



'24 **INTERNAL AFFAIRS** **REPORT**

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1 Justice Square
Columbia, SC 29201

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



Citizens of Columbia,

The culture at the Columbia Police Department is one of professionalism, accountability and transparency. Furthermore, the conduct of each employee is guided by the department's vision, mission, core values, directives and policies. Holding ourselves to the highest of standards promotes our trust and legitimacy in the communities we serve.

The Internal Affairs Report is produced annually by the Office of Professional Standards for the public's review. The Internal Affairs Unit is charged with investigating allegations of employee misconduct, use of force, vehicle pursuits and officer-involved motor vehicle collisions. The report compares information to the previous year for comparison and analysis.

I hope the information in this report provides you with understanding and insight of our efforts to be accountable to each other and our citizens. We are committed to earning our citizens' trust and respect each and every day.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W.H. Holbrook".

William H. "Skip" Holbrook
Chief of Police

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MISSION

The Columbia Police Department will provide professional and ethical service in protection of our citizens while preventing crime and reducing the fear of crime through problem solving partnerships.

We will accomplish our mission by:

- Enforcing the law with integrity, fairness and compassion
- Solving crimes
- Meeting the expectations of our community
- Upholding the constitutional rights of our citizens
- Building and maintaining public trust
- Reducing victimization
- Demonstrating fiscal responsibility

VISION

Through our steadfast commitment to policing excellence, the Columbia Police Department will be transformed to exhibit the innovation, engagement and professionalism of an exceptional organization whose workforce truly reflects the values and diversity of the City of Columbia.

CORE VALUES

PROFESSIONALISM: We will conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with the law enforcement code of conduct, national law enforcement standards, best practices and the expectations of our community.

INTEGRITY: Our commitment to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct will be evidenced by our accountability to each other and the citizens we serve. Integrity is the foundation of trust internally and externally, and it is pursuant to this foundation that we will perform our duties to protect and serve the citizens of the City of Columbia.

DIVERSITY: We will acknowledge and promote the acceptance, inclusion and professional contributions of all, and our recruitment, hiring, retention, training and development practices will reflect a strong commitment to diversity and the diverse populations we serve.

SERVICE ORIENTATION: We will improve the quality of life of those we serve by reducing fear, engaging the community and enhancing public safety.

FAIRNESS: We are committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all citizens as fundamental to the delivery of professional police service.

COURAGE: We will remain physically and morally courageous in all our duties.

COLLABORATION: We believe that cooperation and teamwork will enable us to combine our diverse backgrounds, skills and styles with the capacities of others to achieve common goals.

COMMUNICATION: Effective and open communication at all levels is the cornerstone of a progressive organization. We value honest and constructive discussions of ideas, suggestions and practices that help accomplish the goals of our Department and the communities it serves.

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

	2024	2023	↑ ↓	Change Over Previous Year
Calls for Service	154,412	188,159	↓	-33,747
Public Complaints of Employee Misconduct	40	68	↓	-28
Use of Force Incidents Reported	73	64	↑	+9
Arrests	4,825	4,074	↑	+751
Persons Hit in Shootings	49	87	↓	-38
Homicides	13	20	↓	-7
Firearms Seized	706	808	↓	-102
Officers Assaulted	37	80	↓	-43
Miles Driven	4,543,517	4,811,467	↓	-267,950
Collisions Involving Police Vehicles	82	81	↑	+1
Vehicle Pursuits	46	41	↑	+5

USE OF FORCE

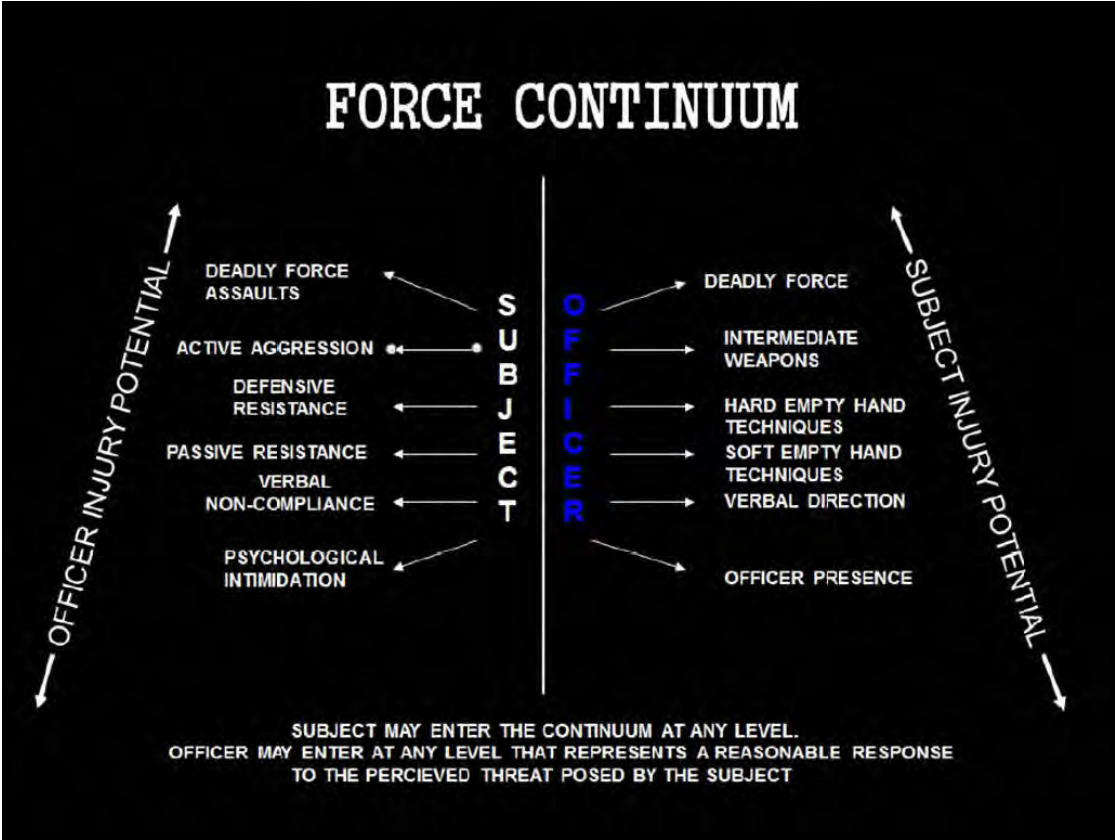


FIGURE 1: Use of Force Continuum. **DATA SOURCES:** National Institute of Justice (Department of Justice)

Officers of the Columbia Police Department must report:

- Pointing or presenting of any weapons, lethal or nonlethal, for the purpose of gaining compliance;
- Discharging a firearm for purposes other than training or recreation;
- Application of use of force using lethal or nonlethal weapons;
- Deployment of a police canine to apprehend or secure suspects; and
- Weaponless force that results in injury.

Police officers are authorized to use less-than-lethal techniques and/or weapons to protect themselves or others from physical harm, restrain or subdue a resistant individual, and bring an unlawful situation safely and effectively under control. In these situations, police officers will evaluate the totality of the circumstances in order

to determine which approved weaponless control techniques and/or less-than-lethal weapons may most effectively de-escalate the incident and bring the situation under control in a safe manner.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Independent Investigations

An officer's use of deadly force is rigorously investigated and thoroughly reviewed both criminally and administratively. If the use of deadly force results in injury or death, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) conducts a criminal investigation. The facts revealed by the criminal investigation are presented to the Fifth Circuit Solicitor's Office if the incident occurred in Richland County and the Eleventh Circuit Solicitor's Office if the incident occurred in Lexington County, who then determine if the officer's action was lawful and justified.

