

Saint Paul Police Department

Police Use-of-Force Incidents

Summary Report

2016 – 2019

Chief Todd Axtell

August 10, 2020

Dear Community Partners,

In February of 2019, the Saint Paul Police Department published its first ever use-of-force report covering the years 2016 and 2017. At that time, I reported that the department would continue to publish reports that captured use-of-force incidents in upcoming years.

As a result of our ongoing commitment to transparency, I am pleased to authorize the publication of the combined 2016-2019 use-of-force reports today.

The data presented in this report were collected from several sources and is an extension of the earlier report. Due to limitations related to types of data we are able to collect; the report focuses on three distinct use-of-force areas:

- Physical force applications
- Firearms pointing incidents, and
- Firearm discharges at a person

The department has successfully completed the transition to a new report writing system, eForms. This will allow the department to collect and report more comprehensive data related to the types of crimes and persons our officers encounter with regard to use-of-force.

Thank you for your continued support of the women and men of the Saint Paul Police Department. We are proud to be able to continue delivering trusted service with respect to you each and every day.

Respectfully,



Todd Axtell
CHIEF OF POLICE

The Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD) is committed to providing trusted service with respect in all of the policing services it provides. The department is also committed to building trust with its community.

The purpose of this report is to further our commitment to transparency. The collection of data in this report did not previously exist in this format and was built using several sources of information and by reading individual reports describing incidents that occurred in 2016 and 2017.

Key findings include:

- Twelve officers were involved in six separate officer-involved shooting incidents from 2016 to 2019. In each of the six incidents, the subject was armed with a weapon that posed a threat to the officer. All six subjects sustained fatal injuries.
- From 2016 to 2019 the SPPD saw a 55 percent increase in the number of subjects presenting a weapon when coming in contact with an officer.
- Subjects of force were not injured in 77 percent of cases in 2016. Over the span of four years that number increased to 87 percent of subjects of force not being injured in 2019. The SPPD believes that this is due to an increase in training of de-escalation as well as the use of multiple officer takedowns as a method to minimize injury to subjects and officers.
- From 2016 to 2019 there were a total of 1,689 use-of-force incidents. The department received 12 complaints from people who believed the force used in a particular incident was excessive. These cases were investigated and presented to the City's Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC), which determined that the force used did not violate department policy in 11 of the 12 cases. There has not been a sustained complaint of excessive force since 2016.
- Physical force was not used by Saint Paul police officers in 99.98 percent of all the incidents to which they responded between 2016 and 2019. In cases where the subject was booked into jail, use of force resulted, on average, in four percent of the incidents.
- Canine apprehensions that resulted in a bite steadily declined from 36 in 2016 to zero in 2019. This is due in large part to an extensive revision of the SPPD canine policy over this four-year period.

DATA NOTE: Due to the limitations of the data available, there are three distinct and separate data groups in this report. Most of the report data focuses on **physical force actions**. This document also reports incidents where **firearms were pointed** and incidents where **officers discharged their firearms**. Some data in this report has changed since the first report was published.

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>5-8</u>
Report overview	5
The Saint Paul Police Department	5
Committed to Transparency	5
Use-of-Force Complaints	6
Use-of-Force Reporting	7
Use-of-Force Oversight	7
Use-of-Force Data	7
Department Policies	8
Use-of-Force Training	8
<u>Use-of-Force Findings</u>	<u>9-15</u>
Use-of-Force Incidents, Actions and Persons	9
Number of Incidents	9
Number of Actions	10
Number of Officers Using Force	10
Types of Physical Force	11
Subject Behavior	12
Subject Injury	12
Time and Location Data	13
Call Types	15
<u>Demographics</u>	<u>15-20</u>
Officers Who Use Force	15
Subjects of Physical Force	18
<u>Firearms Pointing</u>	<u>21-22</u>
<u>Officer Involved Discharges</u>	<u>22-25</u>

INTRODUCTION

Report Overview

This report is the second in a sequence of reports showing a description and analysis of incidents involving Saint Paul police officers who used force against persons with whom they had contact while providing police services.

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

Chief Todd Axtell directed the publication of the first report following numerous police and community meetings in 2018. The communities served by the SPPD made their voices heard clearly and they asked to know more about police use of force.

