



# BURLINGTON POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

February 2023



# RITA CURRAN CASE

On Tuesday, February 21, we announced the closure of Burlington's oldest open case, the murder of Rita Curran. Rita was murdered in

Burlington on July 19 or 20, 1971, more than half a century ago. She was a kindergarten teacher. The random violence of her murder wounded our community, and devastated her family. For fifty years, they have waited for justice. Rita's parents died waiting for it. Our department never forgot Rita or her family.

A few years ago, Lieutenant Detective Commander Jim Trieb decided to approach the case in a new way. Instead of having one detective assigned to the cold case, working it alone when he or she had free time, he decided to treat it as if the crime had just been committed. This meant multiple detectives and technicians examining reports, and physical evidence, and thinking about the case together.

The remarkable closure he and his team achieved proves that BPD's detective bureau is the equal of any in the world. And it cannot be forgotten that they worked this case while simultaneously addressing three years that have comprised the busiest investigatory period in our city's history: six murders, all of them solved; nearly two dozen shootings; 52 gunfire incidents.

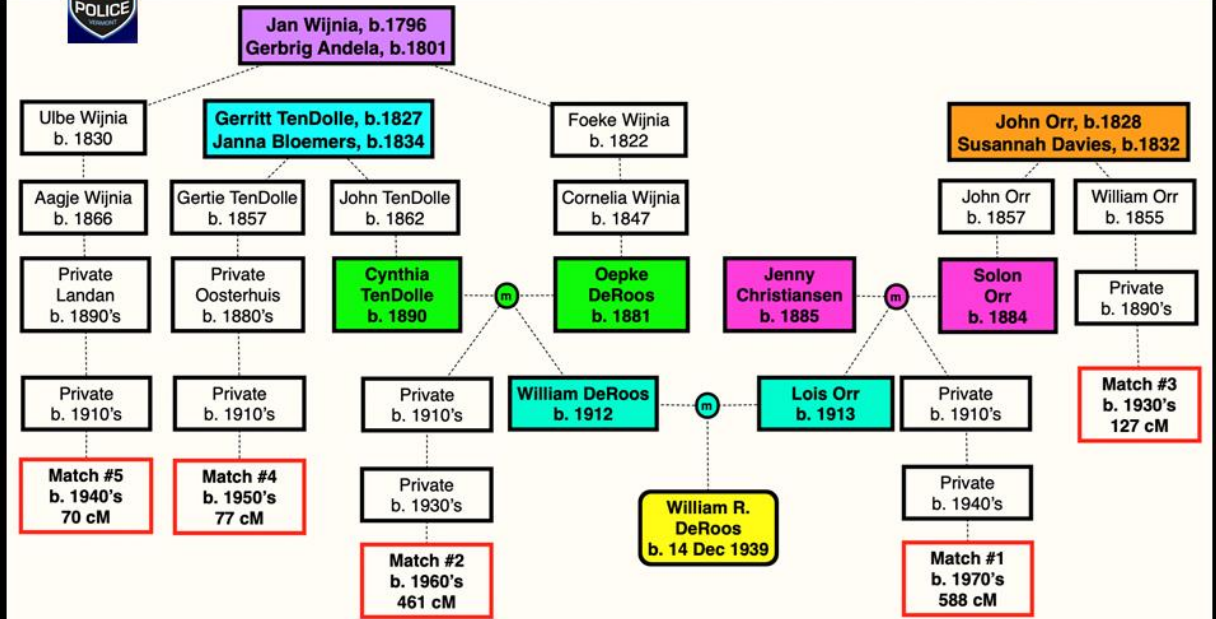
That said, what Lieutenant Trieb's detectives have done was only possible because of the incredibly thorough initial response, all those years ago. Detectives in 1971 documented witnesses and statements. They recorded where things were found, and in what condition. They took and preserved items whose eventual scientific value they had no way of knowing.

And decades later, a cigarette butt recovered at the scene generated a DNA profile. Good police work led to the identification of a suspect. We learned he died of an overdose in San Francisco in 1986, fifteen years after murdering Rita.

