



**Wheat Ridge Police
Professional Standards Unit
2019 Annual Report**



Approved

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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.

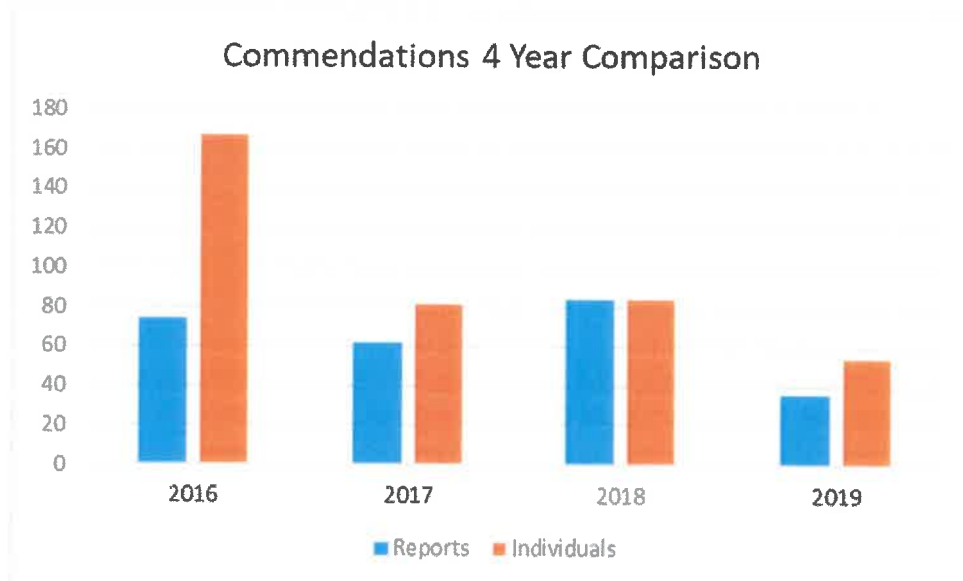
The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) accepts positive and negative comments from the public, professionals, and staff in regards to police services and member conduct. PSU investigates and maintains records on commendations, complaints, use of force incidents, employee-involved accidents, the early 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 2019, 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 54 individuals for exceptional performance, involving 36 separate instances in 2019. The Department received a wide range of compliments from citizens, ranging from motorist assists to life-saving efforts. In 2019, the commendations received were lower than previous years; however, more commendations were upgraded to Challenge Coins. The table below reflects a four-year comparison related to commendations.



Challenge Coins

The graph below represents a four-year comparison of Challenge Coins presented to employees.



Department Awards

The following individuals received an award during 2019. Awards are issued throughout the year or at the Police Department Annual Awards Ceremony.

Medals:

Commendation	Recognition
Officer Smith	Evidence Technician Carter
	Evidence Technician Case

FORMAL LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Division Chief Lorentz

Recruitment

The Police Department Recruitment Team was active in 2019. 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 continued to provide direct involvement in the applicant selection process, attending recruiting events, evaluating and scoring applications, scoring personal history questionnaires and participating in oral board interviews.

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

WRPD Open House	March 6
FBI-Recruiting Women in LE	March 6
Colorado LE Recruitment Fair	March 21
AIMS Public Safety Recruitment Fair	March 27
Recruit Military Recruitment Event	April 18
Law Enforcement Expo, Colorado Springs	May 22
DAV Recruit/Military Denver Job Fair	August 15
Colorado LE Hiring Expo	September 15
University of Northern Colorado Job Fair	November 14

The Recruitment Team attended more job fairs in March 2019 than in other years. The Recruitment Team attempted to attract more candidates prior to the closing of the first Police Officer Recruitment hiring process of 2019.

Approximately 300 individuals visited the Wheat Ridge PD display booth at these nine events. Of those, 237 spoke with a recruiter and gathered information about the department. The demographic breakdown of those interested in 2019:

Caucasian males:	112
Caucasian females:	59
African-American males:	9
African-American females:	5
Hispanic males:	29
Hispanic females:	19
Others	4

In 2019, PSU worked in collaboration with Human Resources to expand recruiting efforts in the metro-area by having a Wheat Ridge PD Hiring Open House. The event was well attended by all demographics. Police Officer Recruit candidates were encouraged to bring family members to

the open house event. In 2019, the collected data supports continued participation in law enforcement specific job fairs.

