



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL



Spokane Police Department
2016 Annual Comprehensive Analysis of Reportable
Use of Force Incidents



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Executive Summary

The Spokane Police Department is committed to protecting people, their property, and their rights. The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use objectively reasonable force in carrying out their duties. The Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use objectively reasonable force and to protect themselves and the public requires monitoring, evaluation, and a careful balancing of all interests.

The primary purpose of the Comprehensive Analysis of Reportable Use of Force Incidents is to provide Spokane Police Department information about officers' use of force and trends associated with use of force. The analysis provides information on many factors involving the subjects and involved officers, as well as environmental details. The document also describes the training issues identified during the incident review. SPD's Training Unit and the Training Plan Committee use the information in the report to assist in their development of training curriculum.

The report also serves to inform the community about use of force. The analysis and individual use of force incident reports are available on SPD's website at the following link:

<https://my.spokanecity.org/police/accountability/use-of-force/>

Trends Identified in the Annual Comprehensive Analysis

Decline in Incident Frequency

The frequency of use of force incidents in 2016 has declined in comparison to 2015. There are 10% fewer incidents in 2016 than 2015, despite the addition of new categories of force. The total number of use of force incidents has declined 29% since 2013.

Use of Less Intrusive Force Options

The Level I Lateral Neck Restraint was the most frequent type of reportable force used by officers in 2016, followed by the use of a TASER™ device. The Use of Force Review Board (UOFRB) is pleased to see the success of the Level I Lateral Neck Restraint control technique and the significantly low occurrence of injury to subjects and officers. The recent mandatory documentation of this technique has confirmed the success of this technique negating the need for other more intrusive force options.



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Increase in Incidents Found to be in Compliance with Policy

All of the 2016 non-deadly reportable uses of force were determined to be objectionably reasonable and in compliance with the Spokane Police Department policy. In contrast, two incidents were found to be in violation of policy in 2015.

Most Incidents Associated with Calls for Service

Use of force incidents continue to stem most often from officers responding to a call for service, rather than court-ordered contacts, officer-initiated contacts, or assisting another agency. In 2016, 72% of the use of force incidents resulted from officers being dispatched to 911 or Crime Check calls rather than officer-initiated activity. Calls for service were also associated with the majority of incidents in 2014 and 2015. This statistic confirms the department's belief that officers are not targeting specific individuals or groups of individuals in their application of force but instead are responding to community members' requests for assistance.

Continued Prevalence of Incidents Related to Domestic Violence Calls

Domestic Violence-related calls continue to be the most common type of call resulting in force, involving 15% of all call types in 2016, 12% in 2015 and 15% of calls in 2014. In an analysis of incidents from 2009-2013, Domestic Violence-related calls were always the most frequent type of call involving force, making up between 15-24% of total calls during the five year span.

SPD strategically uses many Reality Based Training (RBT) scenarios that involve responding to domestic violence scenarios. RBT sessions provide officers opportunities to apply de-escalation, crisis intervention, use of force, and patrol procedures in the context of a Domestic Violence call. SPD trained all officers in Verbal Defense & Influence (VDI) de-escalation training in 2014, and integrated VDI concepts into all aspects of training. VDI is a structured communication method designed to increase positive outcomes in stressful situations. VDI provides a framework that allows officers to control, resolve, and even prevent conflict. The approach taken by VDI is to recognize and address the underlying factors that lead to conflict instead of simply attempting to deal with a situation after it has already become a problem. SPD will be providing additional VDI training in 2017.



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Introduction

Use of Force Defined

Use of Force is use of physical effort towards detention or control. Deadly Force is the application of force that creates a substantial likelihood of causing serious bodily injury or death.

This report analyzes non-deadly applications of force. There were a total of 108 reportable uses of force in 2016, including three deadly force incidents. Two of those incidents did not involve a fatality as the subject survived the encounter. This report will analyze the 105 non-deadly uses of force. It should be noted that in two cases, two different Internal Affairs tracking numbers exist for the same incident. F16-062 and F15-066 are associated with one incident. F16-075 and F16-099 are also associated with the same incident. Due to this duplication, our internal records show a total of 110 uses of force and 107 non-deadly uses of force. After removing the two duplicates and the three deadly force cases, our total is 105 non-deadly incidents.

Reportable Use of Force with Chain of Command Review

Reportable uses of force involve an officer's deployment of control tactics and/or control devices for which officers have successfully completed department-approved training. When a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed or restrained, it is not considered a reportable use of force; it is considered compliance. Less intrusive control tactics are not normally deemed a "Reportable Use of Force." For example, when an officer uses his body weight to control a suspect while handcuffing the person in the prone position, that situation would not require a use of force investigation. However, if an injury occurred that is not consistent with an applied control technique or tactic, a use of force investigation would occur. Most reportable use of force incidents occur when an officer uses a physical tactic, such as a Lateral Neck Restraint or TASER.™ Spokane Police Department also categorizes the intentional pointing of a firearm as a reportable use of force incident, although it does not involve the application of physical force.

Reportable Non-Deadly Use of Force Applications*

- All applications of a Conducted Energy Weapon (e.g. TASER™) or control device
- All applications of Lateral Neck Restraint
- All applications of the intentional pointing of a firearm at a suspect where the officer is intentionally "pointed in" (muzzle is covering the subject) with their firearm, with the intent to use the firearm in defense of themselves or another
- All applications of Blunt Impact Munitions (e.g. 40mm rounds)
- All applications of K9 contacts



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- Any application of an impact weapon whether personal, issued or improvised to a subject (e.g., baton strikes, knee strikes)
- Any deployment of chemical agents OC or CS by means of spray or by means of physically or mechanically delivered techniques where a person is exposed to the substance
- Any application causing a visible injury (with the exception of minor marks on the wrist consistent with being handcuffed or minor marks as a result of prone handcuffing) or resulting in the subject complaining of injury

*SPD's Use of Force policies were revised during the course of 2015 to expand the types of reportable force; new policies with expanded categories were implemented January 1, 2016.

Investigation and Administrative Review of Use of Force

Incidents involving use of force are reported by the officer's supervisor using Blue Team software. Blue Team reports contain the administrative review and supplemental documents such as police reports, radio transmissions, and investigative summary narratives. The Blue Team report is reviewed by the chain of command (sergeant, lieutenant, captain) before being sent to a Major for the final determination. This review process ensures that the application of force is within policy and law and meets department expectations. See "Non-Deadly Use of Force Investigation" flow chart at the end of the report for more information.

