

Annual Review of Use of Force & Vehicle Pursuit Incidents

This submission is made in accordance with Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of the Attorney General’s Use of Force Policy (April 2022) (“Use of Force Policy”), and Sections 12.2 and 12.3 of Addendum B to the Attorney General’s Use of Force Policy (April 2022) (“Vehicular Pursuit Policy”).

County*

Somerset

Law Enforcement Agency *

North Plainfield Police Department

Date of Report *

3/11/2024

Year of Data Covered in this Report*

2023

Check the box below to confirm*

Report has been reviewed by and endorsed by the agency's law enforcement executive.

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Use of Force Annual Review: Written Report

Agency statistics

The North Plainfield Police Department employs 46 full time police officers, 1 SLEO II and 3 SLEO III Officers. The Chief of Police is William G. Parenti who has served in that position since July 1, 2004. There is one captain who serves as executive officer and three lieutenants who serve as division commanders. There are 6 sergeants in the patrol division, 2 detective sergeants, 1 traffic safety sergeant and 1 training sergeant. There are 5 detectives assigned to the criminal investigation division and 1 of those detectives serves as the school resource officer. In 2023 the agency recorded 44,456 calls for service.

Section One: BWC/Video Audit

Your review must include a brief description of your agency's random and risk-based audit process (e.g., how videos are selected, who reviews the videos, etc.). If your agency did not conduct a risk- based and/or random BWC/video audit in 2023, please indicate how you plan to remedy that in 2024.

Section One: BWC/Video Audit*

According to NPPD policy Patrol Sergeants Shall review twelve BWC videos (2 per sergeant), on a monthly basis for compliance of this General Order. This review shall include a minimum of five (2) domestic violence related calls for service. Supervisors conducting the reviews are required to make entries in the computer aided dispatch system and advise the patrol division commander that the review was completed. The patrol division commander ensures the reviews are submitted and completed.

Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints

Your analysis must include a review of internal affairs complaints related to use of force incidents and must include the following: 1. number of IA complaints filed; 2. number filed by civilians; 3. number initiated by the agency; 4. numbers sustained; and 5. number still pending.

Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints *

1. In 2023, there no internal affairs complaint regarding a use of force incident.
2. There were zero (0) made by civilians.
3. There were zero (0) made by the agency.
4. There were no sustained charges regarding use of force in 2023.
5. There are zero (0) pending complaints.

Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Uses of Force

Section 7.5 of the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy requires that every use of force must undergo a meaningful command level review. Your annual review should include a brief description of your agency's meaningful review policy. If your agency was not able to conduct a meaningful review of each use of force incident, please explain why you were unable to do so and please indicate how you plan to do so going forward.

Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Uses of Force*

It is the policy of the North Plainfield Police Department that all use of force incidents shall undergo a meaningful command level review by at least two levels of supervisors. One reviewer shall be two levels or more above the officer who is being reviewed. The review form will be forwarded by the shift commander to the division commander and finally to the captain for review. The review will include suggestions by all reviewers for policy changes, additional training, equipment enhancements and/or recommended discipline. Meaningful review documents will be forwarded to Internal Affairs Officer and maintained for future tracking and review. NPPD policy requires 3 levels of review on all use of force incidents. The review is then forwarded to the Chief of Police for the final review and signature.

Section Four: Non-Discriminatory Application of Force

Your review must include an explanation of how you concluded whether force was applied in a non-discriminatory manner based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Your analysis should include a review of your community's demographics and demographic data from the Use of Force portal. If you conclude that any use of force was applied in a discriminatory manner, please explain what steps you have taken and will take to address this conclusion.

Section Four: Non-Discriminatory Application of Force*

Use of force analysis:

As part of the preparation of this report the Benchmark Analytics Use of force trend report was reviewed and those statistics were compared to the demographics of the Borough of North Plainfield. The agency also tracks race and gender statistics for quarterly analysis regarding arrests and motor vehicle stops. The use of force data indicates that out of 23 use of force incidents the race breakdown is as follows:

Race: (18) white and (5) black or African American.

Ethnicity: (18) Hispanic or Latino and 5 non-Hispanic.

Gender: (20) male and (3) female

The demographics for the borough of North Plainfield are as follows:

Race: 70% Caucasian 22% black of African American 7% other

Ethnicity: 48% Hispanic 22% white, 22 % African American

Gender 46% Male 53% female

After reviewing the three-year trend report including 2021, 2022 and 2023, the proportions of the racial and ethnic breakdown appear to remain consistent. The race and ethnicity of the subjects reflect the demographics of the Borough of North Plainfield and of the area. After analyzing these statistics and, as mentioned above, the facts of every use of force incident, no trends or individual incidents of discrimination were identified. The agency found that force applied is without any discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

Section Five: Overall Review of Use of Force

Please utilize as much space as needed to conduct a thorough review of your agency's use of force during the preceding calendar year. Your review should evaluate whether force was used in compliance with the Attorney General's Use of Force Policy and your agency's policy. Even if the use of force itself was compliant with those policies, your review should include any recommendations for training, equipment, or room for improvement (e.g., additional de-escalation efforts could have been made).

