



Wheat Ridge Police Professional Standards Unit 2020 Annual Report



Approved

The Professional Standards Unit is responsible for several areas within the Police Department. Their primary duty shall be to ensure the integrity of the Wheat Ridge Police Department. The Professional Standards Unit's areas of responsibility include but not limited to the development, implementation, and supervision of recruitment and selection processes within the department, police department awards/recognition program, and internal investigation activities.

The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) accepts positive and negative comments from the public, professionals, and staff in regards to police services and member conduct. PSU investigates and maintains records on commendations, complaints, use of force incidents, employee-involved accidents, the early warning system, and eluding and pursuit events.

The PSU office researches, recommends, develops and writes policy revisions, and other responsibilities as assigned by the Chief of Police.

The areas of responsibility for PSU are outlined in the Annual Report. Information contained in the PSU 2020, Annual Report is compiled from the yearly activities of PSU.

Commendations

The Wheat Ridge Police Department provides recognition to those employees and citizens whose actions exemplify the qualities of our Core Values, specifically: Courage, Integrity, Respect, Perseverance, and Initiative. The Department recognized 42 individuals for exceptional performance, involving 52 separate instances in 2020. The Department received a wide range of compliments from citizens, ranging from motorist assists to life-saving efforts. The table below reflects a four-year comparison related to commendations.



Challenge Coins

In 2020, 23 Challenge Coins were presented to 21 employees. The graph below represents a four-year comparison of Challenge Coins presented to employees.



Department Awards

The following individuals received an award during 2020. Awards are issued throughout the year or at the Police Department Annual Awards Ceremony.

Medals:

Commendation

Sergeant Simpson
 Detective Eversole
 Detective Shaul
 Detective McDaniel
 Officer McCarthy
 Officer Samuels
 Officer Cotten

Achievement

IT Services Jonathan Allen
 Support Services Michelle Stodden
 PIO Sara Spaulding
 Detective Slade
 Officer Cotten
 Officer van Veen
 Officer Miller
 Officer Holliday

Life Saving

Detective Kulp
 Officer Espinosa
 Officer Rezac

FORMAL LETTER OF RECOGNITION

Jefferson County District Attorney Investigator Boatright
 Jefferson County District Attorney Investigator Jenkins
 Sergeant Sailor
 Sergeant Lima
 Sergeant Simpson
 Sergeant Krieger
 Corporal Stark
 Detective Slade

Officer van Veen
Officer Johnson
Officer Reetz
Officer Gross

Recruitment

The Police Department Recruitment Team was not active in 2020 due to COVID 19 and the social distancing regulations that were in effect. Members of the Recruitment Team included: Sergeants Jamie Watson, and Bobbi Dawkins; Officers Allan Fischer, Barry Malloy, Nate Lovan, Brian Gross, John Bowman, Krista Cuney, Steven Berkowitz, and Detectives Zahra Al-Arahawi, and Kyle Eversole.

Recruitment Team members attended nine job fairs in 2019, one less than in 2018. Team members participated in the following recruiting events:

PSU facilitated the hiring process for all positions within the Police Department and assisted with internal transfers and promotional processes. PSU worked closely with the Human Resources Division to develop recruiting strategies and marketing techniques.

Hiring Processes, Promotions & Demographics

In 2020, 189 people applied to be sworn police officers with the City of Wheat Ridge. This is an increase from 2019 (174). The recruitment process was cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Note: Gender/Ethnicity information is not required during the application process. The percentages detailed below are of the total information available.

- 70% of the applicants were men
- 30% of the applicants were women
- 67% of the applicants were Caucasian
- 1% of the applicants were African-American
- 18% of the applicants were Hispanic
- 1% of the applicants were Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1% of the applicants were American Indian
- 12% of the applicants identified as “Other”

During 2020, the Department hired no lateral police officers; however, 6 recruit police officers were hired. The demographics for those hired in 2019, were two Caucasian females, one Hispanic male, and three Caucasian males.

In 2020, a Division Chief’s hiring process was held for internal candidates. One internal male candidate was selected to fill the position.