Concurrently, the Internal Affairs Unit conducts a parallel investigation to determine if the involved officer(s) complied with our policies and that the force was necessary and justified. The use of deadly force would automatically be reviewed by the Force Review Board to determine if the force was within policy, not within policy, had any other policy violations, and if there were any tactical/training concerns.

Tracking and Monitoring Use of Force Incidents

The ability to track use of force incidents and officer involved shootings has increased tremendously since the implementation of the software program IAPRO. The program continues to be an integral part in preparation for the Internal Affairs Report yearly. IAPRO is also used to supply quarterly reports to Executive Staff as it relates to use of force, accidents, complaints, and pursuits. The quarterly reports allow Executive Staff to actively see if the Department is trending with the same numbers as previous quarters throughout the year. One component of IAPRO is BlueTeam, a web based

application for frontline supervisors to enter incident data. Incidents including use of force, vehicle accidents, and pursuits are entered into BlueTeam and can then be routed through the chain of command with review and approval at each step. In January 2020, BlueTeam was implemented completely throughout the department and proven to be a great asset to the Internal Affairs Unit.

Body Worn Camera (BWC) Program

Since the implementation of CPD's body worn camera (BWC) policy, which requires officers to wear BWCs while on duty and performing any uniformed law enforcement function, it has proven to be beneficial to CPD, the officers and citizens they serve. BWCs record calls for service, officer initiated calls and public contacts. BWCs are activated by the officer upon arrival at the location and remain on until the call is cleared. BWC's have helped strengthen accountability and transparency throughout CPD, and the law enforcement community as a whole. With the use of this policy it has the ability to reduce complaints, and resolve officer involved incidents. BWCs have also been a great tool in assisting with training within the department. Having the ability to go back and review incidents, discuss and make corrections as needed, has been completely beneficial. BWC video/audio files are maintained by the department for at least 60 days. The video/audio files are not subject to release pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, but the files may be released at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The department's written BWC policy is available for review at the agency website:
<https://columbiapd.net/policies-procedures/>

White House Police Data Initiative (PDI)

In 2016, the department partnered with the White House for the Police Data Initiative, and developed an open data portal developed to provide accessible, convenient and transparent information to the public. Currently housed in the public data portal are datasets including assaults on Officers, Arrests and Field Interviews. In addition to the datasets, the department provides information on officer involved shootings, calls for service, code violation properties and national data with a local community crime map. The Public Data Portal can be accessed online at <https://coc-colacitygis.opendata.arcgis.com> or through the department's website.

Citizen Surveys

A text message-based survey was developed in partnership with Protexting as an additional mechanism to obtain citizen feedback regarding the department's performance. The citizen-police encounter survey provides the department with a mechanism to measure and evaluate encounters, and provides another way for the voices of Columbia Citizens to be heard. Citizens can also go to columbiapd.net/survey to provide feedback.

Traditionally, reported reductions in crime rates have been the primary indicator of law enforcement success, causing officer performance measures to be based on enforcement-related encounters alone. Community policing, the foundation of the department's policing strategies, has expanded the work of Columbia Police Officers to include engaging members of the community as partners in crime reduction and problem solving initiatives. The citizen feedback we get on the full spectrum of encounters, will further guide our efforts to build trust and confidence between the members of our department and the community.

OFFICER WELLNESS

When an officer uses deadly force or is involved in a critical incident, the subject officer is placed on "Administrative Duty" status pending referral to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program (SC LEAP), or another psychological service provider. Assignment to "Administrative Duty" status is non-disciplinary with no loss of pay or benefits. Officers remain on "Administrative Duty" status until determined "fit for duty" by the psychological service provider. Upon being determined "fit for duty" the officer's status remains as "Administrative Duty" until final disposition is reached in both criminal and administrative investigations.

TRAINING

All officers are required to attend training, demonstrate proficiency with all approved lethal and/or less than lethal weapons, and review the department's Use of Force policy at least once every year. Officers also receive training on a regular basis on techniques to reduce Use of Force incidents, such as conflict resolution, cultural diversity, de-escalation, responding to people with mental disabilities, and community policing.

In order to be authorized to carry lethal and/or less than lethal weapons, police officers must:

- Receive and sign for a copy of the department's Use of Force policy
- Receive instruction on the Use of Force policy
- Pass the written Use of Force test
- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of all authorized weapons

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)

In 2018, the Columbia Police Department joined over 400 Law Enforcement agencies across the nation when it pledged to join the International Association of Chiefs of Police "One Mind" campaign. This campaign lays a foundation for successful interactions between police officers and persons affected by mental illness.

As part of this initiative, the department implemented partnerships with other agencies such as the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Columbia-Richland Communications, Midlands Probate Court-Mental Health, and Richland and Lexington Emergency Services. The purpose of this partnership is to join together in developing a model policy and response to person's in mental health crisis. Additionally, all sworn Columbia Police Officers receive basic Mental Illness Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) from certified NAMI instructors. This continued in 2020 despite the COVID 19 Pandemic. Several Columbia Police Officers received the week long CIT training, and in the coming years, the Columbia Police Department's Training Unit plans to continue to work with certified instructors and certify all sworn officers with the Columbia Police in Crisis Intervention Training.

As of December 2024, 282 Columbia Police employees have attended the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training Class.

2024 USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS

In 2024, the Columbia Police Department reported 73 use of force incidents. The number of Use of Force incidents represents approximately .04% of the citizen encounters with officers, and approximately 1.5% of arrests. The number of Use of Force incidents in 2024 increased from 2023, with a slight upward trend of 14%. Although there was an increase in the total Use of Force Incidents in 2024, all but one was determined to be justified.

Use of Force, Public Encounters and Arrests			
	2024	2023	Change Over Previous Year
Total Use of Force Events	73	64	+9
Total Public Encounters	154,412	188,159	-33,747
Total Arrests	4,825	4,074	+751

FIGURE 2: Number of Times Officers Used Force or Made an Arrest as a Result of Contact with the Public. **DATA SOURCES:** CPD

As in the previous three years, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Armstrong vs. Village of Pinehurst* is central to the policy regarding use of Electronic Control Devices (ECDs). The Department has added information regarding the use of ECDs and *Armstrong vs. Village of Pinehurst* to the certification training, as well as the recertification training. Officers are using empty hand techniques with combative subjects, and officers are not using ECDs on fleeing or passively resistive subjects.

On June 16th, 2020, the Columbia City Council voted to add several changes to the Use of Force Policy (see General Order 01.02). The changes included:

- 1) A description of choke holds and carotid artery holds (vascular neck restraints) and a prohibition on their use unless deadly force is authorized
- 2) Precautions officers must take in order to avoid positional asphyxia.

In 2024, the leading encounter causing an officer to use force was due to the Act of Aggression against the officer followed by the Act of Defensive Resistance. There 31 encounters of Active Aggression and 19 encounters of Defensive Resistance resulting in Use of Force incidents.

Other encounters for officer contact with subjects that led to the Use of Force involved drunk or disorderly suspects, resisting arrest and assault (not domestic). Domestic incidents led to at least 10 Use of Force incidents, and 7 others involved incidents involving assault. Alcohol was also a contributor to at least 11 Use of Force incidents, drugs was a contributor in at least 4 incidents. At least 2 involved an individual who was suffering from mental illness. In at least 5 cases, officers were confronted with deadly force wherein suspects had or were suspected of having weapons including guns and knives. There was no (0) instance of officers using deadly force in 2024.

With the department continuing its CIT training in 2024, at least one officer responding to 100 incidents was CIT certified. CIT certified refers to the NAMI Crisis Intervention Team 40 Hour Class. The most commonly used weapon in Use of Force situations were hands and feet, which are categorized as a form of less than lethal force, and in this report they are known as empty hand techniques or "hands" for short.

