

Bellingham Police Department  
Use of Force Statistics  
September 2018

*Bellingham*

**POLICE**

Washington State Accredited Agency

Your Bellingham Police Department maintains a commitment to our community by respecting the people we serve, acting with integrity and demonstrating accountability to those that we serve.

As entrusted guardians of our community, our interactions in the performance of our official duties sometimes brings us into conflict with members of society that fail to heed our community's wishes for order and peace. It is the policy of your police department that your officers may only use that amount of force that is objectively reasonable and necessary in the performance of their legal duties. Your police department's use of force policies are consistent with the laws of the United States and the State of Washington. Your police department also strives to have policies that are consistent, with identified "best practices," and contemporary scientific discovery and application.

The components for constitutional policing are training, policy and supervision. Your police department maintains the highest standards and attention to all three areas and will continue to be an agency that serves its community with commitment, vision and values.

# SECTION ONE: Incident Information

<b>Total number of use of force incidents:</b>	<b>19 / 0.33%</b>	<b>YTD 184 / 0.36%</b>
• Incidents involving one officer:	4 / 21%	YTD 18 / 10%
• Incidents involving more than one officer:	15 / 79%	YTD 166 / 90%

According to the city's Computer-Aided Dispatch information from September 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, your Bellingham Police officers responded to 5792 calls for service. These calls for service also included officer-initiated activities where an officer contacted someone, performed a traffic stop or witnessed an incident and were investigating further.

For fans of numbers, this means that **0.33%, or one-third of one percent** of incidents in September resulted in your officers using lawful force against a citizen. (50973 calls this year)

## Incident origin:

• Call for service from 911	13 / 68%	YTD 149 / 81%
• Self-initiated by officer(s)	6 / 32%	YTD 35 / 19%

Put into perspective with the previous information this means that in all 5792 calls for service that your police officers responded to in the month of September, only six times did an officer's self-initiated contact result in one of your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

In numbers: **0.10%, or one-tenth of one percent.**

## Reason for use of force:

• Active resistance to lawful commands	14 / 74%	YTD 134 / 73%
• Actively aggressive	3 / 16%	YTD 21 / 11%
• Assaultive	2 / 10%	YTD 24 / 13%
• Life-threatening	0	YTD 5 / 3%

Your police officers are allowed by law to use force in the discharge of their duties.

As the information above has already shown, your police officers very rarely have to use force to accomplish their lawful objectives. The reasons listed above show that some citizens do not wish to submit to officers' lawful authority. How the citizens resist lawful actions of your officers is detailed hereafter, along with officers' responses.

### Citizen Resistance

• Barricaded	0	YTD 3 / 1%
• Fled	4 / 12%	YTD 28 / 8%
• Hiding	1 / 3%	YTD 12 / 4%
• Physical resistance	11 / 32%	YTD 117 / 35%
• Refuse lawful commands	18 / 53%	YTD 176 / 52%

### Officers' Force Response

• Physical control(s)	31 / 42%	YTD 342 / 43%
• Physical impact(s)	0	YTD 15 / 2%
• TASER display	8 / 11%	YTD 33 / 4%
• Verbal command	32 / 43%	YTD 333 / 42%
• Weapon pointing	0	YTD 5 / <1%
• Restraints	1 / 1%	YTD 9 / 1%
• Less Lethal Shotgun	0	YTD 9 / 1%
• Less Lethal Shotgun display	0	YTD 3 / <1%
• K9 application	1 / 1%	YTD 15 / 2%
• TASER usage	0	YTD 18 / 2%
• Vascular Neck Restraint	1 / 1%	YTD 5 / <1%
• Chemical Irritant	0	YTD 5 / <1%
• Pursuit Immobilization Technique	0	YTD 1 / <1%
• Firearm	0	YTD 0
• Impact Weapon	0	YTD 0

A citizens' resistance to lawful commands can take more than one form; sometimes your officers' response to these situations necessitates finding a solution that safely resolves the situation. For example, a citizen may refuse a lawful command, then flee on foot and ultimately resist physically when located. For that one incident, three specific items are documented. In the same manner, one of your officers may give a lawful verbal command. When that lawful command is disregarded the officer may need to employ a physical control technique such as tackling a fleeing citizen. Thus, two specific items are documented.

Of note, your officers noted that for this particular data set, citizens in 18 of the 19 incidents (95%) disregarded verbal commands wherein your officers used lawful force. Citizens were more likely to offer physical resistance to lawful commands after that. Your officers used authorized physical controls like grabbing arms for handcuffing or holding folks from fleeing far more than deploying other modalities of force like TASERs or physical strikes.

Your officers used lawful force against a citizen in September in **0.33%, or one-third of one percent** of incidents. Your police department using force to accomplish lawful objectives is a rarity.