Until the publishing of the first report in 2018, the SPPD had not previously reported, in detail, facts and circumstances of police use-of-force incidents.

This report builds on the previously reported summary data on all use-of-force incidents in 2016 and 2017 where any level of force was used above handcuffing an unresisting person, to now include 2018 and 2019.

Saint Paul Police Department

The SPPD was established in 1854 as the first police department in the State of Minnesota. In 2018, there were 635 sworn police officers and 152 civilian support staff. The department receives tax funding in the amount of approximately \$100 million and serves a city of more than 310,000 residents. The city is a metropolis of residential, commercial, and business and is proud of its high standard of living.

The department formally adopted and launched a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program in 2018 requiring all sworn police officers to wear a BWC while providing police services. The department publishes quarterly reports on its BWC program, which can be viewed online on the department's website, <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police>

Committed to Transparency

Chief Todd Axtell was appointed as Saint Paul's Chief of Police by then-Mayor Chris Coleman on June 23, 2016. Chief Axtell immediately committed the department to transparency and to engaging the public at historic levels. Since his appointment, the department has worked toward delivering on this assurance of increased transparency. True to his pledge, Chief Axtell and his administration released 15 years of traffic stop data in 2017 and for every year following that. The data was collected based on a 2001 agreement between the Saint Paul NAACP and the SPPD, but the data was not previously published.

The department also published a website comparing programming, priorities and initiatives with former President Barack Obama’s “Final Report on 21st Century Policing” and created an interactive online version of the police department policy manual for the public. Each of these initiatives included an online tool making it possible for members of the public to provide feedback to the department on its performance, policies and procedures.

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 public 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 investigated complaints regarding use of force are turned over to the Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC). The PCIARC is a body of nine 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 2) if so, 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.

The below table represents complaint data and final outcome of excessive force complaints received between 2016-2019.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Complaints	7	0	3	2
Sustained	1	0	0	0
Policy Violation	1	0	0	0

Data reflects incident occurrence date and not the date of the filed complaint. You can find a detailed account of all complaints filed against members of the police department at the below link:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity>.

Use-of-Force Reporting

The SPPD requires every officer to notify a supervisor and file a police report and a use-of-force report in each incident where they use force above un-resisted handcuffing.

A supervisor is required to respond to the location and interview both the officer and the person on whom force was used. The supervisor evaluates 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 a second measure of checks and balances, the department's internal affairs unit also reviews use-of-force incidents for potential policy violations. If any possible policy violations are identified a formal investigation is initiated.

Use-of-Force Data

Throughout the years documented in this report, the SPPD used a record management system (RMS) implemented in 2001. The functionality of this system met the record and data needs of the time in which it was designed.

In more recent years, there was, and continues to be, significant evolution to policing and the interest in understanding policing trends. The RMS used in previous years did not have the capacity to adequately collect or report on these evolving trends. Additionally, the legacy RMS has limitations in supporting this research and the collection and reporting of data.

SPPD has successfully transitioned into a new report writing system that will collect more comprehensive data as it relates to the types of crimes and people our officers come into contact with. This new platform will also help the department increase the reporting frequency of use-of-force data to the public.

The data required for this reporting were collected from multiple sources and combined into one report. The reportable data is presented in a summary format.

The police incident data contained in police reports were recorded to accommodate any data requests made under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act related to this report.

Department Policies

The SPPD revised its use-of-force policy in April of 2018 and posted this policy online. The department hosted several 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 dozens of them into the updated policy.

The foundation of the revised policy was built on the principles within the articles of the United States 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 captured many new elements not present in earlier policies. It includes more language focused on de-escalation and speaks specifically to when an officer can use deadly force.

The revised policy also placed 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.

The new policy also contains a new visual model that illustrates levels of responses matched to subject actions.

The policy is online for the public to view and the online policy solicits electronic feedback from the public.

You can find the policy on the police department's website:

www.stpaul.gov/departments/police.

The use-of-force incidents reported in this document took place under both the previous version of the policy and the current one. Changing trends resulting from the policy revision will be reported in future documents.

Use-of-Force Training

At the time of hire, SPPD officers are eligible to be licensed as peace officers by the State of Minnesota. They must have a minimum of a two-year college degree and have successfully completed the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) required skills training.

