



# **Office of Professional Standards Annual Report 2021**



# Chief's Comments



The St. Petersburg Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency serving the 261,338 citizens of the City of St. Petersburg and the thousands who visit each year.

The police department is authorized to have 600 sworn employees, and 226 full-time non-sworn employees contribute to daily operations. The department's full-time work force is supplemented by the dedicated work of 45 citizen volunteers. Police services are provided for an area covering 62 square miles and traversed by 1,047.75 miles of roadway. The department also provides marine police services within 206 linear miles of shoreline.

When misconduct of an employee is alleged, it is investigated by a supervisor or, in the case of serious allegations, by the Office of Professional Standards Division. The 2021 Office of Professional Standards Annual Report illustrates the number and type of concerns raised by the community and department members and compares our efforts with previous years.

The St. Petersburg Police Department received 488,220 telephone calls from the public and responded to 162,412 calls for service. The department issued 20,206 traffic citations and made 7,724 arrests, which includes 1,113 drug arrests. Citizens initiated three complaints against employees in 2021 that resulted in formal investigations by the Office of Professional Standards or as a Bureau Investigation, one less than in 2020.

During 2021, there were 73 cruiser crashes compared with 104 in 2020. Of those, 33 were found to be preventable. Also, in 2021, employees initiated three pursuits; all of the pursuits were found to be compliant with departmental policies. The department has a very strict policy governing when a pursuit can occur, and we require our employees to adhere to specific procedures.

The department welcomes community oversight and involvement. The Civilian Police Review Committee (CPRC) reviews investigations after the cases become a public record. During 2021, the CPRC reviewed ten Office of Professional Standards Investigations. The CPRC agreed with all ten of the department's findings in the cases. Also, in 2021, the department received 231 letters of appreciation from citizens, thanking department employees for their service and consideration.

Each year, the police profession continues to evolve and change. The department must be prepared to adapt to these changes if we are to be successful in our goals to proactively address crime trends and traffic safety issues, implement new law enforcement technology and techniques, and attract and retain qualified and diverse professionals. The department is an outstanding organization; one that values our employees and community partners while working to improve the quality of life for the citizens it serves.

# Philosophy

The St. Petersburg Police Department provides police services by adhering to the community policing model and working in partnership with the community to solve mutually identified problems. While engaged with, and cognizant of the concerns of the community, the department works to provide efficient, effective and courteous police service that promotes public safety, protects the rights of all citizens and improves the quality of life in St. Petersburg, while upholding the highest standards of the law enforcement profession.

It is the mission of the St. Petersburg Police Department to provide professional police service to the community by adhering to the values of loyalty, integrity and honor.

The St. Petersburg Police Department has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. since 1985. It is also accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. The department is committed to law enforcement excellence and the protection of the safety and rights of the citizens it serves.



## Introduction

Police officers are expected to diagnose situations they encounter within a few short moments and take the most appropriate course of action. Most encounters with citizens result in positive experiences, in part due to the training, experience, and ethical character of the police officer. In the face of danger, the potential for complications increases; however, the majority of these encounters are resolved without complaint.

In a limited number of situations, officers clearly use their authority inappropriately. In other situations, citizens may believe police officers have exceeded their authority or have simply not treated them properly. Therefore, it is of critical importance to have a system in place that allows citizens to bring these concerns to the attention of police managers. This system must achieve at least three important objectives.

First, the system must create a sense of confidence on the part of citizens that their complaints will be taken seriously, properly investigated, and corrective measures will be taken when needed. Most police/citizen interactions take place without witnesses who are directly involved in the encounters. Without an effective system for addressing citizen complaints or concerns, the Police Department will not have the type of feedback needed to ensure that quality service is being provided and the department is using its authority appropriately.

Second, the system must create a sense of confidence on the part of the police officers that complaints will be investigated within a reasonable time frame and that they will be treated fairly and consistently. Police officers have a very difficult job; to do it effectively, they must be supported when they operate within the framework of the law and departmental policy. Although most complaints are lodged because of the sincere belief an officer's behavior was not appropriate, occasionally the system will be used as revenge toward the officer or as leverage for criminal charges.

Third, the system must provide information to city officials, the police department, and the community. This information is one important measure of the department's responsiveness to the community and the efforts made to provide guidance and direction to police employees in their encounters with citizens. It is also useful in identifying areas where policy and training changes might be made. The achievement of all of these objectives is important to the successful functioning of a system designed to ensure that police employees are carrying out their responsibilities to the community in the most appropriate manner possible.

The St. Petersburg Police Department has established a method to meet these objectives through the Office of Professional Standards (OPS), which reports directly to the chief of police. This office consists of a major, four detective investigators, an operations analyst specialist responsible for Staff Inspections, and one administrative secretary. Under the direction of the chief of police, the Office of Professional Standards has the responsibility to conduct investigations into complaints of employee misconduct from both inside and outside the department. The Office of Professional Standards also has the responsibility for monitoring investigations of alleged employee misconduct that are conducted by an employee's supervisor.

The Staff Inspections Unit conducts various inspections based on different timetables, as required, of all department functions and applicable policies, procedures, administrative and operational activities, and resources in efforts to ensure accountability and maintain integrity. Through staff inspections, the chief of police is provided objective information regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of department components; recommendations for the modification, revision, or creation of policies, procedures, and practices; as well as an evaluation of available resources to meet agency goals.

The purpose of this Office of Professional Standards Annual Report is twofold. First, this report provides information to the community on the results of investigations of both citizen and department-initiated complaints. It contains information over a five-year period from 2017 through 2021, to provide a basis for comparison. Second, the report is designed to provide greater insight into efforts by the city, police department, and citizen volunteers to meet the objectives described above.

The report achieves its purpose by describing how a citizen can make a complaint and explaining the Office of Professional Standards process. The report examines community oversight of internal investigations and police operations. It addresses commendations and investigations conducted by the Office of Professional Standards and supervisory personnel over the past five years, and it reviews complaints from an organizational and employee perspective.

## **The Process**

### *Making a Complaint*

Complaints against employees of the St. Petersburg Police Department can be made in several ways. All employees of the police department have the responsibility for receiving a complaint, so the process can be initiated any time a citizen chooses. A complaint may be lodged against the department or any employee, in person, by e-mail, by telephone, by mail, or via the online form that is on the police department's website using the information provided in Appendix C. When complaints are initiated outside the normal business hours of Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the information will usually be taken by an on-duty supervisor and referred to the watch commander/manager. The watch commander/manager may direct a supervisor to investigate or refer the complaint to the Office of Professional Standards.