Feb 22, 2023 – all data preliminary & subject to change



## INVESTIGATIVE GENETIC GENEALOGY: RITA CURRAN CASE

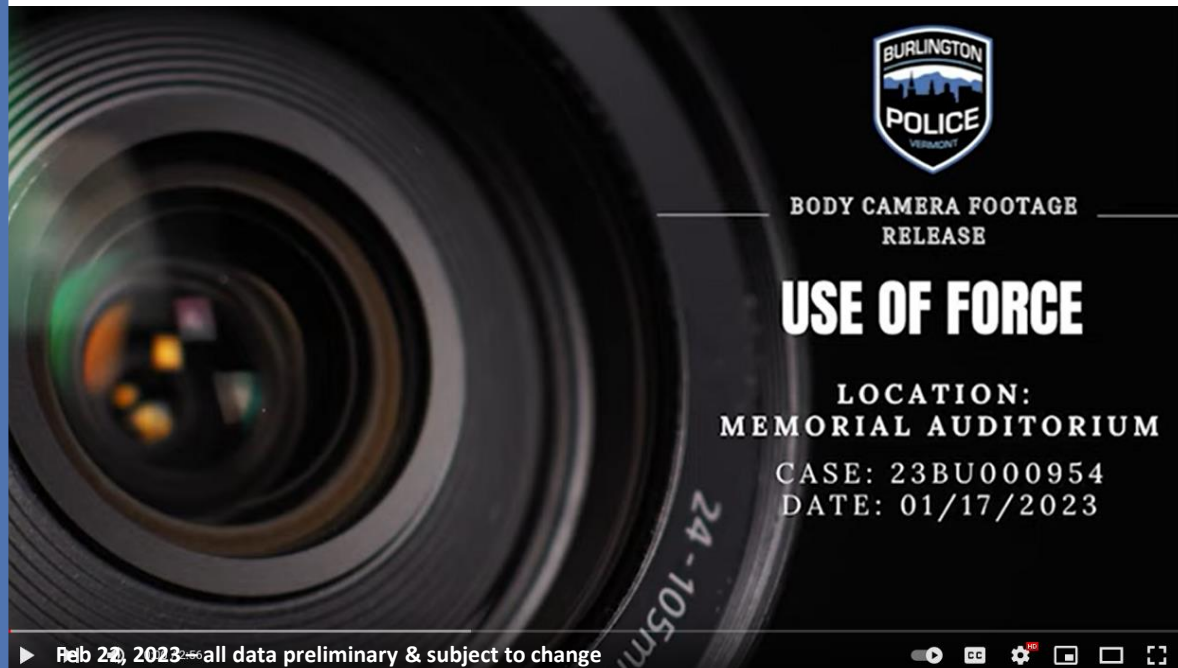




# UOF Incidents and Information Page

Earlier this month, we created a **NEW** [Use-of Force Incidents and Information page](#) for the website. The page includes links to:

- A use-of-force flowchart describing our review process.
- [Our use-of-force policy](#).
- Monthly reports describing each and every use of force, so that members of the public can review and evaluate them. (No other agency in Vermont does this.)
- [Body-worn camera footage](#) as part of an [agreement with the independent Burlington Police Commission](#). (No other agency in Vermont does this.)



## Use-of-Force Incidents & Information

Burlington Police Department

- Police Department
- Key Department Directives
- About Us
- Online Incident Reporting
- Press Releases
- Police Transformation
- Police Commission
- Transparency & Data
  - Open Data Dashboard
  - City Open Data Portal
- Use-of-Force Incidents & Info**
  - Reports & Presentations
  - Previous Reports & Older Resources
  - Chief's Reports to the Police Commission
  - Crisis, Advocacy, Intervention Programs
  - Citizen Complaints and Compliments
  - We're Hiring
  - Parking & Parking Enforcement
  - Safety & Crime Prevention Resources
  - Services and Guidance
  - Community Academy

**DD05**  
Statewide  
Policy on  
Police  
Use of  
Force

Use of  
Force  
Flow  
Chart

View Use  
of Force  
Videos ↗

### Use-of-Force Reports

The following reports are presented to the Burlington Police Commission each month during regularly scheduled open meetings, beginning in March 2021.

