



## Wheat Ridge Police Professional Standards Unit Annual Use of Force Report 2019



Approved: *[Signature]*

The Wheat Ridge Police Department’s Use of Force Policy can be found in section 5.01 of the Department’s policy manual. Use of Force standards are based upon the United States Constitution, Colorado Revised Statutes, and Department policy directives. The reporting and documentation required when force is utilized are addressed in Section 5.03 of the Department’s policy directives.

Use of Force reports for 2019, were analyzed to identify trends, improve training and employee safety, and provide information for the agency addressing Use of Force incidents. Use of Force situations included in this report are limited to those prescribed by policy 5.03.03.

The information contained in this annual report has been obtained through a review of the 2019, Use of Force reports. When appropriate, yearly comparisons are made to identify trend information.

The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) received 19 reported Use of Force incidents in 2019.

### Use of Force and Calls for Service by Quarter

Use of Force incidents per Calls for Service (CFS) have fluctuated between quarters in 2019, from .02% to .07%. Quarters two and four (0.07%) had the highest Use of Force incident per CFS than the other quarters. Quarter three (0.02%) was the lowest and quarter one was the second (0.05%) lowest for Use of Force incidents per CFS in 2019.

2019	Calls for Service	Use of Force Incident	UoF Incidents Per CFS
1st Quarter	8,283	4	0.05%
2nd Quarter	10,173	7	0.07%
3rd Quarter	11,394	2	0.02%
4th Quarter	9,071	6	0.07%

### Four Year Comparison of Use of Force Incidents per Calls for Service:

Use of Force incidents per CFS have fluctuated in the past four years. In 2019 there were 19 Use of Force reports generated for 38,921 calls for service. This equated to one incident in every 2,048 CFS. In 2018, there were 19 Use of Force reports generated for 38,241 CFS; one incident in every 2,012 CFS. In 2017, there were 27 Use of Force reports for 32,272 CFS. That equated to one Use of Force incident in every 1,195 CFS.

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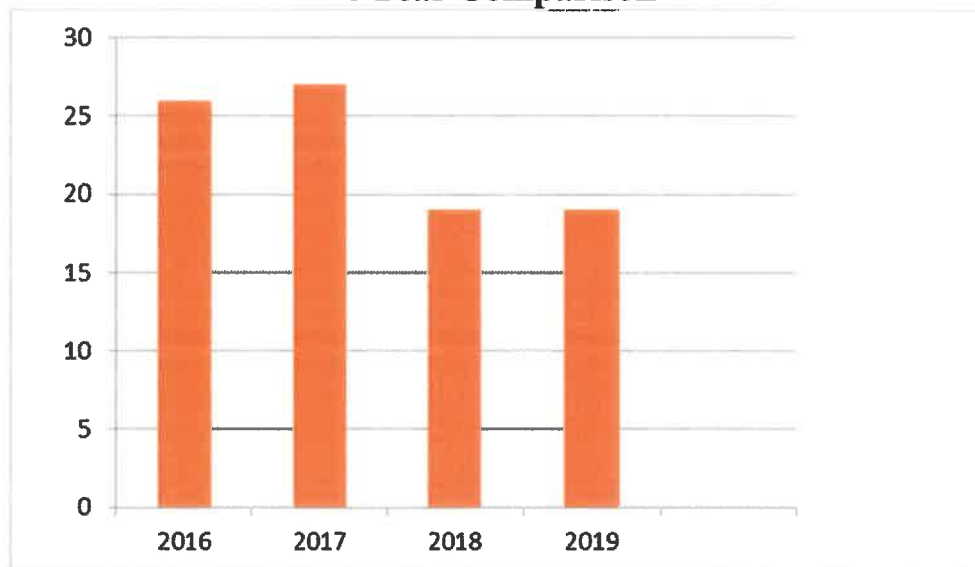
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Year	Calls for Service	Use of Force Incident	UOF Incidents Per CFS
2016	39,448	22	0.06%
2017	32,272	27	0.08%
2018	38,241	19	0.05%
2019	38,921	19	0.05%

### Use of Force Incidents Four Year Comparison:

Reportable Use of Force instances was the highest in 2017 (27) and the second highest in 2016 (22). In 2018 and 2019 there was a significant decrease to 19 Use of Force incidents. The decrease could be attributed to the Department having 75% of sworn officers and supervisors trained in de-escalation techniques.

