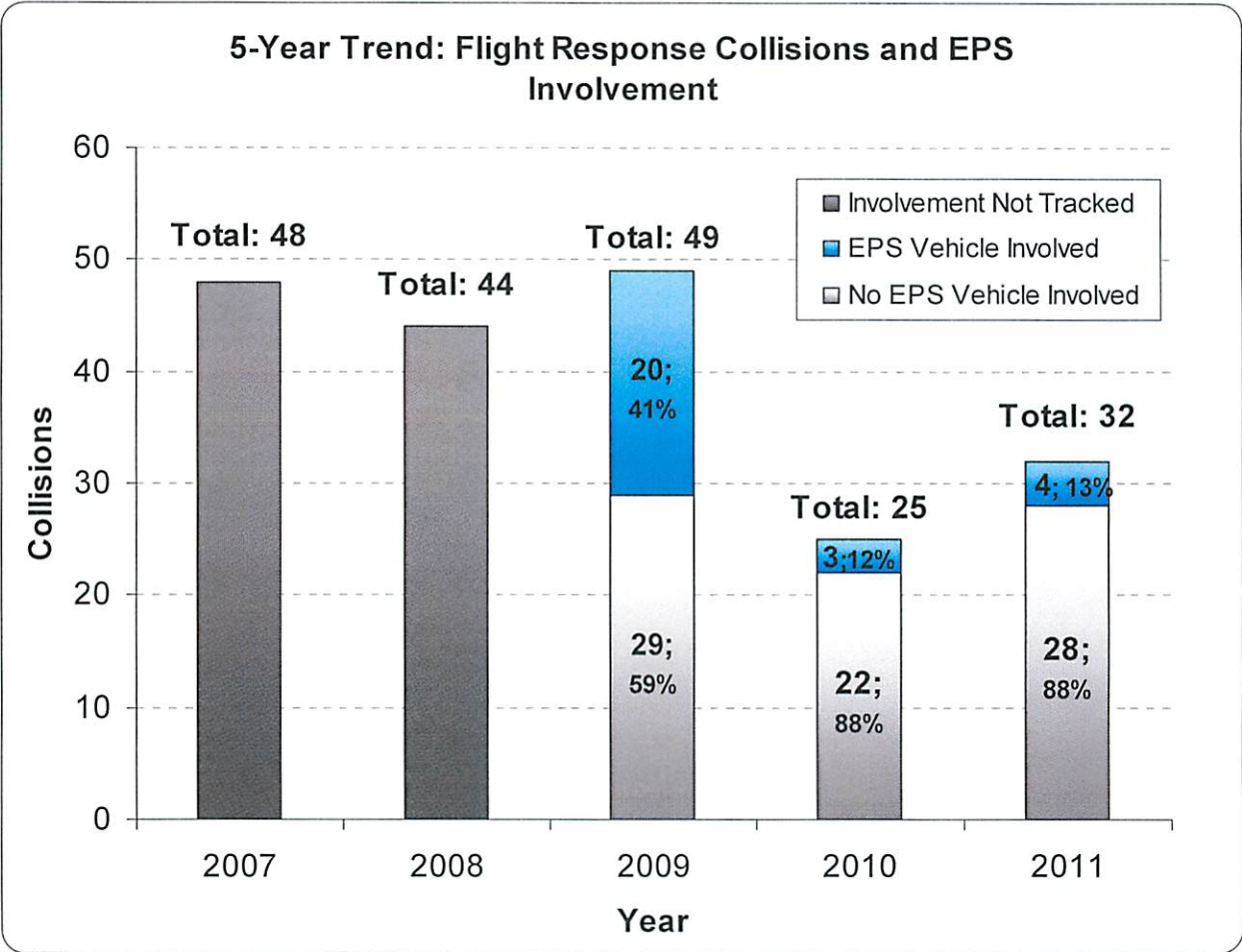


**Chart 5: 5-Year Trend: Prevention Technique Attempts and Success Rates**





**Chart 6: 5-Year Trend: Flight Response Collisions and Collision Involvement**



*Collision involvement (suspect vehicle, police vehicle, and/or third party civilian vehicle) was not tracked for years prior to 2009.*