In February of 2020, an external male candidate was appointed to the position of Chief of Police.

Department, Community, and Enforcement Demographics

The City of Wheat Ridge is a Home Rule Municipality located in Jefferson County Colorado. Wheat Ridge is a western suburb of Denver. The Wheat Ridge Police Department strives to achieve staffing demographically aligned with our service community. The most recent data regarding demographics in Wheat Ridge is found in the 2020 estimate provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. While these are the estimated demographics of the city residents in 2020, these statistics do not include the individuals traveling through, commuting to, or temporarily residing in Wheat Ridge. For this reason, caution should be used when directly comparing Wheat Ridge resident demographics to police employee demographics.

The 2020, United States Census Bureau showed that Caucasian men and women make up 90.4% of the Wheat Ridge population. At the end of 2020, the Wheat Ridge Police Department consisted of 93.1% Caucasian officers.

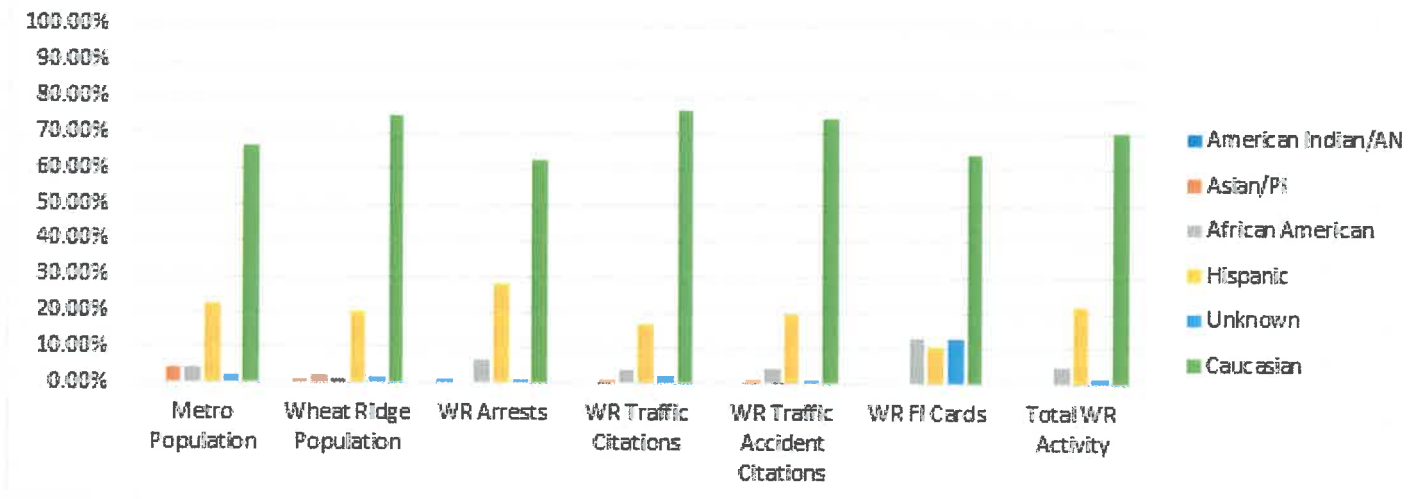
Hispanic officers accounted for 4.6% of the department's sworn staff at the end of 2020; whereas, the service population is approximately 21.4% Hispanic. African-American officers accounted for 1.1% of the department's sworn staff at the end of 2020; whereas, the service population is approximately 1%.

The Department employed one Asian officer (1.1%) in 2020; whereas the service population is approximately 1.3% of the Wheat Ridge population. The Department did not employ American Indian/Alaska Native officers in 2020. The Department employed one Middle Eastern officer for 1%.

In 2020, the Department integrated a new Records Management System (RMS); Niche. Since the inception of Niche in 2019 there were challenges in regards to adequate data entry regarding ethnicity. The Niche Consortium Group continued to work with the Niche vendor to eliminate problems. Furthermore, team members continue to receive training on the new RMS to improve their knowledge and skills. Caution should be given to the below data as it may not be an accurate representation of individuals contacted by officers.