Section Five: Overall Review of Use of Force*

Use of Force:

According to the Benchmark Analytics Use of force trend report, there were 23 use of force reports filed in 2023 pertaining to 15 separate incidents. The greatest number of incidents where force was applied were fights and disorderly persons with (8) incidents. The second greatest number of incidents were at domestic disputes where force was applied (5) times. The list includes: (4) assault incidents, (3) incidents assisting other agencies, (3) on pedestrian stops, (2) on motor vehicle accidents, (2) on traffic stops, (2) on welfare checks, (1) on an eluding call, (1) on a report of gunfire, (1) on a subject with a gun and (1) during a theft.

Additionally, an audit of body worn camera recordings randomly, on a risk-based selection basis and after use of force incidents occurred. The internal affairs officer also reviewed the BWC recordings of officers after every use of force incident as well as all the meaningful review forms. Those forms are loaded in the internal affairs database for future review. This data base is reviewed for indicators of any pattern of violations of the use of force policy by any individual officer or groups of officers.

The highest number of individual force incidents in reported by officers in 2023 is (4) by two officers Ptl. Jannone and Ptl. Lippincott. Ptl. Hause used force (3) times. Two officers reported using force (2) times and eight officers reported using force (1) time. No other officer in the agency reported using force. The use of force summary for 2022 was also examined and there was no indication of a pattern of excessive force by any officer or officers in 2023. After reviewing each one of those incidents and reviewing the body worn camera recordings of each incident, along with the meaningful review reports. The meaningful reviews for all use of force incidents went through three layers of supervision. The chief executive then reviewed and signed them.

Show of Force: There were five incidents where officers had to use a display of force:

Officers filed a total of seven show of force reports during five different incidents. All of those incidents were reviewed through the meaningful review process and found to be consistent with the Use of Force policy and the NJAG guidelines.

Section Six: Further Action

Please explain what further action your agency has taken, or will take, to implement any changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment you have deemed appropriate. These actions can include department-wide changes, or changes applicable to specific officers or divisions.

Section Six: Further Action *

The North Plainfield Police Department reviews all use of force incidents and analyzes those incidents for compliance with existing policy and guidelines. During that review, the several layers of supervision involved have the opportunity to comment on what occurred and how improvements, if needed, can be made. Also, as an accredited agency, the department is always looking to improve methods of service delivery, striving to maintain our accredited status. Problem identification and identification of the best alternative solutions to those problems is done at the command and executive levels. Changes and modifications to policies and procedures are then established and executed through the chain of command through training. At the conclusion of 2023, some modifications were made to the meaningful review form in order to make it easier for front line supervisors to more effectively review incidents.

Vehicle Pursuit Annual Review: Written Report

Section One: BWC/Video Audit

Your review must include a brief description of your agency's random and risk-based audit process (e.g., how videos are selected, who reviews the videos, etc.). If your agency did not conduct a risk-based and/or random BWC/video audit in 2023, please indicate how you plan to remedy that in 2024.

Section One: BWC/Video Audit *

According to NPPD policy Patrol Sergeants Shall review twelve BWC videos (2 per sergeant), on a monthly basis for compliance of this General Order. This review shall include a minimum of five (2) domestic violence related calls for service. Supervisors conducting the reviews are required to make entries in the computer aided dispatch system and advise the patrol division commander that the review was completed. The patrol division commander ensures the reviews are submitted and completed.

Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints

Your analysis must include a review of internal affairs complaints related to vehicle pursuit incidents and must include the following: 1. number of IA complaints filed; 2. number filed by civilians; 3. number initiated by the agency; 4. numbers sustained; and 5. number still pending.

Section Two: Internal Affairs Complaints*

1. In 2023, there was one (1) internal affairs complaint regarding a pursuit incident.
2. There were zero (0) made by civilians.
3. The one complaint was initiated by this agency.
4. One officer had a sustained charge of a violation of the body worn camera policy.
5. There are zero (0) pending complaints.

This was discovered as a result of the meaningful review process.

Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Pursuits

Section 12.1 of the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy requires that every vehicle pursuit must undergo a meaningful command level review. Your annual review should include a brief description of your agency's meaningful review policy. If your agency was not able to conduct a meaningful review of each use of force incident, please explain why you were unable to do so and please indicate how you plan to do so going forward.