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 2019, 174 people applied to be sworn police officers with the City of Wheat Ridge. This is an 89% decrease from 2018 (1,152), a 78% decrease from 2017 (807), and a 32% decrease from 2016 (257) applicants.

The decrease in applicants is not specific to the Wheat Ridge Police Department; it is an epidemic that is impacting law enforcement organizations nation-wide. According to the article Three Areas of Consideration for Solving the Recruitment Challenges, (Shawn Walker, The Police Chief Online, October 24, 2018) areas of concern were “tighter budgets, the effect of social media on the perception of law enforcement, and the lack of qualified people applying.”

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

- 75% of the applicants were men
- 25% of the applicants were women
- 69% of the applicants were Caucasian
- 5% of the applicants were African-American
- 17% of the applicants were Hispanic
- 5% of the applicants were Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0% of the applicants were American Indian
- 4% of the applicants identified as “Other”

During 2019, the Department hired no lateral police officers; however, 15 recruit police officers were hired. The demographics for those hired in 2019, were four Caucasian females, one African-American male, one Hispanic male, and nine Caucasian males.

In 2019, a Commander’s hiring process was held for internal and external candidates. One external female candidate was selected to fill the position.

Due to attrition, a Sergeant’s Assessment Center process was held in 2019. Two internal male candidates were selected to fill two open sergeant’s positions. A sergeant’s promotion list will be in effect until June 2020.

The former Police Chief of 14 years retired in July of 2019. The City Managers Office conducted a nationwide Police Chief search and anticipated the position to be filled in 2020.

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 2018 estimate provided by the U.S.

Census Bureau. While these are the estimated demographics of the city residents in 2018, 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 2018, United States Census Bureau showed that Caucasian men and women make up 89% of the Wheat Ridge population. At the end of 2019, the Wheat Ridge Police Department consisted of 94% Caucasian officers.

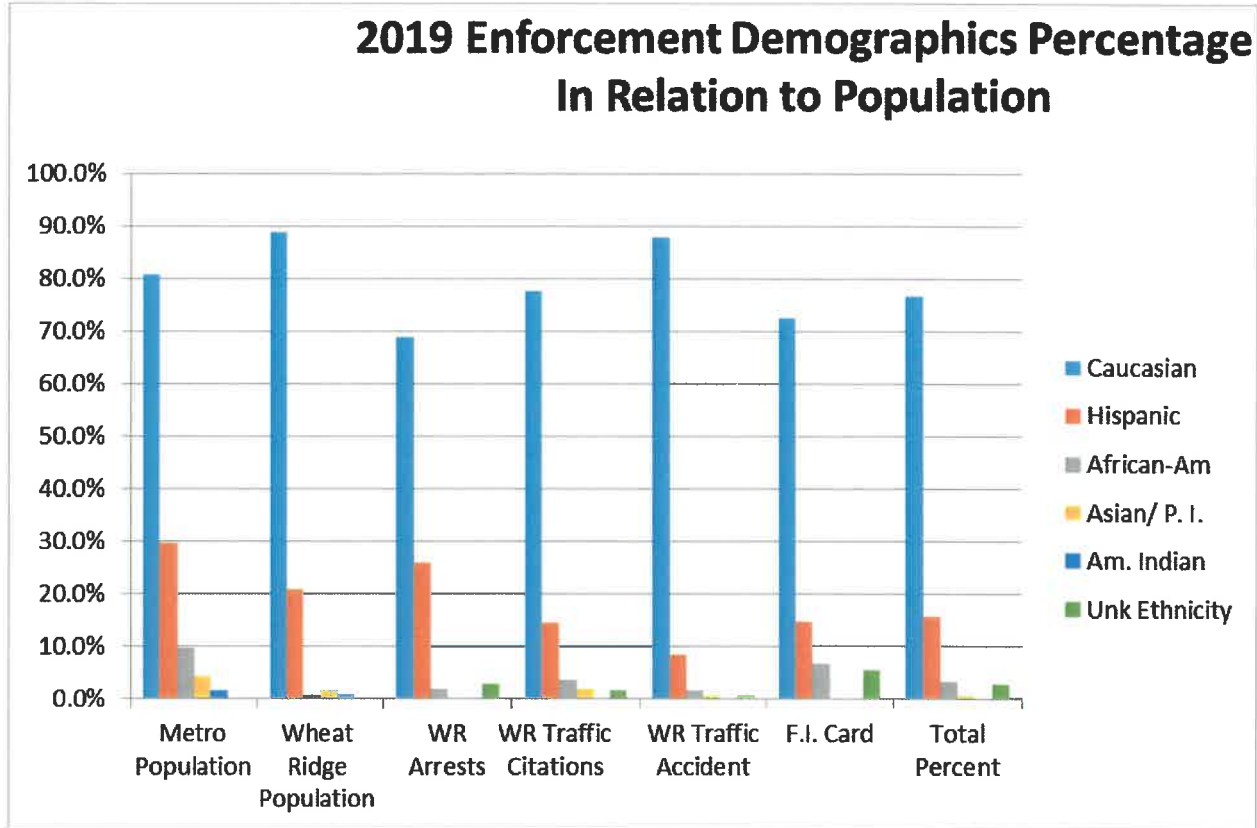
Hispanic officers accounted for 3.0% of the department's sworn staff at the end of 2019; whereas, the service population is approximately 21% Hispanic. African-American officers accounted for 1.5% of the department's sworn staff at the end of 2019; whereas, the service population is approximately 0.8%.