The below chart represents an analysis of the percentage of total WRPD enforcement actions in 2020 from arrests made, traffic citations' issued, traffic summonses issued as a result of traffic accidents, and field contact cards in relation to population demographics of Wheat Ridge and the Denver Metropolitan Area (date obtained from the 2019 estimate):

2020 Enforcement Demographics In Relation to Population



An analysis of the above data shows:

The Caucasian population comprises 74.9% of the Wheat Ridge population and 66.5% of the overall Denver metropolitan population. In 2020, 70.3% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Caucasian population.

The Hispanic population comprises 20.3% of the Wheat Ridge population and 22.1% of the Denver metro population. In 2020, 21.8% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Hispanic population.

The African-American population comprises .8% of the Wheat Ridge population and 4.4% of the Denver metro population. In 2020, 5.2% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the African American population.

The American Indian population comprises .5% of the population of Wheat Ridge and .8% of the Denver metro area. In 2020, 0.6% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the American Indian population.

The Asian/Pacific Islander population comprises 1.9% of the population of Wheat Ridge and 4.2% of the Denver metro area. In 2020, 0.7% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Asian/Pacific Islander population.

Wheat Ridge contact and enforcement actions were listed as 1.5% Unknown in Niche RMS.

Biased-Based Profiling

Bias-Based Profiling complaints are thoroughly investigated and subjected to an administrative review. Complaints are typically investigated by the named department member’s direct supervisor. The supervisor takes into account the citizen’s concerns, department policies, and municipal, state, and federal law. The investigating supervisor thoroughly documents the results of the investigation and makes a recommendation regarding disposition. The documented investigation is then forwarded to each link in the named department member’s chain of

command. The case is reviewed by each successive member, each of whom documents their findings and makes their recommendation for disposition. The Chief of Police makes the final review of the investigation and taking into account each previous recommendation and issues a final disposition.

There were three bias-based profiling allegations received in 2020. Males reported all three of the incidents, and none of the allegations involved the same officer(s). One male alleged that the officer refused to take a theft report from him because he is Hispanic and “gay”. A second male alleged the officers contacted him on three separate occasions because he was being “racially profiled” due to the fact he is African American. A third male alleged that an officer would not listen to his story, tell him his rights, or provide him with a drink of water because he is of “Mexican Heritage.”

All allegations were thoroughly investigated and there was no evidence to support the allegations.

Pursuits

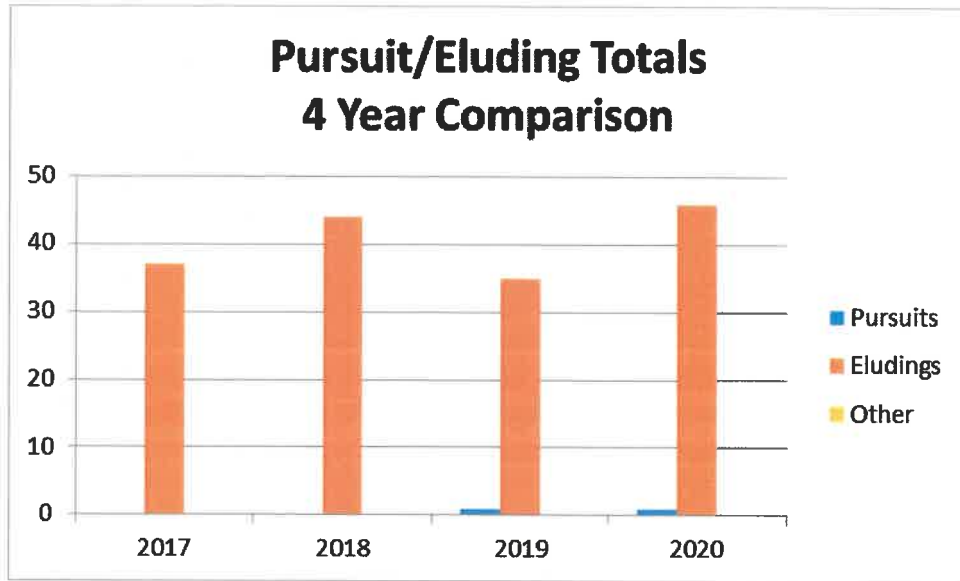
The Wheat Ridge Police Department defines a *pursuit* as the active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend the operator of a motor vehicle who, having been given an audible and visual indication to stop, attempts to avoid apprehension by maintaining or increasing speed or using other evasive tactics, and ignoring the attempts of the officer to stop the driver.