**Use of Force Incidents  
4 Year Comparison**



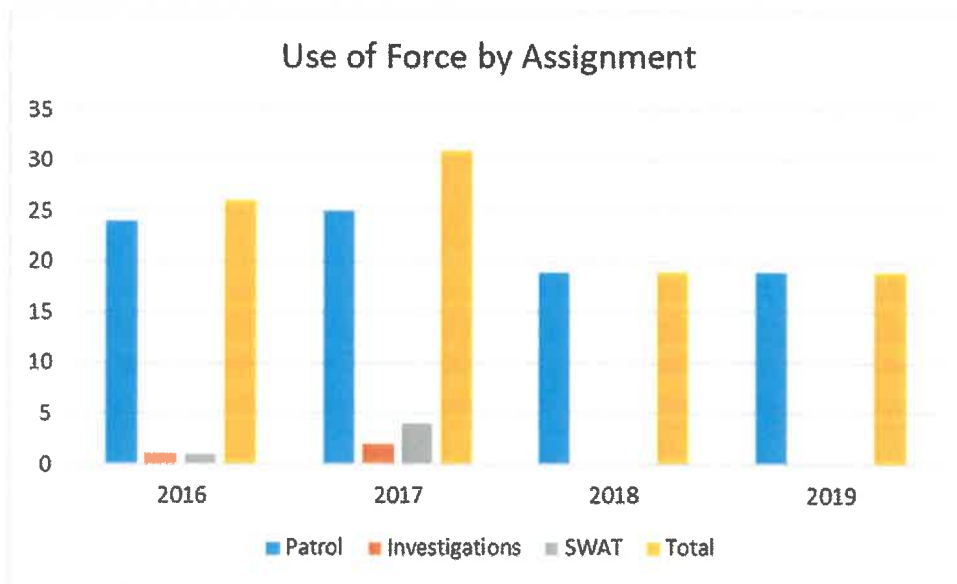
### Use of Force by Assignment

Patrol assignments routinely generate the majority of the Use of Force reports, as would be expected due to the number of CFS and contacts. Patrol Operations were involved in 100% of the Use of Force incidents in 2019. The chart below compares the last four years, which shows that patrol assignments have generated the most Use of Force incidents.

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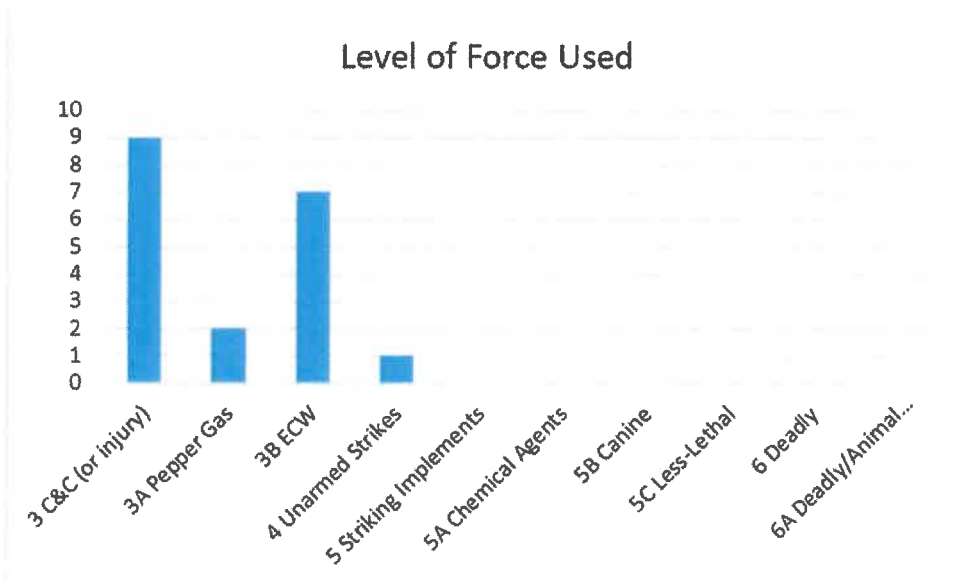
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In 2018 and 2019, Patrol Operations were involved in 100% of the Use of Force incidents. In 2016 and 2017, Patrol Operations averaged 86% of the Use of Force incidents. Investigations and SWAT each shared 4% of the Use of Force incidents in 2016. In 2017, Investigations was responsible for 7% of the Use of Force incidents and 13% was attributed to SWAT.