This review process measures the objective reasonableness of each application of force considering the following:

- The threat factors pertaining to victims, public, officers and the involved subject
- The subject's resistance level/ability and attempts to flee officer control efforts
- The severity of the crime or community care-taking elements of the incident

This review also takes into consideration the involved officers' level of training and experience and the fact that officers are often forced to make split-second decisions during situations that are often tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving. After the final determination has been made, the use of force report is then distributed to SPD's Training Director, Defensive Tactics subject matter experts, Internal Affairs Lieutenant, patrol captain, Chief, Assistant Chief, Director of Strategic Initiatives, City Attorney's Office, and the Office of Police Ombudsman.

Incidents get a secondary review by the Use of Force Review Board (UOFRB). The UOFRB meets monthly to debrief use of force incidents with the intent to evaluate training, equipment needs, and policy/standard operating procedure (SOPs) in place or practiced department-wide. The UOFRB only reviews incidents that have received a final determination from the Chief or designee, and the UOFRB is not utilized to recommend discipline or conduct investigations in unresolved use of force incidents. UOFRB members include: Training Director, Assistant Training Director, Rangemaster, Internal Affairs Lieutenant, Internal Affairs Sergeants, Program Professional, and appointed subject matter experts as needed.



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Use of Force Data: January 1, 2016-December 31, 2016

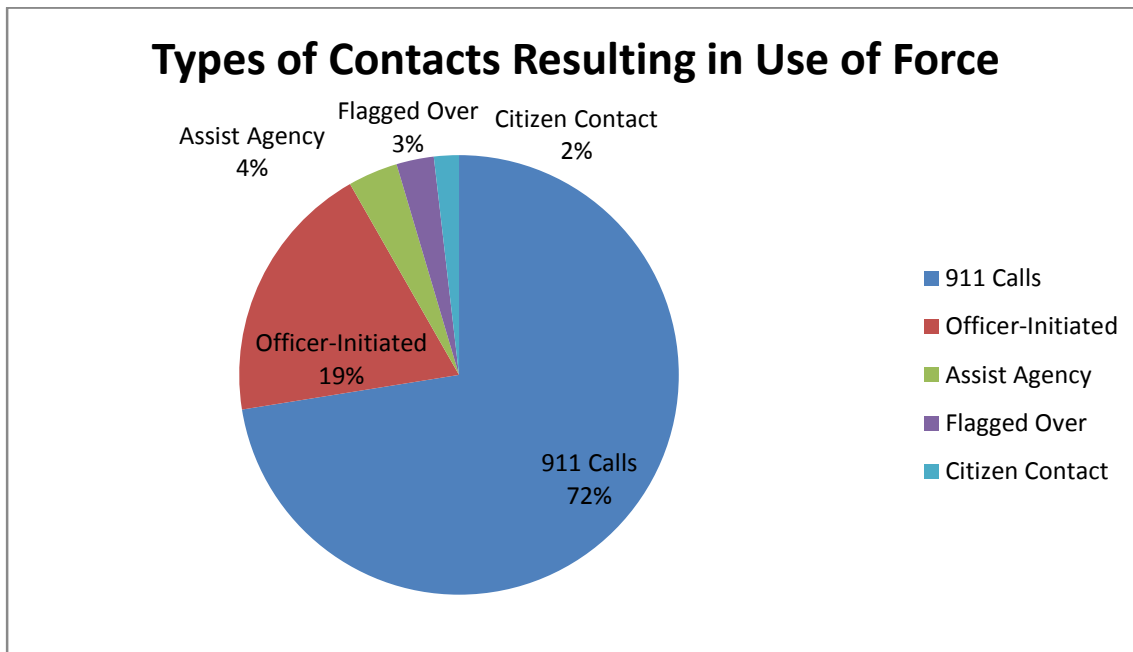
Total Reportable Use of Force Incidents

Spokane Police Department officers used non-deadly force in 105 incidents in 2016. There are 10% fewer incidents in 2016 than 2015, despite the addition of new categories of force. In fact, the total number of incidents has declined 29% since 2013.

Agencies are often asked to compare use of force rates with police-citizen contacts. It is difficult to provide a definitive number of police-citizen contacts. The department looks at the rate of arrests and the frequency of use of force incidents. 2016 arrest numbers are not available due to switching over to a new CAD/RMS system partway through the year; however, the number of arrests over the past three years averages 10, 573.

Calls for Service versus Officer-Initiated Contacts

Figure 1





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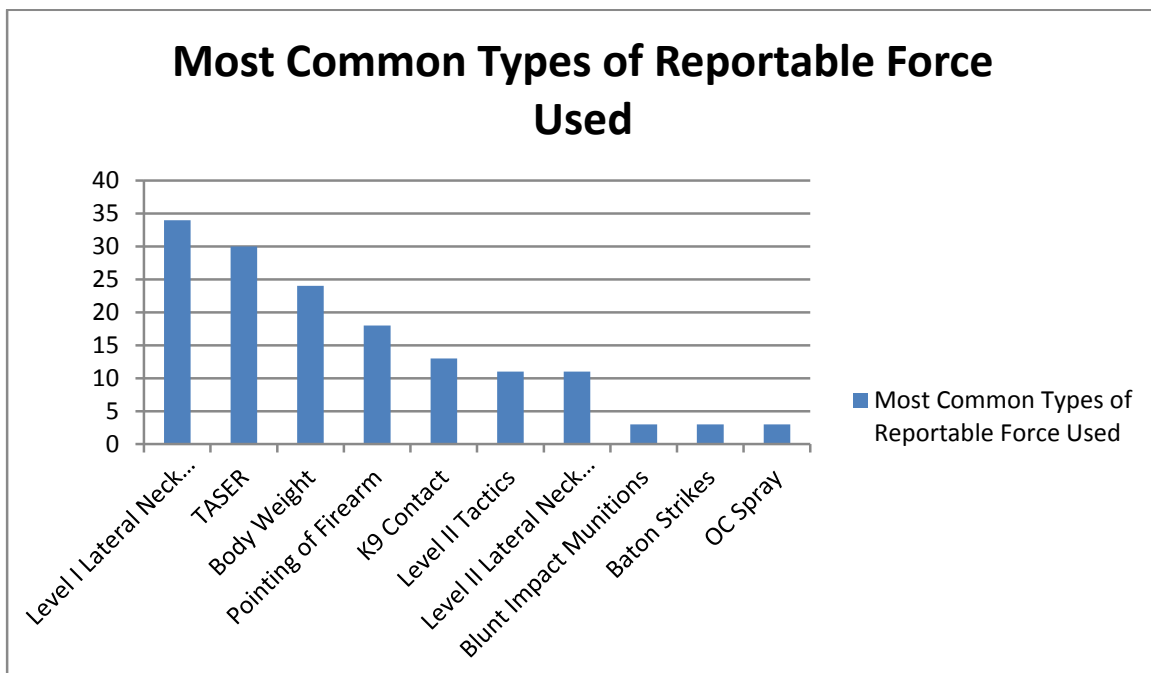
72% of the use of force incidents resulted from officers being dispatched to 911 or Crime Check calls rather than officer-initiated activity. In 19% of incidents, the officer initiated contact. 4% of calls involved officers assisting another agency, 3% of calls stemmed from a citizen flagging over an officer, and 2% were other citizen contacts. See Figure 1.