Eluding is defined as the act of knowingly attempting to evade a peace officer while driving a motor vehicle, and the officer disengages pursuing the vehicle—following department policy and procedure.

In 2019, there were 35 total incidents in which suspects failed to yield to police officers. One was deemed a Justified Pursuit.

2020	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Total	Justified	Not Justified
Pursuits	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Eluding	10	10	8	11	18	46	0

The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of Pursuit/Eluding totals.

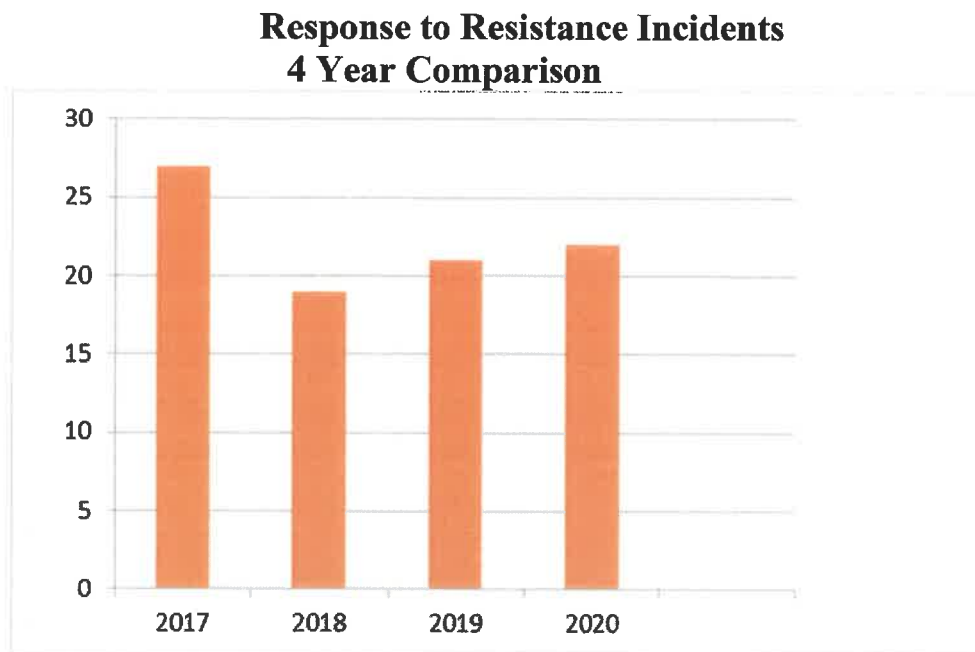


Full pursuit and eluding information and analysis are more completely detailed in the 2020 Pursuit Analysis Report.

