

Saint Paul Police Department

Police Use-of-Force Incidents

Summary Report

2024

Chief Axel Henry

Dear Community Partners,

As part of the Saint Paul Police Department's ongoing commitment to transparency, the 2024 data for use-of-force incidents involving SPPD personnel has been compiled and shared on the following pages of this report.

Among the detailed data included in this report are the number of times force was used, types of force used, demographics of those involved in use of force incidents, and number of injuries that resulted from use-of-force incidents.

While our officers strive to de-escalate situations whenever possible, there are circumstances in which the use of force is necessary to effect an arrest or protect officers and our community from harm. Our department is constantly evaluating our use-of-force training, which we refer to as "response to resistance or aggression" (RRA). That evaluation and resulting evolution of our training has led us to become a national leader among police departments for being at the forefront of use-of-force techniques. As a result, many other departments are now modeling their response to resistance or aggression (RRA) training after that of the SPPD.

Our department's commitment to de-escalation of incidents, as well as providing the safest and most effective means of RRA techniques has produced a data outcome that shows use-of-force having been used in only .36% of police encounters in 2024. That means that over 99% of SPPD encounters in 2024 resulted in no force being used. Further, of the incidents in which force was used, the overwhelming majority of force incidents involved low levels of force, including soft empty hand techniques.

Thank you for your continued trust and support of our officers and the work we do in partnership with the Saint Paul community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ACH', is positioned above the name Axel C. Henry.

Axel C. Henry
CHIEF OF POLICE

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INTRODUCTION

The Saint Paul Police Department

The Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD) was established in 1854 as the first police department in the State of Minnesota. In 2024, the department had an authorized strength of 619 sworn police officer positions. The department serves the capital city of the state of Minnesota, a city of more than 300,000 residents. The city is a metropolis of residential, commercial, and business and is proud of its high standard of living.

Use of Force Training at SPPD

Police use of force continues to be one of the most important local and national discussion topics between police departments and the communities they serve.

Chief Axel C. Henry was a use of force instructor for twenty years and understands the importance of safety, for both the community member and the officer. The use of force techniques trained at the SPPD have developed and evolved over the years as our expert training personnel continue to study and research the safest and most effective methods of responding to resistance or aggression. For the purpose of this report and discussion, the terms use-of-force and response to resistance or aggression (RRA) are interchangeable.

During recent years, a study was conducted to evaluate the data for SPPD RRA incidents over the years 2014-2020. During that time period, the RRA training model at SPPD underwent revision, and the study was intended to evaluate the outcome of the changes that had taken place. The revision of SPPD's RRA training program included the following goals: increase safety for everyone involved in police incidents, emphasize de-escalation techniques, reduce the level of force used, increase technique effectiveness, and enhance community trust.

SPPD recruits who attended the 2015 academy were the first to go through the new training model, followed by all other officers in 2016. Several notable changes that occurred within the RRA training model during this time were the following:

- Emphasis on de-escalation skills at every step of encounters
- RRA training became more team focused
- Increased focus on soft empty-hand control techniques
- Increased scenario-based training to enhance decision making
- Reduced reliance on pain compliance and striking techniques
- Increased RRA training hours during the recruit academy

The initial field observations following the changes to SPPD's RRA training curriculum included lower levels of force used by officers, enhanced teamwork by officers, and increased focus on soft empty-hand techniques.

Data was then gathered to evaluate the changes over the timeframe of 2014-2020, which included over 2800 RRA incidents. That data showed the following results:

- Reduction of use-of-force by 37%
- Reduction of officers using strikes during use-of-force incidents by 69%
- Reduction of officers using chemical irritants in use-of-force incidents by 52%
- Reduction of officers using Tasers in use-of-force incidents by 39%
- Reduction of injuries to people being arrested by 55%
- Reduction of injuries to officers by 25%

In addition to the RRA training described above, SPPD personnel receive a significant amount of training in crisis intervention and de-escalation, among other programs. Further, in the fall of 2020, SPPD launched the Ethical Policing is Courageous (EPIC) training program. The program is a first-of-its-kind peer intervention program designed to teach officers how to intervene successfully – regardless of rank or seniority – to prevent misconduct. The ongoing program, which involves eight hours of discussion, video analysis, and interactive scenarios, has been completed by every officer in the department. EPIC is a cornerstone to our department’s mission to incorporate the highest values into our training, our service and our employee development.

Use-of-Force Complaints

The SPPD investigates all complaints against officers involving the use of police force. Complaints can be received from the public or initiated internally by the department.

There are many ways the community can make a complaint about police use of force. Complaints can be filed with several non-government groups that have partnered with the SPPD, with the City of Saint Paul Office of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity, or directly with the SPPD.

All excessive force investigations are reviewed by the Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC). The PCIARC is a body of Saint Paul residents selected by the Mayor of Saint Paul and confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council.

The role of the PCIARC is to evaluate the complaint and the documented investigation and make recommendations to the chief of police on 1) whether the police action violated policy and, if so, 2) what disciplinary action they believe is warranted.