Type of Call

Domestic Violence-related calls were the most common type of call resulting in a reportable use of force. DV-related calls (include a wide variety of classifications from DV protection order violations to DV Assault) made up 15% of incidents. Other common types of calls resulting in force included serving a court-ordered warrant (8%), Suicide Attempt (8%), Traffic Stop (8%), Suspicious Person (8%), Assault (7%), and Person with a Weapon (6%). The rest of the calls varied and included classifications such as Burglary, Commercial Burglary, Robbery, Disorderly Conduct, Fight, Hit and Run, Sex Crime, Suspicious Circumstances, Trouble Unknown, Check Welfare, Assist Other Agency, Traffic Stop, Vehicle Theft, Vehicle Recovery, Stolen Property, etc.

Type of Force

Figure 2





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Many of the incidents involved multiple officers and more than one type of force. For example, while taking a subject into custody, one officer might use a Takedown Technique while another officer used a TASER™ device.

The Level I Lateral Neck Restraint was the most frequent type of reportable force used by officers in 2016, followed by the use of a TASER™ device. The most common application of force used in 2015 was the intentional pointing of a firearm (27 applications); however, officers used that technique less often in 2016 (18 applications). In 2016, there was a 33% reduction in the use of the intentional pointing of a firearm technique. Since 2014, use of this tactic has reduced by 47%.

Frequently Used Applications

- The Level I Lateral Neck Restraint (LNR)* was used 34 times.
- Officers deployed a TASER™ 30 times, in 24 of the 105 non-deadly force incidents.
- Body Weight/Manual Force was used in 24 of the incidents.
- Intentional Pointing of a Firearm was used as a tactic 18 times.

Less Frequently Used Applications

- K9 contacts occurred 13 times.**
- The Level II LNR was used 11 times by officers.
- Level 2 tactics (e.g., knee strikes) were used 11 times.
- Blunt impact munitions were deployed 3 times.
- Officers deployed baton strikes 3 times.
- Oleoresin capsicum spray, commonly known as pepper spray, was used 3 times.

*A Lateral Neck Restraint (LNR) is a control technique that involves an officer placing pressure on the sides of the subject's neck, compressing arteries and veins. The LNR impacts the circulatory system while leaving the airway unobstructed and protected during the deployment of this control technique. The Level I LNR involves lighter pressure as the officer does not intend to render the subject unconscious; in many cases, the subject is compliant once placed in the hold. An officer deploying a Level II LNR control technique does so with the intention of rendering the subject temporarily unconscious.

** SPD K9s are used extensively. K9s were deployed 1000 times in 2016, to assist with tracking, building searches, perimeter security, evidence finds, and suspect apprehension. K9s were involved in 189 captures and 13 incidents involving use of force. K9 contacts occurred 13 times, representing 1.3% of total K9 deployments. Industry best practices suggest that the bite to apprehension ratio should be below 20%, based on *Kerr v City of West Palm Beach*.

Effectiveness of Techniques

The SPD training unit was interested to know how often the Lateral Neck Restraint (LNR) was effective in the safe apprehension of subjects. The Level I Lateral Neck Restraint (LNR) was used 34 times. 24 incidents (70%) involved



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a Level I LNR application with no other force needed in order to take the subject into custody, which did not result in injury to the subject. In 6 incidents, officers used a secondary type of force such as body weight/manual force, takedown technique, etc. In two other incidents, the officer began with a Level I LNR application and transitioned to a Level II application so both techniques are counted. This technique resulted in a high level of success and very low level of injury.

TASER™ device applications are the second most frequent type of force used. A TASER™ device was deployed in 24 of the 105 (23%) non-deadly force incidents and was successful in 16 (67%) of those incidents. In 12 of the 24 non-deadly incidents, the TASER™ was effective without issue. In 4 cases, the application was not effective until followed up by a drive stun to complete the circuit or a secondary application was applied to the subject.

In 8 of the 24 (33%) incidents, the TASER™ was not effective due to probes not making desired contact with the subject, sometimes due to the subject's heavy clothing or other inadequate probe connections. In one incident, the probe darts were not wide enough to achieve the desired effect due to close proximity with the subject.

Injuries to Subject

In 38 incidents, the subject was uninjured. These cases often involved the intentional pointing of a firearm with no physical force used or the use of a Level I Lateral Neck Restraint control hold.

In 50 cases, the subject sustained minor injury, such as scrapes, abrasions, or lacerations, often associated with handcuffing/control techniques performed on various ground surfaces. Subjects were often injured while falling to the ground as a result of various applications of force. For example, one subject, armed with an axe, fell on the concrete when officers deployed a TASER™; he sustained a laceration to his face that required stitches. Minor injuries also included incidents where medics removed TASER™ device probes or provided medical clearances prior to transporting to jail.

17 incidents involved more serious subject injuries. In four cases, subjects sustained injuries that would be considered unusual for the type of force used. In each case, the subject's actions and environment contributed to the injury. One subject sustained a small facial fracture that did not require treatment; he fell on the concrete when the TASER™ device was applied. One subject sustained a chipped elbow; the injury may have occurred when he ran into traffic while trying to escape and was hit by a car, and he was also taken to the ground by an officer. Another subject also sustained a broken elbow in an incident where the officer took him to the ground for prone handcuffing. One subject broke a tooth in an encounter involving a takedown technique. The 13 K9 contacts required medical attention at the hospital per policy 318.2.6, which states "If the injury requires medical attention, the subject should be transported to an appropriate medical facility."

Note: In a few cases, subjects presented with injuries that were unrelated to the contact (e.g., infected stitches from pre-existing wound) or the subjects had already harmed themselves (e.g., cut their wrists).