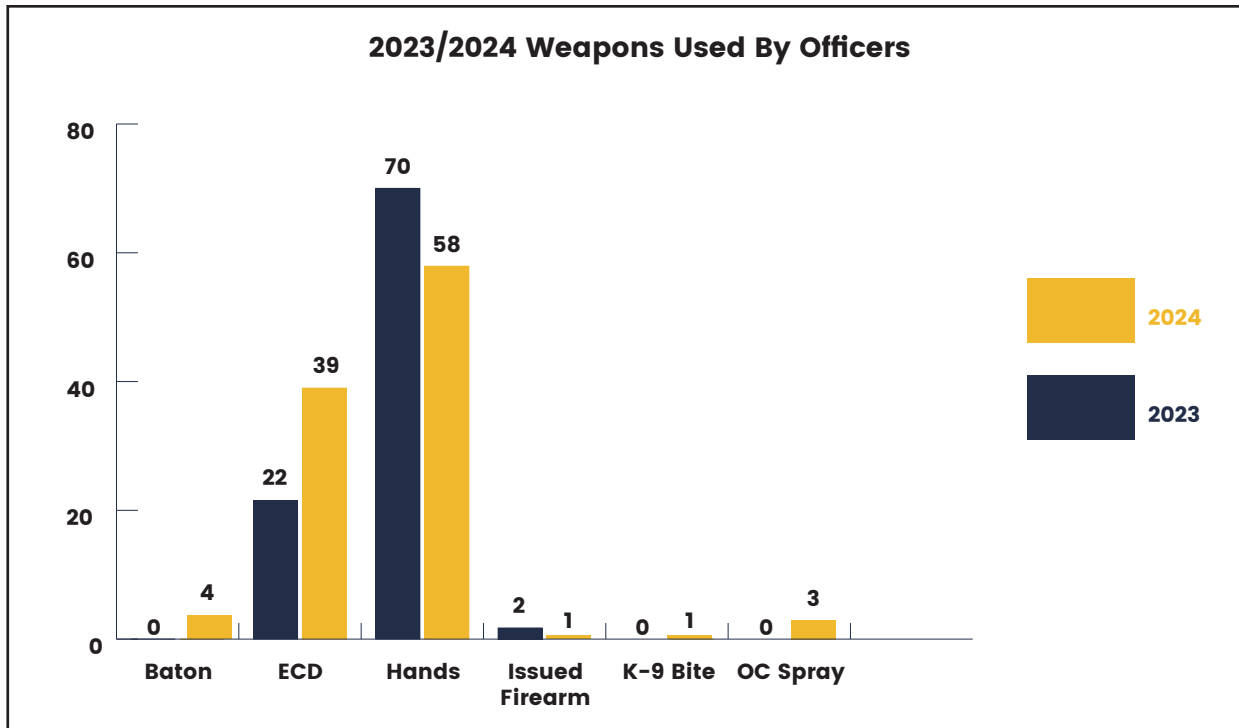


FIGURE 3: Weapons Used by Officers During Use of Force Situations.

PLEASE NOTE: Any single Use of Force event may have included the use of multiple weapons or techniques by one or more officers, which is why the number of weapons or techniques used is greater than the number of events.

DATA SOURCES: CPD

Officers must report to their chain of command when their firearm is displayed to gain compliance. In 2024, officers displayed firearms 186 times, and displayed their ECDs 64 times without using them. K-9s were used 22 times in 2024 to gain compliance from a suspect without biting.

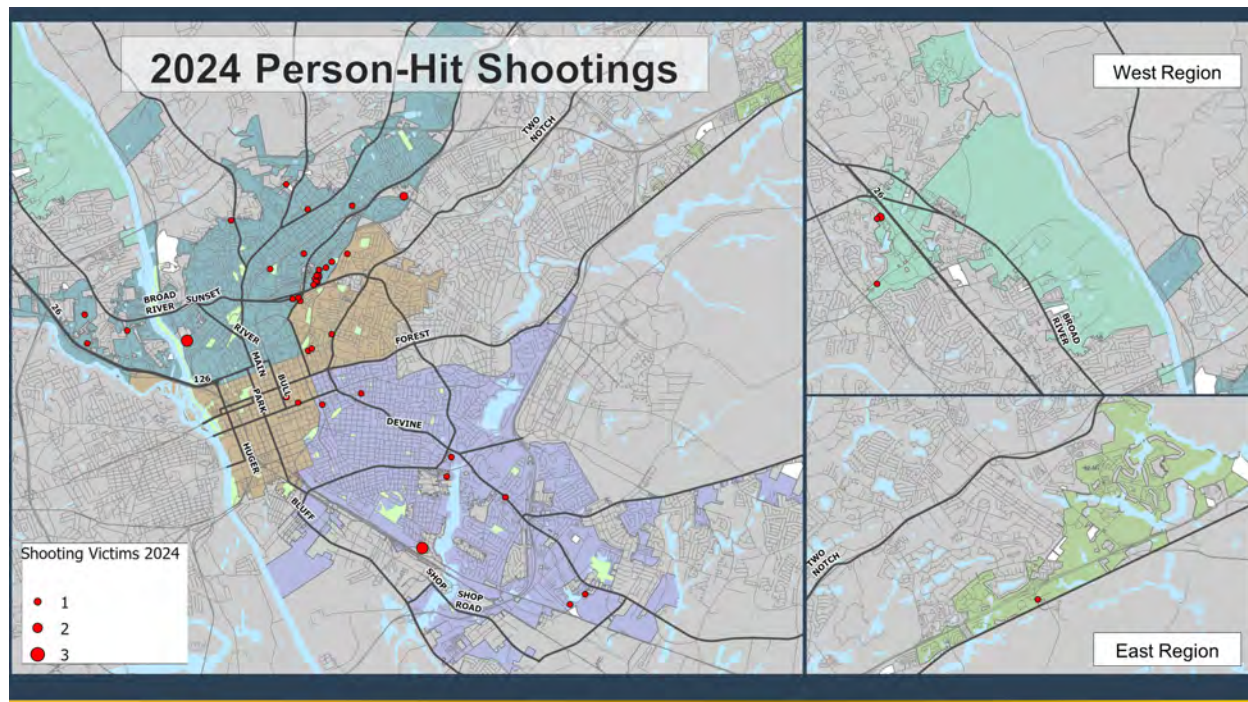


FIGURE 4: 2024 Persons Hit by CPD Region. **DATA SOURCE:** CPD
Typically, patterns of gun crime correlate with higher numbers of Use of Force incidents.

2024 Demographics in Use of Force Incidents

Several Use of Force incidents involved animals, and several involved multiple suspects. In 2024, there were 74 suspects involved in Use of Force incidents. The gender and racial breakdown of the suspects were identified as (53 Black Males, 10 Black Females, 8 White Males, 1 White Females, 1 Hispanic Male, and 1 Hispanic Female).

In 2024, the Use of Force incidents involved 118 officers using force. The gender and racial breakdown of the 118 officers is as follows: (113 officers were male and 5 were females). The racial breakdown of the officers were 81 White, 33 Black, 3 Hispanic, and 1 Native American.

