

Bellingham Police Department
Use of Force Statistics
2017

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.

For this data presentation, the numbers in parenthesis indicate the incident/percentage change from the collected 2016 data in similar categories.

SECTION ONE: Incident Information

Total number of use of force incidents:	205 / 0.35%	(+36 / - 0.03%)
• Incidents involving one officer:	51 / 25%	(+4 / - 3%)
• Incidents involving more than one officer:	154 / 75%	(+32 / +3%)

According to the city's Computer-Aided Dispatch information from January 1st through December 31st of 2017 your Bellingham Police officers responded to a total of 58962 calls for service (+ 14277). 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 **0.35%, or around three-tenths of one percent** of incidents in 2017 resulted in your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

Incident origin:

• Call for service from 911	171 / 83%	(+33 / + 1%)
• Self-initiated by officer(s)	34 / 17%	(+3 / -1%)

Put into perspective with the previous information this means that in all 58962 calls for service that your police officers responded to in 2017, only **thirty-four times** did an officer's self-initiated contact result in one of your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

In numbers: **0.058%, or less than one-tenth of one percent**. (-0.011%)

Reason for use of force:

• Active resistance to lawful commands	142 / 69%	(+25 / 0)
• Actively aggressive towards officers	31 / 15%	(+0 / - 3%)
• Assaultive towards officers	27 / 13%	(+9 / +2%)
• Life Threatening action towards officers	5 / 2%	(+2 / 0)

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	7 / 2%	(+3 / +1%)
• Fled on foot	57 / 13%	(+7 / -1%)
• Hiding	11 / 2%	(+3 / 0)
• Physical resistance	151 / 34%	(+23 / -3%)
• Refuse lawful commands	219 / 49%	(+65 / +4%)

Officers' Force Response

• Physical control(s)	363 / 45%	(-3 / -4%)
• Physical impact(s)	13 / 3%	(-8 / 0)
• TASER display	27 / 3%	(+13 / +1%)
• Verbal command	345 / 42%	(+73 / +6%)
• Weapon pointing	3 / <1%	(-16 / -3%)
• Restraints	11 / 1%	(-4 / +1%)
• Less Lethal Shotgun	4 / <1%	(-2 / -<1%)
• K9 application	10 / 1%	(+5 / +<1%)
• TASER usage	16 / 2%	(+1 / 0)
• Vascular Neck Restraint	9 / 1%	(+2 / 0)
• Chemical Irritant	3 / <1%	(-3 / - <1%)
• Pursuit Immobilization Technique	0	(-2 / 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, verbal commands were disregarded by citizens in 196 of the 205 incidents (96%) wherein lawful force was used by your officers (+10%). 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.

And do not forget that **0.35%, or approximately three-tenths of one percent** of incidents in 2017 resulted in your officers using lawful force against a citizen, so your police department using force to accomplish lawful objectives is a rarity.

Day of Week

Sunday	37 / 18%	(+7 / 0)
Monday	22 / 11%	(+5 / +1%)
Tuesday	26 / 13%	(+3 / -1%)
Wednesday	35 / 17%	(+14 / +5%)
Thursday	22 / 11%	(-7 / -6%)
Friday	33 / 16%	(+7 / +1%)
Saturday	30 / 14%	(+7 / 0)

Time of Day

0620 - 1020	16 / 8%	(+4 / +1%)
1020 - 1620	67 / 33%	(+9 / -1%)
1620 - 2020	50 / 24%	(+17 / +5%)
2020 - 0300	62 / 30%	(+10 / -1%)
0300 - 0620	10 / 5%	(-4 / -3%)

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: 55 / 27% (+18 / +5%)

- Did not require hospitalization

For 2017, your officers used lawful force **0.35%, or approximately three-tenths of one percent** in the incidents they responded to. Of the 58962 incidents your officers responded to, only fifty-five of those contacts resulted in any kind of notable injury to a citizen, all minor in nature.

In numbers: **0.093%, 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: 60 / 29% (+9 / -1%)

As noted above, your officers noted that in sixty incidents where lawful force was used on citizens the citizen was transported to St. Joseph's Hospital for medical care. Most commonly citizens appear to be having a mental health issue that pose a danger to themselves or others; your police department strives to have mental health issues handled by the hospital, not the jail, and thus the citizens are taken to the hospital by your officers for the appropriate care.

Injuries to Officers:	44 / 21%	(+17 / +5%)
Officers Transported to Hospital:	0	(-5 / -3%)
Median Age of Citizen:	31.5 years	(+2.5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngest 12, oldest 73 		
Median Age of Officer:	38 years	(- 0.25 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngest 25, oldest 59 		

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	141 / 69%	(+29/ +4%)
• Black or African American	18 / 9%	(+5 /+2%)
• American Indian	25 / 12%	(+2 / -1%)
• Hispanic	13 / 6%	(-6 / -5%)
• Asian	5 / 2%	(+3 / +1%)
• East Indian	2 / 1%	(+1 / +<1%)

Race of Officer

• White	434 / 90%	(+88 / -1%)
• Black or African American	15 / 3%	(+11 / +2%)
• Hispanic	17 / 3%	(-1 / -2%)
• East Indian	16 / 3%	(+6 / +1%)
• Asian	0	(-1 / -<1%)

Resident of Whatcom County / Bellingham?

• Yes	189 / 93%	(+32 / +2%)
• No	14 / 7%	(-1 / -2%)

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.

However, do not forget that in 2017 your officers used lawful force in only **0.35%, or around three-tenths of one percent** of incidents. So these incidents are truly outliers and thus may not adhere to population demographics. For example, fifteen citizens with Black ancestry had lawful force used against them in order to achieve lawful objectives in 2017, **0.025%, or less than three one-hundredths of one percent** of the responses to incidents by your police department in the year; this is nowhere near the city demographic.

Gender Identification of Citizen

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|
| • Male | 154 / 76% | (+29 / +3%) |
| • Female | 49 / 24% | (+2 / -3%) |

Gender Identification of Officer

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|
| • Male | 428 / 89% | (+85 / -1%) |
| • Female | 53 / 11% | (+17 / +2%) |

Considerations for Citizen's Actions

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| • Alcohol use perceived | 86 / 27% | (+40 / +6%) |
| • Mental health issue perceived | 86 / 27% | (+22 / -3%) |
| • Drug use perceived | 50 / 16% | (+14 / -1%) |
| • Combination | 44 / 14% | (+21 / +3%) |
| • Nothing perceived | 49 / 15% | (+5 / -6%) |

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.