It is the policy of the St. Petersburg Police Department that complaints will be handled at the appropriate organizational level and as quickly as possible. If the supervisor who initially received the complaint is able to investigate it, they will do so upon approval of the watch commander and document the actions taken. This information will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Standards, and the citizen will be notified of the findings of the investigation. Examples of complaints normally handled at the supervisory level include improper procedures and discourtesy. These types of investigations are categorized as Bureau Investigations. If the complaint is of a more serious nature, it is forwarded to the Office of Professional Standards for investigation. The Office of Professional Standards will normally investigate all allegations of a serious nature to include excessive force, the administrative aspects of criminal misconduct, bias-based allegations, and cases of officer-involved shootings. These investigations are categorized as Office of Professional Standards (OPS) Investigations.

## *Office of Professional Standards (OPS) Investigations*

All Office of Professional Standards Investigations must follow guidelines established by state laws and departmental policy. The Law Enforcement Officers' and Correctional Officers' Rights is a Florida State Statute that dictates how Office of Professional Standards Investigations are conducted. These investigations are considered confidential until the investigation is completed. (See Appendix D for a copy of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Correctional Officers' Rights.) Anonymous complaints are handled at the discretion of the chief of police. When a complaint is investigated by the Office of Professional Standards, the following procedures are followed:

The Office of Professional Standards Investigator contacts the complainant and arranges an appointment for an interview. Generally, the interview is conducted at the Police Department's Office of Professional Standards office. However, at times, interviews can be conducted at a complainant's home, business, or at the Civilian Police Review Committee's office located in the Municipal Services Building, 3rd Floor. Interviews are also conducted at the County jail; therefore, incarceration does not preclude a citizen's complaint from being heard.

The complainant is placed under oath and a sworn statement is taken from that person. This statement is audio recorded.

After the recorded statement is transcribed, the complainant is re-contacted and given an opportunity to review the statement for accuracy and to sign it.

The same procedure is used for all witnesses and officers/members involved in the case. All statements are recorded, transcribed, and assembled in a case file to be reviewed by the chief of police.

If the evidence indicates there might have been improper conduct, the chief of police can direct the matter to be reviewed by a Command Review Board. The Board consists of the assistant chiefs and the chief of police

Once the case has been reviewed by the Command Review Board, a decision is made as to whether the officer/member acted properly or not. Each allegation will receive one of five possible findings by the Board:

- 1) Exonerated – The acts which provided the basis for the complaint or allegation occurred; however, the investigation revealed they were justified, lawful, and proper.
- 2) Not Sustained - The investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to prove the allegations made in the complaint.
- 3) Sustained – The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to prove clearly the allegations made in the complaint.
- 4) Unfounded – The investigation conclusively proved the act or acts complained of did not occur.

- 5) Not Involved – The investigation disclosed the affected employee was not involved in the alleged misconduct.

If the Board sustains the allegation, the second phase of the process is to decide on the appropriate disciplinary/corrective action. Disciplinary action is guided by the department's philosophy contained in General Order I-04; Discipline Authority.

At the conclusion of the Board's action, the complainant and the accused are notified in writing of the Board's decision on the allegation and the type of discipline that was administered, if any.

The complainant may come to the department to review the case once all criminal charges (if any) have been investigated and resolved and the administrative investigation has been completed.

### ***Bureau Investigations***

Complaints investigated by the officer's/member's supervisor (Bureau Investigations) generally follow similar steps, except the statements generally are not audio recorded and transcribed (unless the accused officer requests a live interview). In most Bureau Investigations, the supervisor interviews the complainant and witnesses and then provides written questions to the accused officer/member who provides a written response. The supervisor determines the finding and then makes recommendations that are reviewed by the various levels of supervision and management in the officer's/member's chain of command, with final review by the chief of police.

### ***Information Only***

Another classification of cases is known as Information Only. An Information Only case is the documentation of an incident in which a citizen requests information regarding an employee's behavior and/or actions. An Information Only case may require several hours of exploration in order to determine what actually occurred. Once it is determined the incident does not involve misconduct by an employee, it is filed for informational purposes after an explanation has been furnished to the inquiring party. Many inquiries involve questions concerning the legality of an officer's/member's actions that need to be dealt with within the judicial system.

The Office of Professional Standards Division also reviews and archives all crashes and pursuits. The Office of Professional Standards also maintains a liaison with the City Legal Department and conducts inquiries into incidents involving St. Petersburg Police Department employees which result in civil litigation.

## **Community Oversight**

In addition to the Office of Professional Standards investigative process, there are additional means of oversight of police operations.

- The first is through the elected mayor and City Council. The chief of police reports to the mayor of the city. Police department policy and issues are regularly reviewed by the mayor and

council through the budgetary process, special reports that are prepared on department operations, and routine administrative oversight procedures. Citizens can raise concerns directly with the mayor and members of City Council.

- A second means of community oversight is through the news media. The St. Petersburg Police Department is in constant contact with reporters from print and electronic news media, providing both official and unofficial sources of information concerning police activities. The news media routinely reports on crime problems and any administrative issues of importance occurring within the department.
- A third means of community oversight is the police department's crime prevention program and regular participation in the meetings of the city's neighborhood associations. The department's commitment to community problem-solving policing places employees in regular contact with citizens throughout the community who have an interest in police performance. Also, the State of Florida Public Records Law allows anyone the ability to review completed internal and criminal investigative cases, as long as there are no criminal charges pending.
- The Civilian Police Review Committee (established in 1991; formerly called The Citizen's Review Committee) provides input and some measure of oversight into police operations.
  - 1) The Civilian Police Review Committee reviews completed Office of Professional Standards Investigations and Bureau Investigations to help ensure they are complete and unbiased. The committee is also charged with the responsibility of monitoring disciplinary action in the cases and reviewing them for consistency and fairness. In addition, the Civilian Police Review Committee serves an important role for citizens who may not feel comfortable making a complaint to a police department supervisor concerning employee misconduct. In those cases, the committee's coordinator can facilitate the interview with the Office of Professional Standards by making the appointment and being present during the interview if the complainant so desires.
  - 2) The Civilian Police Review Committee holds periodic televised public meetings where input is received from citizens. This information is passed along to the mayor who, in turn, passes the information to the chief of police. The Civilian Police Review Committee appears to be operating very effectively. It is an example of how the community can become involved in their police department. Membership on the Civilian Police Review Committee is voluntary and is made up of 11 diverse community members.

## **Biased Policing**

The Office of Professional Standards annually reviews agency policies and practices to include traffic stop procedures, searches, asset seizure and forfeiture, interviews and interrogations, and citizen concerns as they relate to biased policing as well as any corrective measures taken. Any revisions or modifications needed regarding policy and procedure are submitted for consideration and appropriate action. This information is then documented in the OPS Annual Report.