The Department employed one Asian officer (1.5%) in 2019; whereas the service population is approximately 1.72% of the Wheat Ridge population. The Department did not employ American Indian/Alaska Native officers in 2019. The Department employed one Middle Eastern officer for 1%.

The above data fluctuated slightly throughout 2019 due to attrition.

In 2019, the Department integrated a new Records Management System (RMS); Niche. Since the inception of Niche 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 2019 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 (date obtained from the 2018 estimate) Area:



An analysis of the above data shows:

The Caucasian population comprises 89% of the Wheat Ridge population and 80.8% of the overall Denver metropolitan population. In 2019, 76.8% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Caucasian population.

The Hispanic population comprises 20.9% of the Wheat Ridge population and 29.7% of the Denver metro population. In 2019, 15.9% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Hispanic population.

The African-American population comprises 0.8% of the Wheat Ridge population and 9.8% of the Denver metro population. In 2019, 3.5% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the African American population.

The American Indian population comprises 1.0% of the population of Wheat Ridge and 1.8% of the Denver metro area. In 2019, 0.1% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the American Indian population.

The Asian/Pacific Islander population comprises 1.7% of the population of Wheat Ridge and 4.3% of the Denver metro area. In 2019, 0.7% of WRPD contacts and enforcement actions involved the Asian/Pacific Islander population.

Wheat Ridge contact and enforcement actions were listed as 2% 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 2019. Males reported all three of the incidents, and none of the allegations involved the same officer(s). One male alleged that the officer did not respond to his call for service because he was poor. A second male alleged the officers did not conduct a thorough traffic accident investigation because of the male’s race, and the third male alleged that a detective failed to properly investigate his stalking case because of his sex, ethnicity, national origin, and having disabled children.

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

Pursuits

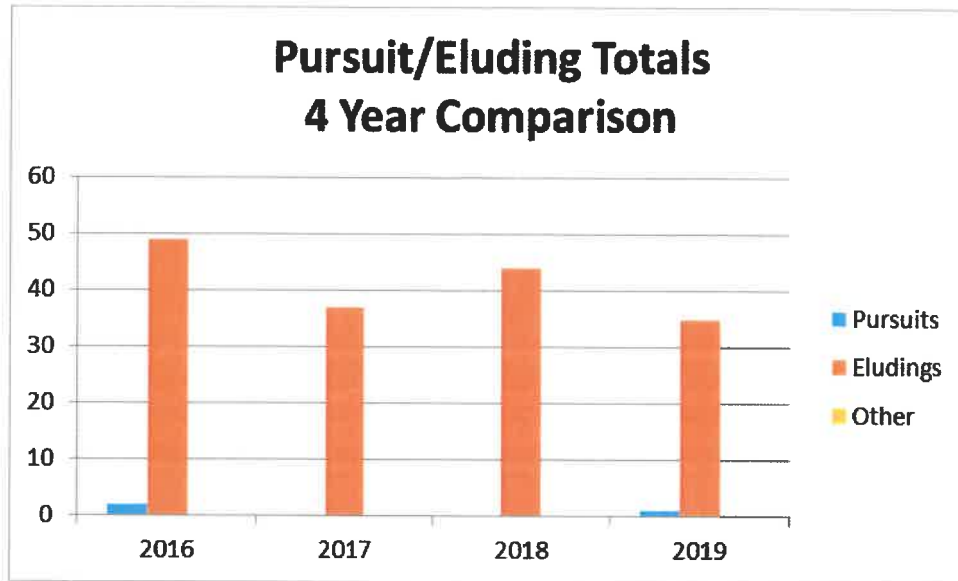
The Wheat Ridge Police Department defines a *pursuit* as the active attempt by an officer in an authorized emergency vehicle to apprehend the operator of a motor vehicle who, having been given an audible and visual indication to stop, attempts to avoid apprehension by maintaining or increasing speed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