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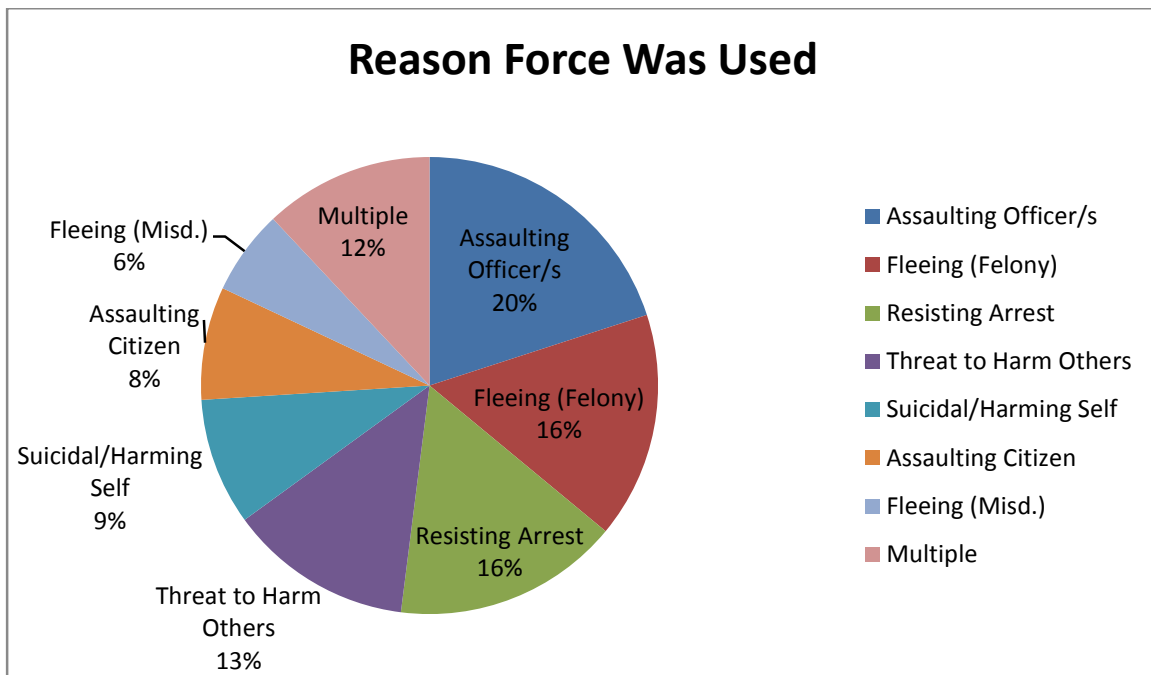
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Injuries to Officer

Officers were injured in 15 cases. In 9 incidents, officers sustained minor injuries such as contusions, abrasions, and scrapes. Officers were bitten by the subject in two of those incidents. More serious injuries consisted of sprained thumb, sore knee, aggravation of a pre-existing elbow injury, and a back strain.

Reason Force Was Used

Figure 3



Spokane Police officers are required to document the circumstances of use of force incidents and articulate the reason that force was used. The most common reason was assaulting officer/s, followed by the circumstances of a suspect fleeing from a Felony arrest. An example of Felony fleeing is a situation in which an armed robbery suspect flees the scene and hides in a nearby abandoned building, and a K9 is called to locate him. The K9 then locates and apprehends the suspect, who is arrested for first-degree Robbery. See Figure 3.



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Resistance Threshold Guidelines

During the process of choice and application of reasonably applied force, officers are trained to identify, interpret, predict and evaluate resistance from a subject(s). Resistance thresholds will assist as a guide in force decision making. However, resistance thresholds alone will not determine the reasonableness of applied force whether excessive or insufficient.

Level of Resistance

Objectively Reasonable Officer Response

Compliant:

Presence
Verbal Commands/Draw and Direct
Compliant Handcuffing
Cursory Search for Weapons
Reasonably Objective Exceptional Techniques

Passive:

Escort Compliance Techniques (Joint Locks)
Neuromuscular Control
Passive Resistant Handcuffing
Reasonably Objective Exceptional Techniques

Active:

Active Resistant Handcuffing
Takedown Techniques
Roll Over Techniques
Level I Neck Restraint
Reasonably Objective Exceptional Techniques

Assaultive:

Impact Techniques
Level II Neck Restraint
OC / CS spray
TASER™
Reasonably Objective Exceptional Techniques

Life Threatening:

Firearms
Weapon Retention Techniques
Reasonably Objective Exceptional Techniques



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Level of Resistance Definitions:

Compliant: Cooperative response to lawful commands.

Passive: Noncompliance to lawful authority without physical resistance or mechanical enhancement.

Active: Use of physical effort or mechanical resistance in achieving and/or maintaining noncompliance.

Assaultive: Noncompliance perceived as, or resulting in, an actual assault on an individual or officer. The scope and severity of the attack would support the reasonable assumption that the actions would not result in death or serious bodily harm.

Aggravated Assaultive/Life Threatening: Noncompliance perceived as, or resulting in, an actual assault on an individual or officer. The scope and severity of the attack would support the reasonable assumption that the actions would result in death or serious bodily harm.

Tactical Interaction Commitment

Interaction with citizens is a primary function for the Officers of the Spokane Police Department. It will be the intent of every officer to demonstrate five interaction tactics. The first one will be maintained regardless of the situation. The next four will be implemented when safety of the officer, subject, citizens and property allow.

- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- When practical, ask people instead of order.
- When practical, explain why we are asking.
- When practical, give them options that will allow them to save face yet achieve the desired goal.
- When practical, give the subject at least one additional chance to comply.



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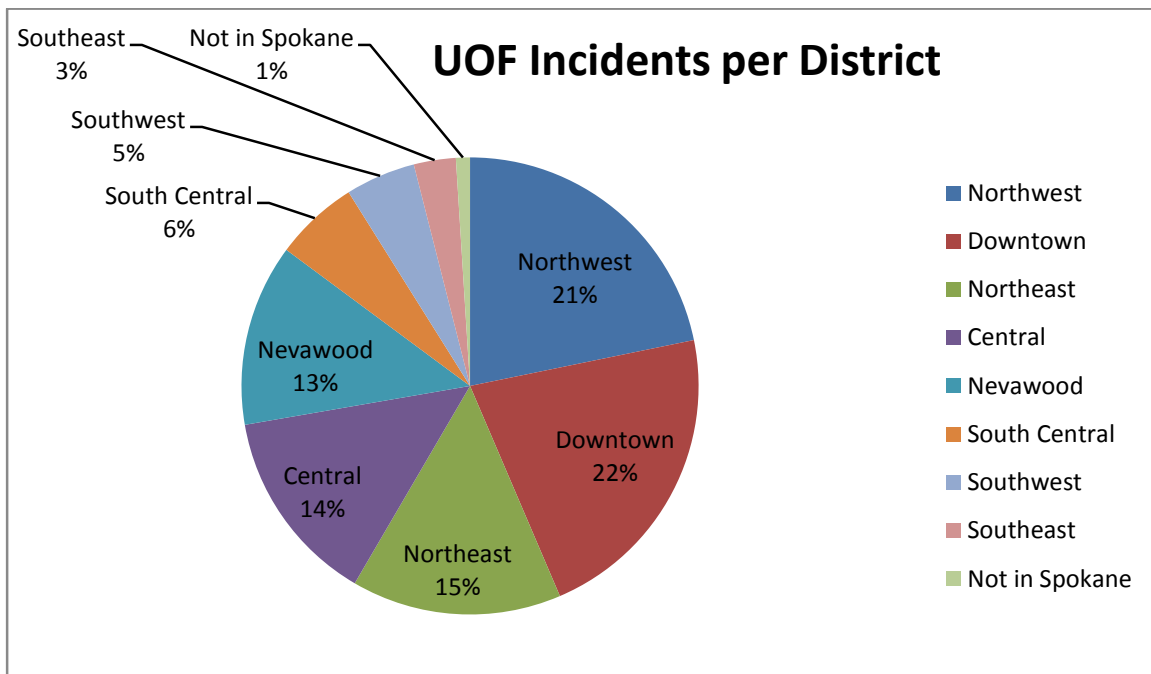
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Environmental Characteristics