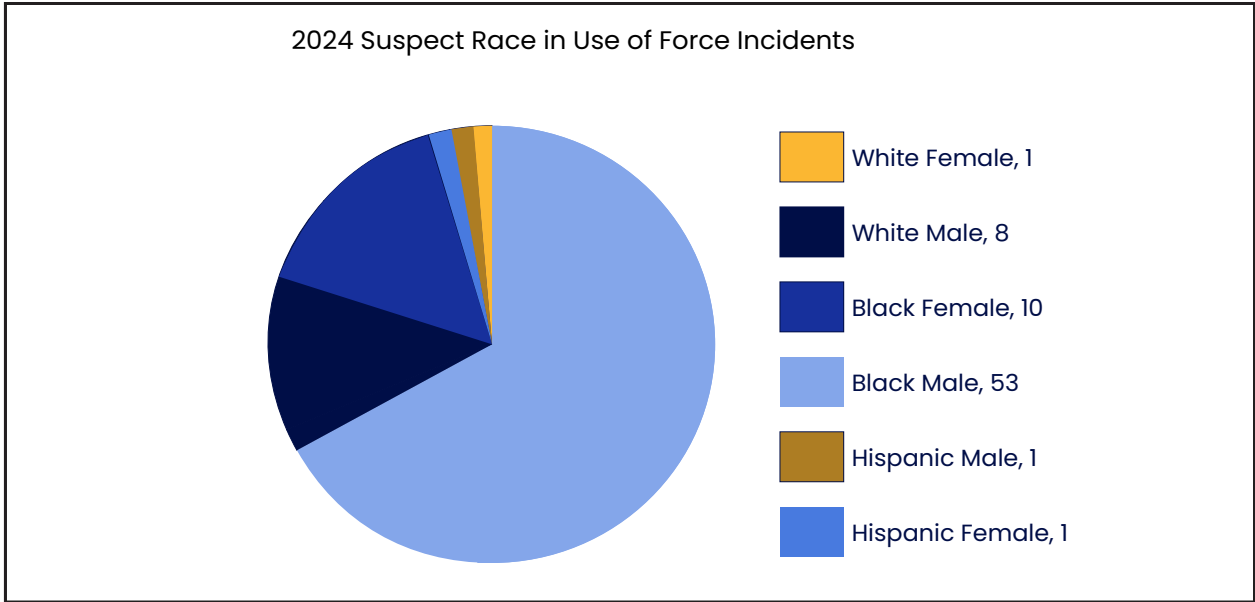


FIGURE 5: 2024 Suspect Race / Gender in Use of Force Incidents.

DATA SOURCE: CPD

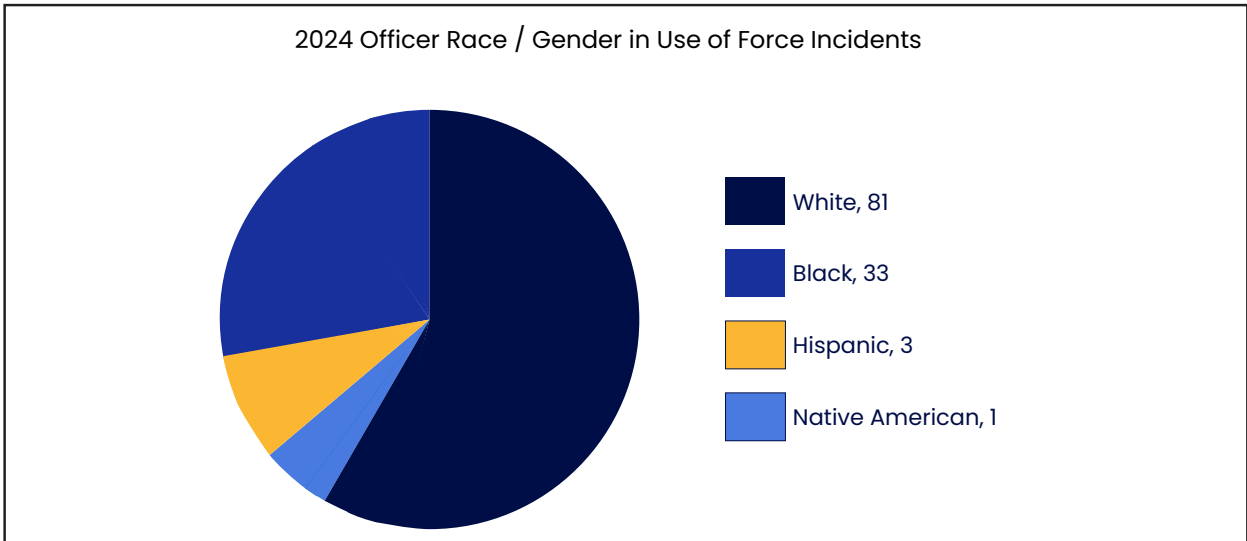


FIGURE 6: 2024 Officer Race / Gender in Use of Force Incidents.

DATA SOURCE: CPD

Sworn Race/Gender as of December 2024

Race and Gender - (Sworn)			
Race/Gender	Job Status	Totals	%
African American Female Sworn	Part Time	0	0.00
African American Female Sworn	Sworn	24	8.28
African American Male Sworn	Sworn	73	25.17
Asian Male Sworn	Sworn	1	0.33
Hispanic Female Sworn	Sworn	3	1.00
Hispanic Male Sworn	Sworn	11	3.79
Native American Male Sworn	Sworn	1	0.33
Other Female Sworn	Sworn	1	0.33
Other Male Sworn	Sworn	6	2.07
White Female Sworn	Sworn	26	8.97
White Male Sworn	Part Time	1	0.33
White Male Sworn	Sworn	145	50.00
Total		292	

Force Review Board

In 2021, the Columbia Police Department, by Special Order, commenced a new process called the Force Review Board (FRB). The Order specified that a FRB would regularly convene and review all Use of Force incidents involving Columbia Police Officers. The FRB was charged with the ensuring our correct application of laws, policy, training, and de-escalation, as well as identifying areas of improvement in our training, tactics, and supervision. Although each Use of Force incident was already being reviewed by each involved officer's chain of command, the FRB is to act as a broader review of Use of Force incidents to ensure the Department has proper training, equipment, and oversight.

The Office of Professional Standards is the FRB facilitator, while the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief of Police serves as the Chairperson. The FRB is composed of the

following staff: Chief of Police or Deputy Chief of Police (Chairperson), Office of Professional Standards Commander (Vice Chairman), a Major, the Training Division Commander, two Captains, the Department Police Advisor, a Sergeant, and a Corporal.

After each FRB, the Office of Professional Standards produces a written report with findings and recommendations. The FRB continues to provide, when applicable, recommendations which included training/tactical references to be reviewed by the Training Unit.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

The Department has an established process for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating complaints made by citizens, coworkers and supervisors regarding employee actions and policy violations.

Internal Affairs Unit

The Internal Affairs Unit (IA), which falls under the Department's Office of Professional Standards, facilitates the complaint process, investigates allegations of employee misconduct, policy violations, and conducts administrative reviews of Use of Force incidents, vehicle pursuits, officer involved shootings, criminal charges against employees and collisions involving department vehicles. The staff of the IA Unit ensures that all complaints are handled fairly and objectively and are thoroughly investigated. The personnel assigned to IA are dedicated to protecting the rights of all persons involved in the complaint process and treating everyone with dignity and respect. IA consists of two (2) Police Sergeants, and an Administrative Assistant, whom all report to the Office of Professional Standards Commander (Captain), who then reports directly to the Office of the Chief. Investigations of complaints involving

allegations that would constitute a violation of law, misconduct, and breach of departmental directives, policies or procedures, are handled by an investigator in the IA Unit or the supervisors chain of command. The below listed allegations are always investigated by an Internal Affairs investigator:

- Use of Force (or any incident) involving serious injury or death
- Allegations of criminal conduct
- Conduct involving moral turpitude - an act or behavior that gravely violates the sentiment or accepted standard of the community
- Vehicle accidents of a major nature involving on-duty police personnel

Command Review Board (CRB)

Procedural Justice is one of the cornerstones in 21st Century Policing. It's based on the idea that people's perceptions of police legitimacy are influenced more by their experience of interacting with officers than by the end result of those interactions. The concept includes focus on principles of fairness, respect, and dignity while embracing transparency and neutrality. In implementing Procedural Justice, it is recognized that the importance extends to internal matters as it influences external police actions.