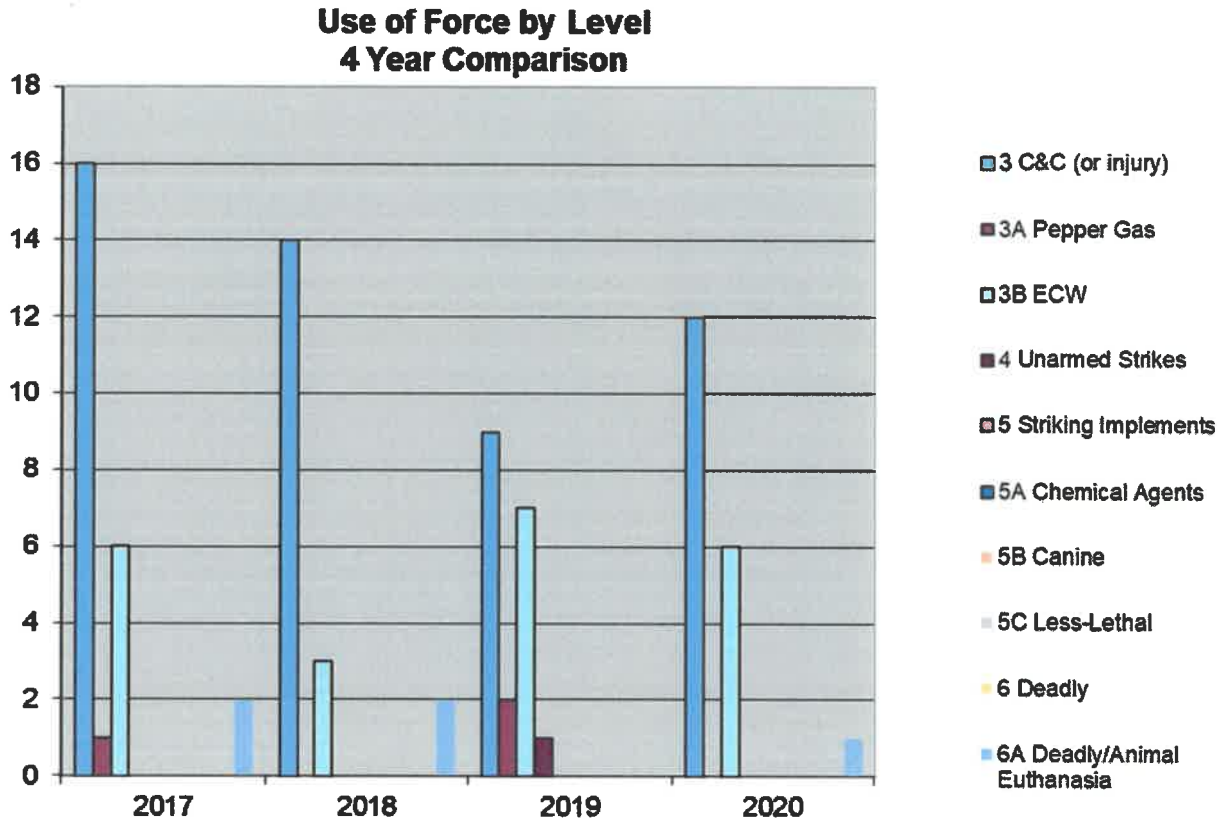
Response to Resistance

Officers are required to complete a Use of Force report when they use force greater than Level 3, control and compliance, or whenever any person sustains an injury. *Control and compliance* is defined as the use of some combination of leverage and strength to generate compliance, including joint locks, pressure points, takedowns, and come-along techniques. Supervisors review the reports and make recommendations as to whether the incident needs further investigation.

PSU received 21 reported Response to Resistance incidents in 2020. The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of reported Use of Force incident.



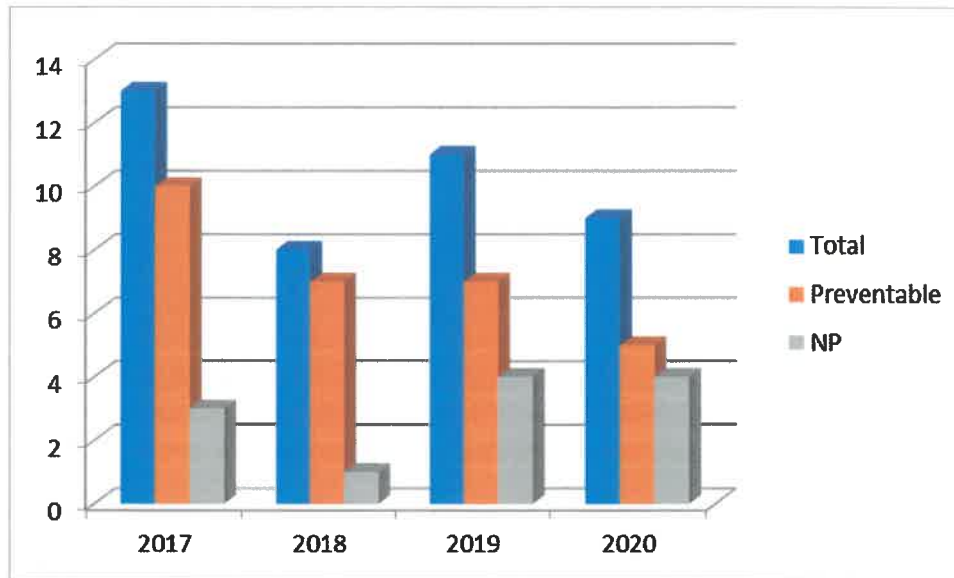
Level 3 Use of Force (Control and Compliance) remained the most widely used level of response to resistance. The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of reported Response to Resistance incident by force level.