#### MONTHLY USE-OF-FORCE REPORTS

2021	2022	2023
January 2021	January 2022	January 2023
February 2021	February 2022	
March 2021	March 2022	
April 2021	April 2022	
May 2021	May 2022	
June 2021	June 2022	
July 2021	July 2022	
August 2021	August 2022	
September 2021	September 2022	
October 2021	October 2022	
November 2021	November 2022	
December 2021	December 2022	



# USE OF FORCE POLICY & PREVENTION

Transparency around use of force—one of policing’s most fraught authorities and responsibilities—is a key to engendering public trust. Whenever possible, police want to avoid uses of force. It’s always better to do a talk down than a take down. But it’s not always possible. When force becomes necessary, it must be lawful, within policy, and in keeping with training. The BPD has a number of unique systems in place to ensure that.

- A lawful use of force must be in accordance with Supreme Court case [Graham v Connor](#) (1989). Four non-exhaustive factors are:
  - ◆ the severity of the crime at issue
  - ◆ whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to peoples’ safety
  - ◆ the totality of the circumstances
  - ◆ whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest
- Chief Murad has created strong policies to guide, delineate, and limit use of force. In 2019, representatives of a wide range of community groups and the public came together as the [Committee to Review Police Practices](#). In July 2020, after the horrific murder of George Floyd, Chief Murad took that committee’s work and wrote the [most progressive and forward-thinking use-of-force policy](#) in Vermont. It contained much stronger rules against excessive force, a far greater emphasis on deescalation and deceleration, and added a duty to intervene, duty of care, and duty to report. It was largely used as the template for the new, statewide use-of-force policy. [The statewide policy is now Burlington’s](#), as well, and is available online.

- BPD reviews every use of force via a [multi-part, multi-officer review process](#) that includes trained supervisors and the Deputy Chief of Operations. Whenever a use of force involves a person of color, the Mayor is informed.
- Our use-of-force tactics training emphasizes both deescalation and [Brazilian Jiu Jitsu](#), which avoids strikes in favor of control holds and grappling, both of which have been [shown](#) by [studies](#) to be re far safer for subjects and officers alike.
- Every officer is trained according to ICAT standards—the Police Executive Research Forum’s [Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics](#)—which hinges on decision-making, crisis recognition and response, tactical communications and negotiations, and operational safety tactics, and, most of all, slowing things down.
- We have created an entire division of the department dedicated to social services and alternatives to police response, the [Crisis, Advocacy, Intervention Programs, or CAIP](#). This includes resources like our Community Support Liaisons, in-house social workers who help address challenges like substance-use disorder, houselessness, and chronic mental-health issues so that police intervention doesn’t become necessary.



# SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

On February 2 we conducted a swearing-in ceremony for 16 new employees. The Mayor was in attendance and the event was [covered by Town Meeting TV and can be seen on YouTube](#). These employees had been hired between October and January. The ceremony also recognized three officers who had returned to BPD (not shown). We also added six new sworn probationary police officers (shown at right, left to right):

- Suzanne Hansen, Badge 415
- Bibek Gurung, Badge 414
- Logan Parette, Badge 413
- Devyn Cotten, Badge 412
- Domenic Tenan, Badge 411
- Kim Lockerby, Badge 410



We also added nine professional employees (at left, left to right), in positions like Community Service Officer, Community Support Liaison, and Emergency Communications Specialist (dispatcher).