Police District (Neighborhood)

Figure 4



Use of force incidents took place most often in the Downtown and Northwest police districts in 2016, followed by Northeast, [West] Central, and Nevawood districts. They occurred less frequently in the Southside districts.



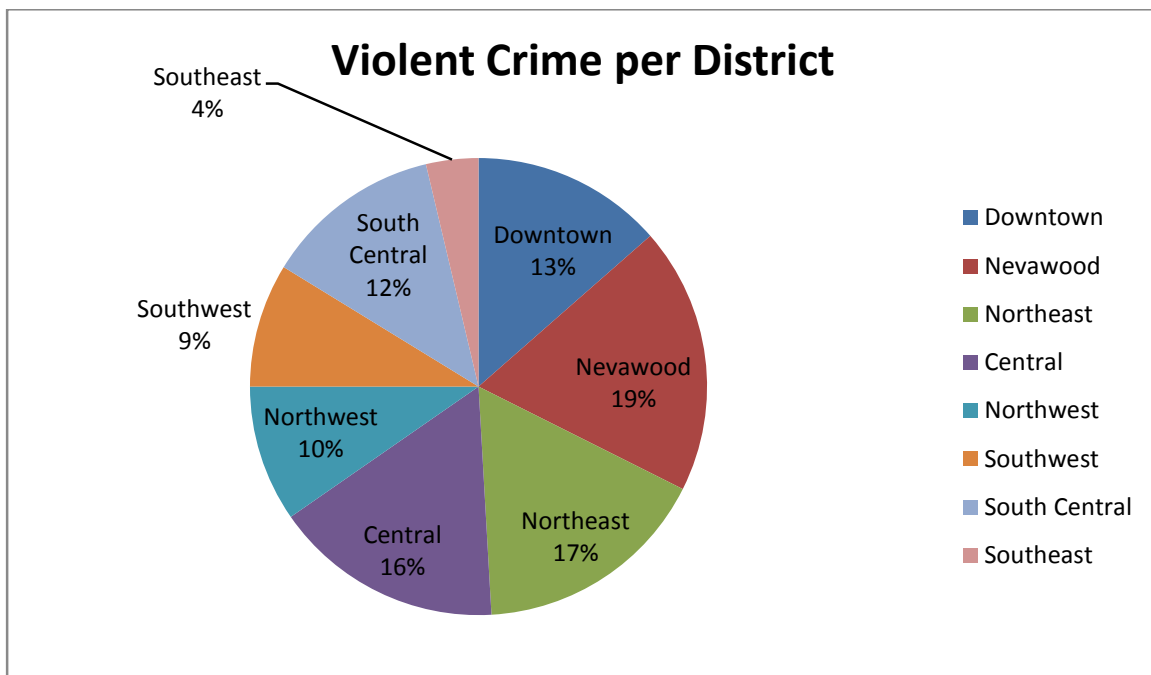
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Violent Crime per District (Neighborhood)

Figure 5



2016 Violent crime per district data is not available due to the department switching over from Universal Crime Reporting (UCR) Program to National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) mid-year. However, 2015 data shows that use of force incidents took place most often in the Downtown and Northwest police districts in 2015. During this time period, the Nevawood and Northeast police districts had the highest incidence of violent crime. The Downtown district was somewhat of an anomaly because violent crime statistics were lower in Downtown, yet Downtown had the most use of force incidents. The Southeast district had the least amount of use of force incidents and had the lowest incidence of violent crime. The Central District is also known as the West Central neighborhood; the South Central district was formerly known as Garry/East Central. Refer to Figures 4 and 5. Also refer to Attachment A for a map of the districts and Attachment B for the crime rate per district.



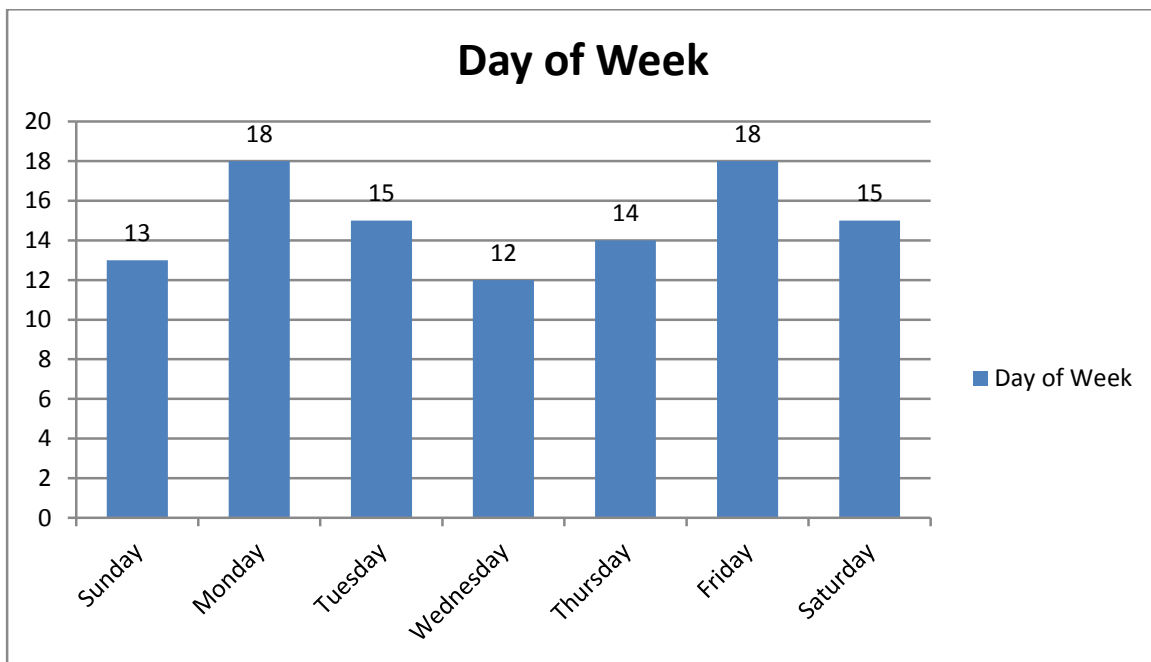
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Day of the Week

Figure 6



2016 data shows that incidents happened most frequently on Fridays and Mondays. In 2015, incidents occurred more often on Sunday than any other day of the week. See Figure 6.



