

Bellingham Police Department  
Use of Force Statistics  
December 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>25 / 0.50%</b>	<b>YTD 242 / 0.36%</b>
• Incidents involving one officer:	2 / 8%	YTD 24 / 10%
• Incidents involving more than one officer:	23 / 92%	YTD 218 / 90%

According to the city's Computer-Aided Dispatch information from December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, your Bellingham Police officers responded to 5011 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 **0.50%, or one-half of one percent** of incidents in December resulted in your officers using lawful force against a citizen. (67261 calls this year)

## Incident origin:

• Call for service from 911	19 / 76%	YTD 198 / 82%
• Self-initiated by officer(s)	6 / 24%	YTD 44 / 18%

Put into perspective with the previous information this means that in all 5011 calls for service that your police officers responded to in the month of December, only six times did an officer's self-initiated contact result in one of your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

In numbers: **0.12%, or one-tenth of one percent.**

## Reason for use of force:

• Active resistance to lawful commands	20 / 80%	YTD 178 / 74%
• Actively aggressive	2 / 8%	YTD 28 / 12%
• Assaultive	2 / 8%	YTD 30 / 12%
• Life-threatening	1 / 4%	YTD 6 / 2%

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	2 / 4%	YTD 5 / 1%
• Fled	5 / 9%	YTD 42 / 9%
• Hiding	4 / 7%	YTD 20 / 4%
• Physical resistance	18 / 33%	YTD 160 / 35%
• Refuse lawful commands	25 / 46%	YTD 234 / 51%

### Officers' Force Response

• Physical control(s)	58 / 49%	YTD 463 / 44%
• Physical impact(s)	2 / 2%	YTD 24 / 2%
• TASER display	2 / 2%	YTD 40 / 4%
• Verbal command	47 / 40%	YTD 433 / 41%
• Weapon pointing	1 / 1%	YTD 8 / 1%
• Restraints	0	YTD 15 / 1%
• Less Lethal Shotgun	0	YTD 9 / 1%
• Less Lethal Shotgun display	1 / 1%	YTD 4 / <1%
• K9 application	3 / 2%	YTD 20 / 2%
• TASER usage	1 / 1%	YTD 19 / 2%
• Vascular Neck Restraint	0	YTD 6 / 1%
• Chemical Irritant	2 / 2%	YTD 7 / 1%
• Pursuit Intervention Technique	0	YTD 3 / <1%
• Firearm	1 / 1%	YTD 1 / <1%
• 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 25 of the 25 incidents (100%) 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 December in **0.50%, or one-half of one percent** of incidents. Your police department using force to accomplish lawful objectives is a rarity.

**Day of Week**

Sunday	5 / 20%	YTD 39 / 16%
Monday	4 / 16%	YTD 25 / 10%
Tuesday	3 / 12%	YTD 38 / 16%
Wednesday	2 / 8%	YTD 22 / 9%
Thursday	4 / 16%	YTD 39 / 16%
Friday	4 / 16%	YTD 36 / 15%
Saturday	3 / 12%	YTD 43 / 18%

**Time of Day**

0620-1020	1 / 4%	YTD 12 / 5%
1020-1620	10 / 40%	YTD 57 / 24%
1620-2020	8 / 32%	YTD 68 / 28%
2020-0300	4 / 16%	YTD 81 / 33%
0300-0620	2 / 8%	YTD 24 / 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 / 16% YTD 67 / 28%**

- Abrasions, K9 puncture, gunshot wound

For the month of December, your officers used lawful force **0.50%, or one-half of one percent** in the incidents they responded to. Of the 5011 incidents your officers responded to, only four of those contacts resulted in any kind of notable injury to a citizen.

In numbers: **0.08%, 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: 7 / 28% YTD 76 / 31%**

- Four emergent detentions, three for jail clearance

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>2 / 8%</b>	<b>YTD 37 / 15%</b>
<b>Officers Transported to Hospital:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>YTD 0</b>
<b>Median Age of Citizen:</b>	<b>33 years</b>	<b>32 years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 17, Oldest 68</li> </ul>		
<b>Median Age of Officer:</b>	<b>39 years</b>	<b>38 years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 24, 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	16 / 64%	YTD 168 / 69%
• Black or African American	4 / 16%	YTD 27 / 11%
• American Indian	3 / 12%	YTD 25 / 10%
• Hispanic	2 / 8%	YTD 18 / 7%
• Asian	0	YTD 4 / 2%

#### **Race of Officer**

• White	67 / 96%	YTD 535 / 92%
• Black or African American	1 / 1%	YTD 11 / 2%
• East Indian	0	YTD 15 / 3%
• Hispanic	2 / 3%	YTD 21 / 4%
• Asian	0	YTD 1 / <1%

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

• Yes	23 / 92%	YTD 220 / 91%
• No	2 / 8%	YTD 22 / 9%

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 December 91% 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 December your officers used lawful force in only **0.50%**, or **one-half of one percent** of incidents. So these incidents are truly outliers and thus may not adhere to population demographics. For example, in December, to achieve lawful objectives lawful force was used by your police department three times against persons of American Indian ancestry, or **0.06%**, or around **six one-hundredths of one percent** in the 5011 incidents for the month. This is nowhere near the city demographic.

### Gender Identification of Citizen

- |          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| • Male   | 18 / 72% | YTD 193 / 80% |
| • Female | 7 / 28%  | YTD 49 / 20%  |

### Gender Identification of Officer

- |          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| • Male   | 64 / 91% | YTD 510 / 87% |
| • Female | 6 / 9%   | YTD 73 / 13%  |

### Considerations for Citizen's Actions

- |                                 |          |              |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| • Alcohol use perceived         | 7 / 23%  | YTD 79 / 25% |
| • Mental health issue perceived | 10 / 32% | YTD 88 / 28% |
| • Drug use perceived            | 4 / 13%  | YTD 50 / 16% |
| • Combination                   | 3 / 10%  | YTD 36 / 12% |
| • Nothing perceived             | 7 / 23%  | YTD 60 / 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).