**Day of Week**

Sunday	4 / 21%	YTD 26 / 14%
Monday	0	YTD 20 / 11%
Tuesday	4 / 21%	YTD 32 / 17%
Wednesday	1 / 5%	YTD 19 / 10%
Thursday	4 / 21%	YTD 29 / 16%
Friday	3 / 16%	YTD 25 / 14%
Saturday	3 / 16%	YTD 33 / 18%

**Time of Day**

0620-1020	1 / 5%	YTD 9 / 5%
1020-1620	6 / 32%	YTD 40 / 22%
1620-2020	4 / 21%	YTD 51 / 28%
2020-0300	8 / 42%	YTD 66 / 36%
0300-0620	0	YTD 18 / 10%

## SECTION TWO: Involved Persons' Information

The data presented in this section will provide information on the citizens involved in your police department's use of force incidents, along with information on your police officers involved in those incidents.

**Injuries to Citizens due to Officers' force: 4 / 12% YTD 57 / 31%**

- Abrasions, K9 puncture

For the month of September, your officers used lawful force **0.33%, or one-third of one percent** in the incidents they responded to. Of the 5792 incidents your officers responded to, only four of those contacts resulted in any kind of notable injury to a citizen.

In numbers: **0.07%, or less than one-tenth of one percent** of incidents responded to by your officers resulted in an injury from your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

**Citizens Transported to Hospital: 6 / 32% YTD 59 / 32%**

- Four emergent detentions, one jail requirement, one previous injury

Your officers noted that in instances where they applied lawful force, four citizens appeared to be having a mental health issue that posed a danger to themselves or others. Your police department strives to have mental health issues handled by the hospital, not the jail, and thus your officers took the citizen to the hospital for the appropriate care.

<b>Injuries to Officers:</b>	<b>8 / 42%</b>	<b>YTD 32 / 17%</b>
<b>Officers Transported to Hospital:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>YTD 0</b>
<b>Median Age of Citizen:</b>	<b>35 years</b>	<b>34 years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 15, Oldest 62</li> </ul>		
<b>Median Age of Officer:</b>	<b>37.5 years</b>	<b>37 years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 23, Oldest 60</li> </ul>		

Median ages were determined to be the best descriptor in these two categories, as the reader can gain a better appreciation for the more-likely ages rather than having an average age be skewed by outliers.

In addition, this information serves as a good reminder to the fact that your officers encounter folks from all age ranges in the performance of their official duties and sometimes encounter unlawful resistance from citizens, both younger and older.

#### **Race of Citizen**

• White	10 / 53%	YTD 126 / 68%
• Black or African American	6 / 32%	YTD 20 / 11%
• American Indian	1 / 5%	YTD 18 / 10%
• Hispanic	2 / 10%	YTD 16 / 9%
• Asian	0	YTD 4 / 2%

#### **Race of Officer**

• White	36 / 86%	YTD 398 / 92%
• Black or African American	3 / 7%	YTD 7 / 2%
• East Indian	0	YTD 13 / 3%
• Hispanic	3 / 7%	YTD 13 / 3%
• Asian	0	YTD 1 / <1%

#### **Resident of Whatcom County / Bellingham?**

• Yes	15 / 79%	YTD 164 / 89%
• No	4 / 21%	YTD 20 / 11%

Statistical analysis of police use of force often has a discussion component concerning the population demographics of the involved citizens. The reader is cautioned to remember that from a statistical basis, comparing outlying events to population demographics often will not give the reader an accurate assessment of the situation.

For example, in the month of September 79% of citizens that your officers used lawful force on were residents of either Whatcom County or the City of Bellingham.

However, do not forget that in the month of September your officers used lawful force in only **0.33%, or one-third of one percent** of incidents. So these incidents are truly outliers and thus may not adhere to population demographics. For example, in September, to achieve lawful objectives lawful force was used by your police department two times against persons of Hispanic ancestry, or **0.034%, or around three one-hundredths of one percent** in the incidents for the month. This is nowhere near the city demographic.

### Gender Identification of Citizen

- |          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| • Male   | 15 / 79% | YTD 146 / 79% |
| • Female | 4 / 21%  | YTD 38 / 21%  |

### Gender Identification of Officer

- |          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| • Male   | 35 / 83% | YTD 377 / 87% |
| • Female | 7 / 17%  | YTD 55 / 13%  |

### Considerations for Citizen's Actions

- |                                 |         |              |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| • Alcohol use perceived         | 6 / 32% | YTD 62 / 27% |
| • Mental health issue perceived | 6 / 32% | YTD 63 / 27% |
| • Drug use perceived            | 3 / 16% | YTD 38 / 16% |
| • Combination                   | 1 / 5%  | YTD 25 / 11% |
| • Nothing perceived             | 5 / 26% | YTD 44 / 19% |

This information was provided by your police department to better inform the community we serve about use of force incidents. Your officers are empowered by the laws of the United States and the State of Washington to lawfully use force when objectively reasonable and necessary. This authority is viewed as an awesome responsibility to our community and your officers wish to be transparent so that our community understands that, although a statistical rarity, sometimes your officers have to lawfully gain compliance in the performance of their official duties.

Future information will also display the year-to-date information so that the community maintains a trusting relationship towards their police department in the topic of police use of force.

Should you have any questions, comments or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Lieutenant Don Almer at 360-778-8641 or [dalmer@cob.org](mailto:dalmer@cob.org).