- Robert King, ECS
- Jennifer Balogun, ECS
- Maritza McGlothlin, ECS
- Catherine Mara, CSL
- Brigid Blazek, CSL
- ShanShan Chen, Redaction Specialist
- Peter Hatfield, CSO
- Krista Towne, CSO
- Yusuf Abdi, CSO



## THE BPD IS HIRING!

**\$71,000**  
**starting pay**

**\$100,000**  
**top pay** (when contract matures)

**and a \$15,000**  
**hiring bonus**

- City retirement with 5-year vesting
- Shift differential, weekend, and holiday pay
- **full medical benefits** and wellness incentives
- Retirement after 20 years of service at 50% salary
- Retirement after 25 years of service at 75% salary
- 15-step pay scale for non-supervisory employees
- Overtime can be received as cash or vacation accrual
- **10-hour workday, 4-days-on/3-days-off schedule**
- **Weekends off every other month**
- Yearly education bonus
- Beards and tattoos permitted
- Various **specialty assignments** such as detectives, narcotics, K9, domestic violence prevention, airport
- **Applicant can be a non-U.S. citizen** if applicant is a permanent resident / green-card holder

[www.bpdcareers.com](http://www.bpdcareers.com)



## REBUILDING POLICE

Mayor Weinberger and Chief Murad presented a [rebuilding plan as part of the FY23 budget](#), which the City Council unanimously approved. The Council also approved strong contracts and raised authorized officer headcount from 74 to 87. The BPD is working hard to grow.

On December 16, 2022, three new BPD officers graduated from the Vermont Police Academy and started their fifteen-week field training.

On February 2, 2023, we swore in six new officers and sent them to the current Academy class. (See slide 5.)

We have also promulgated a Request for Proposals seeking a firm to assist with [a recruitment campaign](#).





## BUILDING ROLES UNIQUE TO BPD

As part of Chief Murad's 2021 Public Safety Continuity Plan, we have hired:

- **Community Service Officers (CSOs),**

These are unarmed, unsworn officers who answer quality-of-life calls for service. Historically, the BPD had two; Chief Murad's plan expanded the number. We currently have six employees in the role, and **our new FY23 budget allows us to have 12 CSOs**. The role is also a stepping stone to becoming a police officer. (One of the CSOs shown below graduated from the police academy in December, and the other is attending the current academy class.)



**BPD  
currently  
has 6 CSOs  
and 4 CSLs**

As part of the Public Safety Continuity Plan, we hired:

- **Community Support Liaisons (CSLs)**

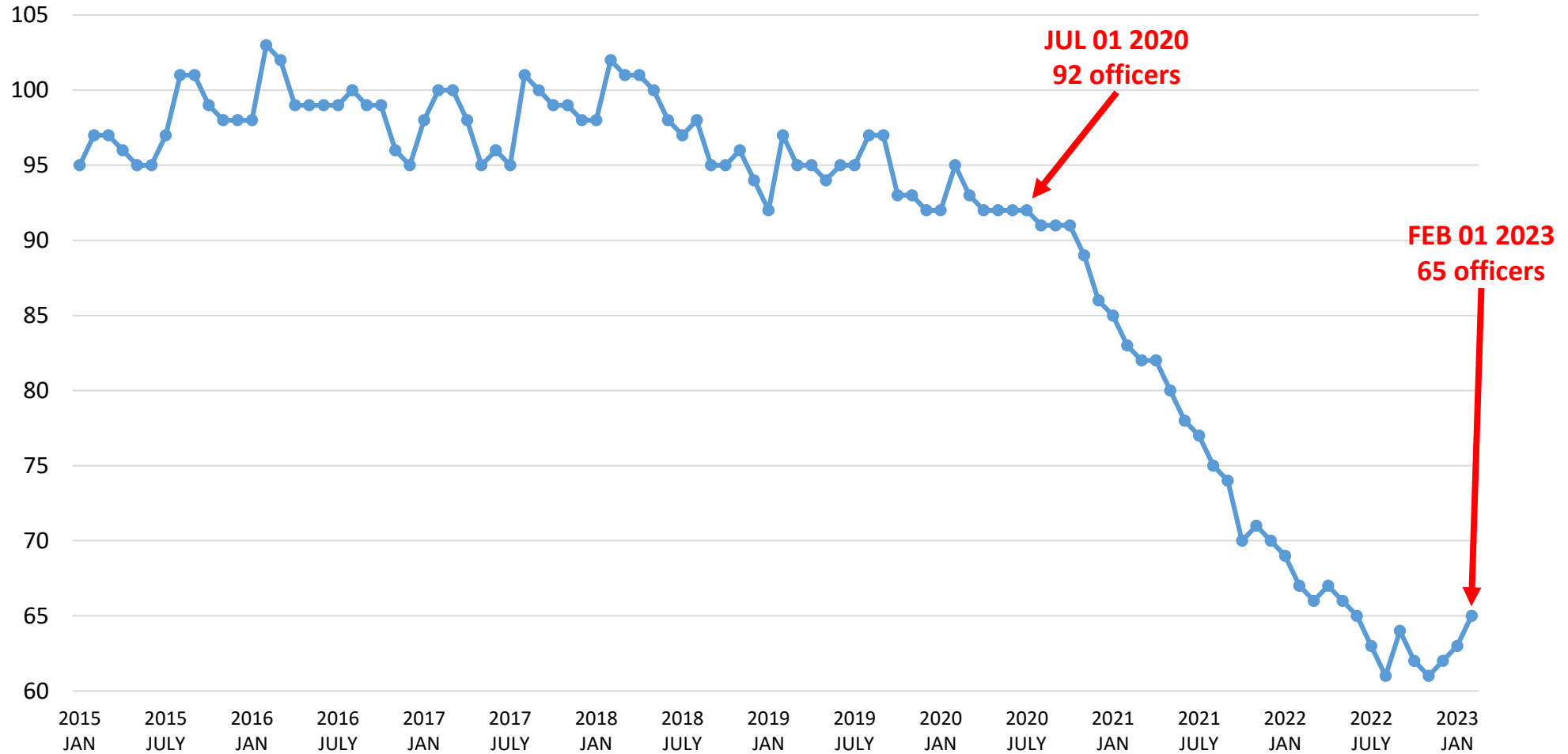
Chief Murad and Community Support Supervisor Lacey Smith, pictured above, created this new position, which is unique to the BPD. CSLs are embedded social workers with expertise in mental health, substance use disorder, and houselessness who help address social service issues. **We have two CSLs in the hiring pipeline, and are hopeful to have six CSLs by early 2023.**





# BPD SWORN OFFICER HEADCOUNT, 2015-2023

TOTAL SWORN HEADCOUNT, as of the first of each month, month-by-month



Feb 22, 2023 – all data preliminary & subject to change



# 65 TOTAL, 55 AVAILABLE

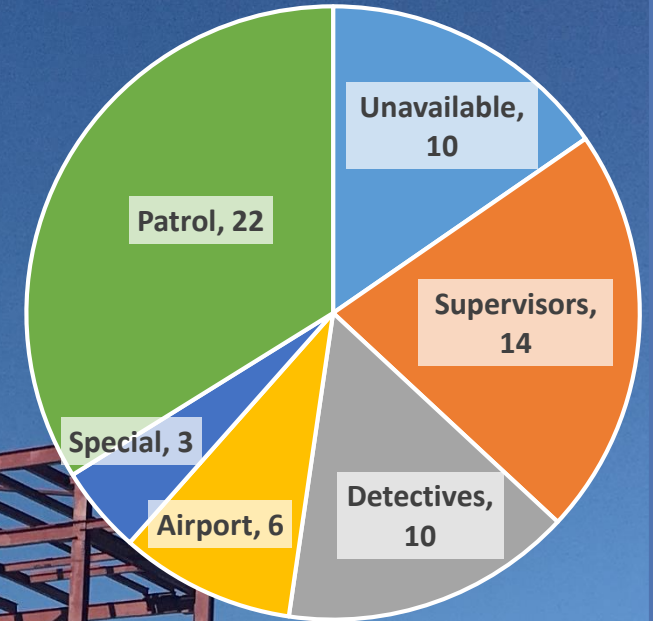
As of February 01, 2023, the BPD has 65 total sworn officers, of whom 55 are available to be deployed. Historically, headcount has been in the high 90s; currently we are authorized for 87 officers.