The PCIARC is provided unrestricted access to all materials related to an incident. This includes all police reports and other documentation, audio and video evidence, and all investigative documents and materials.

You can find detailed information about PCIARC, as well as links to PCIARC annual reports, at the link below: [PCIARC Background & Resources | Saint Paul Minnesota \(stpaul.gov\)](#)

Use-of-Force Reporting

The SPPD requires every officer to notify a supervisor, complete a police report, and a use of force report for every use of force above cooperative handcuffing.

When force is used, a supervisor is required to respond to the location and interview both the officer and the person on whom force was used. The supervisor conducts a preliminary investigation of the incident to ensure the force application and the decision leading up to the application were within department policy.

Use-of-Force Oversight

The SPPD has established several oversight measures to ensure incidents involving police use of force meet all department expectations.

Beyond the initial response and inquiry of the front-line supervisor, unit commanders are required to review each incident where physical force was used within their command. These incidents are then presented and reviewed by the department's use-of-force committee, whose members represent the senior leadership of each of the three patrol districts and the training unit. The committee is chaired by the deputy chief of the operations division.

As an additional measure of checks and balances, the department's internal affairs unit also reviews use-of-force incidents for potential policy violations.

Department Policies

The SPPD revised its use-of-force policy (titled as response to resistance or aggression) in April of 2018 and posted this policy online. The department hosted public meetings to discuss the policy so that community members could share their ideas, input and concerns. The department collected more than 100 feedback points and incorporated many of them into the updated policy.

The foundation of the revised policy was built on the principles within the articles of the U.S. Constitution, and both state and federal law. Policy development was also guided by former President Obama's "Final Report on 21st Century Policing."

The revised policy includes more language focused on de-escalation and speaks specifically to when an officer can use deadly force. The revised policy also places a greater emphasis on protecting the sanctity of life, de-escalation and includes guidelines to help officers determine the appropriate level of force based on observed behavior.

You can find the policy on the police department's website: www.stpaul.gov/departments/police

USE-OF-FORCE FINDINGS

Number of Incidents

Saint Paul police officers responded to 236,938 incidents in 2024, and physical force resulted in 847 of those incidents. This can be reduced to one physical use-of-force incident occurring in every 280 police interactions, or 0.36 percent. This means that **99.64% of SPPD encounters in 2024 resulted in no force being used**. The number of incidents that officers respond to do not include the hundreds of thousands of interactions that officers have with community members each year. The overwhelming majority of force incidents involved low levels of force, including soft empty hand techniques. When soft empty hand techniques are removed from data, it results in 66 total incidents where force was used, or .03 percent. This would mean higher levels of force are occurring once for every 3,589 police interactions.

Number of Officers Using Force

The table below shows the number of officers who used force in each incident. The data reflects the SPPD training model highlighted in the Use of Force Training at SPPD section, found earlier in this report. Specifically, SPPD has shifted towards more team-based use-of-force techniques, in an effort to address incidents in the safest manner possible and reduce injuries to both subjects and officers involved.

Number of Officers Using Force in Each Incident	
	2024
1 officer	248
2 officers	285
3 officers	151
4 officers	82
5 or more officers	81
Total	847

Types of Physical Force

The table below shows the different types of force used by SPPD officers in 2024. Notable within this table is that soft empty hand techniques, a low level of force, was by far the highest number of any force type used. In fact, the soft empty hands category accounted for 82% of force types used in 2024.

Use of Force Types	
	2024
ASR	96
Canine	2
Hard Empty Hand	13
Less Lethal	11
Pepperball*	33
Soft Empty Hands	781
Taser	16
Impact Tool	3
Vehicle	2
Total	957

When soft empty hands are removed from use of force types, force is used .03% of the time. The use of force “types” number does not match the number of incidents because sometimes more than one type of force is used.

Subject Injury

Officers are required to report subject injury in each use-of-force incident, which is also evaluated by the responding supervisor and, if applicable, the responding medical staff. The department requires an injury be recorded if the subject complains of any pain, even if no injury can be observed. As the table below shows, during use-of-force incidents occurring in 2024, 91% of subjects were not injured; 8% had a minor injury; and 0.6% had a major injury.

Subject Injury Data	
	2024
Dog Bite	2
Minor	68
Major Injury	5
No Injuries	772
Total Incidents	847

Officer Injury

Injuries of officers are reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as part of tracking for the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) database. The table below shows the number of officers injured during incidents. Additional data from LEOKA can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr/leoka>