### **2019 Use of Force Incidents by Level:**

In 2019, officers used Control and Compliance techniques 49% of the time, whereas, the Electronic Control Weapon was used 36%, Pepper Gas 10%, and Unarmed Strikes 5% when a Use of Force technique was necessary.

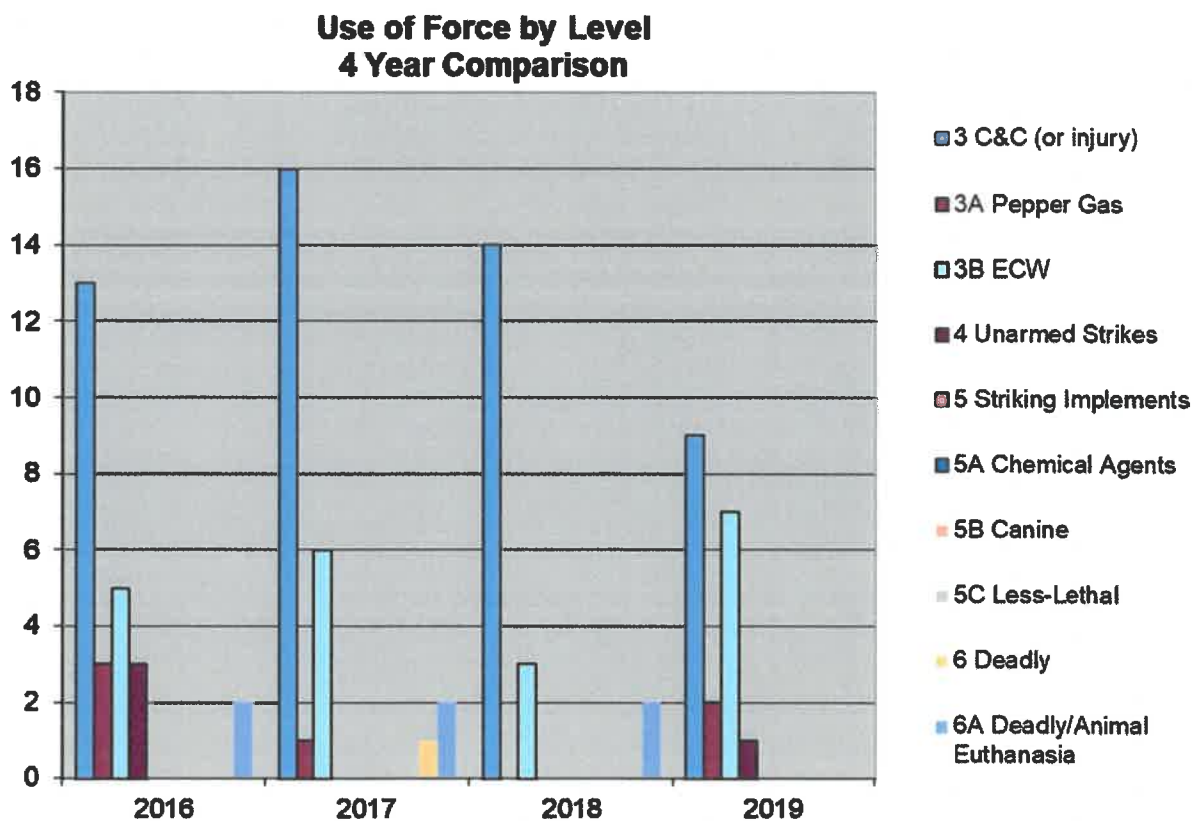


**Level of Force Used Four Year Comparison**

Out of the total Use of Force incidents (minus Level 6A Animal Euthanasia), Level 3 (Control and Compliance) Use of Force was used in 62% of the total incidents, Level 3A (Pepper Gas) Use of Force was used in 7%, and Level 3B (Electronic Control Weapon, ECW) was used in 36% of incidents.