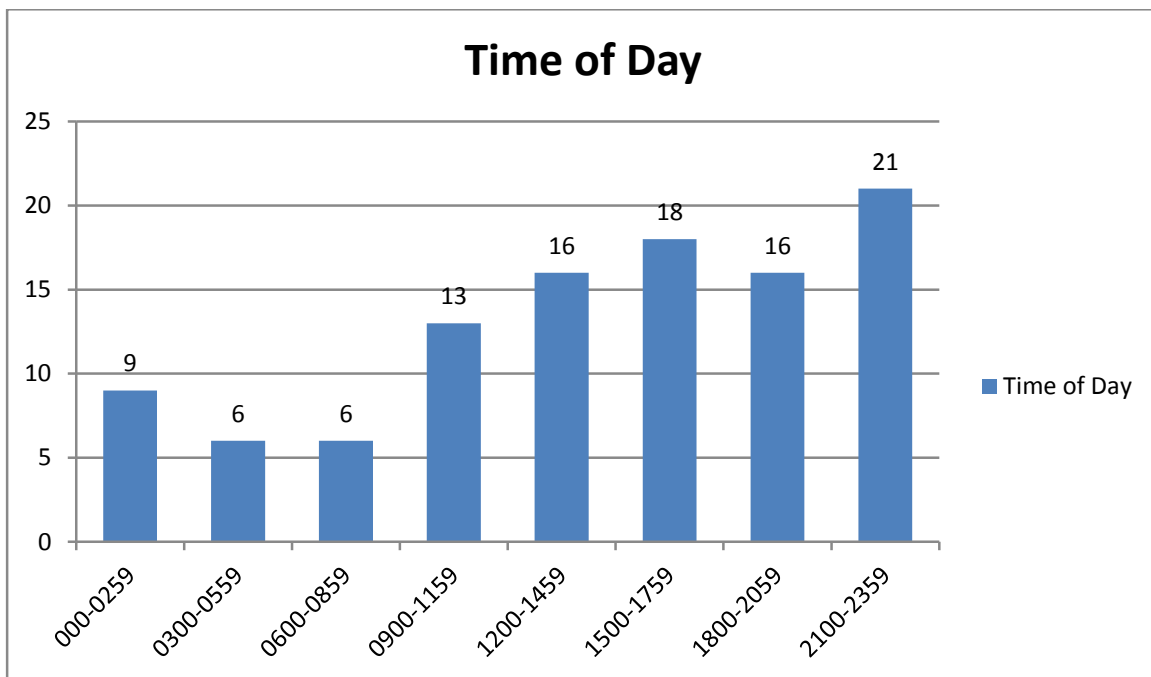
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Time of Day

Figure 7



Force was most frequently used between 2100 and 2359 hours (9:00 pm- midnight), which include Power and Graveyard shifts, and 1500-1759 hours (3:00-6:00 pm), which includes Day, Swing, and Power shifts. Day Shift hours are from 0600-1640. Swing shift hours are from 1000-2040. Power Shift hours are from 1600-0240. Grave Shift hours are from 2000-0640. SPD assigns more officers to Swing and Power shifts than to Day and Grave shifts. K9 officers are also assigned to Power shift. See Figure 7.



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Subject Characteristics

Subject Age

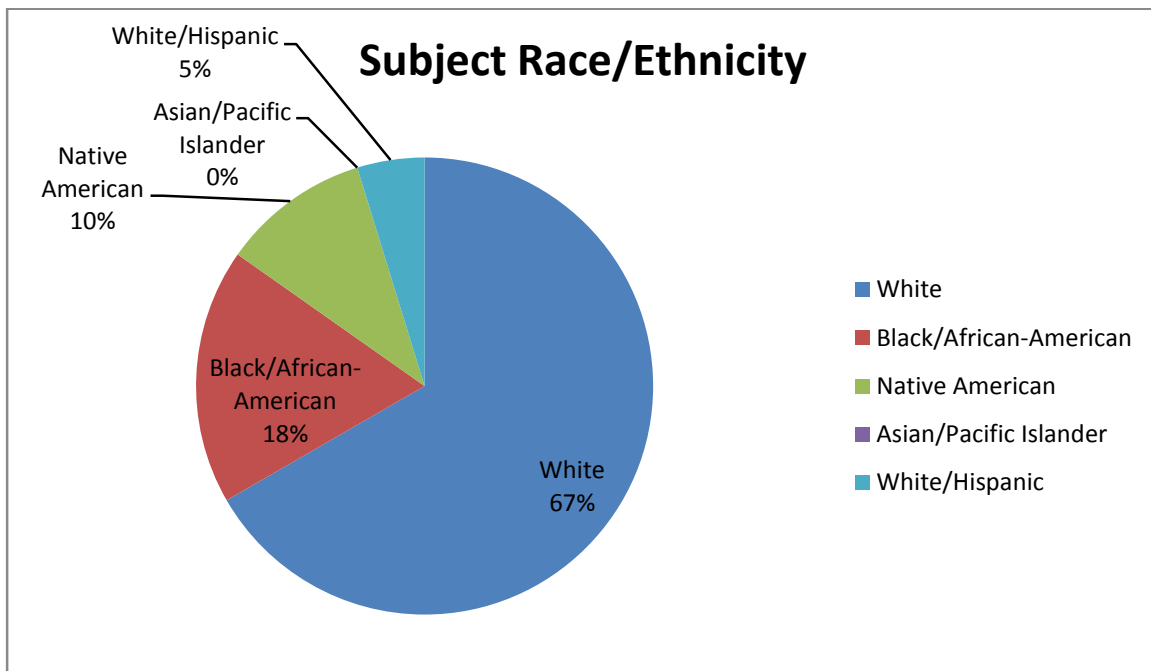
The average age of the subjects was 34 years old. Two subjects were juveniles. The youngest subject was 14 and the oldest subject was 54 years old.

Subject Gender

The vast majority of involved subjects in use of force incidents were male. Only 4 subjects were female.

Subject Racial/Ethnic Demographics

Figure 8





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70 of the 105 of subjects involved in use of force incidents (67%) were White. 19 (18%) subjects were Black/African-American, 11 (10%) subjects were Native American, 5 (5%) subject were White/Hispanic, and no subjects were Asian/Pacific Islander. See Figure 8.