2019	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Total	Justified	Not Justified
Pursuits	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Eluding	6	16	2	11	35	35	0

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

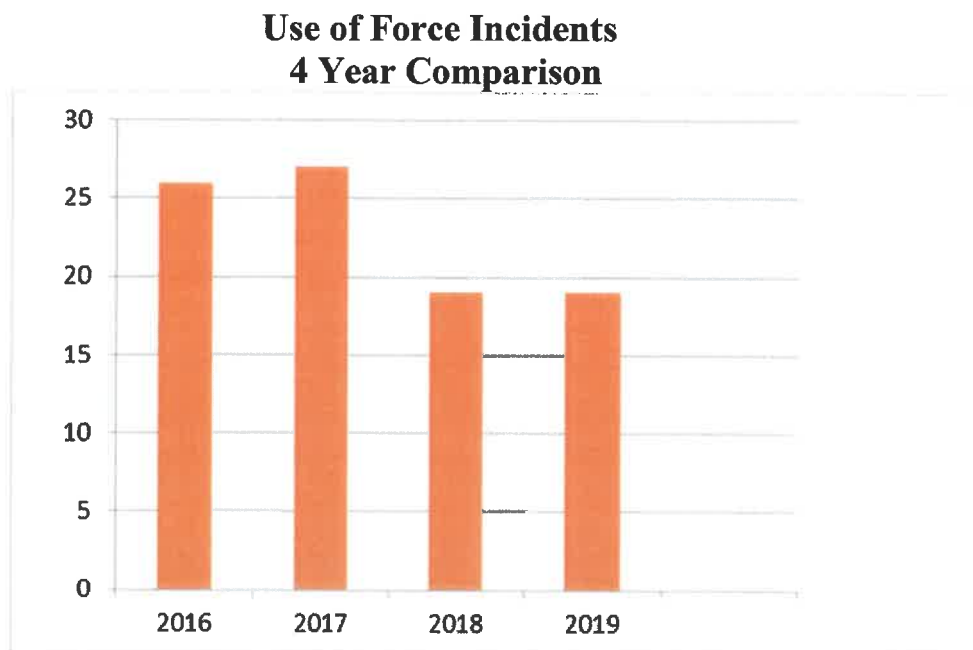


Full pursuit and eluding information and analysis are more completely detailed in the 2019 Pursuit Analysis Report.