Refer to 2020, Use of Force Analysis report for complete information and analysis of the use of force incidents.

Employee Involved Traffic Accidents

Wheat Ridge Police employees were involved in nine accidents in 2020. Four were deemed not preventable, while five were preventable. In reviewing accidents over the past four years, preventable accidents involving employees have decreased. The graph below shows a four-year comparison.



Complaints Investigated in 2020

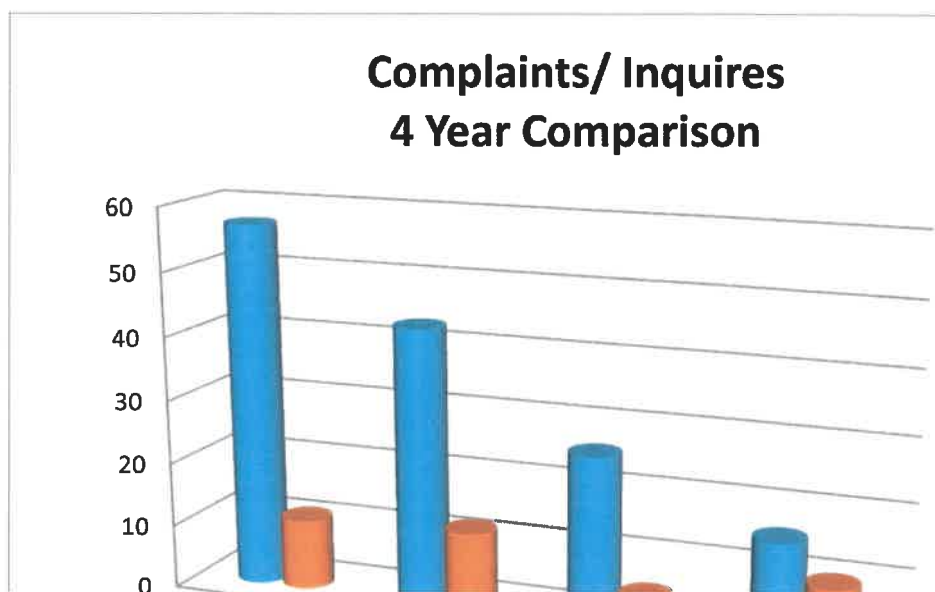
Misconduct Allegation	S	NS	EX	UNF	PF	MED
3.42.02 Directives & Expectations	2					
3.42.03 Laws	1	2	1	2		
3.42.04 Truthfulness						
3.42.05 Conduct Unbecoming	1			1		
3.42.06 Respect for Others	2	1		3		
3.42.07 Customer Service		2		2		
3.42.08 Police Authority		2				
3.42.09 Neglect of Duty		2		2		
3.42.10 Care of Property and Equipment	1			1		
3.42.11 Conflict of Interest						
3.42.12 Use of Force (complaints only)						
3.42.13 Pursuits (complaints only)						
3.42.14 Traffic Accident						

Explanation of Abbreviations	
S = Sustained Complaint	EX = Exonerated
NS = Not Sustained	UNF = Unfounded
PF = Policy Failure	MED = Mediation

PSU received and the Department investigated 28 complaints in 2020; three were classified as major investigations; one involved off-duty conduct, and the other two involved on-duty conduct. The remaining investigations were classified as follows, fourteen Minor, five Administrative, and six Inquires.

