

Office of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor

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The following report contains a statistical summary for reports of police misconduct in Hunterdon County for 2017. In addition, the report provides statistics for the disposition of those complaints. A review of the report and a comparison of this report with the reports prepared in prior years reveal the following:

2017 Hunterdon County Internal Affairs Statistics

All eighteen (18) law enforcement agencies required by Attorney Generals Annual Reporting Requirements submitted their reports to a Prosecutor's Bureau of Professional Standards. This now includes the Washington Township Police Department (Morris County) which covers Califon Borough, Hunterdon County Corrections, and Hunterdon County Park Rangers.

Total Complaints Filed:

Upon review of the Internal Affairs Summary Reports there was an increase in 2017 of the total number of complaints filed (85) representing a increase of ten (10) total complaints compared to (75) in 2016. It is important to note that the numbers involved in the complaints and dispositions will not add up due to some complaints being disposed are from prior years complaints being disposed in the current year.

(85) Complaints Filed
(84) Complaints Disposed
(41) Administrative Dispositions
(15) Dispositions Sustained
(13) Exonerations (2) Not Sustained (13) Unfounded

2017 Professional Standards Executive Summary Hunterdon County

Trends:

There was a slight decrease in number of citizen complaints in 2017 (59) as compared to (61) in 2016. There was an increase in the number of agency generated complaints in 2017 (24) from 2016 (13). The number of demeanor complaints in 2017 (22) decreased from 2016 (26).

Conclusion

Upon review of the data received from all of Hunterdon's Police and Law Enforcement agencies, the trend observed is a positive trend in the decrease of citizen generated complaints and an increase in agency generated complaints. Both positive trends are indicative of increased involvement by the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office on the County Municipal Police Department's Internal Affairs process and the increased value and expectations on the local law enforcement officer from a supervisory and accountability standpoint.

Demeanor complaints are the most common complaints from citizens. The added reviews involved in the internal investigation process continues to look for trending issues among law enforcement officers to identify issues, address them proactively and alter concerning behaviors before they become larger issues. These issues can negatively affect the perspective of the citizens toward law enforcement, bringing discredit to the police department and adversely affect the officer's career. Historically, the complaints in Hunterdon originate from a citizen's encounter with a uniformed officer, such as an issuance of a motor vehicle summons. Since the implementation of the mobile video recordings, and most recently Body Worn Cameras, supervisors can typically resolve the complaint by reviewing the videotape.

The Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office Bureau of Professional Standards provides this office and all municipal law enforcement agencies a centralized resource and contacts to provide guidance and experience in the Internal Affairs process.

The Following Was Accomplished in 2017

1. The Bureau continues to monitor and improve the recently centralized screening policy for all internal affairs complaints occurring in Hunterdon County jurisdictions. This was done to ensure that the early warning and trending system in place assists the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office identify and address areas of concern of specific officers in need of training or counseling. The Bureau screens every case and monitors the investigation and disposition of each case, as well as offering guidance if/when needed. Benchmarks have been put in place to create alerts of officers who receive frequent complaints and notifications are directed to the agencies Internal Affairs Officer to conduct a Meaningful Review of the reported incidents to ascertain in any commonalities or trends are apparent which may be resulting in citizen complaints. This process

is put in place to not only protect the citizens from an officer who may be involved in inappropriate conduct but also to provide guidance and training to officers so potential issues are addressed and do not adversely affect their career.


2. In the desire to increase public confidence this office has implemented a Centralized Classification Process in the screening of complaints. This screening process involves multi-level reviews in the decision making process on the direction, classification and findings of internal investigations. Further the process involves a third level of intake review consisting of a legal review by an Assistant Prosecutor on allegations of a criminal nature or involving use of force.

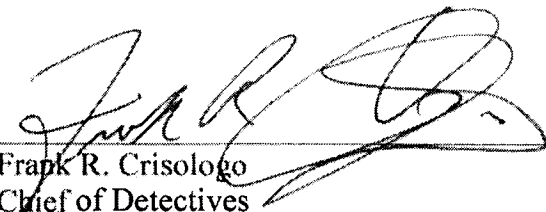
3. The Bureau continues to offer all county agencies experienced resources, assistance and inspection/audit services. We continue to offer professional standards reviews and recommendations to municipal police agencies in the areas of personnel & internal record keeping, policy and procedure, evidence audits, and integrity matters. Annual training in these areas was also completed. Further training was provided in the area of search and seizure, as well as interview skills and techniques.

4. Our centralized web based Core Policy system for all Hunterdon County Police Agencies continues to expand with the addition of several more core policies on our website.

5. The Bureau of Professional Standards provided Internal Affairs Refresher Training for internal affairs officers in the county.

6. An audit of all county agencies revealed that all have implemented the most current Attorney General Internal Affairs Guide.

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