In keeping with the implementation of Procedural Justice at the Columbia Police Department, the department established a Command Review Board (CRB) in 2015. The purpose is to provide a more transparent decision-making process for administrative investigations and solicit the community to participate. The CRB is comprised of the following personnel, assigned by the Chief of Police or his designee:

- Chief of Police/Deputy Chief of Police will serve as Chairperson of the Board
- Professional Standards Division Commander (advisory capacity)
- Bureau/Division Major
- Bureau/Division Commander/Captain (Chain of Command)
- Bureau/Division Executive Officer/Lieutenant (Chain of Command)
- Bureau/Division Sergeant/Corporal (Chain of Command)
- Peer Member (same job classification and/or tenure as accused employee)
- Columbia Police Department's Citizen Advisory Council representative
- Police Advisor (advisory capacity)

In 2024, the CRB met on 10 occasions to review 11 investigations. All 11 investigations resulted in an initial finding of sustained policy violations and a recommendation for serious disciplinary action (suspension, demotion or termination). In each of these meetings, the CRB made recommendations for disposition and disciplinary action to the CRB Chair. The Chief or Deputy Chief of Police serve as the Chairperson of the CRB and makes the final determination concerning disciplinary actions. The Chief of Police or their designee may also convene a CRB hearing for any circumstance deemed appropriate.

CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Columbia Police Department Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) was formed in 2015 to strengthen relationships between the police department and the community by establishing open dialogue and transparency concerning department policies and procedures. The CAC provides insights and recommendations on many issues, including but not limited to, law enforcement and safety concerns in the community, policy review and development, police training and improving police community relations. A member of the CAC also serves on the Command Review Board to provide citizen input in administrative cases involving officer misconduct. The CAC is comprised of at least 10 members representing the diverse demographics of the city of Columbia. The Mayor and City Council appoint seven representatives and the Chief of Police appoints three representatives to the CAC. The Council meets periodically throughout the year.

During meetings, members review significant events such as officer involved shootings, high profile incidents, and evaluate new policies. In 2024, Citizen Advisory Council members attended eleven (11) Command Review Board Hearings and two (2) Citizen Advisory Council meetings were held to discuss several issues such as Use of Force and the department's use of new technology to enhance officer training and public safety.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

We recognize that despite our best efforts, there will be times when citizens, fellow officers, or supervisors perceive an employee's behavior to be inappropriate. When this occurs, the Internal Affairs Unit uses an established process for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating complaints.

Complaints concerning employee misconduct are classified in two ways: Internal and External. Internal complaints are generated by CPD Employees. External complaints originate from outside of the CPD.

Making A Complaint

Complaints against CPD employees can be submitted in a variety of ways:

- **Online** – Visit www.ColumbiaPD.net/employee-complaint to complete a form
- **In person** – File a written complaint at CPD headquarters or any region office
- **Mail** – Send a letter to:
Internal Affairs Unit
Columbia Police Department
1 Justice Square
Columbia, SC 29201
- **Phone** – Call the IA Unit at **803-545-3655** and request to speak to a member of Internal Affairs or leave a detailed message with your name, a way to contact you and what the complaint is regarding.

Upon receipt of a citizen complaint by the Internal Affairs Unit, each complaint will be logged and assigned. All complaints are taken seriously and every effort is made to process them in a timely manner. To learn more, please visit www.ColumbiaPD.net, select "Inside CPD," and click "Office of Professional Standards." This area of our website contains detailed information about the complaint process.

Investigations

After a complaint is filed, the following procedures are followed:

- The complaint is processed through the IA Unit for tracking purposes and assigned to the employee's supervisor or the IA Unit to investigate.
- An investigator will contact the complainant and arrange an interview. Anonymous complaints are also investigated.
- When statements are prepared in writing, the complainant is given the opportunity to review the statement for accuracy and sign the statement, affirming its truthfulness.
- Interviews and statements are obtained from all witnesses in each incident. All documentation is assembled in the case file for review by the employee's chain of command, Internal Affairs, and in appropriate circumstances the Command Review Board.

Types of Dispositions

Complaint dispositions are classified as one of the following:

- **Sustained** - The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation and the actions of the employee, violated a provision of the department's rules/regulations, policies and/or procedures.
- **Not Sustained** - The investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation.
- **Unfounded** - The alleged incident did not occur.
- **Exonerated** - The incident occurred, but the actions of the employee were lawful and proper.

If an allegation is found to be Exonerated, Not Sustained or Unfounded, then the Commander of the IA Unit may review the investigation with the subject employee's chain of command. When the possible disciplinary action is suspension, demotion, or termination, a CRB hearing will be held by default, convened to render a disposition on the allegation(s). If the allegation(s) is sustained, the CRB will recommend the appropriate disciplinary actions.

Upon conclusion of the investigation of a complaint, Internal Affairs will notify the complainant and the accused employee of the findings. The Columbia Police Department makes every effort to investigate and adjudicate all complaints within a practical time frame from the time a complaint is made. However, circumstances such as case complexity and witness availability, can prolong complaint investigations.

Discipline Philosophy

The Columbia Police Department is committed to a system of discipline that minimizes abuse of authority and promotes the Department's reputation for professionalism. The Chief of Police determines the appropriate disciplinary actions, with recommendations from the the CRB for more serious violations of policy and the employee's chain-of-command for all other violations. Ensuring all such actions are consistent with the Department's established discipline philosophy, Internal

Affairs reviews every investigation for consistency with the disciplinary policy and philosophy, and works with the Office of the Chief to resolve any inconsistencies. The Department's Discipline Philosophy is based on the understanding that employees will occasionally make errors in judgment in carrying out their duties, and that some errors call for greater consequences than others.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves, both in interactions with each other and the public, in a manner that conveys respect, honesty, integrity, and dedication to public service. In turn, CPD employees can expect to be treated fairly, honestly and respectfully, by their peers and other employees of the department holding positions at all levels of organizational authority. The department has an obligation to make its expectations for employee behavior and the consequences of failing to meet those expectations very clear to employees. Consequences of not following policy and/or of sustained complaints or policy violations could result in range from counseling and retraining to employee termination. In many cases, employees receive additional training in the subject areas where violations occur. When behaviors occur that are not in keeping with the expectations of the department, the consequences or discipline imposed is based upon a balanced consideration of several factors. These factors are interactive and carry equal weight, unless there are particular circumstances associated with an incident that would give a factor greater or lesser weight. All of these factors will not apply in every case. Some factors may not apply to a particular incident.

The factors considered in disciplinary matters are:

- **Employee motivation:** An employee's conduct will be examined to determine whether the employee was operating in the public's interest or if they were motivated by personal interest.
- **Degree of harm:** The degree of harm an error causes is also an important aspect in deciding the consequences of an employee's behavior. Harm can be measured in terms of monetary cost to the department and community, personal injury, and by the impact of the error on public confidence.
- **Employee experience:** The experience of the employee will be taken into consideration as well. A relatively new employee will be given more lenient

consideration when errors in judgment are made. Employees with more experience who make the same errors may expect to receive more serious sanctions.

- **Intentional/Unintentional Errors:** An unintentional error is an action or decision that turns out to be wrong, but at the time it was taken, seemed to be in compliance with policy and the most appropriate course, based on the information available. An intentional error is an action or a decision that an employee makes that is known (or should be known) to be in conflict with law, policy, procedures or rules at the time the error is made. Generally, intentional errors will be treated more seriously and carry greater consequences. Within the framework of intentional errors there are certain behaviors that are entirely inconsistent with the responsibilities of police employees.
- **Employee's Past Record:** To the extent allowed by law and policy, an employee's past record will be taken into consideration in determining the consequences of a failure to meet the department's expectations. An employee that continually makes errors can expect the consequences of this behavior to become progressively more punitive. An employee that has a record of few or no errors can expect less stringent consequences.