SPPD officers begin their careers in a 16-week police academy where they receive approximately 100 hours of use-of-force training. After the police academy, officers receive quarterly use-of-force training in addition to annual in-service training.

Officers are required to demonstrate both understanding and proficiency of department policies and accepted practices. These include appropriate use-of-force techniques, firearms training, de-escalation and other related topics.

Officer training places a heavy emphasis on using time and distance to de-escalate situations and using multiple officer tactics so fewer potentially injury-causing techniques are required.

As stated earlier in this report, officers are also taught to identify and recognize subject behaviors in order to determine appropriate responses.

USE-OF-FORCE FINDINGS

Use-of-Force Incidents

There are several distinct ways to report use-of-force data that include the **number of incidents** the SPPD responded to where force was used, the **number of force actions** taken by officers, the **number of officers** who used force and the **number of persons** subjected to police force.

This report individually captures each of these areas for each year for the reader to evaluate. Visual representations were added to improve understanding of the data.

Number of Incidents

Saint Paul police officers responded to 269,852 incidents in 2016 and physical force resulted in 458 of those incidents. This can be reduced to one physical use-of-force incident occurring in every 589 police interactions or 0.17 (17 one-hundredths of a percent of the time) percent.

Officers responded to 301,196 incidents in 2017 and physical force resulted in 423 of those incidents. This can be reduced to one physical use-of-force incident occurring in every 710 police incidents or 0.14 (14 one-hundredths of a percent of the time) percent.

Officers responded to 298,492 incidents in 2018 and physical force resulted in 382 of those incidents. This can be reduced to one physical use-of-force incident occurring in every 781 police incidents or 0.12 (12 one-hundredths of a percent of the time) percent.

Officers responded to 292,765 incidents in 2019 and physical force resulted in 426 of those incidents. This can be reduced to one physical use-of-force incident occurring in every 687 police incidents or 0.14 (14 one-hundredths of a percent of the time) percent.

You can also compare the use-of-force incidents to interactions that resulted in either arrest or citation.

In 2016, there were 7,644 incidents where a subject was arrested and booked into jail. Of these incidents, 317 resulted in a use-of-force action. That equates to approximately 4 percent of the time.

In 2017, there were 8,248 incidents where a subject was arrested and booked into jail. Of these incidents, 295 resulted in a use-of-force action. That equates to approximately 3.5 percent of the time.

In 2018, there were 8,432 incidents where a subject was arrested and booked into jail. Of these incidents, 382 resulted in a use-of-force action. That equates to approximately 4.5 percent of the time.

In 2019, there were 8,065 incidents where a subject was arrested and booked into jail. Of these incidents, 426 resulted in a use-of-force action. That equates to approximately 5.3 percent of the time.

Number of Force Actions

SPPD officers used and documented 755 use-of-force actions in 2016, 758 in 2017, 700 in 2018 and 742 in 2019. These incidents ranged from handcuffing a resisting person and control techniques up to physical strikes. The majority of the force techniques was the use of control holds and escorts as depicted in the charts below.

Number of Officers Using Force

Data about officers using force was collected and is depicted in two separate ways. The first chart shows the number of officers using force in each incident. Most of the incidents involved a single officer using force against a subject in both 2016 and 2017.

Number of Officers Using force in Each Incident				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
1 officer	296	271	241	252
2 officers	116	106	106	117
3 officers	33	38	30	39
4 officers	7	6	4	14
5 or more officers	1	2	1	4
Total	453	423	382	426

Types of Physical Force

The SPPD collects data on the physical force techniques used by officers. There were 755 in 2016, 758 in 2017, 700 in 2018 and 742 in 2019.

Most force actions involved control holds, escorts and taking subjects to the ground. Officers are trained to, whenever possible, control subjects using multiple-officer techniques rather than strikes or other potentially injury causing techniques.