# 65

- minus 10 on injury, VPA, FTO, etc. = 55
- minus 14 supervisors = 41
- minus 10 detectives = 31
- minus 6 airport officers = 25
- minus 3 special assignments = 22

# 22

# officers on Patrol





# REVISED PRIORITY RESPONSE PLAN

PRIORITY 1	High priority.
PRIORITY 2	Middle priority. (*) = situationally dependent; some may be Priority 1 or Priority 3.
PRIORITY 3	Low priority. Response may be delayed based on officer availability; may receive a CSO response.

We originally implemented [the Priority Response Plan](#) in May 2021. We have made several revisions, shown in this chart. The categorization of incidents has **not** changed. (Our primary goal remains **NEIGHBORS' PHYSICAL SAFETY**, so Priority 1 incidents are still Priority 1 incidents, etc.) But many Priority 3 incidents will now receive a different response.

In the chart, **incidents labeled "CSO"** will initially receive a response from a CSO, rather than a police officer, unless the incident evolves in a way that changes its category or requires a sworn officer.

**Incidents labeled "ONL"** (for "Online Only") will be diverted to an online reporting function. Unless extenuating circumstances apply, callers will be asked to make an online report. There are reporting mechanisms for callers who do not have Internet access.

Additionally, during daytime weekday hours when DSB detectives are available, **DSB will handle untimely deaths.**

<b>911 Hangup</b>	<b>Cruelty to a Child</b>	Illegal Dumping	<b>CSO</b>	<b>Robbery</b>
Airport AOA Violation	Cruelty to Animals	Impeding a Public Officer		<b>Runaway</b>
Airport Duress Alarm	Custodial Interference *	Impersonation of a Police Officer *		Runaway Apprehension
Airport PHASE Alarm *	Disorderly Conduct *	Inciting a Felony		Search
Alcohol Offense	Disorderly Conduct by Elec Comm	Intoxication	<b>CSO</b>	Search Warrant
Animal Problem	Disturbance	Investigation - Cold Case		Sex Offender Registry Violation
Arrest on Warrant	DLS	Juvenile Problem *		<b>Sexual Assault</b>
<b>Arson</b>	<b>Domestic Assault - Felony</b>	<b>Kidnapping</b>		Sheltering/Aiding Runaway
Assault - Aggravated	<b>Domestic Assault - Misd</b>	Larceny - from a Building		SRO Activity
Assault - Simple	<b>Domestic Disturbance</b>	Larceny - from a Motor Vehicle		<b>Stalking</b>
Assist - Agency	Drugs	Larceny - Other		Stolen Vehicle
Assist - Car Seat Inspection	Drugs - Possession	<b>Larceny from a Person</b>		Subpoena Service
Assist - K9	Drugs - Sale	<b>Lewd and Lascivious Conduct</b>		<b>Suicide - Attempted</b>
Assist - Motorist	<b>DUI</b>	Lockdown Drill		Suspicious Event *
Assist - Other	Eluding Police	Mental Health Issue *		Theft of Rental Property
Assist - Public	Embezzlement	Minor in Possession of Alcohol		Theft of Service
Background Investigation	Enabling Consumption by Minors	<b>Missing Person</b>		Threats/Harassment *
Bad Check	<b>Escape</b>	Motor Vehicle Complaint	<b>CSO</b>	Traffic
Bar / Liquor License Violation	Extortion	Noise	<b>CSO</b>	Trespass *
<b>Bomb Threat</b>	False Info to Police	Obstruction of Justice		<b>TRO/FRO Service</b>
Burglary *	False Pretenses	Operations		<b>TRO/FRO Violation</b>
CHINS	False Public Alarms	Ordinance Violation - Other	<b>CSO</b>	<b>Unlawful Restraint</b>
Community Outreach	False Swearing	<b>Overdose</b>		<b>Untimely Death</b>
Compliance Check	Fireworks	Parking	<b>CSO</b>	Use of Elec Comm to Lure a Child
Computer Crime	Foot Patrol	Possession of Stolen Property		Uttering a Forged Instrument
Contributing to Delinquency of Minor	Forgery	Prescription Fraud	<b>ONL</b>	Vandalism
Counterfeiting	Found/Lost Property	Prohibited Acts		VIN verification
<b>Crash - Fatality</b>	Fraud	Property Damage	<b>CSO</b>	Violation of Conditions of Release *
<b>Crash - Injury to person(s)</b>	Fugitive From Justice	Reckless Endangerment *		Voyeurism *
Crash - LSA *	Graffiti Removal	Recovered Property	<b>CSO</b>	Weapons Offense
Crash - Non-Investigated	Hindering Arrest	<b>Resisting Arrest</b>		Welfare Check *
Crash - Property damage only	<b>Homicide</b>	Retail Theft		
	Identity Theft	Roadway Hazard		



