

Alexandria Police Department
Office of the Chief
Office of External Affairs and Professional Responsibility
2019 Annual Analysis of Departmental Uses of Force¹

Alexandria Police Directive 10.32, Use of Force², enumerates the Department’s policies and procedures pertaining to the authorized use of lethal, less lethal and non-lethal weapons by employees during the performance of their duties. These policies require that employees’ use of force be documented and investigated. A comprehensive investigation will be conducted in instances of the use of firearm, any action resulting in death or injury of another person, application of force through the use of a Canine, a baton, Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, other weapons such as a Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW), or in any use of force situation where a person is injured or makes a complaint. The use of weaponless physical controls is required to be documented by employees in a Police Offense Reports, which are reviewed and approved by a supervisor. An investigation will also document the use of weaponless controls or tactics when accompanying the application of a lethal, less lethal and non-lethal weapon use.

This focus of this report is on the use of lethal, less lethal and non-lethal weapons by Department employees during the CY2019.

Background

During the previous four years, all levels of forces used were counted regardless of effectiveness. Therefore, the number of *instances* where force was used is greater than the number of recorded *cases*. Before CY2016, only use of force ruled effective was counted.

Before CY2016, a single use of force case may have included multiple types of force and/or incidents where multiple officers were involved. These incidents were categorized by the highest level of force deployed, not necessarily every type or number of force utilized.

In September of CY2016, reporting of force incidents were expanded to include all levels of force used. The new reporting methodology records an officer’s attempts to use lower levels of force before escalating to a higher level. It also documents the de-escalation of force when the selected force option is effective. For instance, if two officers utilize different types of force to affect a lawful objective, the incident will be categorized as one

¹ This report complies with CALEA Standard 4.2.4 and Police Directive 1.9 Administrative Reports, Appendix A.

² https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/police/info/Combined_Policy10.pdf

incident involving two uses of force. The collection of data in this manner documents each officer's deployment of force as opposed to recording the facts under the umbrella of a single incident.

Therefore, the reporting guideline improvements post-CY2016 permits us to review each use of force instance on its own. The reporting guidelines changed in September of 2016 with the implementation of IA Pro/Blue Team. During an incident, one officer's use of force may be appropriate, while another officer's actions may be outside of policy limits. Before CY2016, if an officer's use of force was deemed excessive or not within policy, the entire incident was categorized as such. The statistics reflected in the years since 2016 are more inclusive than previous years and provide an improved analysis of the types of force employees of the Alexandria Police Department are utilizing.

Analysis of Force Used

This analysis was conducted by reviewing 45 Use of Force (UF) classifications in 2019. A total of 41 cases were initiated to investigate the application of force by officers. The uses of force involved 30 members of Patrol, three members of the Canine Unit, two members of the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) Unit, one member of the Traffic Safety Section (Motors) and one member of the Criminal Investigations Section. None of the cases involved personnel other than sworn officers. Table 1 lists the types of force used by Alexandria Police Officers during the previous four-year period.

Table 1 - Use of Forces Classification

	CY2016	CY2017	CY2018	CY2019
Firearm	0	3	1	2
Impact Weapon (Baton, Sage Gun, LLM)	1	1	0	0
Canine	0	0	0	3
OC Spray	5	3	2	3
CEW (Taser)	8	10	9	12
Weaponless Force / Injury / Complaint	32	44	23	25
TOTAL	46	61	35	45

In CY2019, two officers used their firearms during a single incident. There were no uses of impact weapons, three canine deployments, three uses of OC spray, and 12 CEW (Taser) deployments.

The 45 applied uses of force were carried out by a total of 37 officers. Of those 37 officers, four officers used some type of reportable force more than once. Of the total number of uses of force investigations, nine incidents involved force being applied by two or more officers. Within the nine investigations, seven involved two officers and two involved three or more officers. Finally, there was one case of alleged excessive force that was investigated and determined to be unsubstantiated.

A review of the analysis does not reveal any specific needs or trends in the Department's use of force application. One incident required refresher training on the use of the CEW for two officers. The training was specific to recognizing CEW effectiveness and the necessity to transition to other force options.

Lethal Force (Firearm)

In CY2019, there was one incident in which two officers deployed lethal force. The case involved two officers who fired at a subject who was armed with an Avtomat Kalashnikov (AK) style rifle and a handgun. The subject approached the officers in a narrow hallway with the rifle pointed at the officers.