In 2021, the policies reviewed by OPS were:

II-25 Discrimination and Harassment  
II-38 Biased Policing  
II-42 Use of Force  
II-44 Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW)  
III-01 Field Contacts  
III-12 Police Vehicle Operation  
III-36 Interactions with Transgender Individuals  
III-40 Mobile Video Recording Systems (MVRS)  
IV-01 Rules of Conduct  
V.5:39 Social Media and Electronic Communication  
USB SOP II-08 Violator Enforcement

Upon review of agency policy and practices as they relate to biased policing, several policies were revised or added, as follows:

- II-25 Discrimination and Harassment – Policy revised to include the prohibition of all forms of harassment.
- II-38 Biased Policing - Biased policing definition revised.
- II-42 Use of Force – Choke hold definition revised.
- III-01 Field Contacts – Revision requiring descriptive subject information be provided to the Emergency Communications Center.

Upon OPS review of the revised policies, as well as the other identified policies, it was concluded that the policies were compliant with identified best practices.

The Office of Professional Standards received thirteen (13) bias-based complaints from citizens in 2021. Each incident was investigated, and the individuals were contacted by supervisors of the officers/members involved and/or by detectives from the Office of Professional Standards. Based on the information and the circumstances surrounding these arrests/incidents, all the complaints of biased policing were unfounded and corrective action was not needed. There were fourteen (14) bias-based complaints investigated in 2020.

*Biased Policing Interactions 2021*

<b>Bias Claimed</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Corrective Action Needed</b>
Race	Cyber-stalking investigation	A citizen who believes they are the victim of cyber-stalking and cyber-harassment would like the individual she feels is responsible charged; however, detectives and the State Attorney have been unable to find probable cause based on the evidence and circumstances. The citizen continues to assert that the reason the person is not being prosecuted is because of her race.	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Race	Aggravated Battery	A citizen called in to express her concerns regarding an aggravated battery investigation her son was involved in. She felt charges should have been filed in the case and believed the reason they were not because the investigating officer was biased in his investigation.	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Race	Parking ordinance violation	A citizen and their spouse submitted a complaint against two officers which occurred during the investigation of a parking ordinance violation. The complainant reported racial discrimination; however, the investigation into the incident did not find any evidence to support that claim. The spouse reported that she did not feel the actions of the officer were discriminatory, but they were discourteous, and the officers did not listen to both sides of the story thoroughly. Note that the violation was not occurring at the time of the incident.	Discrimination Unfounded; One officer received verbal counseling for discourtesy and the second officer received a memorandum of counseling for inefficiency

<b>Bias Claimed</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Corrective Action Needed</b>
Orientation	Missing Person	An officer was dispatched to a Missing Person call and the complainant was out of town causing them to assist the caller via telephone. It is alleged that while assisting, the officer made inappropriate comments reference the caller's "lifestyle" and he was "unprofessional" during the phone call. The missing person report was not conducted by the officer but was later investigated and documented by another officer.	Officer received an employee notice and 1-day suspension for inefficiency. Improper procedures and conduct unbecoming of an employee were not sustained.
Race	Traffic Accident	A citizen complained of how an officer handled a vehicle crash he was involved in. His complaints were that a witness was not on the report and should be, as well as his wife, who was a passenger and that she was not interviewed. The citizen could not specifically provide a reason, but he said the investigation felt racially biased. He said the people in the other vehicle were the same race as the officer and he claimed the officer spent more time speaking to the other people and did not accurately document the facts of the crash. He speculated this was racially motivated because he could not see another reason for the officer's actions. After investigation, the complainant was found to be the at-fault vehicle and the officer received verbal counseling in reference to traffic crash investigation procedures.	Officer received verbal counseling on the proper procedures in conducting a traffic crash to correctly and accurately gather, document and speak to all parties and witnesses involved.
Race	Call for Service	A citizen claimed that a delivery driver threw a clipboard, called him racial slurs, and pointed a firearm at him. Both parties had different statements and there was no surveillance or witnesses so PC for arrest could not be established. The citizen claimed that the failure to arrest was racist.	No violation of Policy or Procedure

<b>Bias Claimed</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Corrective Action Needed</b>
Race	Call for Service	A visitor to the area had two interactions in the same evening with the same two officers. The first time, he was asked to leave an area and told he would be trespassed if he did not. The second, he was a complainant in a call for service of a drunk individual. The officers did not realize he was the complainant because he left the scene and the individual did not flag them down or attempt to contact them in any way, but states that they left and did not talk to him because of his race. Body cameras were reviewed.	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Sexual Orientation	Social Media	It is alleged that an officer made comments on a public Instagram post which brought concern to members of the public. The post is discriminatory based on sexual orientation.	The allegations of Conduct Unbecoming of an Employee and Violation of the Code of Conduct were Unfounded.
Sex	Call for Service	A citizen wanted another citizen arrested because she said he was harassing her and intimidating her; however, no probable cause was found to make an arrest. She claimed it was because the investigating officer and supervisor were men and that she would get a better response from a woman.	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Race and Sex	Battery	A citizen alleges that during a battery investigation, the officer paid more attention to the security staff than herself and that the investigation outcome would be different if she was white. There was no probable cause established to charge the security staff with battery.	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Race	Aggravated Assault	A citizen alleged that the entire department is racist against herself, and her husband reference an aggravated assault where her husband was arrested.	No violation of Policy or Procedure

<b>Bias Claimed</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Corrective Action Needed</b>
Race	No Contact Order	A citizen called regarding a complaint from 2020 where she felt we failed to prosecute a no-contact order and she wished to make additional allegations that officers were creating an " ideological attack on me based on my gender, race color, and what they believe my lack of wealth."	No violation of Policy or Procedure
Race	Traffic Stop	A citizen alleged that the officer who stopped her fiancé, the driver of the vehicle, for a suspended license was trying to get him deported and that she and her fiancé were being harassed by St. Petersburg Police Officers. She states they are targeted because he is Cuban, and she is black	No violation of Policy or Procedure

## Personnel Intervention System

The Office of Professional Standards utilizes a Personnel Early Intervention System to monitor employees who receive multiple complaints, engage in multiple uses of force, and/or are involved in multiple vehicle accidents or pursuits. When employees are identified, they are referred to their chain of command who has the responsibility to review the complaints. The employee's supervisor reports their findings to the Office of Professional Standards via their chain of command. During 2021, there were no employees who required corrective action or additional training after a review resulting from the Personnel Early Intervention System.