Disciplinary actions are still documented if an employee resigns while under investigation. Although resignations in lieu of terminations may be accepted by the Chief of Police, resignations accepted while the employee is still under Administrative Investigation are still subject to the outcome of the investigation and any disciplinary documentation that would apply. The results of such findings are reported to the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy Misconduct Unit for further action (reference South Carolina State Statute 23-23-150).

2024 COMPLAINTS AND DISPOSITIONS

The IA Unit processed 130 complaints against employees of the Columbia Police Department in 2024. 40 of these complaints were external complaints (which means they were initiated by the public) and 90 were from internal of the department. There was a 41.2% decrease in these public complaints in 2024.

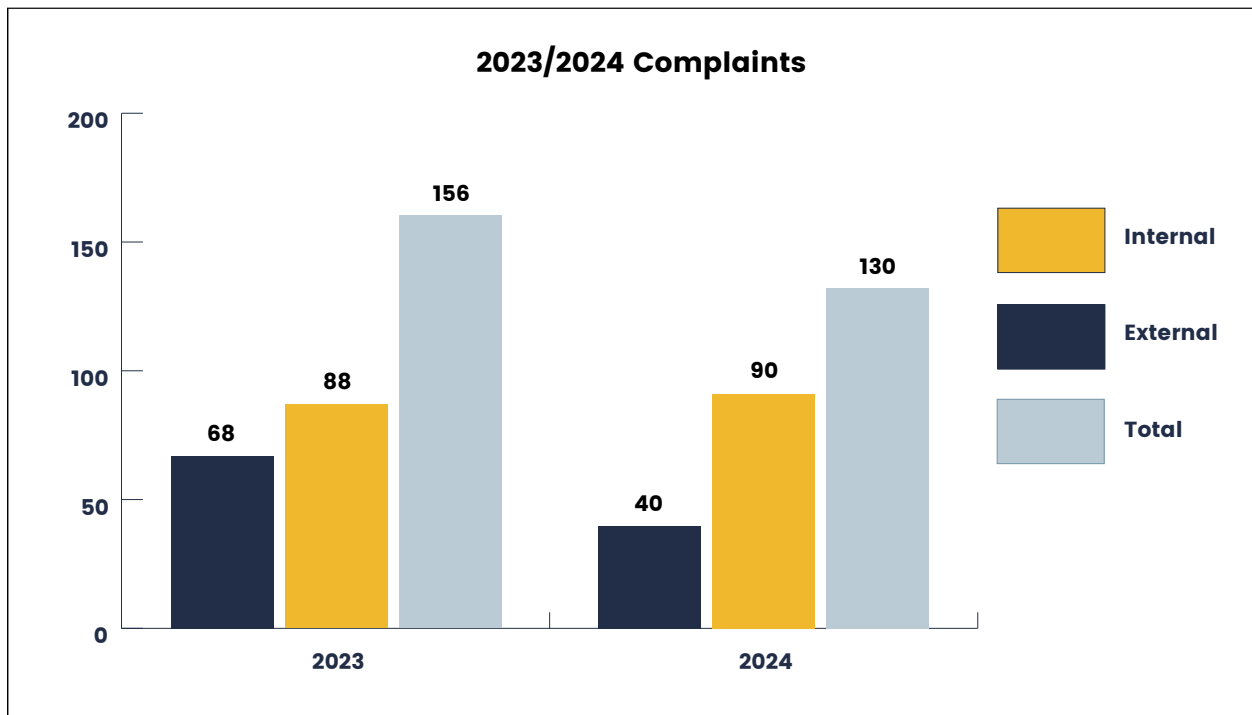


FIGURE 7: The total number of internal and external complaints received in, 2023 and 2024. **PLEASE NOTE:** Complaints may contain multiple allegations. Some complaints in this table may still be pending adjudication.

DATA SOURCE: CPD

In 2024, the Columbia Police Department investigated 3 complaints involving excessive force with 2 of the complaints involving Use of Force. Of these complaints, none were sustained.

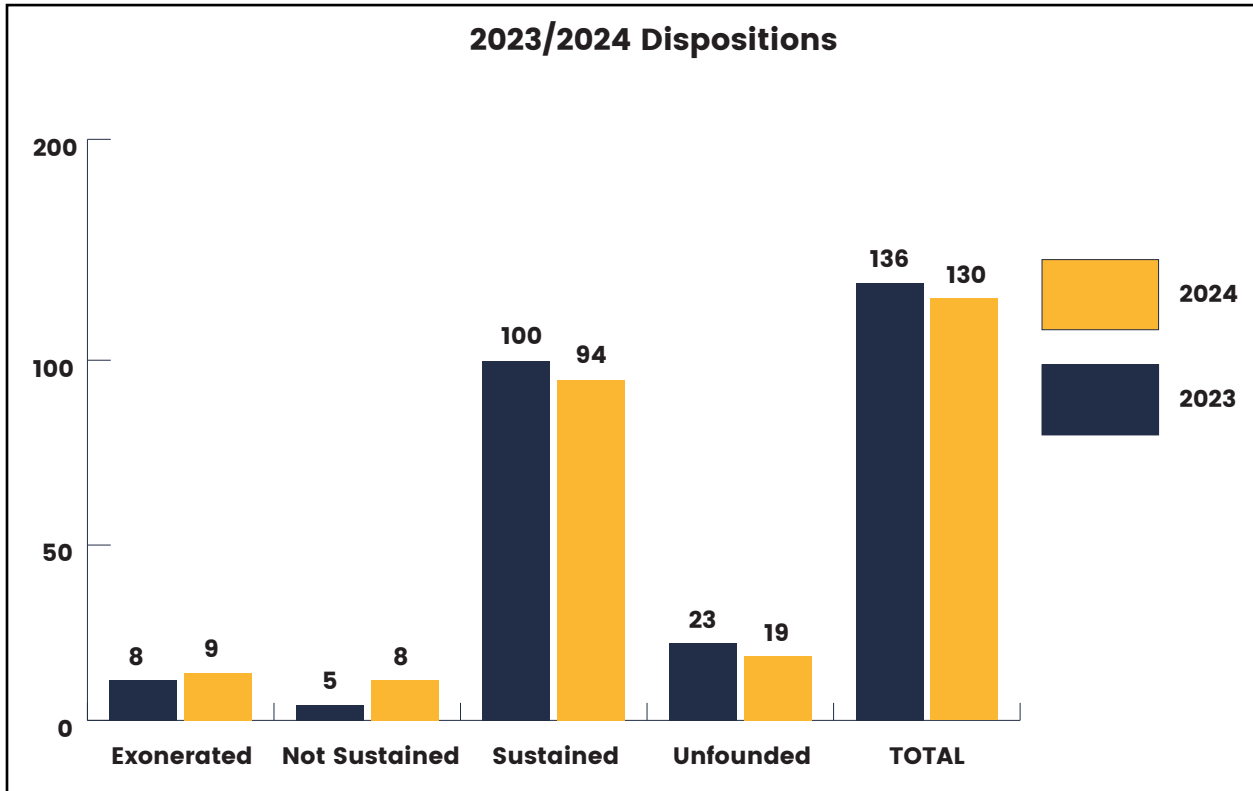


FIGURE 8: The Findings of Complaints Alleged in 2023 and 2024. Note 19 cases were administratively closed or are otherwise without additional disposition.