Use of Force Types				
Use of Force Type	2016	2017	2018	2019
ASR	85	73	47	54
Body/Escort Hold	204	189	138	125
Canine	36	19	6	0
Body/Escort Hold Handcuff/Restraint	1	0	0	0
EZ Leg restraint *	NA	NA	2	19
Handcuff/Restraint w/Resistance	108	107	97	80
Hard Empty Hand	56	33	4	27
Impact Weapon ASP/Other	10	5	1	1
Leg / Knee Strike	64	48	28	26
Less Lethal	2	2	1	6
Multiple Officer Takedown	0	23	68	67
Pepperball *	NA	NA	NA	16
Pressure Points	11	9	3	8
Rear Sentry Takedown	18	15	3	1
Single Officer Takedown	0	38	90	115
Soft Empty Hands	116	152	124	165
Spit Prevention Device *	NA	NA	4	2
Taser	116	45	84	30
Vehicle	43	0	0	0
Total	755	758	700	742

(*) indicates a new use of force technique available to officers during this time range

Subject Behavior

Officers often describe the actions and behavior of use-of-force subjects when reporting force incidents. A review of this data showed in many incidents subject behavior changed throughout the encounter. Subjects both escalated and deescalated through these events. The data, as reported by the officers, captures the subject's behavior at the time the force option was used. Officers often noted several subject behaviors in a single incident.

Subject Behavior Listed by Officers When Force Was Used				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Active Resistance	321	315	271	325
Hard hands	81	91	64	59
Biting	14	8	11	7
Fleeing	108	127	99	104
Verbal	126	163	128	140
Kicking	46	46	46	48
Spitting	15	17	20	20
Passive Resistance	143	148	118	140
Weapon	18	18	24	28

Subject Injury

Officers are required to report subject injury in each use-of-force incident, which is also evaluated by the responding supervisor. Also measured was the number of times a subject received treatment for injuries. Most cases showed the subject received either no injury or a minor injury. The department requires an injury be recorded if the subject complains of any pain even if no injury can be observed.

Injury Data				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Dog Bite	34	19	6	0
Laceration	3	1	0	0
Minor	75	82	50	61
None	388	348	340	413
Possible Internal	0	1	0	0
Major Injury	1	0	0	0
Unknown	0	2		0
Total Incidents	501	453	396	474

Time and Location Data

The below tables depict data related to when and where force incidents occur.

SCENE TYPES				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Residential	164	135	138	167
Street	152	143	0	0
Commercial	52	22	0	0
Retail	41	45	36	49
Public Domain	19	25	156	166
School	10	15	16	7
Park	7	3	0	
Government	5	4	3	2
Church	2	1	0	3
Hospital	0	7	8	
Office/Commercial	0	19	24	32
Restaurant	0	1	0	0
Rec Center	1	3	1	0
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

MONTH				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	35	35	39	35
February	53	28	32	29
March	37	34	29	37
April	37	30	32	30
May	53	32	24	40
June	37	47	32	38
July	38	38	43	35
August	30	34	21	41
September	46	33	29	32
October	36	44	37	47
November	19	37	35	32
December	32	31	29	30
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

DAY OF WEEK				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Monday	68	54	41	64
Tuesday	59	54	49	67
Wednesday	69	47	55	69
Thursday	73	53	64	41
Friday	69	74	57	70
Saturday	62	77	62	56
Sunday	54	64	54	59
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

TIME OF DAY				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
12:00 AM	31	15	22	28
1:00 AM	31	33	29	21
2:00 AM	21	16	9	17
3:00 AM	21	9	9	9
4:00 AM	8	5	6	6
5:00 AM	4	7	5	6
6:00 AM	3	11	8	12
7:00 AM	5	5	3	11
8:00 AM	5	10	8	9
9:00 AM	15	13	5	5
10:00 AM	17	16	11	9
11:00 AM	16	14	15	11
12:00 PM	18	16	12	8
1:00 PM	14	14	17	14
2:00 PM	13	24	18	7
3:00 PM	23	29	14	9
4:00 PM	20	22	18	24
5:00 PM	24	21	35	36
6:00 PM	27	24	19	27
7:00 PM	20	19	26	29
8:00 PM	32	35	17	29
9:00 PM	22	28	28	31
10:00 PM	26	28	18	38
11:00 PM	37	19	30	30
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

Call Types

The data showed that a significant number of incidents where force was used did not result in the subject being arrested and taken to jail. There were several indicators in the data to support the belief that persons in crisis can be involved in use-of-force incidents. These types of incidents represented the third largest category of use-of-force incidents in both 2016 and 2017.