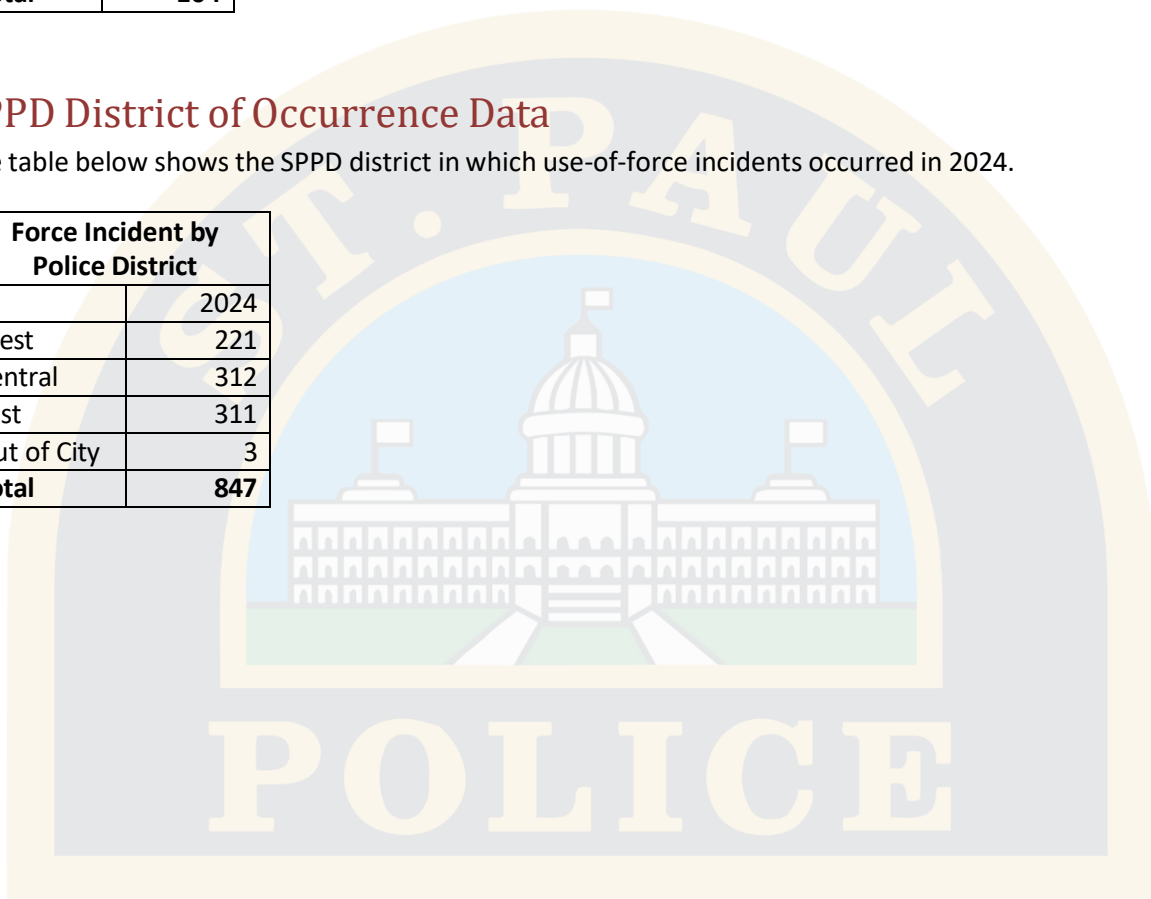
Officer injuries in Saint Paul are up by 30% from 2024.

Officer Injury Data	
	2024
Total	104

SPPD District of Occurrence Data

The table below shows the SPPD district in which use-of-force incidents occurred in 2024.

Force Incident by Police District	
	2024
West	221
Central	312
East	311
Out of City	3
Total	847



Subject Race & Gender Data

The table below shows demographic data for use-of-force incidents that occurred in 2024. Demographics are collected by the officer's observation at the time of incident.

Subject Race and Gender	
	2024
Asian	59
Female	6
Male	53
Black	450
Female	114
Male	336
Hispanic	39
Female	7
Male	32
Native American	17
Female	4
Male	13
White	256
Female	94
Male	162
Other	26
Female	4
Male	22
Total	847

Subject Age Data

The table below shows the age of subjects who were involved in use-of-force incidents in 2024. Subject age data is based on the reported birth year of the subject.

	2024
10 to 14	19
15-17	34
18-19	34
20-29	258
30-39	306
40-49	126
50-59	44
60 and older	11
Unknown	15
Total	847

Firearms Pointing

Although the pointing of a firearm is not a physical application of force, the SPPD considers the action a reportable use of force.

Officers are required to document incidents during which they point a firearm in the direction of another person. These incidents include calls when officers are searching for individuals who are suspected to be armed and have been involved in violent crimes.

Considerable training is provided to officers related to safe weapons handling.

In 2024, officers pointed firearms at subjects 464 times; this number equates to officers pointing firearms at subjects during .19% of incidents in 2024. Twelve officers discharged their firearm in 2024, during the course of five incidents.

Calls for Service	
2024	236,938

Firearms Pointing Incidents	
2024	464

Percentage of Incidents	
2024	0.19%

CONCLUSION

While the Saint Paul Police Department is recognized for being at the forefront of best practices for use-of-force training, we know that we must continue learning and developing. It is imperative that we continue to listen to our community members, study our current practices, and look for areas that we can continue to improve. We review each use of force incident in the city, both at the street level and with the Office of the Chief. You have our commitment that we will continue striving to ensure that our use-of-force training and practices meet the expectations and trust of our community.