The 28 complaints involved 22 officers. Out of the total officers, four officers had two complaints made against them and two officers had three against them in 2020.

Complaints have steadily decreased each year from 2017. The graph below shows a four-year comparison.



Complaint Analysis:

The Wheat Ridge Police Department investigates all complaints against the agency or its employees, including those made anonymously. All complaints are investigated objectively and in a timely fashion.

Wheat Ridge Policy 3.43.05 (B) outlines the process to keep the complainant notified of the investigation status and the results of the investigation upon conclusion.

Wheat Ridge Policy 3.43.02 Complaint Definitions outlines the three complaint categories as, Inquiry, Divisional, and Misconduct. The Misconduct category has two subcategories, Minor and Major Allegations. The severity of the allegation will determine the assigned complaint category.

Wheat Ridge Policy 3.43.10 Disposition Classification outlines the seven disposition classifications for any allegation of misconduct. The dispositions include, Inquiry, Unfounded, Exonerated, Not-Sustained, Sustained, Misconduct Not Based on Complaint, and Policy Failure. The disposition is based on the evidence or lack of evidence in a complaint investigation.

Completion Time:

In cases of Inquiries, Divisional, and Minor complaints, every reasonable effort was made to ensure that the investigation was completed and a disposition reached within 30 days. In cases of Major complaints, additional time was generally necessary due to the complexity of the investigation. In those cases, every reasonable effort was made to ensure completion within 60 days. In all cases, the Chief of Police may grant extensions; department members who are the subject of the investigation are notified of the extension.

In 2020, case completion time varied considerably, for a variety of reasons:

- Inquiries:** The average time to complete an inquiry case in 2020 was 27 days. The shortest completion time was two days; the longest was 49 days. The long case regarded a case in which an officer misplaced a citizen's belonging.
- Divisional:** The average completion time for Divisional complaints in 2019 was 38 days. The shortest completion time was 29 days; the longest was 67 days. The case with the longest completion time involved a traffic complaint. The case was investigated within the policy.
- Minor:** The average completion time for Minor complaints in 2019 was 36 days. The shortest completion time was 15 days; the longest was 55 days. The long case involved an in depth case where extensive follow up was required.
- Major:** Three Major investigations were conducted in 2019. The average completion time for the investigations was 63 days. The shortest completion time was 72 days, and the longest was 128 days. There was an approved extension request for the longest investigation. The longest investigation was very complex.

In only two cases in which the investigation extended beyond the 30 or 60-day time limit imposed by policy, was there a formal extension request forwarded for the approval of the Chief of Police. Care should be taken to ensure this requirement is adhered to in future investigations.

Source of Complaints:

According to the 2019 estimate provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, Wheat Ridge is home to approximately 31,331 residents. Twenty-six complaints, including inquiries, were received in 2020, a complaint to citizen ratio of 1/.00089.

Of the 28 total complaints/inquiries received in 2020, one resulted from an incident that occurred at a location outside the city. This incident involved off duty behavior in the City of Brighton.

Out of the total complaints/inquiries received in 2020, eighteen were initiated by a citizen, six by Wheat Ridge PD employees, and four by administrative means.

Patrol Operations:

Out of the 28 cases, 26 involved personnel assigned to the Patrol Operations Division. One (7%) complaint involved a member of the Community Services Team and the remaining 15 (93%) involved patrol officers. Out of the 26 officers, two involved a sergeant, and two involved corporals.

Support Services:

Out of the 28 cases, six cases involved Support Services Personnel, two complaints involved persons assigned to the Investigations Bureau, and the other involved, one is assigned to Records.

Complaint by call type:

The number one investigated complaint was Citizen Complaints. There were no viable trends with relation to the call for service type. Of those included were traffic, domestic violence, harassment, disturbance, and suspicious persons calls.