During 2021, six (6) employees met the criteria for referral under the Personnel Early Intervention System. Each of those were as a result of having ten or more documented force incidents in a six-month period. All the employees met with their respective supervisor to discuss the referral. The meeting and results were documented and sent back to the Office of Professional Standards via their chain of command. In each of the reviews in 2021, the use of force used by officers/members was approved and properly documented. As would be expected, historically the officers/members being reviewed are generally in very active units like Downtown Deployment or are in assignments where force is more likely to be used, as is the case for Department K-9 Officers who are regularly in a position where they are tracking felony suspects and when they find the suspect, are usually by themselves. In many of those cases, the use of force is a CEW (Taser), or firearm being pointed at the suspect until other officers arrive to secure the suspect, and no other force is used.

The Personnel Early Intervention System is managed by the major in the Office of Professional Standards who closely monitors alerts and the subsequent reviews by the respective supervisors. At this time, it appears the system is working as designed.

### *Personnel Interventions 2017-2021*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017	14
2018	16
2019	13
2020	3
2021	6

### *Commendations*

The St. Petersburg Police Department welcomes positive comments about the department and its employees. They can be received from citizens or initiated internally by a supervisor or other members of the department.

During 2021, the St. Petersburg Police Department received 231 documented unsolicited letters and telephone calls of appreciation from citizens, thanking department employees for outstanding service and consideration. The department initiated 181 commendations to employees for actions arising from heroism to outstanding investigations.

### *Commendations 2017-2021*

<b>Type of Commendation</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Letters of Appreciation (Citizens)	229	208	214	225	231
Departmental Commendations*	155	157	178	171	181

\*Includes Service Awards, Officer of the Year, Ned March/Bud Purdy Award, Field Training Officer of the Year, and the Civilian Employees of the Year

### *Complaints and Investigations*

#### **Administrative Investigations**

In 2021, the Office of Professional Standards coordinated and/or investigated 34 Administrative Investigations into 52 allegations of misconduct. These investigations are classified as Bureau Investigations or Office of Professional Standards Investigations. Citizens initiated three of these cases. Thirty-one cases were initiated internally where the chief of police or another employee was the party

alleging misconduct by another member of the department. Misconduct was sustained for 25 allegations. All cases were reviewed by each employee's chain of command (See Table 1).

In 2021 there were five (5) investigations of note reviewed by the Command Review Board and Shooting Review Board.

- The first investigation involved a series of text messages sent by an officer to another group of officers. The text messages were determined to be inappropriate and insensitive, and the officer received a 40-hour suspension, mandatory cultural competency training, and a formal referral to the Employee Assistance Program.
- The second investigation involved an Officer discharging his firearm, resulting in injury to a person. The Shooting Review Board determined the shooting to be justified.
- The third investigation involved an Officer discharging his firearm while off-duty in response to a now-occurring felony, and no injuries were sustained by any person as a result of the shooting. The Shooting Review Board determined the shooting to be justified.
- The fourth investigation involved allegations of unnecessary force and improper procedures against two officers while taking a subject into custody. One officer resigned while under investigation, and the second officer's employment was terminated.
- The fifth investigation involved an officer discharging his firearm, resulting in injury to a person. That shooting is currently under investigation and has not yet been presented to the Shooting Review Board.

**Table 1 Administrative Investigations 2017 -2021**

<b>Type of Investigation</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Citizen Initiated Cases	8	4	3	4	3
Department Initiated Cases	44	31	36	25	31
Total Cases	52	35	39	29	34
Total Sustained Allegations*	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>

\*The total number of allegations is not the total number of cases. One case may have multiple allegations of misconduct. Cases with sustained allegations may have been initiated in prior years.

### **Citizen-Initiated Cases**

Citizen-initiated complaints are assessed by the Office of Professional Standards and the Chief of Police. The cases are either investigated by the Office of Professional Standards or assigned for investigation by the employee's immediate supervisor at the Bureau level. In 2021, citizens initiated three complaints, one less than 2020 (See Table 1 above).

**Table 2 Citizen Initiated Case Allegations 2017-2021**

<b>Type of Allegation</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Sustained in 2021</b>
Conviction/Guilt of a Misdemeanor or Felony	1	0	1	1	0	0
Conduct Unbecoming an Employee	1	2	0	3	2	2
Discourtesy	0	1	1	1	0	0
Improper Procedures	5	1	0	0	2	1
Inefficiency	2	0	1	0	1	1
Unnecessary Force	2	3	1	5	0	0
<b>Total*</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

\*The total number of allegations is not the total number of cases. One case may have more than one allegation of misconduct. Sustained allegations may have been initiated in prior years depending on length of investigation and scheduling of Command Review Board.

### Department-Initiated Cases

Department-initiated cases are assessed and investigated in the same manner as citizen-initiated complaints. In 2021, the department initiated 31 complaints, which is 6 more than in 2020 (See Table 1 above).

**Table 3 Department Initiated Case Allegations 2017-2021**

<b>Type of allegation</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Sustained in 2021</b>
Absent Without Leave	3	1	0	0	0	0
Abuse of Sick Time/Chronic Absenteeism	2	4	1	2	1	1
Chronic Offender of the Code of Conduct	1	1	5	1	0	0
Conviction or Guilt of a Misdemeanor or Felony	4	1	5	3	2	2
Conduct Unbecoming an Employee	11	3	5	3	7	3
Discharge of Weapon/Person	3	0	1	7	3	0



Type of allegation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Sustained in 2021
Discourtesy	1	0	1	1	1	0
Falsification	3	7	3	1	4	1
Improper Procedures	14	13	11	9	8	4
Inefficiency	18	10	6	8	9	7
Insubordination	1	1	0	2	1	0
Negligent Loss/Damage to City Property	3	0	0	1	0	0
Tardiness	3	1	1	0	0	0
Unnecessary Force	2	2	3	2	2	0
Violation of the Code of Conduct	0	0	0	1	4	3
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>

\*The total number of allegations is not the total number of cases. One case may have more than one allegation of misconduct

\*\*The 2020 Annual Report consolidated and removed duplicate categories which had previously been reported on Table 3

\*\*\* Sustained allegations may have been initiated in prior years depending on length of investigation and scheduling of Command Review Board.

## Use of Force

The St. Petersburg Police Department provides training for all members in the many varied methods of force that could be utilized when affecting an arrest or defending oneself or another. Use of force may range from a simple takedown maneuver to the discharge of a firearm. General Order II-42, Use of Force, states, “It is the policy of the St. Petersburg Police Department that the use of force in any situation shall follow applicable laws and is limited to the force which is needed to halt aggressive actions and/or to overcome specific resistance by the subject in order to accomplish a lawful objective.” The use of force is divided into two categories: deadly and non-deadly.