There were no Level 4 (Unarmed Striking Technique) Use of Force incidents in 2017, or 2018. However, Level 4 Use of Force had limited use in 2016, and 2019 at 5%. Levels 5 (Striking Implements), 5A (Chemical Agents), Level 5B (Canine), and 5C (Less-Lethal) Use of Force have not been utilized in the last four years.

Level 6 (Deadly Force) Use of Force incident was used once (2017) in the last four years. Finally, Level 6A force, Animal Euthanasia, was used on two occasions to end the suffering of injured animals in, 2016, 2017, and 2018. The table below reflects Use of Force by level since 2016.



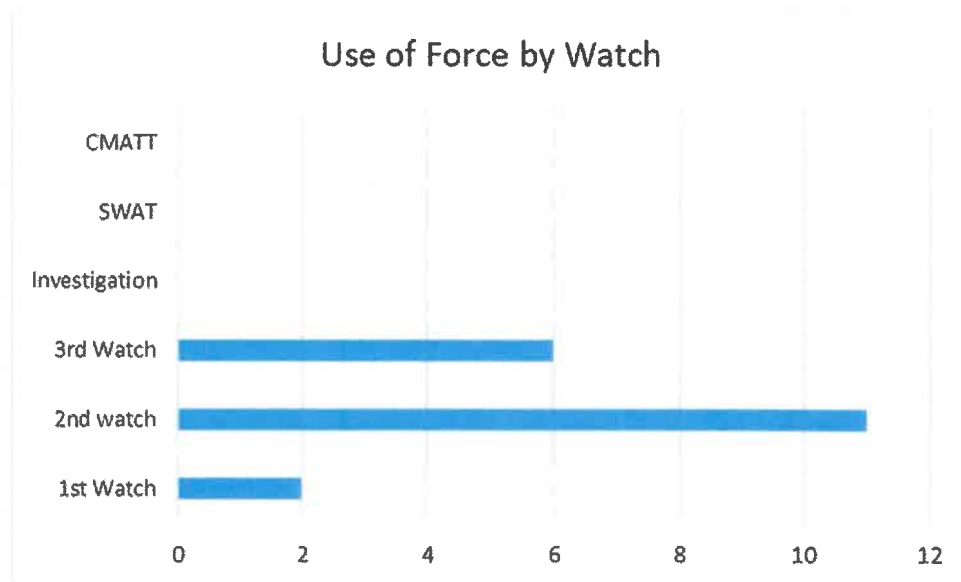
**2019 Use of Force Incidents by Gender and Age Group:**

Seventeen (89%) of the suspects involved in Use of Force incidents in 2019 were adult males. Of the total males contacted, ten were between 18-29; three were between 30-39; three between 40-49; and one over 60 years of age.

Adult female suspects accounted for 11% of the Use of Force incidents in 2019. One female was between 18-29, and the other three females were between 40-49 years of age.

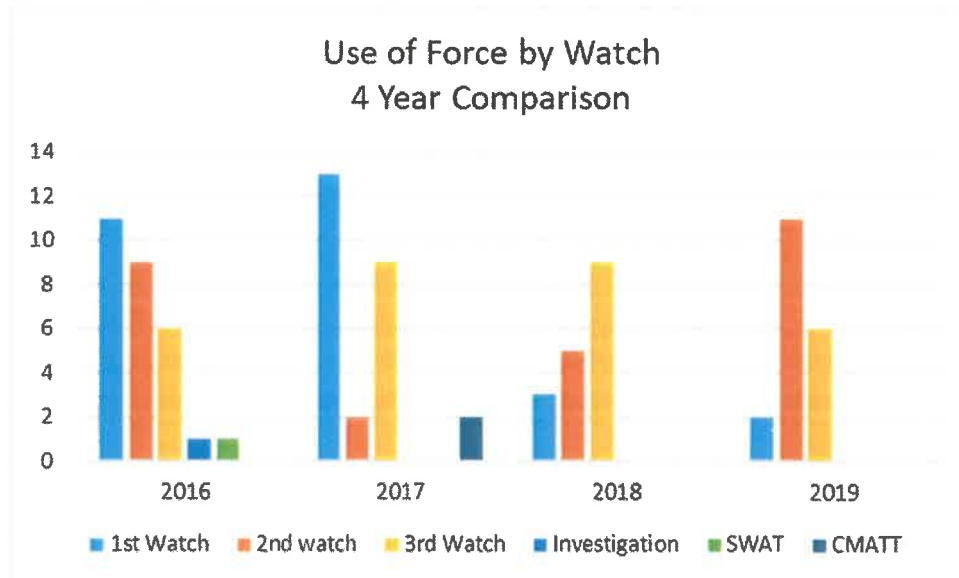
**2019 Use of Force Incidents by Watch:**