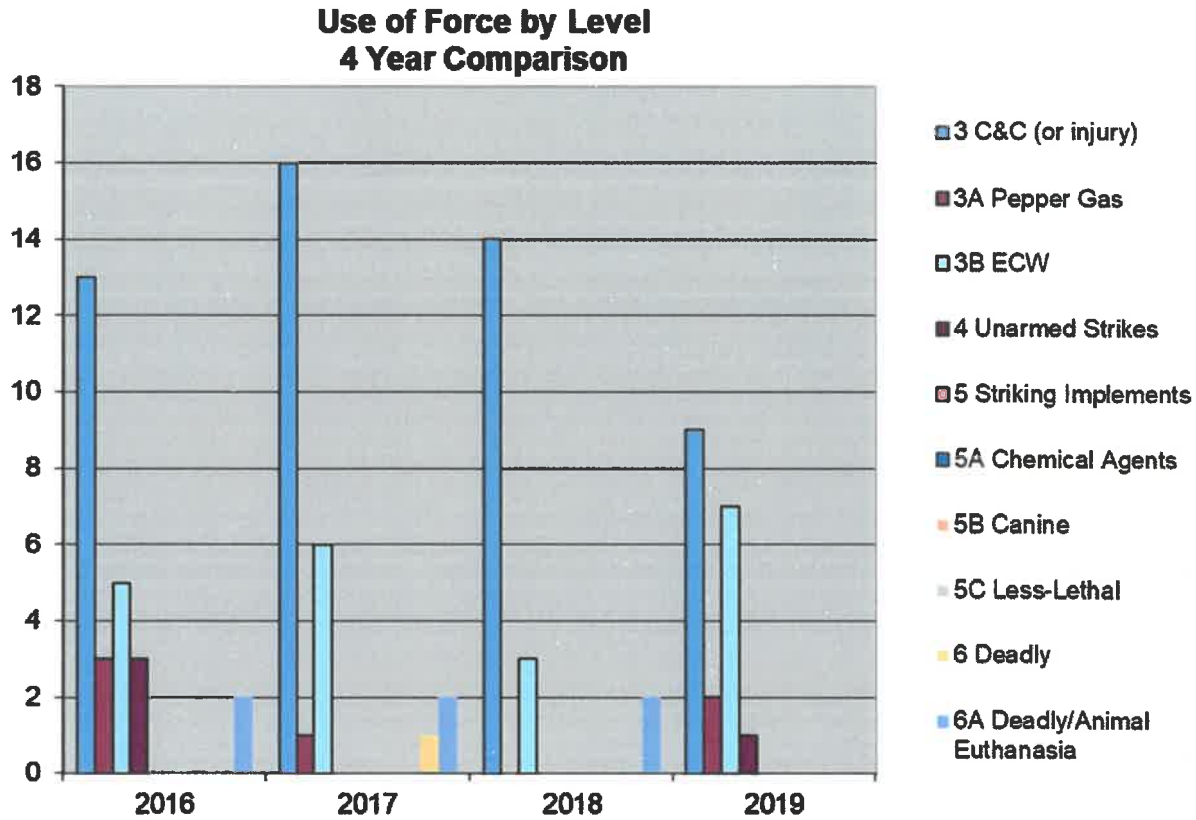
Use of Force

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 19 reported Use of Force incidents in 2019. The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of reported Use of Force incident.



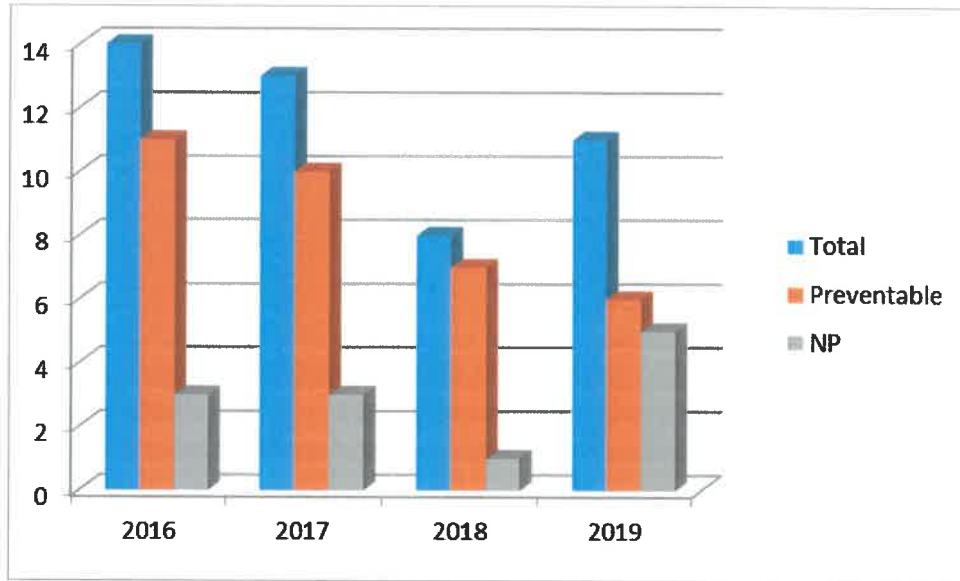
Level 3 Use of Force (Control and Compliance) remained the most widely used level of force. The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of reported Use of Force incident by force level.