Of the 19 incidents involving African-American subjects, 14 developed from a call for service. Of those 14 incidents, call types included Person with a Weapon, Disorderly Person, Trouble Unknown, Domestic Violence, Vehicle Theft, Suspicious Person, and Suspicious Circumstances. The Disorderly Person calls involved threats of physical harm. The Suspicious Person calls were legitimate concerns from the public: a person in a ski mask screaming at another person, an individual who walked out of a hospital with an intact intravenous line, and an anonymous call about a person with many warrants. The Suspicious Circumstances call involved attempted burglary suspects wearing masks and carrying bats.

Three contacts with were initiated by the officer. Two calls were traffic stops where the subject ran from the officer; one incident began when an officer saw a mentally unstable person in the roadway with a bat.

Two of the incidents were court-ordered contacts. One incident involved a Department of Corrections felony escape warrant on a subject, who was contacted as he fled while police were in the area searching for a Domestic Violence suspect. The other incident involved patrol officers assisting the SWAT team with apprehending a barricaded subject with a Murder warrant.

Of the 11 incidents involving Native American subjects, all were calls for service contacts. Of the 11 calls, call types included Assault, Suicide Attempt, Reckless Driving, Person with a Weapon, Stolen Property, Suspicious Person, Welfare Check, Domestic Violence, Warrant, and Suspicious Circumstances. The Suspicious Person call was a citizen calling in to report the location of a Murder suspect. The Suspicious Circumstances call was from an anonymous caller about the subject having stolen a vehicle. In one of the calls for service, Spokane Police officers assisted Spokane County Sheriff's Office deputies, as the deputies had initiated a vehicle pursuit for Reckless Driving charges. In both incidents with a Warrant call type, a citizen had called in to report the subject's location and warrant status. One subject was wanted for several counts of Identity Theft; the other subject had two warrants for violation of a Domestic Violence Protection Order.

Of the 5 incidents involving Hispanic subjects, two stemmed from calls for service, two were officer-initiated contacts, and one call involved assisting another agency. The call types included Suicide Attempt and Assault. The officer-initiated calls involved a bike stop for a bike that matched the description of a stolen bike. Officers responded to a fight downtown in the other incident. One incident took place in Central Washington; a Spokane Police officer served on a multi-agency team and deployed his K9 as the subject was fleeing from felony arrest.



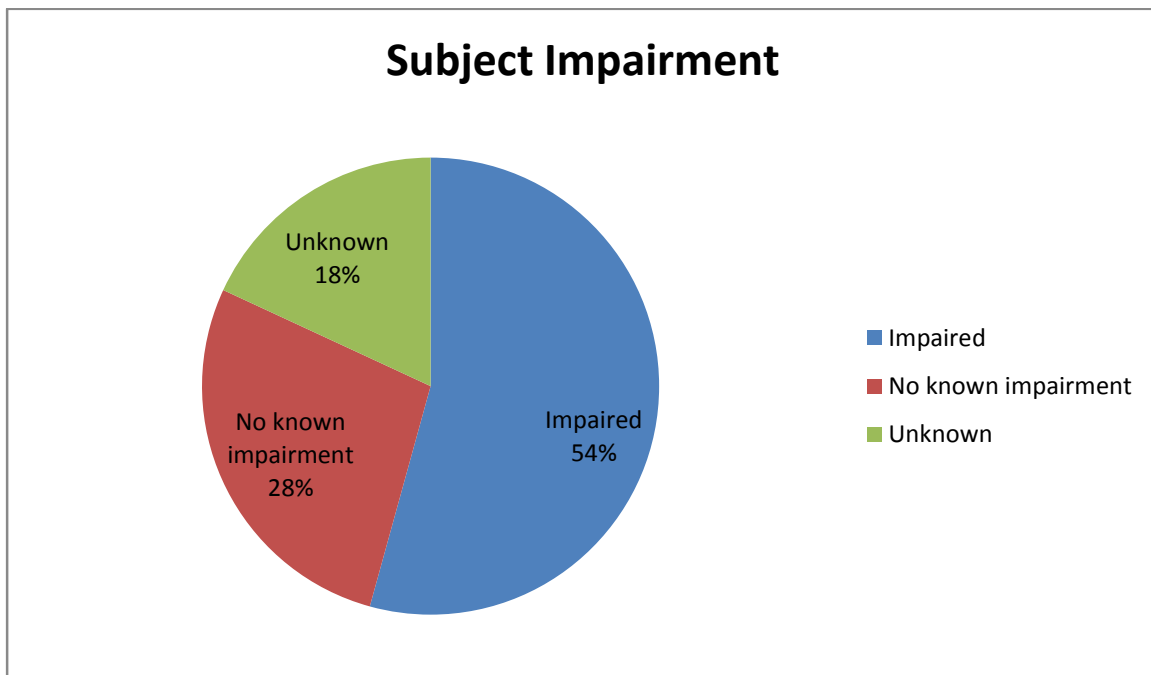
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Subject Drug and Alcohol Impairment

Figure 9



57 of the 105 (54%) of the involved subjects appeared to be impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, as documented in Blue Team. It is difficult to determine the extent of drug and alcohol use in the incidents, as sometimes subjects are in possession of drugs but claim not to be under the influence at the time of the incident. It's also difficult to discern which drug/s or which combination of drugs that subjects are using. In 19 (18%) incidents, the supervisor reported that the subject's behavior was unusual due to unknown reasons (alcohol, drugs, mental health issues, or a combination of those factors). See Figure 9.