Second Watch (1300-0100) was involved in 58% of the total Use of Force incidents. Third Watch (2100-0700) was involved in 32% and First Watch (0700-1600) in 10% of the total Use of Force Incidents. Second Watch officers work 12-hour shifts versus ten-hour shifts for First and Third Watches, which could explain the higher number of Use of Force incidents for Second Watch.



As shown in the four year comparison chart below, 2019, was the only year that Second Watch had the highest Use of Force incidents since 2016. Furthermore, SWAT and the Investigations Division have not had a Use of Force incident since 2017; whereas, CMATT, had two Use of Force incidents in 2017.

First Watch of 2019, recorded the lowest Use of Force incidents since 2017. Second Watch incidents increased 55% from 2018 to 2019. Third Watch had its highest Use of Force incidents in 2017 and 2018. The Investigations Division and SWAT have not generated a Use of Force incident since 2016; whereas, CMATT not since 2017.



**2019 Use of Force by Call Type:**

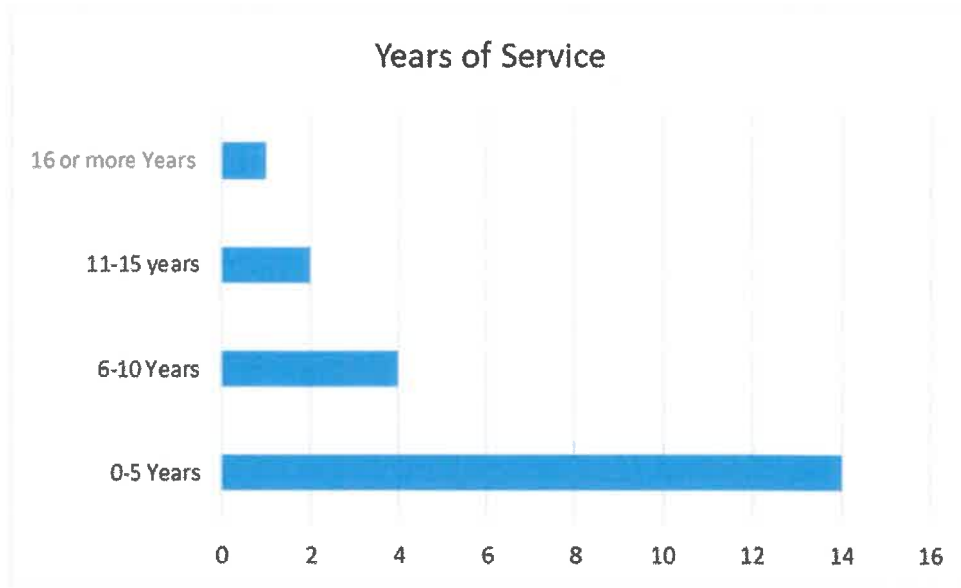
During 2019, officer encountered circumstance that required them to use force on certain types of calls for service more than other CFS. Officers contacting individuals during a non-physical disturbance were 32% more likely to encounter volatile or resistive suspects in 2019. Calls regarding suspicious persons was the second highest CFS to encounter a Use of Force situation at 16%.