ORIGINAL CALL TYPE				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Non-Domestic Assault Crime	57	50	43	61
Auto or Vehicle Theft	13	18	16	18
Burglary	16	14	14	9
Criminal Damage to Property	8	6	9	9
Death Investigations	0	4	0	0
Disturbance Crimes	48	47	23	44
Domestic Assault/Family Matters	42	40	43	49
Drug Crimes	33	19	22	33
Driving Under the Influence	5	6	7	8
Fraud Related Crimes	7	3	2	4
Other NonViolent Crimes/Investigations	46	29	52	25
Obstructing a Legal Process	57	68	32	29
Robbery	9	4	4	6
Sex Offense	1	4	1	4
Theft Related Crimes	21	21	6	10
Traffic Violations/Accidents	8	5	19	24
Warrants	19	21	18	22
Weapons Calls	19	14	20	23
Medical/Persons in Crisis	44	50	51	48
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

DEMOGRAPHICS

Officers Who Use Force

Understanding trends and patterns can assist the department in reducing use-of-force incidents.

Data was collected to understand the years of service, rank and gender of officers who use force.

More than half of the use of force incidents over the cumulative four calendar years involved employees with five or fewer years of service. This number is expected as this portion of the workforce represents the bulk of the patrol force.

Years of Service

YEARS OF SERVICE				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
<12 MONTHS	16	0	64	64
1	141	1	78	99
2	72	119	25	124
3	77	0	89	31
4	15	148	32	83
5	18	47	78	32
6	22	61	12	64
7	8	33	7	11
8	79	25	15	9
9	7	0	2	27
10	25	67	34	10
11	4	8	9	30
12	2	14	9	4
13	5	3	1	13
14	33	1	0	2
15	16	0	6	0
16	23	22	18	3
17	41	31	24	18
18	13	5	15	10
19	6	22	12	9
20	12	27	4	6
21	6	6	2	6
22	6	15	9	6
23	5	0	6	8
24	0	13	5	4
25	0	2	3	4
26	5	0	1	0
27	2	0	0	0
28	0	6	4	1
29	2	5	0	1
30			0	0
31	1	0	0	0
32				
	662	681	564	679

Note: The employee totals do not match the authorized strength. This is because of the rotation of exiting employees and new hires.

OFFICER RACE				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Asian	58	85	56	93
Black	41	57	56	53
Hispanic	30	26	40	48
Native American	3	1	2	10
Two or More Races	43	33	33	30
White	487	479	377	445
TOTAL	662	681	564	679

OFFICER GENDER				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	43	36	20	55
Male	619	645	544	624
TOTAL	662	681	564	679

FORCE INCIDENT BY POLICE DISTRICT				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
West	151	141	105	123
Central	140	162	133	154
East	162	119	143	149
OOC	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	453	423	382	426

Subjects of Force

The demographics of the subjects of force were similar across all four years. Younger community members were proportionally more likely to be subjects of physical force with nearly 79 percent under 40 and 36 percent between 20 and 29. African American males had the highest percentage of incidents at 41% of the total between 2016-2019.

SUBJECT RACE AND GENDER				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
ASIAN	27	33	26	42
Female	0	4	2	3
Male	27	29	24	39
BLACK	249	222	216	271
Female	46	52	41	64
Male	203	170	175	207
HISPANIC	34	41	16	26
Female	2	7	4	3
Male	32	34	12	23
NATIVE AMERICAN	4	11	6	6
Female	2	4	4	2
Male	2	7	2	4
UNKNOWN	34	17	25	15
Female	10	3	7	4
Male	22	14	16	10
Unknown	2	0	2	1
WHITE	153	128	107	109
Female	30	23	24	37
Male	123	105	83	72
OTHER	0	1	0	5
Male	0	0	0	5
Other	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	501	453	396	474

Subject Age Data

58 percent of the subjects were between the ages of 20-40.

SUBJECT AGE DATA				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
10 to 14	20	23	19	22
15-17	34	61	42	44
18-19	43	25	21	29
20-29	189	161	148	156
30-39	108	96	89	120
40-49	42	42	41	52
50-59	24	24	21	21
60 and older	6	6	4	6
Unknown	35	15	11	24
TOTAL	501	453	396	474

Subject Dispositions

Several use-of-force incidents involved people who were not taken into custody or identified. One scenario where this could occur might involve crowd control, where officers release chemical gas to regain order and the subjects fled or were not detained.