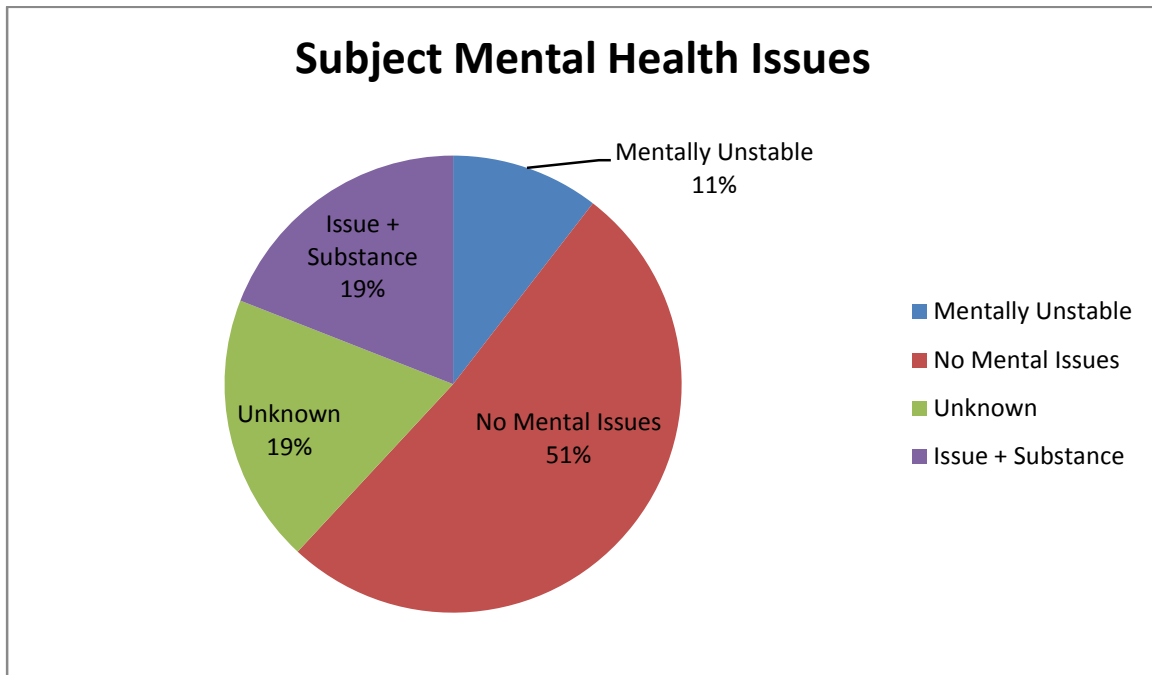
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Mental Health Status

Figure 10



Subjects were documented as mentally unstable in 12 (11%) of the 105 use of force incidents. In 20 (20%) of the cases, mental health issues were documented along with alcohol and/or drug use. In 54 (58%) incidents, officers were not aware of any mental health issues. In 19 (20%) incidents, the supervisor reported that the subject's behavior was unusual due to unknown reasons (alcohol, drugs, mental health issues, or combination of those factors). See Figure 10.

Warrant Status

In 30 (29%) of the incidents, subjects had outstanding warrants.



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Officer Characteristics

87 different officers were involved in use of force incidents in 2016. All of those officers were working in a patrol function at the time. A patrol assignment could include the role of Neighborhood Conditions Officer or Patrol Anti-Crime Team member. Some of the officers changed shifts during the year for a variety of reasons, such as a probationary officer being moved for manpower needs. The majority of the officers held a patrol rank (e.g., Patrolman First Class, Senior Police Officer, Police Officer). Six officers held the rank of sergeant, and four held the rank of lieutenant.

34 of the incidents were associated with Graveyard Shift, 28 with Power Shift, 23 with Swing shift, and 20 with Day shift. Day Shift hours are from 0600-1640. Swing shift hours are from 1000-2040. Power Shift hours are from 1600-0240. Grave Shift hours are from 2000-0640.

Involved officers in use of force incidents had been employed by Spokane Police Department an average of 10 years. Officers' previous law enforcement experience at other agencies was not factored (only their time with SPD). The average age of involved officers involved in use of force incidents was 39 years old; the average age of current officers is 42 years old. 6% of the involved officers were female; 94% were male. SPD officer demographics are 9% female and 91% male. 82 of the involved officers have identified their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian; 2 Native American; 2 Hispanic; one as Multi-Racial. Of officers that were employed in 2016, 297 have identified as White/Caucasian; 10 Hispanic; 6 Multi-Racial; 5 Native American; 3 African-American/Black; 1 Asian/Pacific Islander; and 1 officer marked "Unknown" for his race (It is important to note that these numbers do not reflect current staffing numbers. They included all officers that were employed in 2016 regardless of hire, retirement, or separation date.)

87 officers were involved in use of force incidents with the majority involved in one incident. 5 officers were involved in four or more incidents. Of those officers, four officers were assigned to patrol and one was a K9 handler.

Outcomes of the Investigation and Review of Use of Force

Of the 105 non-deadly uses of force in 2016, none were found to be in violation of policy. In contrast, two incidents were found to be in violation with policy in 2015.

In one case, the defensive tactics instructors were asked to provide an analysis to help the chain of command with their review, but the incident was determined to be within policy.

One incident was associated with an internal complaint. Upon review of the incident, a sergeant determined that one involved officer's use of a knee strike and fist strike technique was not within policy. He filed an Excessive Force complaint against the officer. The complaint was investigated by Internal Affairs and reviewed by the chain of command. It was determined that the officer's actions were within policy and objectively reasonable under the circumstances, as officers were unable to control the subject and were unsure if he was still armed. The officer was exonerated.



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Another incident was associated with an Excessive Force complaint by a citizen. It was determined that the use of a Level I Lateral Neck Restraint and wrist lock were reasonable to control an actively resisting armed individual. The two involved officers were exonerated.

None of the other 2016 incidents involving a reportable use of force were associated with an Excessive Force allegation by a citizen or fellow officer.

Training Issues Identified during the Incident Review Process

SPD's extensive review of incidents often identifies opportunities for training, both on an individual basis and for the entire department. The most prominent department-wide training issue was related to the Intentional Pointing of a Firearm technique. In some cases, officers were justified and within policy in intentionally "pointing in" at a subject, but officers did not lower their weapon and return to guard position when indicated (SPD's new training philosophy). The application of firearms must be aligned with the four firearms safety laws and SPD's new training philosophy, which is in place to prevent unintentional firearm discharges.

Individual officers were contacted about their use of the technique, but UOFRB members realized that the change in training philosophy would require ongoing department-wide training, provided in a variety of ways throughout 2016. The subject was addressed during Spring and Fall In-Service, sergeant training, and both firearm qualifications. Sergeant Boothe and the other firearms instructors also prepared a Field In-Service training video.

Chief Meidl noted a significant improvement in officers' reports in 2016, due to department-wide report-writing training and the Use of Force Review Board (UOFRB) additional review. (Significant training on report writing occurred during the last two years with Use of Force Report Writing training for all employees, In-service training, and supervisor training.)

The UOFRB determined that department members needed guidance in situations that involve a subject swallowing drugs while in custody. The Training Cadre developed a Field In-Service training on this topic.

The UOFRB also concluded that department members needed training on vehicle blocking techniques. A section on blocking will be provided at Spring 2017 In-service.

Conclusion

Thorough review of use of force incidents is critical to Spokane Police Department. The review provides a "big picture" of all the incidents that have been individually reviewed and reveals trends that inform future training decisions. A proper review also can improve the police department's legitimacy and relationship with the community, while a lack of careful review can perpetuate distrust. Police departments derive their authority from legal and constitutional principles designed to uphold the safety and dignity of the public, and unreasonable use of force undermines the community's trust. Therefore, thorough evaluation is required when vesting officers with the authority to use



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objectively reasonable force. Spokane Police Department is committed to providing a comprehensive annual review of incidents and making that review available to the public.