**2019 Use of Force by Number of Officers:**

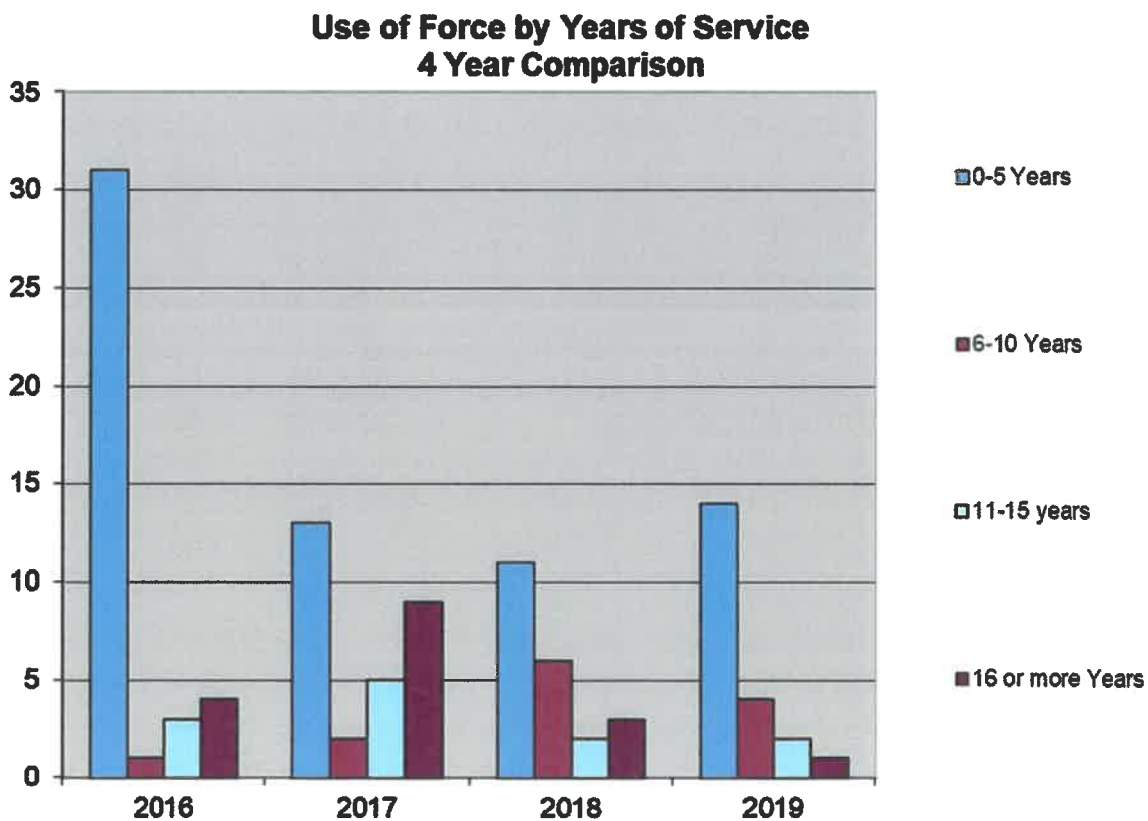
The 19 total Use of Force incidents involved 21 officers; some officers were involved in more than one Use of Force incident. Ten incidents involved one officer, six incidents involved two officers, and three incidents involved three officers,

**2019 Use of Force by Years of Service:**

Use of Force involvement was highest among officers with less than five years of experience (14) in 2019. The second-highest group was officers with 6 to 10 years of experience (four). See the below graph for specific data.



The below graph shows a four year comparison of Use of Force by Years of Service since 2016. Officers with five years of service or less make up the majority of Use of Force incidents since 2016. This is to be expected since the patrol division has the highest number of less senior officers than other police divisions.



**2018 Allegations of Excessive Use of Force:**

PSU investigated four complaints of excessive force in 2019. This is an increase from 2018, which had one complaint of excessive force. The increase may be due to the fact that two incidents were related to tight handcuffs, which by Department policy may not have generated a Use of Force Report. However, the arrestee told deputies from the Jefferson County Jail about the tight handcuffs. Jefferson County Deputies are mandated to report any possible Use of Force to the arresting agency.

**Summary of Excessive Force Complaints**

**PSU# 19-C-0008**

**Findings: Not-Sustained**

**Synopsis:**

Arrestee complained of pain caused by the handcuffs. The handcuffs were checked and repositioned. The complaint was made by the arrestee to a deputy at the Jefferson County Jail.

**PSU# 19-C-0009**

**Findings: Exonerated**

**Synopsis:**

Officers made an observation, based on reasonable suspicion, that a crime was being committed in their presence (vehicle theft). The officers contacted a male suspect with weapons drawn; the officers holstered their weapons once the situation was deemed safe. The male felt the contact was too aggressive.