# INCIDENT VOLUME

## FULL YEAR DATA

In 2022, there were 25,181 total incidents. Of those, **3,987—or 16%—have been “stacked” according to the Priority Response Plan.**

Additionally, **2,763—or 11%—have been referred to online reporting.**

Additionally, approximately 25% of calls receive response from a CSO or CSL instead of a sworn officer.

This means BPD officers respond to 50% fewer calls for service than they used to. Increasingly, this is unacceptable to our neighbors.

	TOTAL INCIDENTS FULL YEAR	Full Year %Δ	YTD INCIDENTS (as of 2/15)
2017	32,671	100%	3,837
2018	29,684	↓9%	3,450
2019	28,475	↓4%	3,369
2020	23,592	↓17%	3,297
2021	21,586	↓9%	1,920
2022	25,181	↑17%	2,226
2023	n/a		<b>2,747</b>
	Δ 2017 to 2022:	↓24%	

## YEAR-TO-DATE 2/15

Year-to-date, **incidents in 2023 are up 23% compared to 2022. They are up 43% over 2021**, but are lower than years prior to that. (Note that Feb 15 2020 was prior to the onset of the pandemic.)

Of the 2,747 incidents in 2023 so far, 409 have been “stacked”—i.e., 15%.

Additionally, 286 have been referred to online reporting, or 10%.



# SELECTED VALCOUR INCIDENTS, YTD AS OF FEBRUARY 15

	Assault - Agg	Assault - Simple	Burglary	Crash w Injury or Fatal	Disorderly Conduct	Domestic Assault*	Domestic Disturb	Gunfire	Larceny (all)**	Mental Health Issue	Overdose	Robbery	Sexual Assault	Stolen Vehicle	Traffic
2018	3	15	11	8	6	18	41	0	34	87	7	0	5	0	637
2019	4	18	9	10	17	22	51	0	60	108	8	3	7	6	383
2020	6	21	6	12	15	6	74	1	43	132	14	3	9	7	372
2021	5	8	6	8	4	1	55	0	60	101	13	2	3	4	95
2022	6	14	32	8	11	6	63	1	78	111	12	3	0	14	120
2023	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>72</b>

\* = combines incidents categorized as “Domestic Assault – Felony” and “Domestic Assault – Misdemeanor”

\*\* = combines incidents categorized as “Larceny from a Person,” “Larceny – from a Building,” “Larceny – from Motor Vehicle,” and “Larceny – Other”

NOTE: All categories shown year-to-date, through February 15 of their respective year

NOTE: These data are derived from Valcour incidents. Incidents are initially categorized by dispatch according to the information provided by a caller; the category may be changed by the officer who responds to the scene and/or the detective who takes the case. Offense data and/or NIBRS data may differ.



# PRIORITY 1 INCIDENTS

**In 2022, there were more Priority 1 incidents than in any of the previous five years. At this very early stage in 2023, that high-volume trend is being maintained.**

Priority 1 incidents include assaults, crashes with injury, domestic incidents, overdoses, robberies, and homicides. Year over year, Priority 1 incidents comprise an increasingly large percentage of all incidents.

### Priority 1 Incidents