DATA SOURCE: CPD

The following actions were taken as a result of the sustained complaints. Some sustained complaints resulted in reprimands to several employees. The following does not include reprimands created and served by the accident review board.

	External	Internal	Total
Counseling/Retraining	5	48	53
Oral Reprimand	0	12	12
Written Reprimand	1	19	20
Suspension	0	2	2
Termination or Resignation in Lieu of Termination	1	6	7
TOTAL	7	87	94

FIGURE 9: Actions Taken in Conjunction with sustained allegations in 2024. The remaining sustained complaints were resolved with Performance Improvement Plans. Several sustained complaints resulted in multiple reprimands. In 4 instances in 2024, an employee resigned knowing they were facing termination.

DATA SOURCE: CPD

As a result of 94 sustained allegations made in 2024, 4 employees resigned in lieu of termination and 4 other employees were terminated.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING EMPLOYEES

When an employee of the Columbia Police Department is accused of a crime within the City of Columbia's jurisdiction, the case is referred to an independent agency, such as SLED, for investigation. If the alleged crime occurs outside of City of Columbia Police Department's jurisdiction, the agency with jurisdiction in that area conducts the criminal investigation in accordance with local procedures. The facts revealed by the criminal investigation are presented to the appropriate prosecutorial authority, for a determination of whether the employee should be criminally charged or not.

The IA Unit conducts independent administrative investigations that run concurrent and parallel, but independent of the criminal investigation.

The completed administrative investigation is presented to the CRB for review to determine if any directives and/or procedures were violated. Decisions on the final disposition of criminal and administrative cases are made independently of one another.

Employees charged with a crime, including certain traffic offenses, are required to report the charges to their immediate supervisor and/or the Watch Commander. Employees may be placed on Investigatory Suspension pending resolution of the charges. Depending on the outcome of the charges, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment or reinstatement if the investigation determines the employee was innocent and clear of any criminal and/or policy violations.

IN-CUSTODY DEATHS

CPD has several policies relating to prisoner care and transportation. These policies are periodically reviewed and updated to guide employees in their handling of persons in custody. Officers receive annual training on these policies.

If a person dies while in the custody of CPD, the appropriate jurisdiction's Coroner's Office and SLED are requested to conduct an independent criminal investigation. The facts revealed by the criminal investigation are presented to the Fifth Circuit Solicitor's Office if the incident occurred in Richland County and the Eleventh Circuit Solicitor's Office if the incident occurred in Lexington County, who then determine if the officer's action was lawful and justified. An Internal Affairs investigation is concurrent and parallel, but independent of the criminal investigation to determine policy compliance. At the conclusion of the internal investigation, the case is reviewed by the officer's chain of command or the Command Review Board to determine the disposition, and any disciplinary action, if appropriate.

- **In 2024, no in-custody deaths occurred.**

VEHICLE PURSUITS & COLLISIONS

Vehicle Pursuits – Policy and Practice

Pursuit driving is one of the most serious and dangerous duties and responsibilities of police officers. The primary responsibility of an officer in pursuit of a violator is safety: the safety of the public, the violator, and police officers. The department's policy authorizes officers to engage in a vehicle pursuit only when they have cause to believe the necessity of apprehension outweighs the immediate danger created by the pursuit to the officer and the public. The need for immediate apprehension of the violator must continuously be weighed against the inherent risks created by pursuit driving.

If a pursuit is initiated by an officer of the department, the officer's supervisor will take oversight responsibility for the pursuit and ensure compliance with all policies. Supervisors respond to the area of the pursuit while monitoring the pursuit on the radio and continuously evaluate the circumstances surrounding the pursuit. The supervisor completes an After Action Report which provides a written summary of the incident and forwards the Vehicle Pursuit Packet through the chain of command to the Office of the Chief. The Office of Professional Standards reviews and analyzes each pursuit packet to identify potential needs for additional training and/or policy/directive modifications.

In 2024, Tire Deflation Devices (TDD), also known as Stop Sticks, were deployed in 2 different pursuits involving the Columbia Police Department (CPD). Out of those 2 deployments, both were successful in stopping the fleeing subject's vehicle.

In 2024, Starchase which is a vehicle mounted GPS launcher was introduced and purchased by the City of Columbia Police Department. This technology provides law enforcement with the ability to tag, track, and safely apprehend a suspect without the need to engage in a high speed pursuit. The device is a tagging system that tracks and locates a fleeing vehicle. Further training and departmental policy has been developed so that this tool will be utilized by the department in 2025.

PURSUIITS		
	2024	2023
Pursuits:		
Total Officers Involved	89	73
Terminated by Supervisor	11	6
Terminated by Officer	4	10
Terminated by Suspect	11	22
Terminated by Suspect due to Collision	15	10
Policy Compliant	25	29
Policy Compliant/Remediation	4	2
Justified Pursuits w/o Policy Violation	25	29
Justified Pursuits w/ Policy Violation	11	12
Unjustified Pursuits	10	0
Collisions resulting from Pursuits	17	10
Total Pursuits	46	41
Injuries:		
Officer	2	0
Suspect(s)	8	4
Third Party	2	0
Reason Initiated:		
Traffic Offense	26	14
Criminal Offense	20	27

FIGURE 10: 2023 and 2024 Pursuits. **DATA SOURCE:** CPD

Vehicle Pursuits – Definitions

Justified – the pursuit is legal according to State Law. The officer is justified in regards to SC State law in initiating a traffic stop and/or pursuing the vehicle.

Unjustified Pursuits – pursuits that may have occurred because they were initiated due to unjust, wrong, and/or unlawful reasons, lacking reasonable suspicion and not of an actual or suspected law violator.

Policy Compliant – does not violate policy, the incident complied with policy.

Policy Not Compliant – violates policy directly related to the pursuit policy or any other policy during the pursuit.

Justified without Policy Violation – the pursuit was legal and lawful (at a minimum reasonable suspicion existed for the traffic stop) and there were no violations of policy.

Justified with Policy Violation – The pursuit was legal and lawful (at a minimum reasonable suspicion existed for the traffic stop) and the pursuit violated policy.

Vehicles/Officers Involved – the number city vehicles involved in the pursuit, and officers in the vehicles. There are times when there may be more than one officer in a patrol car and therefore the number of officers versus the number of vehicles differ.

Terminated by Supervisor – the supervisor uses their own discretion to terminate the pursuit based on the supervisor's assessment of the situation and various factors present.

Terminated by Officer – The officer uses their own discretion to terminate the pursuit based on the supervisor's assessment of the situation and various factors present.

Terminated by Suspect due to Collision – The pursuit is terminated due to accident, involving the suspect vehicle.

Collisions Resulting from Pursuits – Pursuits that caused, contributed, or ended in collisions.

Reasons for Initiating Vehicle Pursuits		
Offenses Initiating a Pursuit	2024	2023
Homicide	0	0
Burglary/Home Invasion	0	0
Assault on Government Officer or Employee	0	0
Assault w/ Deadly Weapon	0	3
Auto Breaking	0	2
Sexual Assault (Rape/Sex Offense)	0	0
Larceny of a vehicle	13	13
Hit and Run	2	0
Unlawful Entry into an Enclosed Area	4	0
Kidnapping	0	0
Robbery (Armed)	2	0
Traffic Offense (Not DUI)	15	12
Wanted Person	1	1
Weapons Law Violation	1	3
Arson	0	0
Criminal Offense - Non Felony	0	0
DUI	4	2
Person with a gun	0	0
Shots Fired	1	3
Suspicious Person	0	2
Narcotics Violation	3	3
TOTAL	46	44

FIGURE 11: Violations Initiating Pursuits in 2023 and 2024. Some pursuits had multiple violations. **DATA SOURCE:** CPD

Of the 46 pursuits, 25 pursuits were initiated due to criminal activity and 21 pursuits were initiated due to traffic violations. The Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle offenses to include Carjacking accounted for the majority of the criminal activity. 15 of the 46 pursuits were initiated because the vehicle was reported stolen, which was an increase from the previous year in 2023.