Complaint by allegation:

The Department's highest complaint allegations were Respect for Others (six) and Laws (six) in 2020. Of the six Customer Service complaints, three were sustained, and one was unfounded. Of the five Use of Force complaints, two were sustained and one was not sustained and three were unfounded. Of the six Laws complaints, one was sustained, two were not sustained, one was exonerated and two were unfounded. The second highest complaint allegation was Customer Service (four), with two not sustained, and two unfounded.

Complaint by case type:

When viewed by case type, the overwhelming majority of cases continue to be classified as minor investigations.

If a case is determined to meet the criteria for mediation, that option for resolution is offered to both the employee and the complainant. The department utilizes the services of Jefferson County Mediation. There were no cases referred to mediation in 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020. Seven complaints have been successfully mediated to the benefit of both the employee and the complainant since the inception of the mediation process in 2010.

Early Warning System

The Early Warning System was developed to identify employees who may be having difficulties with specific functions of their job performance, or who may be having behavioral issues. Police Department policy requires a supervisory review of the Professional Standards history of employees who have:

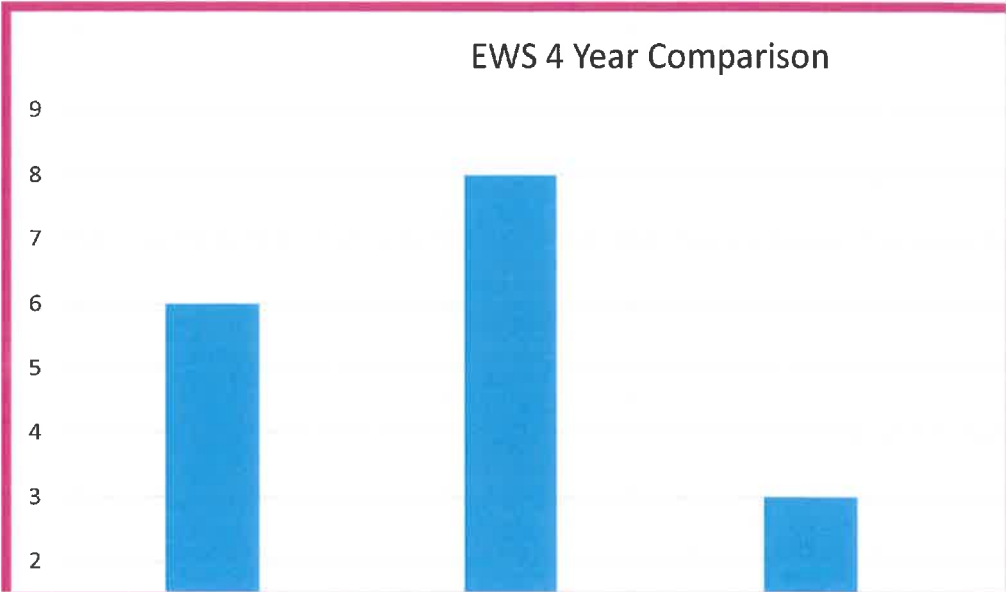
- Received two sustained complaints or four complaints, regardless of disposition, within a 12-month time period.
- Been involved in two preventable traffic accidents, while operating a City-owned vehicle, within a 12-month time period.
- Is involved in four or more use of force situations, regardless of disposition, during any 12-month period that require a Use of Force report, as defined in Policy 5.03.03

The review consists of reviewing each case to determine patterns or practices that require correction, either through counseling or directed training.

Early Warning System Analysis:

In 2020, two Early Warning System (EWS) special reviews were initiated. One employees received two sustained complaints within a 12-month period, and one employee was involved in

four use of force incidents within a 12-month period, which generated the EWS alert. The below charts show a four-year comparison related to Early Warning System alerts.



Officer’s respective supervisors and chain of command reviewed each of their performance. One officer was placed on a Performance Improvement Plan. It was determined no further action was necessary for the remaining officer.