

**Bellingham Police Department  
Use of Force Statistics  
May 2021**

*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>12 / 0.23%</b>	<b>YTD 57 / 0.23%</b>
• Incidents involving one officer:	0	YTD 3 / 5%
• Incidents involving more than one officer:	12 / 100%	YTD 54 / 95%

According to the city's Computer-Aided Dispatch information from May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup> of this year your Bellingham Police officers responded to 5229 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 **0.23%, or around two-tenths of one percent** of incidents in May resulted in your officers using lawful force against a citizen. (24381 calls this year)

## Incident origin:

• Call for service from 911	11 / 92%	YTD 51 / 89%
• Self-initiated by officer(s)	1 / 8%	YTD 6 / 11%

Put into perspective with the previous information this means that in all 5229 calls for service that your police officers responded to in the month of May, only once did an officer's self-initiated contact result in one of your officers using lawful force against a citizen.

In numbers: **0.019%, or around two one-hundredths of one percent.**

## Reason for use of force:

• Active resistance to lawful commands	6 / 50%	YTD 35 / 61%
• Actively aggressive	2 / 17%	YTD 11 / 19%
• Assaultive	4 / 33%	YTD 11 / 19%
• Life-threatening	0	YTD 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	0	YTD 1 / 2%
• Fled	2 / 17%	YTD 12 / 21%
• Hiding	0	YTD 5 / 9%
• Physical resistance	12 / 100%	YTD 49 / 86%
• Refuse lawful commands	12 / 100%	YTD 56 / 98%

### Officers' Force Response

• Physical control(s)	35 / 292%	YTD 125 / 219%
• Physical impact(s)	0	YTD 3 / 5%
• TASER display	0	YTD 3 / 5%
• Verbal command	25 / 208%	YTD 125 / 219%
• Weapon pointing	0	YTD 0
• Restraints	0	YTD 1 / 2%
• Less Lethal Shotgun	0	YTD 4 / 7%
• Less Lethal Shotgun display	0	YTD 0
• K9 application	0	YTD 5 / 9%
• TASER usage	0	YTD 2 / 3%
• Vascular Neck Restraint	0	YTD 0
• Chemical Irritant	1 / 8%	YTD 2 / 3%
• Pursuit Immobilization Technique	0	YTD 0
• 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, verbal commands were disregarded by citizens in 12 of the 12 incidents (100%) wherein lawful force was used by your officers. 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.

In addition, do not forget that **0.23%, or around two-tenths of one percent** of incidents in May 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	1 / 8%	YTD 5 / 9%
Monday	2 / 17%	YTD 9 / 16%
Tuesday	0	YTD 5 / 9%
Wednesday	2 / 17%	YTD 7 / 12%
Thursday	2 / 17%	YTD 10 / 17%
Friday	3 / 25%	YTD 13 / 23%
Saturday	2 / 17%	YTD 8 / 14%

**Time of Day**

0620 - 1020	2 / 17%	YTD 4 / 7%
1020 - 1620	1 / 8%	YTD 14 / 25%
1620 - 2020	4 / 33%	YTD 22 / 39%
2020 - 0300	3 / 25%	YTD 12 / 21%
0300 - 0620	1 / 8%	YTD 4 / 7%

## 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: 1 / 8% YTD 11 / 19%**

For the month of May, your officers used lawful force **0.23%, or around two-tenths of one percent** in the incidents they responded to. Of the 5229 incidents your officers responded to, one of those incidents responded to by your officers resulted in an injury from your officers using lawful force against a citizen (abrasions).

**Citizens Transported to Hospital: 5 / 42% YTD 21 / 37%**

- (2) emergent detentions, (1) medical issue, (2) jail requirements

As noted above, your officers noted that in five incidents where lawful force was used on citizens the citizens were transported to St. Joseph's Hospital for medical care. Two 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 the citizen was taken to the hospital by your officers for the appropriate care.

<b>Injuries to Officers:</b>	<b>3 / 25%</b>	<b>YTD 14 / 25%</b>
<b>Officers Transported to Hospital:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>YTD 0</b>
<b>Median Age of Citizen:</b>	<b>34 years</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 20, Oldest 43</li> </ul>		
<b>Median Age of Officer:</b>	<b>37 years</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngest 26, Oldest 55</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	5 / 42%	YTD 36 / 63%
• Black or African American	3 / 25%	YTD 12 / 21%
• American Indian	4 / 33%	YTD 5 / 9%
• Hispanic	0	YTD 3 / 5%
• Asian	0	YTD 1 / 2%

#### **Race of Officer**

• White	32 / 267%	YTD 163 / 286%
• Black or African American	1 / 8%	YTD 2 / 3%
• East Indian	0	YTD 0
• Hispanic	2 / 17%	YTD 5 / 9%
• Asian	0	YTD 5 / 9%

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

• Yes	10 / 83%	YTD 53 / 93%
• No	2 / 17%	YTD 4 / 7%

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 May 93% 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 May your officers used lawful force in only **0.23%, or around two-tenths of one percent** of incidents. So, these incidents are truly outliers and thus may not adhere to population demographics. For example, three persons of black ancestry had lawful force used against them in order to achieve lawful objectives in May, or **0.06%, or around six one-hundredths of one percent** of the responses to incidents by your police department that month; this is nowhere near the city demographic.

### Gender Identification of Citizen

- |          |         |              |
|----------|---------|--------------|
| • Male   | 6 / 50% | YTD 41 / 72% |
| • Female | 6 / 50% | YTD 16 / 28% |

### Gender Identification of Officer

- |          |           |                |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| • Male   | 31 / 258% | YTD 148 / 260% |
| • Female | 4 / 33%   | YTD 27 / 47%   |

### Considerations for Citizen's Actions

- |                                 |         |              |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| • Alcohol use perceived         | 5 / 42% | YTD 22 / 39% |
| • Mental health issue perceived | 9 / 75% | YTD 33 / 58% |
| • Drug use perceived            | 2 / 17% | YTD 11 / 19% |
| • Combination                   | 4 / 33% | YTD 18 / 32% |
| • Nothing perceived             | 0       | YTD 10 / 17% |

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 Deputy Chief Don Almer at 360-778-8641 or [dalmer@cob.org](mailto:dalmer@cob.org).