



2019 in review: Annual crime statistics and complaint data

The Police Department continues to work with our community partners, residents and businesses toward the goal of a safer city. The Police Department releases its annual crime statistics and complaint data on its website and the city's open data portal.

Police officers contact the public in several ways, including response to calls received by the dispatch center, flag downs or requests made in public, along with officer initiated activities (which range from traffic to pedestrian stops). Not all service calls result in written reports or citations. Officers use their discretion, experience, knowledge of laws/policies and communication skills to resolve situations.

All department employees (sworn officers and professional staff) working in the community have been wearing body cameras since 2014 in an effort to strengthen staff's performance and accountability, enhance department transparency, document encounters with the public, and investigate and resolve complaints and staff-involved incidents.

In 2019, the Police Department responded to nearly 24,000 calls for service, conducted over 10,000 traffic stops, over 8,000 pedestrian and bicycle stops, wrote more than 3,500 reports and arrested 1,130 individuals. The calls for service do not reflect the thousands of walk-ins to the police lobby and phone calls where professional staff, including administration, records and parking, provides services directly to the public (i.e., police report copies, vehicle releases, parking enforcement/permits, media inquiries, general questions, property/evidence, etc.).

The 2019 crime statistics show an increase in reported violent crime (homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault); 47 incidents in 2019 over 40 reported in 2018. This increase can be partially attributed to an increase in reported rapes from seven in 2018 to 14 reported in 2019 along with a change in reporting criteria for sexual assaults, and 13 robberies in 2019 compared to eight in 2018. There were no reported homicides in 2019 and clearance rates for violent crimes (the percentage of crimes that are solved) increased from 70 percent in 2018 to 74 percent in 2019.

Property crimes (burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson) rose 27 percent in comparison to 2018. The increase in property crimes has effected the entire State of California due to a thriving economy along with changes in legislation dealing with property crimes and narcotic violations, which have lessened penalties and the ability to incarcerate offenders.

The Police Department investigated 10 internal affairs cases, six of which were based on complaints and 4 of which were department initiated. It should be noted that the six complaints are out of 42,338, or 0.01 percent of contacts with the public. This is over a 50 percent decrease from 2018 where 17 internal affairs investigations were conducted. When reviewing internal and personnel complaints, it is important to look at the number and types of service calls officers respond to within the evaluated period. It is inevitable that with 42,338 public contacts, there will be situations where a member of the public is not satisfied with the service received and has the right to file a complaint.

The top cause for internal investigation in 2019 was for conduct (4 investigations). Out of the 10 internal affairs investigations:

- One was sustained
- One was not sustained
- Two were exonerated
- Three are pending
- Two concluded with no finding
- One was unfounded
- None were found to be frivolous
- No complaints were withdrawn

A "sustained" finding means that evidence from the internal investigation indicated the complaint was founded. The sustained complaint in 2019 was for a policy violation.

A "not sustained" finding means the investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation(s).

For a complaint to be "exonerated" there must be proof that the officer's actions were consistent with department policies and protocols. This occurs quite frequently since all employees working in the community now wear body cameras.

A complaint is considered "pending" when the complainant is facing criminal charges and laws prohibit police personnel from questioning the complainant until the charges are adjudicated.

A complaint is "closed with no finding" when the complainant fails to disclose promised information needed to further the investigation, the complainant is no longer available or the department member is no longer employed by the department.

For a complaint to be determined "unfounded," it must be demonstrated that the alleged actions did not occur or did not involve our personnel.

A finding of "frivolous" is reached when, the investigation found that the complaint is one that is "totally and completely without merit" or is taken "for the sole purpose of harassing the officer."

A finding of "withdrawn" is reached when the complainant affirmatively indicated the desire to withdraw the complaint.

The use of body cameras has allowed supervisors to review incidents mentioned by complainants immediately. This review allows for an examination of a situation as it happened based upon the facts, as opposed to recollection.

With all this factored into the equation, 10 internal affairs investigations per year is an acceptable number, but we will always strive toward zero.