SUBJECT DISPOSITION				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cited	38	34	14	29
Detox	2	3	6	2
Hospital	70	65	84	69
LEC (Jail)	317	295	252	311
Other	34	19	6	17
Released	40	37	34	46
TOTAL	501	453	396	474

Many subjects of force were not arrested by the police officers who used force following the incident. Officers frequently turned juveniles over to their parents, assisted those in crisis to care facilities or found other remedies that best fit individual situations.

SUBJECT RESIDENT OF SAINT PAUL				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Non-Resident	97	86	83	88
Unknown	52	25	15	43
Unsheltered	50	46	44	67
Saint Paul Resident	302	296	254	276
TOTAL	501	453	396	474

SUBJECT RACE				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Asian	27	33	26	42
Black	249	222	216	271
Hispanic	34	41	16	26
Native American	4	11	6	6
Unknown	34	17	25	15
White	153	128	107	109
Other	0	1	0	5
TOTAL	501	453	396	474

FIREARMS POINTING

Firearms Pointing

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

Officers documented incidents where they pointed a firearm in the direction of another person. This did not include times when officers merely unholstered their firearm or carried it in the “low ready” position when subjects may have been present.

Firearms are used during times when officers are searching for potentially dangerous suspects of crimes who could be armed, when conducting high-risk felony traffic stops and other times when it is reasonable to affect the arrest of a subject.

Considerable training is provided to officers related to safe weapons handling including that officers do not place their fingers inside the trigger guard of any weapon until a decision is made to discharge their firearm.

In 2016, officers pointed department issued weapons at subjects 457 times. Worth noting is that five officers discharged their firearms in 2016 in two incidents that are described later in this report.

In 2017, officers pointed department issued weapons at subjects 491 times. Worth noting is that four officers discharged their firearms in 2017 in two incidents which are also described later in this report.

In 2018, officers pointed department issued weapons at subjects 600 times. Worth noting is that two officers discharged their firearms in 2018 in one incident which is also described later in this report.

In 2019, officers pointed department issued weapons at subjects 599 times. Worth noting is that one officer discharged their firearm in 2019 in one incident which is also described later in this report.

The SPPD fully understands the impact of pointing a firearm at a subject, which is why the department chooses to document and review these incidents as reportable force incidents.

Monitoring firearm pointing is not an industry standard because many departments do not consider firearms pointing to be a reportable use of force. However, the SPPD monitors and reviews every instance of firearm pointing.

There was less available data in these incidents as with the physical force data. Officers do not always identify all subjects when a firearm is pointed. An example is a scenario where an officer is searching an area and encounters several unrelated subjects. The officers often move past them to continue their search. Because the depth of the data, these incidents were reported separately from the physical force incidents.

CALLS FOR SERVICE	
2016	269,799
2017	300,610
2018	298,492
2019	292,765

FIREARMS POINTING INCIDENTS	
2016	457
2017	491
2018	600
2019	599

PERCENTAGE OF INCIDENTS	
2016	0.17%
2017	0.16%
2018	0.20%
2019	0.20%

Officer Involved Firearm Discharges

Officer Involved Shootings

No officer ever wants to discharge their firearm while performing their duties.

The use of deadly force is life changing for officers and their families. Officers are also aware that these incidents are life changing for the subjects and their families.

Unfortunately, subjects will sometimes make decisions that require officers to respond with deadly force, such as discharging their firearm.

When this happens, the SPPD involves a third-party, independent investigator who investigates the officer's action as a criminal matter. The investigation is then turned over to the County Attorney. Following the criminal investigation, the SPPD conducts its own investigation to evaluate if the actions were within department policy.

In 2016 and 2017, the department experienced four officer involved shootings, with two in each calendar year. All were investigated by a third party and reviewed by a prosecutor or a grand jury who determined no laws were violated. Those incidents are briefly described:

2016 Shooting Incidents

May 9, 2016

Subject: Jaffort Smith

Four officers discharged firearms

Officers responded to a 911 call about a man with a gun. Officers located the 33-year-old man, who was with a woman, several blocks away.

Officers saw the man shoot the woman in the head and then flee into a nearby yard where he fired at officers. Four officers returned fire and the man sustained fatal injuries.

