

*Wilmington Department of Police
2023 Office of Professional Standards
Investigations Statistical Summary*

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wilmington Department of Police is to work in partnership with our residents to make our communities safer through the delivery of professional law enforcement services and a comprehensive approach designed to meet the public safety needs of our City. This mission will be fostered by every member of the department.

Oath of Office

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Delaware. I will, in all respects and at all times, give true allegiance to the duly constituted authorities of the Government of the United States, of the State of Delaware, and the City of Wilmington. I will faithfully discharge the duties as a member of the Department of Police to which I have been appointed. I do further solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will obey, in all respects, the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Police now in force or hereafter to be adopted and will obey all superior officers in the Department of Police. I will obey all laws of the United States, the State of Delaware, all ordinances of the City of Wilmington, and the regulations of every State or community where I may be at the time while a member of the Department of Police”.

Code of Ethics

“As a member of the Wilmington Department of Police, my first duty is to serve the people of Wilmington. I will safeguard lives and property; protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence and disorder. Above all else, I shall respect the constitutional rights of all citizens to liberty, equality, and justice. I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all, maintaining courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. I will be honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, and exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department.

I will regard my fellow officers with the same standards as I hold myself. It is my duty to guard his/her honor and life as I guard my own.

Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature, or that is confided to me in my official capacity, will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty. I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions.

With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear, favor, or the acceptance of gratuities. I shall be loyal to my superiors who determine my policy and accept responsibility for my actions. It is my duty to do only things which will reflect honor upon them and my profession.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God and my chosen profession...Law Enforcement”.

Introduction

The goal of the Department of Police, as declared by the Wilmington City Code, is “to preserve the public peace, prevent and detect crime, police the streets and park areas, and enforce the traffic statutes, ordinances and regulations relating thereto. The Department shall, at all times, aid in the administration and enforcement of the statutes of the State of Delaware and the ordinances of the City of Wilmington. The Department shall train, equip, maintain, supervise, and discipline the Wilmington Police.

The Wilmington Department of Police is governed by the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Delaware, the ordinances of the City of Wilmington, and Departmental Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations encompass a broad range of categories, which include, among other things, guidelines and protocol for handling specific situations, as well as documents which are necessary to manage a modern urban police department. The Rules and Regulations also cover behavior and performance expectations, to which the Department holds all employees accountable. The Department recognizes that, despite all best efforts, there will be times when citizens, fellow employees, and supervisors, perceive an employee’s behavior to be inappropriate and violate policy. When this event occurs, the Office of Professional Standards uses a well-established procedure for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating complaints.

Investigative Findings

Once an investigation has been completed, a “Finding”, based on the evidence presented, will establish whether a violation of the Rules and Regulations of the Department has occurred. Below is a list of the “Findings” used by the Wilmington Police Department:

- **SUBSTANTIATED:** There is sufficient proof to confirm the allegation by the preponderance of the evidence.
- **UNSUBSTANTIATED:** There is insufficient proof to confirm the allegation.
- **UNFOUNDED:** The allegation is either demonstrably false or there is no credible evidence to support it.
- **PROPER CONDUCT:** The officer is exonerated, in that the officer conducted him/herself in the manner alleged, but was within the policy guidelines.
- **POLICY FAILURE:** A review by the Office of Professional Standards will be made to determine if a policy is proper or improper, or if additional training is required.

Final Disposition

Once a “Finding” has been determined by an Investigator, it is forwarded to the Commander of the Office of Professional Standards for his/her review and approval. Once approved, the “Finding” becomes the “Final Disposition” for the complaint. The Complainant will then be mailed a letter which will advise of the final disposition of the complaint. The Complainant will not be notified, if applicable, of any disciplinary action taken by the Department.

Office of Professional Standards 2023 Complaints Received Statistics

In the calendar year 2023, which comprised of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, the Office of Professional Standards assigned a total of 619 cases for investigation and/or review, 37 Citizen Complaints, 30 administrative Complaints and 552 Administrative Reviews. Below is a breakdown of the final dispositions to those complaints received:

External: There were a total of 37 complaints received from Citizens.

Substantiated: 5
Unsubstantiated: 10
Unfounded: 10
Proper Conduct: 12
Active Pending: 0

External: There were a total of 2 Officer Commendations submitted online from Citizens.

Internal: There were a total of 30 Administrative Complaints received from within the Department.

Substantiated: 17
Unsubstantiated: 1
Unfounded: 3
Proper Conduct: 9
Active Pending: 0

Internal: There were a total of 552 Administrative Reviews received from within the Department.

Substantiated: 51
Proper Conduct: 501
Pending: 0

Conclusion

During the calendar year 2023, officers from the Wilmington Department of Police responded to 99,376 calls for service. Of those requests for service, only 37 Citizen Complaints were received, which equates to 0.037% of the total complaints serviced in 2023 by the Wilmington Department of Police.