Officers are trained and issued weapons for use in the protection of themselves and others from death or injury. These weapons include a Glock handgun, an ASP baton, an ASR chemical spray, and a Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW). Other methods of force include weaponless physical force. Whenever force is used beyond simple handcuffing and/or when injury occurs, including the use of the issued weapons, a Use of Force Report is completed and sent through the chain of command up to and including the District major.

In 2021, there were 1,014 use of force incidents which were reviewed by the officer’s chain of command and filed in the Office of Professional Standards. This is an increase from 734 use of force incidents in 2020. The largest increase in type of force used was the pointing of a firearm, which rose

from 124 in 2020 to 212 in 2021. Each CEW deployment, just like other types of force, is reviewed by the officer's chain of command as well as the Office of Professional Standards, and each of the deployments was determined to be within department policy. Use of Force Reports are also completed for pointing the Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW) or a firearm at a person.

Often during an altercation more than one type of force may be used against an individual. As was mentioned, in 2021, there were 212 incidents where an officer pointed a firearm at an individual. There were six (6) discharges of firearms that included one at a vicious animal, two (2) accidental discharges, and three (3) at a person; each involving a single officer. Also, in 2021, there were four (4) incidents where an ASP baton was used and 55 incidents where ASR spray was utilized. The ASP baton continues to be seldom used and the use of ASR spray continues to decline. CEW use was almost identical to 2020.

An analysis of the use of force statistics for St. Petersburg Police Department for 2021 was compared to the same statistics for 2020. This review was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of force being used and to address any training needs for the sworn officers of the St. Petersburg Police Department.

### *Type of Force Used Comparison 2017-2021*

<b>Type of Force</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2021</b>
ASP Baton	5	-40%	3	-33%	2	0%	2	100%	4
ASR Spray	113	-23%	87	-7%	81	-14%	70	-21%	55
Firearm Pointed	150	-18%	123	-9%	112	13%	126	68%	212
Firearm Discharge	6	-17%	5	-20%	4	150%	10	-40%	6
Hobble Restraint	10	40%	14	0%	14	107%*	29*	28%	37
K-9 Bite	65	-8%	60	-35%	39	-23%	30	13%	34
Kick	4	0%	4	-75%	1	-100%	0	0%	0
Knee Strike	8	88%	15	-53%	7	0%	7	-57%	3
Pressure Point	8	13%	9	111%	19	-68%	6	0%	6
Punch	14	29%	18	-56%	8	0%	8	-38%	5
Take Down	152	-2%	149	7%	160	-11%	142	19%	169
CEW Pointed	61	-13%	53	-4%	51	-4%	49	49%	73
CEW Discharge	122	35%	165	-39%	101	-8%	93	2%	95

<b>Total Reports of Force*</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>1014</b>
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\*Corrected number

Note: Use of Force Incidents may include more than one type of force used

## *Use of Force Comparison -Firearm Discharge*

<b>Type of Discharge</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>var</b>	<b>2021</b>
Accidental	1	100%	2	-50%	1	-100%	0	%	2
Intentional/Animal	2	0%	2	-33%	2	50%	3	-67%	1
Intentional/Person	3	-100%	0	1%	1	600%	7	-57%	3
<b>Discharge Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-33%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>6</b>

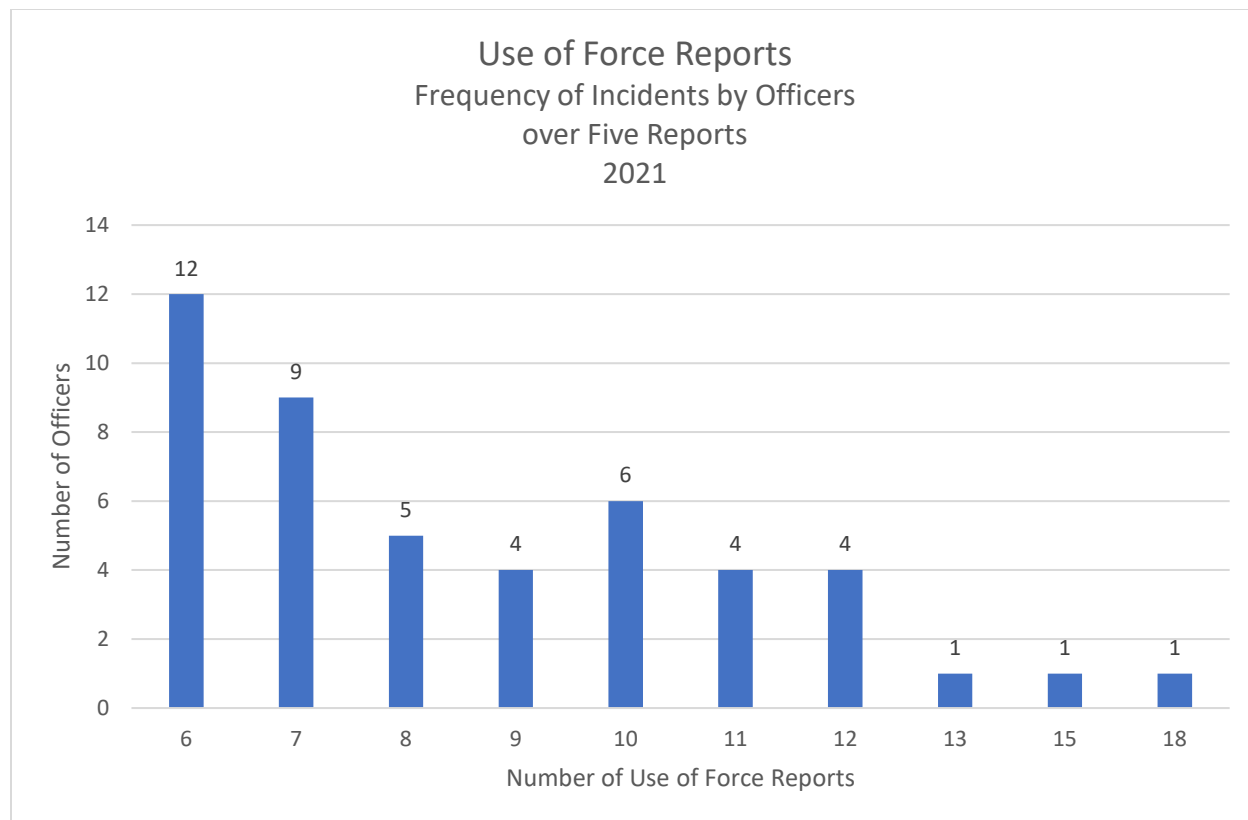
### *Key Points*

Overall use of force totals increased after two years of decreases. Officers are trained annually in use of force and training emphasizes that using force is the last option; still recognizing that response to an active aggressor must be immediate and effective for the safety of the officers and others who may be involved. The department continues to reinforce the concept that punches are only to be used as a defensive measure if an officer is under attack, or on rare occasion, utilized as strikes to forearms or shoulders in accordance with training to encourage a suspect to release their grip on an object. As can be seen in the chart above, the use of punches as a use of force continues to decline, from 18 in 2018 to five (5) in 2021.