Section Three: Meaningful Review of Individual Pursuits*

It is the policy of the North Plainfield Police Department that all pursuits shall undergo a meaningful command level review by at least two levels of supervisors. One reviewer shall be two levels or more above the officer who is being reviewed. The review form will be forwarded by the shift commander to the division commander and finally to the captain for review. The review will include suggestions by all reviewers for policy changes, additional training, equipment enhancements and/or recommended discipline. Meaningful review documents will be forwarded to Internal Affairs Officer and maintained for future tracking and review. NPPD policy requires 3 levels of review on all pursuits incidents.

Section Four: Analysis of Non-Compliant Reports

Your review must include an analysis of all pursuits determined to not be in compliance with the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy, or agency policy, and the steps taken to address the non-compliance. Please indicate whether all non-compliant pursuits were referred to the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability or the County Prosecutor in compliance with Section 12.1(e) of the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy.

Section Four: Analysis of Non-Compliant Reports *

There were no non-compliant pursuits in 2023.

Section Five: Non-Discriminatory Pursuits

Your review must include an explanation of how you concluded whether vehicular pursuits were conducted in a non-discriminatory manner based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Your analysis should include a review of your community's demographics and demographic data from the Use of Force portal. If you conclude that any pursuit was conducted in a discriminatory manner, please explain what steps you have taken and will take to address this conclusion.

Section Five: Non-Discriminatory Pursuits*

After reviewing the Race/Gender quarterly reports for 2023 with the Patrol Division Commander, no irregularities or discriminatory patrol practices by any members listed in any of the quarterly reports. The overall numbers do not indicate any problematic trends with the department when compared to the previous annual reports. Three pursuits were conducted. The first was for a felony suspect who entered town from another jurisdiction. That suspect was not stopped. The second was an attempt to identify a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed, that attempt was terminated. The third incident was a pursuit involving an intoxicated driver who posed an immediate threat to the safety of other motorists. That driver was arrested and charged with DWI. After reviewing these incidents, there was no indication of discriminatory activity on the part of the officers involved.

Section Six: Overall Review of Vehicle Pursuit Analysis

Please utilize as much space as needed to conduct a thorough review of your agency's vehicle pursuit incidents during the preceding calendar year. Your review should include but is not limited to: the reason the pursuit was initiated; the number of officers who engaged in pursuits; whether supervisors approved or terminated pursuits; role of any outside agencies; length of pursuits by time and distance; top speeds reached; nature of any injuries, crashes, or property damage; reason for termination (if terminated), and the outcome of pursuits. Your review should evaluate whether pursuits were compliant with the Attorney General's Vehicular Pursuit Policy and your agency's policy. Even if pursuits were compliant with those policies, your review should include any recommendations for training, equipment, or room for improvement.

Section Six: Overall Review of Vehicle Pursuit Analysis*

The department was engaged in three (3) motor vehicle pursuits in 2023. Two of them were terminated by the supervisor.

During one pursuit, officers were attempting to catch up to armed robbery suspect vehicle that was pursued into North Plainfield from another jurisdiction. During that pursuit, one officer did not activate his BWC in a timely fashion. Corrective action was taken through the disciplinary process.

The second incident occurred while a police unit was trying to close the distance to obtain the registration of a vehicle that was travelling at a high rate of speed. The administrative review was conducted and determined that the attempt to catch up to that vehicle at that rate of speed for that distance should have been terminated sooner. That issue was corrected through re-training of the officers involved.

The third pursuit was a slower speed pursuit involving an intoxicated driver who was a danger to other drivers and simply failed to yield to the police car. The pursuit resulted in the arrest of the driver. That pursuit was consistent with the policy. There were no pursuit related accidents or injuries.

There were no pursuit related accidents or injuries. There was no indication of discriminatory patrol practices in any of those incidents

Section Seven: Further Action

Please explain what further action your agency has taken, or will take, to implement any changes in departmental structure, policy, training, or equipment you have deemed appropriate. These actions can include department-wide changes, or changes applicable to specific officers.

Section Seven: Further Action*

The North Plainfield Police Department conducts a meaningful review of all pursuit incidents and analyzes those incidents for compliance with existing policy and guidelines. During that review, the several layers of supervision involved have the opportunity to comment on what occurred and how improvements, if needed, can be made. Also, as an accredited agency, the department is always looking to improve methods of service delivery, striving to maintain our accredited status. Problem identification and identification of the best alternative solutions to those problems is done at the command and executive levels. Changes and modifications to policies and procedures are then established and executed through the chain of command. At the conclusion of 2023, some modifications were made to the meaningful review form in order to make it easier for front line supervisors to more effectively review incidents.