Refer to 2019, 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 11 accidents in 2019. Five were deemed not preventable, while six were preventable. In reviewing accidents over the past four years, preventable accidents involving employees have decreased, while not-preventable accidents increased since 2016. The graph below shows a four-year comparison.



Complaints Investigated in 2019

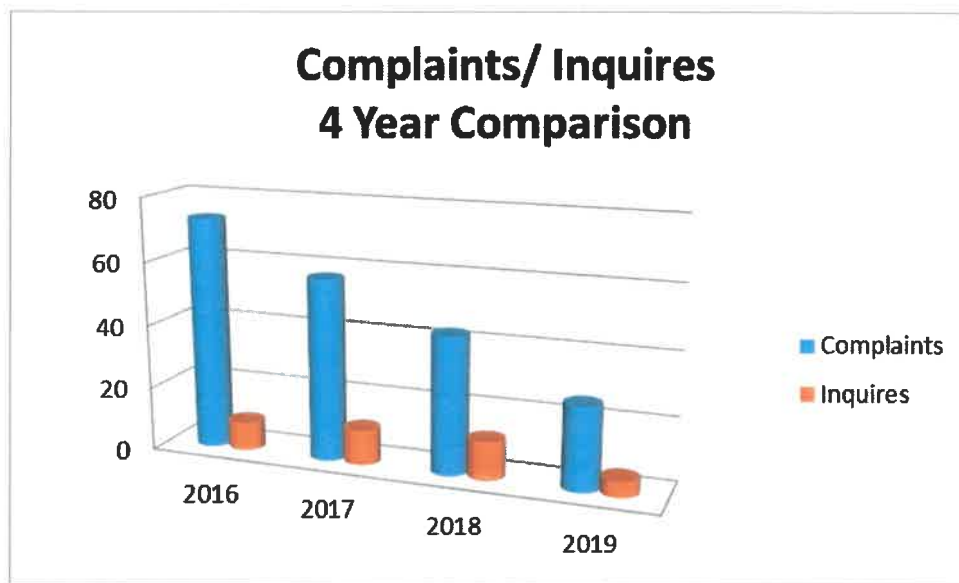
Misconduct Allegation	S	NS	EX	UNF	PF	MED
3.42.02 Directives & Expectations	3			1		
3.42.03 Laws	1					
3.42.04 Truthfulness	1	1				
3.42.05 Conduct Unbecoming	2					
3.42.06 Respect for Others	1					
3.42.07 Customer Service	1	4				
3.42.08 Police Authority						
3.42.09 Neglect of Duty		3				
3.42.10 Care of Property and Equipment	1					
3.42.11 Conflict of Interest						
3.42.12 Use of Force (complaints only)		4	1			
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 26 complaints in 2019; 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, 12 Minor, six Administrative, and five Inquires.

The 26 complaints involved 29 officers and one complaint named the Department as a whole. Out of the total officers, six officers had two complaints made against them, two officers had three, and one officer had four complaints made against them in 2019.

Complaints have decreased each year from 2016. 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 2019, case completion time varied considerably, for a variety of reasons:

- Inquiries: The average time to complete an inquiry case in 2019 was 24.25 days. The shortest completion time was one day; the longest was 54 days. The long case regarded a police pursuit; Arvada PD pursued a suspect's vehicle into Wheat Ridge and caused a traffic accident. The Wheat Ridge Police Department was named in a Civil Lawsuit by the victim in the traffic accident. The additional time was needed for the legal process. Subsequently, the Wheat Ridge Police Department was removed from the Civil Lawsuit because they did not participate in the police pursuit.
- Divisional: The average completion time for Divisional complaints in 2019 was 20 days. The shortest completion time was 15 days; the longest was 24 days. The case with the longest completion time involved a disturbance at the Carnation Festival. The case was investigated within the policy.
- Minor: The average completion time for Minor complaints in 2019 was 50 days. The shortest completion time was 15 days; the longest was 93 days. The long case involved obtaining court transcripts and audio recordings from the Wheat Ridge Municipal Court.
- Major: Three Major investigations were conducted in 2019. The average completion time for the investigations was 65 days. The shortest completion time was 32 days, and the longest was 112 days. There was an approved extension request for the longest investigation. The longest investigation was complex and involved obtaining documents from a third-party source.