The department also continues to implement and encourage the “Park Walk and Talk” concept throughout the city to build better relationships with the citizens we serve, although restrictions put in place due to the global pandemic certainly continued to hinder proactive community policing concepts in various ways in 2021.

There were zero citizen-initiated complaints and one department-initiated complaint of unnecessary or improper use of force investigated by the Office of Professional Standards in 2021 (compared to three investigations in 2020) involving a total of two officers; one of the officers was sustained for the allegation of unnecessary use of force and the officer’s employment was terminated, and the second officer resigned while under investigation. Review of use of force statistics in 2021 indicates officers are using the appropriate level of force, as they have been trained, and are properly documenting said use of force.

The following graph illustrates the number of times officers completed Use of Force Reports more than five times during 2021. Forty-seven officers completed a Use of Force Report more than five times during 2021, compared to 31 officers in 2020. Eleven officers completed a Use of Force Report more than ten times (compared to four officers in 2020) with one officer completing 18 Use of Force Reports during 2021.



## Use of Firearms

The St. Petersburg Police Department provides firearms training on a semiannual basis and the officers are provided with the resources to practice every month. The use of firearms is authorized when all other means of defense have failed and there is a reasonable belief that action is necessary to defend human life or to prevent great bodily harm. All discharges of firearms, either intentional, accidental, or at a dangerous animal will be investigated/reviewed by the Office of Professional Standards. They are broken down as follows:

Type of firearm discharge	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Accidental	1	2	1	0	2
Intentional/Vicious Animal	2**	2*	2	3	1
Intentional/Person	2*	0	1	2*	3
<b>Total Discharge Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

\*Involves more than one officer firing their weapon during an incident

\*\*One incident occurred and was counted in 2016, but heard in 2017; not included in totals for 2017

### **Intentional/Vicious Animals (1 incident)**

1. On August 24th, 2021, an officer responded to a child dependency call for service at a store. While on scene a dog charged at the responding officer. The officer fired their weapon, and the dog was wounded. The shooting was determined to be justified.

### **Intentional/Person (3 incidents)**

1. On August 26th, 2021, there was an intentional discharge of a firearm at a person involving an officer who was attempting to speak to an individual regarding stalking when the officer was attacked. The shooting was determined to be justified.
2. On July 4th, 2021, there was an intentional discharge of a firearm at a person who was actively forcing entry into the off-duty officer's residence. The shooting was determined to be justified.
3. On October 20th, 2021, there was an intentional discharge of a firearm at a person. The investigation is still active.

### **Accidental Discharge of a Firearm (2 incidents)**

1. On January 25th, 2021, there was an accidental discharge of a firearm into a clearing barrel, a device used to safely check whether a firearm is clear of ammunition.
2. On October 28th, 2021, there was an accidental discharge of a firearm into the ground by a K-9 officer during an active K-9 track of a suspect.

## **Use of Force Training**

In 2021 the Training Division provided the following training on use of force topics:

**Ethics and Integrity training to all personnel**

**Blood-borne Pathogens Awareness training to all affected personnel**

**2,120 hours of Firearms Training**

**2,120 hours of De-escalation Training**

**99 hours of rifle training and qualifications**

**1,110 hours of CPR/AED certification training for all affected personnel**

Due to the global pandemic the following regularly scheduled training classes were canceled or postponed:

**Defensive Tactics**

**Mobile Field Force**

## *Annual Analysis of Use of Force Activities, Policies and*

An analysis of the use of force activities, policies and practices including pursuit policies, pursuit reports, and reporting procedures did result in changes of policy or procedure distributed to personnel during calendar year 2021, as follows:

**II-42 Use of Force - Choke hold definition revised.**

**III-01 Field Contacts - Revision requiring descriptive subject information be provided to the Emergency Communications Center.**

## **Pursuits and Department Vehicle Crashes**

### *Pursuits*

The St. Petersburg Police Department is aware of the dangers of police vehicle pursuits. The department is constantly evaluating departmental procedures and every pursuit is investigated by the involved officer's chain of command to ensure compliance with policy. Officers must take into consideration numerous factors before beginning a pursuit, i.e., pedestrian traffic, time of day, traffic conditions, weather conditions, and if the identity of the subject being pursued is known. Authorization must be received from a supervisor to continue the pursuit after an officer initiates it.

In 2021, there were a total of three pursuits, all of which were compliant with department policy. The pursuits involved incidents of armed carjacking, armed robbery, and aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer.

### *Pursuits 2017 - 2021*

<b>Pursuit Compliance</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
In Compliance	0	4	2	4	3
Not in Compliance	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Pursuits</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

A review of General Order III-17, Pursuit of a Vehicle or Boat found that the policy was current and did not require any revisions.

### *Department Vehicle Crashes*

In 2021, St. Petersburg Police Department police vehicles were involved in 73 crashes. During this period, 33 of the crashes were found to be preventable. Thirteen of those preventable crashes resulted in formal discipline. The remaining preventable crashes resulted in counseling. Total cruiser damage was

estimated at \$219,172. Other resulting vehicle and property damage was estimated at \$138,709. A review of the crashes in 2021 indicated a decrease in crashes compared to 2020 and a decrease in preventable crashes from 45 to 33. The required review of the distracted driving video will continue.

### **Crashes 2017-2021\***

<b>Type of Crash</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Preventable Crashes	57	36	46	45	33
Non-Preventable Crashes	71	77	68	57	38
Preventable/Excusable	1	4	1	2	0
Total Crashes	126	117	115	103	73
<b>Formal Discipline (Preventable Crashes)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>

\*May include multiple findings

## **Disciplinary Action**

The discipline philosophy of the St. Petersburg Police Department is not necessarily punitive in nature. The intent of the philosophy is to modify an employee's behavior(s) when found in conflict with the policy of the department and the City. This is frequently accomplished by identifying the unacceptable behavior and providing the employee with additional training. The police department has also instituted having employees create a lesson plan to instruct other officers on certain training issues, such as officer safety and shooting issues. At times, training is not enough, and the improper conduct recurs. In these instances, it may be necessary for the department to take some type of formal action to discourage improper behavior on the part of the employee. The department operates on a "progressive discipline" process in which discipline increases for similar violations in a specific time period. This action may range from verbal counseling, written reprimand, suspension from duty without pay, demotion, and/or termination of employment.