Per the Department's policy, the criminal investigation of the incident was conducted independently by the Virginia State Police (VSP.) The outcome of the criminal investigation and the prosecutorial examination determined that the officers acted in self-defense and did not violate any criminal law. The suspect survived his injuries, was indicted on criminal charges and is awaiting trial. The administrative investigation found the use of force was justified and within Department policy.

The Alexandria Police Department reports all Officer-Involved Shooting data to the Virginia State Police through the UCR/Incident-Based Reporting (IBR.) The VSP submits the APD data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), which compiles the data as part of the National Use-of-Force Data Collection³. The CY2019 incident was reported to the Virginia State Police by the Information Services Section.

Canine

In CY2019, there were three canine deployments, which is an increase of three over last year and the three previous years. All three deployments were for the purpose of apprehending a felony suspect.

The increase over the previous years were attributed to three factors. In CY2019, the Canine Unit was fully staffed after being understaffed for several years. Secondly, the Canine Unit updated the handler certification process to the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) standards, which improved the canine teams' performance. Lastly, the Canine Operations policies were updated to reflect model procedures from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP.)

Conducted Energy Weapons (CEW)

In CY2019, there were 12 incidents of Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEW) being utilized, an increase of three over CY2018. Of those 12 incidents, three deployments missed their targets, and one deployment only landed one probe.

³ <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/use-of-force>

The CEW Program, also known as the Taser Program, was implemented in November 2007. During the 12 years since the program’s inception, there have been five separate years (’09 – ’11, ’17, and ’19) when there were 10 or more Taser deployments in a single calendar year. The mean number of annual uses of Taser is 9.5 deployments. The standard deviation is 4.898.

The total number of Taser units deployed annually was examined to study the connection between the annual uses and the number of deployed units. The number of units deployed each year has varied from 95 units in 2015 to 200 units in 2018, and 187 units in 2019. The variation in these numbers is due to the life cycles of the unit and fiscal limitations. Recently, a budget line item was added for the program which will stabilize the number of units deployed annually and address previous fiscal challenges. Until stabilization occurs, it will be difficult to draw any statistical conclusions related to this data point. For example, in 2015 there were approximately 95 units deployed and during the same year there were nine instances of Taser deployments. Conversely, in 2019 there were 12 uses while there were 187 units deployed.

Demographics Analysis

In CY2019, 37 officers used varying levels of force (see Table 1) during encounters with 28 persons. The following three tables describe the racial and gender demographics of the 37 officers and the 28 suspects.

Table 2 – All Sworn Staff Demographics

RACE / GENDER	# Dept. Sworn Staff	% Dept. Sworn Staff
W/M - NH	172	53.5%
W/F - NH	45	14.1%
B/M - NH	40	12.5%
B/F - NH	11	3.4%
A/M - NH	15	4.7%
A/F - NH	1	.3%
W/M - H	28	8.7%
W/F - H	9	2.8%
Total	321	100%

W = White, B = Black, A = Asian, NH = Non-Hispanic / H = Hispanic

Table 3 – Race & Gender of Officers Who Used Force in CY2019

RACE / GENDER	# of Officers Using Force	% of Officers Using Force
W/M	21	56.8%
W/F	9	24.3%
B/M	3	8.1%
A/M	2	5.4%
W/M/H	2	5.4%
Total	37	100%

W = White, B = Black, A = Asian, NH = Non-Hispanic / H = Hispanic

Table 4 – Race & Gender of Arrestees

RACE / GENDER	# of Arrestees	% USE OF FORCE AGAINST
B/M - NH	12	42.9%
W/M – NH	8	28.6%
W/M – H	4	14.3%
B/F – NH	3	10.7%
W/F – NH	1	3.5%
Total	28	100%

W = White, B = Black, A = Asian, NH = Non-Hispanic / H = Hispanic

Conclusion

During the calendar year 2019, Alexandria Police Officers responded to 80,928 service calls for service. During the same time period, Alexandria Police Officers arrested 4,316 persons. Of the total number of persons arrested, a total of 28 arrestees required the application of some level of force to affect a lawful detention. In each situation where force was used, the need for custody or capture of a suspect was justified. One out of every 154 arrests made by the Alexandria Police Department during CY2019 required the use of some level of physical force. This is a testament of the police legitimacy achieved through exceptional hiring, training and application of procedural justice practices.