In only one case 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 2018 estimate provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, Wheat Ridge is home to approximately 31,400 residents. Twenty-six complaints, including inquiries, were received in 2019, a complaint to citizen ratio of 1/.0088.

Of the 26 total complaints/inquiries received in 2019, three resulted from incidents that occurred at a location outside the city, one in the City of Lakewood and two in the City of Brighton. Four were initiated internally as the result of an incident at WRPD headquarters or Municipal Court.

Out of the total (26) complaints/inquiries received in 2019, 13 were initiated by a citizen, five by Wheat Ridge PD employees, and eight by administrative means.

Patrol Operations:

Out of the 26 cases, 20 involved personnel assigned to the Patrol Operations Division. One (5%) complaint involved a member of the Community Services Team and the remaining 19 (95%) involved patrol officers. Out of the 19 officers, four (21%) involved a sergeant, and three (16%) involved corporals.

Support Services:

Out of the 26 cases, six cases involved Support Services Personnel, five (83.4%) complaints involved persons assigned to the Investigations Bureau, and the other involved, one (16.6%) assigned to Administration.

Complaint by call type:

The number one investigated complaint (four) was Administrative investigations. The second-highest number involved four types of calls for service with each having two complaint allegations; Suspicious Incidents, Traffic Accidents, Warrant Assists, and Disturbances. There were no viable trends for the remaining complaints.

Complaint by allegation:

The Department's highest complaint allegation was Customer Service (five) and Use of Force (five) in 2019. Of the five Customer Service complaints, three were sustained, and one was unfounded. Of the five Use of Force complaints, four were not sustained and one was exonerated. The second highest complaint allegation was Directives & Expectations (four), with three sustained, and one unfounded.

Complaint by case type:

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

Complaint by employee involvement:

A breakdown of employee involvement in complaints (discounting inquiries) in 2019, showed 15 sworn personnel were named in at least one complaint, six were named in two complaints, one in three complaints, and one in four complaints. Two non-sworn personnel were named in at least one complaint.

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, or 2019. 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

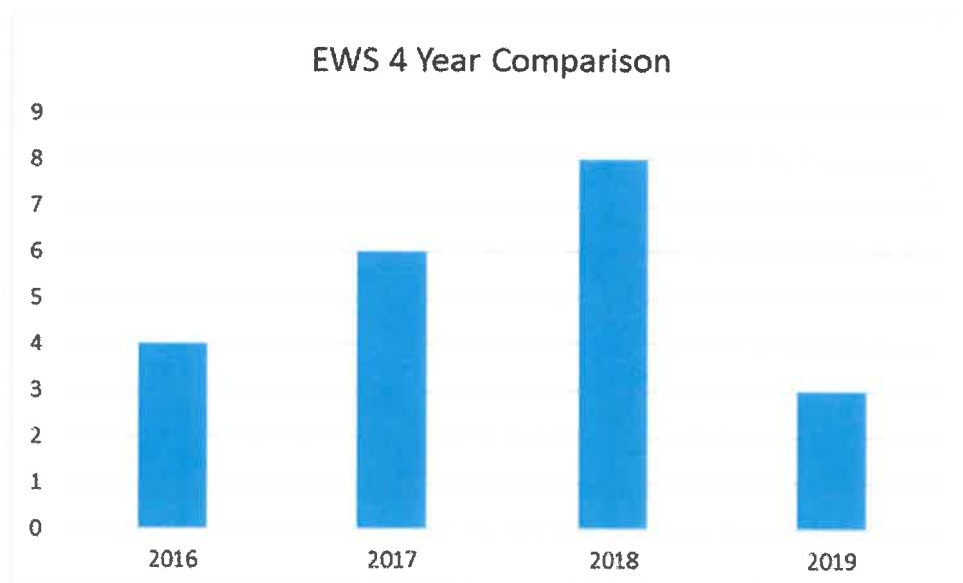
The Early Warning System was developed to identify employees who may be having difficulties with specific functions of their job performance, or who may be having behavioral issues. Police Department policy requires a supervisory review of the Professional Standards history of employees who have:

- 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 2019, three Early Warning System (EWS) special reviews were initiated involving three employees. Two employees received two sustained complaints within a 12-month period, and one employee received four complaints, regardless of disposition, 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. Two officers were placed on Performance Improvement Plans and no further action for the remaining officer.