Of those fifteen (15) stolen vehicles, two (2) had been involved in a Carjacking incident. Two (2) pursuits were the results of an attempted murder and murder incident in which both crimes were freshly committed and officers identified the suspect involved then a pursuit ensued. The suspect from the murder incident was criminally charged for murder.

Four (4) of the forty six (46) pursuits were DUI's, three (3) were narcotics related in which one pursuit resulted in the seizure of a firearm and charges of possession with intent to distribute narcotics.

The one (1) pointing and presenting incident resulted in a stolen firearm being recovered and a convicted felon being in possession of a firearm. The one (1) shots fired incident resulted in officers capturing a wanted suspect for multiple outstanding charges; one (1) was involved in a domestic violence incident; and one (1) was a wanted subject.

Vehicle Pursuits – Policy and Practice Continued

Policy regulating police activity during vehicle pursuits were updated in late 2021. Changes in the new policy broadened justification to conduct a pursuit from violent felony to include violent criminal activity and Serious Criminal Activity. The purpose was to provide further guidance and direction of authorized pursuit situations. The pursuit policy can be found at the agency website: <https://columbiapd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/01.03-Police-Emergency-Vehicle-Operation-and-Motor-Vehicle-Pursuit-Policy.pdf>.

Definitions:

Violent Criminal Activity: Any activity that resulted in death or bodily injury, or any act by the subject where the public or an officer is threatened with bodily injury or death. e.g. the subject has used or threatened to use a weapon.

Serious Criminal Activity: Any activity which would be adjudicated in the Court of General Sessions if a person were arrested and convicted for engaging in that activity.

The Pursuit Authority defined in the Police Emergency Vehicle Operation and Motor Vehicle Pursuit Policy of General Orders was updated to, "Officers are authorized to engage in a vehicle pursuit only when they have reasonable suspicion that the driver or occupant of the other vehicle has engaged or is about to engage in violent criminal activity or serious criminal activity AND the pursuit assessment indicates pursuit is reasonably warranted." Whereas the previous General Order stated: "Officers are authorized to engage in a vehicle pursuit only when they have reasonable suspicion to believe that the driver or occupant of the other vehicle has committed or is about to commit a violent felony." Additionally, the definition of Pursuit Assessment was also included in the policy in order to better help officers and supervisors assess if a pursuit is warranted and is defined as: the process of weighing the factors to the pursuit to decide whether the necessity to immediately apprehend the fleeing suspect outweighs the level of inherent risk created by a motor vehicle pursuit. Some of the factors to be determined prior to engaging in and during a pursuit include, but not limited to, the following:

- If the suspect can be identified and apprehended later
- The types of roadway(s) involved
- Weather conditions
- The seriousness of the offense
- The risks created by initiating the pursuit
- Traffic conditions and density
- Presence of passengers
- Presence of pedestrians
- Degree of control the suspect has over their vehicle

In 2024, there were no fatalities resulting from a pursuit initiated by CPD however during an involved pursuit while assisting RCSD a fatality did occur when an attempted murder suspect collided into an uninvolved citizen.

Employee Motor Vehicle Collisions

To provide police services throughout the City of Columbia's jurisdiction, designated employees drive a significant number of miles in department vehicles. The geographic jurisdiction for the Columbia Police Department includes the city of Columbia and the unincorporated areas covering 141 square miles with additional annexations added throughout the year. In total, the department has approximately 445 vehicles in operation. In 2024, department vehicles were driven a total of 4,543,517 miles.

In 2024, 82 collisions involving the department's motor vehicles were reported, an increase of 1% from the previous year. South Carolina Code of Laws (Section 56-5-765) require the South Carolina Highway Patrol to investigate all collisions involving law enforcement vehicles to make a determination as to whether the agency vehicle was operated properly within the guidelines of appropriate statutes and regulations.

Internal administrative reviews are conducted on all collisions involving Department vehicles. An independent Vehicle Accident Review Board is composed of members of the City of Columbia's Risk Management Office, the City Fleet Services Division, and officers from the Traffic and Training Units. The Board, appointed by the Office of the Chief, reviews the results of the internal investigations to determine if the collision was preventable or not preventable (see figure 11).

When an employee is involved in a preventable collision, the Vehicle Accident Review Board determines appropriate corrective action. Corrective actions include counseling and retraining through punitive actions such as written reprimands and/

or loss of vehicle privileges. In conjunction with these actions, personnel may also be required to attend drivers training or an emergency vehicle operation course as a remedial action. In 2019, a specialized class was developed by the Training Unit for officers who had been in one or several preventable collisions in order to correct driving shortcomings. Three officers were directed to attend the class in 2024.

In addition, the Board identifies patterns of driving, circumstances, equipment or training deficiencies that contribute to collisions and provides recommendations that will resolve and correct identified patterns. These recommendations and strategies are reviewed by the Department's Training Unit and incorporated into training lesson plans proctored during annual recertification of sworn officers and/or for individual application.

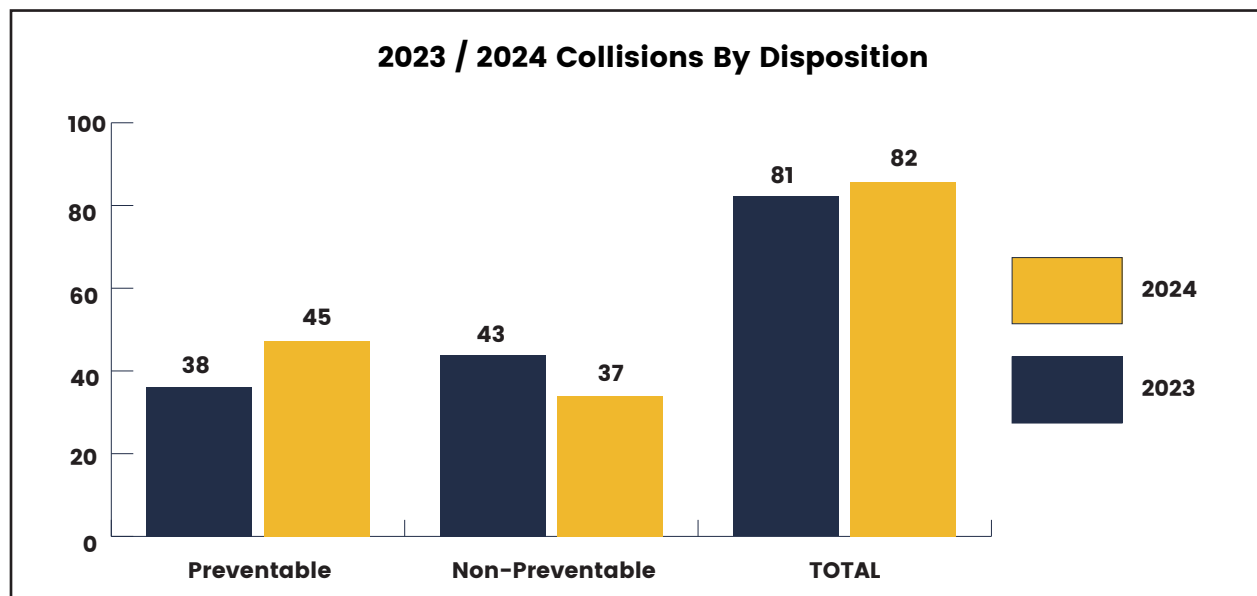


FIGURE 11: Dispositions Reached in Investigations of Department Vehicle Accidents.

DATA SOURCE: CPD



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