In 2021, two employees were terminated from the St. Petersburg Police Department (See Disciplinary Action table below for explanation). The terminations involved Harassment, Racial Discrimination, and Violation of the Code of Conduct.

Review of the disciplinary action taken in 2021 reveals an increase of 24 actions taken when compared with 2020. Suspensions and employee notices were the same compared to 2020. Memorandums of counseling and documented verbal counseling both increased in 2021 compared with 2020.



### *Disciplinary Action 2017-2021*

<b>Type of Action</b>	<b>2017*</b>	<b>2018**</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Termination	4	1	1	3	2
Resignation	1	1	2	0	3
Suspension	4	12	21	8	8
Employee Notice	23	32	25	23	24
Memorandum of Counseling	55	88	63	42	55
Verbal Counseling	109	163	89	53	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>154</b>

\* After arbitration for termination, two employees were rehired and their corrective action resulted in suspensions, which would increase the suspension number by two.

\*\*Officer retired pending results of an OPS Investigation-shown on chart as resignation

## **Organizational Complaint Profile**

The St. Petersburg Police Department has 858 active employees who are assigned in the following manner:

<b>Employee Bureau</b>	<b>Sworn</b>	<b>Non-Sworn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Office of the Chief of Police	6	16	22
Administrative Services Bureau	19	160	179
Investigative Services Bureau	147	32	179
Uniform Services Bureau	382	96	478
<b>Total including part-time employees</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>858</b>

## *Investigations By Bureau 2017-2021*

<b>Bureau</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Office of the Chief	0	0	0	0	0
Uniform Services Bureau	39	23	29	26	25
Investigative Services Bureau	8	6	6	9	5
Administrative Services Bureau	7	9	7	4	5
Other City Departments	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>

\* Total number of personnel does not necessarily reflect the total number of cases.

The department analyzes all investigations as they relate to the organizational elements. Once a pattern has been identified, the department's administration can take corrective action to alleviate the problem.

The department's Uniform Services Bureau received the greatest number of complaints. Seventy-one percent of total cases were assigned to the Uniform Services Bureau. One would expect this to be the case for two reasons: first, 56% of all employees, 382 Sworn and 96 Non-Sworn, are assigned to this Bureau; secondly, uniform personnel are in a position of greater exposure to the public; therefore, making them statistically more prone to receiving internal and external complaints. They have the most direct contact with community members under the most stressful circumstances. In addition to being responsible for traffic enforcement, they are the first representatives of the department to respond to calls. Most encounters that patrol officers have with a citizen are under circumstances where the person is under the stress of being a crime victim, a traffic violator, or an arrested subject; or the person is involved in a dispute with another party and each party expects the officer to side with them in resolving the dispute.

## **Conclusion**

The data in this report has been presented to more fully inform the citizens of St. Petersburg of a key aspect of a strong police/community relationship. The department believes an informed community will be more understanding of the difficult and critical role a police officer must fulfill. The overall goal of the St. Petersburg Police Department is to provide efficient and effective police service to our citizens. With the cooperation and confidence of the community, we will meet that goal.

# Appendix

Demographics of Sworn Personnel.....A  
Total Number of Sworn Employees by Race and Sex.....B  
Complaint or Commendation .....C  
Law Enforcement Officers’ and Correctional Officers’ Rights.....D

**\*\*Note\*\* Prior to the 2020 Annual Report, specific General Orders were included in the Appendix, however all General Orders are now available to the public on the City of St. Petersburg Police Department website (<https://police.stpete.org/general-orders/>). The General Orders available on the website will be the most up-to-date versions.**

# **Appendix A**

## **Demographics of Sworn Personnel**

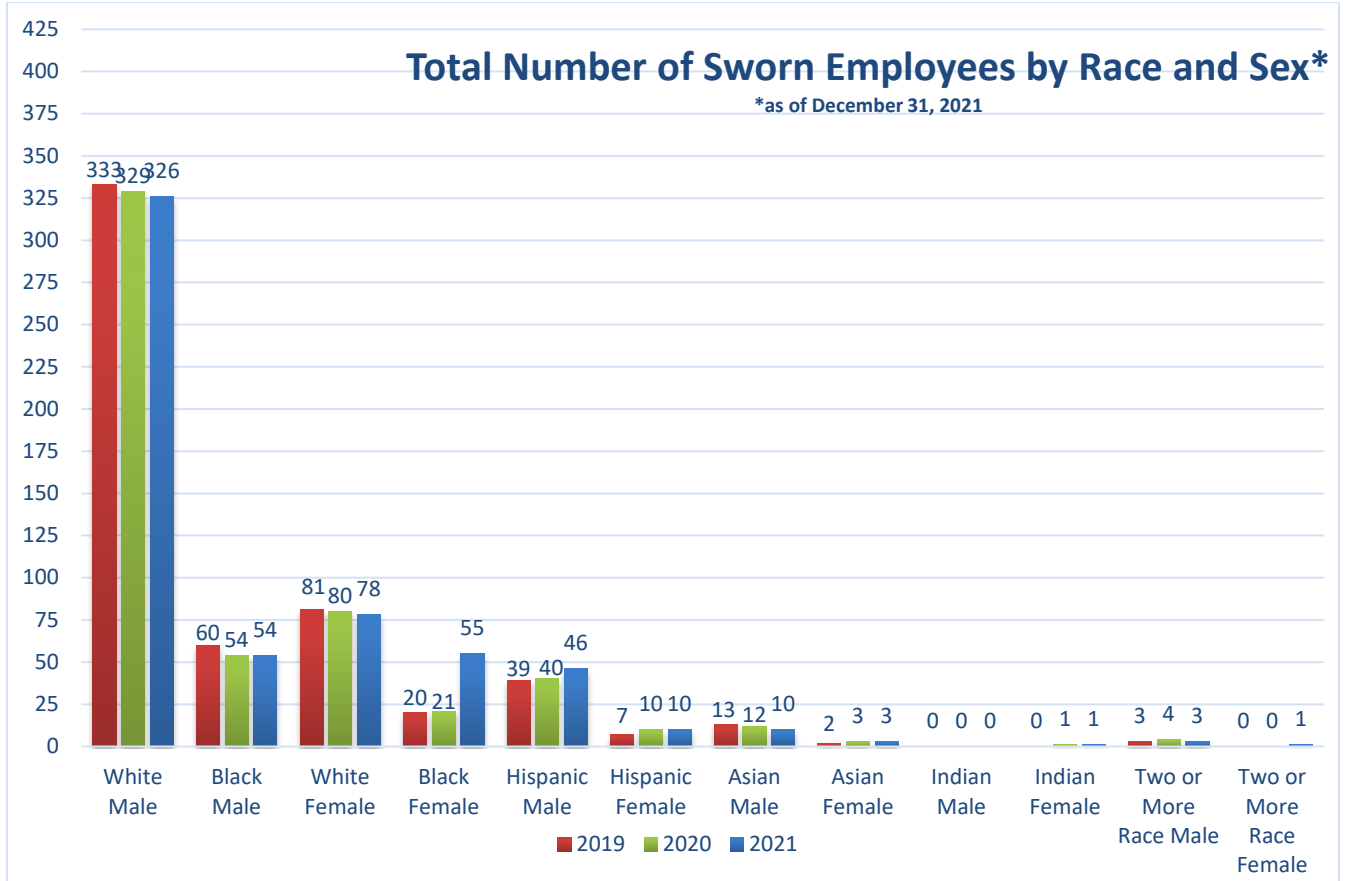
## Demographics of Sworn and Non-Sworn Personnel as of December 31, 2021