The case was investigated by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and presented to a Washington County Grand Jury, which determined the officers' actions were lawful.

The investigation showed a 49-year-old woman was shot in the head by the handgun recovered near the man, Jaffort Smith. The woman survived her injury. The investigation also reported officers ordered Mr. Smith to drop the gun before being shot by officers.

May 26, 2016

Subject Eugene Smith III

One officer discharged firearm

Officers were at a residence in the 2100 block of Minnehaha Street and had two people under arrest outside the home. Continuing their investigation, officers entered the home and encountered a 29-year-old man when opening an interior bedroom door. The investigation showed the man was pointing a shotgun in the officer's direction when the officer fired. The man sustained fatal injuries.

The County Attorney reported the third-party investigation conducted by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension found the man, Eugene Smith, fired one round from a 20-gauge shotgun having no serial number in the direction of the officer.

The investigation also reported Mr. Smith was under the influence of methamphetamine and amphetamines and reported to his girlfriend about an hour before the shooting he was contemplating suicide.

A shotgun was located and recovered near Mr. Smith by investigators.

2017 Shooting Incidents

March 15, 2017

Subject: Cordale Handy

Two officers discharged firearms

Officers responded to a 911 call in the 700 block of East Sixth Street where a woman was reported to be screaming for help. Officers located a 29-year-old man who pointed a gun in the direction of one of the officers after being told to drop the gun. Two officers fired at the man who sustained fatal injuries.

The County Attorney reported the third-party investigation conducted by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension determined the man, Cordale Handy, fired 16 shots inside the building and was under the influence of both drugs and alcohol.

The investigation also reported Mr. Handy did not drop the firearm when ordered by officers and he raised an unloaded firearm in the direction of one of the officers causing both officers to fire their handguns.

A handgun was located and recovered near Mr. Handy by investigators.

October 5, 2017

Subject Phumee Lee

Two officers discharged firearms

Officers responded to a 911 call in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood where a woman reported a man held her and her three young children hostage. She also reported the man shot a handgun in her direction.

Officers located a 28-year-old man who fired a handgun in their direction when confronted. Two officers fired at the man who sustained fatal injuries.

The County Attorney reported the third-party investigation conducted by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension found the man, Phumee Lee, was under the influence of both drugs and alcohol, terrorized his girlfriend and their three young children for two days, threatened to kill them and fired a handgun in their direction.

Video of the officer involved shooting shows Mr. Lee walking in the direction of officers "slightly raising his hands" and then is seen quickly reaching into his pants pocket and retrieving an object. Officers can be heard yelling "drop it" and the video clearly shows a flash emanate from the object held by Mr. Lee.

There was a .38-caliber revolver located and recovered near Mr. Lee by investigators.

2018 Shooting Incidents

August 5, 2018

Subject: William “Billy” Hughes

Two officers discharged firearms

Officers responded to a 911 call in the Midway neighborhood after a resident called to report a man fired a handgun into the interior wall two times.

Officers were on the enclosed porch of the house when a 43-year-old man came out of the upstairs stairwell with a firearm in his hand. Two officers fired their weapons at the man who sustained fatal injuries.

The County Attorney reported the third-party investigation conducted by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension found the man, William Hughes, was under the influence of both drugs and alcohol. The County Attorney stated the officers acted legally because they responded to a call about shots fired, the 911 caller hung up and could not be reached by dispatch despite several attempts, someone threatened to kill the officers when one of them knocked on a door at the scene, and Hughes raised a gun in their direction.

A handgun was recovered near Mr. Hughes by investigators.

2019 Shooting Incidents

September 15, 2019

Subject: Ronald Davis

One officer discharged a firearm

An officer was stopped at a stop sign in a fully marked police squad car in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood. He was rear-ended by another vehicle. When the officer exited his patrol squad, he was confronted by a man running at him with a knife in his hand.

The officer retreated in an attempt to create distance and eventually was forced to fire upon the man who was attacking him. The man later succumbed to his fatal injuries.

The County Attorney reported the third-party investigation conducted by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension found the man, Ronald Davis, was under the influence of narcotics. The County Attorney stated that the officer tried moving away, gave commands to drop the knife and that Davis continued to charge toward the officer.

A knife was recovered at the scene by investigators.