<b>Race &amp; Sex</b>	<b>Sworn</b>	<b>Non-Sworn</b>	<b>Total</b>
White Male	326	76	402
Black Male	54	26	80
White Female	78	123	201
Black Female	22	48	70
Hispanic Female	10	13	23
Hispanic Male	46	7	53
Asian Male	10	4	14
Asian Female	3	5	8
Indian Male	0	0	0
Indian Female	1	0	1
Two or more race Male	3	1	4
Two or more race Female	1	1	2
<b>Total*</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>858</b>

\*Whatever this is supposed to say. Asterisk on total but no exclamation

# **Appendix B**

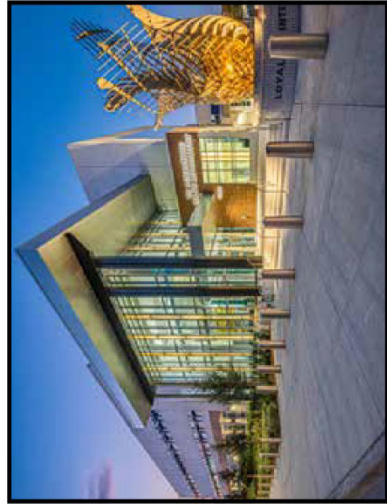
## **Total Number of Sworn Employees by Race and Sex**



# **Appendix C**

## **Complaint or Commendation**





For further information please contact:

**St. Petersburg Police Department  
 Office of Professional Standards**  
 1301 First Avenue North  
 St. Petersburg, FL 33705  
 727-893-7596  
 Email: OPS@stpete.org

It is the policy of the St. Petersburg Police Department to provide an environment for its employees and the citizens it serves that is free from discrimination and harassment.

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**police.stpete.org**

This publication can be made available upon request in alternative formats, such as, Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer disk. Requests can be made by calling (727) 893-7545 (Voice) or 711 for the Florida Relay Service or email the ADA Coordinator at lende@bright@stpete.org. Please allow 72 hours for your request to be processed.

# COMPLAINT OR COMMENDATION

Building Trust Between the Police  
and the Citizens We Serve

## Office of Professional Standards

St. Petersburg Police Department  
 1301 1st Avenue North  
 St. Petersburg, FL 33705  
[police.stpete.org](http://police.stpete.org)



## Commendation

It is the policy of the St. Petersburg Police Department to recognize employees for exemplary performance of their duties through the formal use of commendations. There are three categories: written acknowledgment (letters of recognition), departmental awards, and community-sponsored awards.

The police department sponsors a Medal of Valor for officers who distinguish themselves by an act of conspicuous bravery while consciously facing imminent, life-threatening peril. The Meritorious Service Award is presented to employees who demonstrate exemplary service of great importance to law enforcement.

Hundreds of letters of recognition and phone calls are received each year, by citizens expressing their gratitude for a job well done. You may compliment an employee by letter, phone call, email (OPS@stpete.org), mail or via the online form that is on the police department's website. A written compliment is preferred since it can be posted prominently within police headquarters and placed in the employee's personnel file.

# COMPLAINT OR COMMENDATION



## Committed to You

The St. Petersburg Police Department is dedicated to creating a safer environment and providing responsive police service through an aggressive, problem-solving partnership with the community. We will adapt to the changing future while maintaining our traditional values of integrity and professionalism. To achieve our commitment, we will provide, equally to all people, sensitive, fair, and courteous service which respects each individual's dignity.

Citizen involvement is vital to managing any public agency. Community members' feelings about police service are evaluated through commendations, suggestions, and complaints.

This brochure outlines the basic information necessary for you to let the department know your opinion about the quality of St. Petersburg police service.

## Complaint

The purpose of reviewing complaints is to ensure the continued confidence of the community by upholding the integrity of the police department. The complaint procedure provides citizens with a way to make legitimate complaints regarding police employees. It also protects employees who perform their job in a reasonable, lawful, and impartial manner from false or unwarranted accusations.

Every complaint, if it appears there could be a violation of department policy or procedure, will be vigorously and impartially investigated. It is departmental policy that complaints be handled at the lowest appropriate organizational level and as quickly as possible. Minor breaches of regulations are assigned to the accused employee's supervisor. He/She will contact you by phone or in person.

Upon completion, these complaints are reviewed by the Office of Professional Standards. Many times, complaints can be resolved at this level. However, traffic citations, certain legal issues, or arrests that have not been adjudicated, must await the decision of a judge.

More serious violations are assigned to the Office of Professional Standards. Fact finding investigations of alleged improper or illegal conduct by employees are conducted by detectives. A report is prepared with the sworn, recorded statements of the complainant, witnesses, and accused employees.

Additional evidence or documents are included in the report which is evaluated by an Office of Professional Standards supervisor for thoroughness and objectivity. When completed, the report is presented to the Chief of Police who reviews it and decides whether to convene a command review board.

All cases remain confidential until a final disposition. If the allegation is sustained, the second phase of the process is to decide on corrective action which ranges from remedial training, reprimand, transfer, suspension, demotion, or termination. The employee and the complainant are notified of the case finding.

## How to File a Complaint

You may file a complaint in person, by phone, email (OPS@stpete.org), mail or via the online form that is on the police department's website. It is preferred that individuals identify themselves. Anonymous complaints do not carry the same weight since employees have the same rights as other citizens to confront their accusers. However, anonymous complaints are accepted at the discretion of the Chief of Police.



# **Appendix D**

## **Law Enforcement Officers' and Correctional Officers' Rights**