**PSU# 19-C-0010**

**Findings: Not-Sustained**

**Synopsis:**

Officers responded to a disturbance, where the male suspect fled the scene. Officers were searching for the male who was seen by an officer jumping fences; the male was located in a backyard and was tased. The TASER had no impact on the male and he slide under a boat. Pepper Spray was utilized with no impact on the suspect. Due to the cold outside temperature, it was recommend to spray the male with water in an attempt to make the situation uncomfortable for the male. The tactic worked; the male moved away from the water spray, which allowed an officer to grab ahold of the male.

**PSU# 19-C-0014**

**Findings: Not-Sustained**

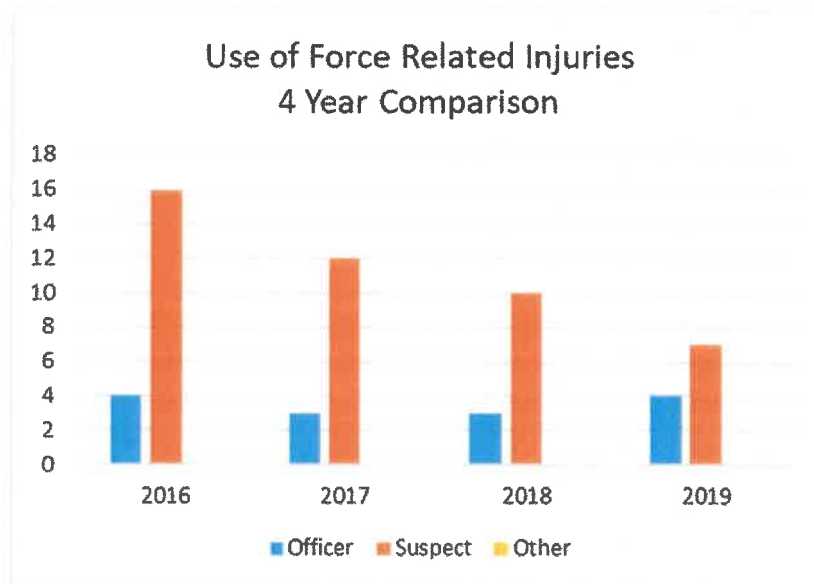
**Synopsis:**

Arrestee complained that the handcuffs were too tight. Handcuffs were checked and repositioned. The complaint was made by the arrestee to a deputy at the Jefferson County Jail.

**2019 Use of Force-Related Injuries:**

Four officers sustained injuries due to Use of Force incidents in 2019. Officer injuries have remained in the single digits since 2016. Seven suspects sustained injuries in 2019, compared to ten suspects in 2018. The majority of injuries to officers in 2019 was scrapes and bruises and complaints of pain was the majority by suspects in 2019. There have been no Use of Force incidents resulting in serious bodily injury or death since 2017.





### **2018 Early Warning System Reviews**

In 2019, four Early Warning System (EWS) reviews were conducted on four employees; none were related to Use of Force incidents. This was a substantial decrease from 2018, which had three EWS related to Use of Force incidents.

### **Additional Analysis:**

Race, gender and age were analyzed to determine if any patterns may be cause for concern. The data showed that 89% of Use of Force incidents involved adult males and 11% involved adult females in 2019. The age group that was most likely to initiate a use of force incident was, 19-29 for males and 40-49 for females. Out of the total Use of Force incidents, white males were involved in 58% of the incidents, Hispanic males 5%, African-American males, 11%, and 16% were non-disclosed ethnicity. White females accounted for 5% of the incidents and 5% for Hispanic females.

In 2019, 47% (nine) of the force recipients were Wheat Ridge residents, 37% (seven) were not residents, and 16% (three) were transient.

In reviewing the locations where force was used, 42% (eight) occurred at the suspect's residence, 52% (ten) occurred at various business locations within the city limits, and 6% (one) occurred at an intersection.

Out of the business locations, 20% (two) occurred at Lutheran Medical Center and 20% (two) at the American Motel. The remaining 60% (one each) occurred at each of the following, Motel 6, Circle K (4885 Kipling Street), O'Reilly Auto Parts, Howard Johnson, the business complex at 4990 Kipling Street, and Denver Health Center.

Of the 19 total Use of Force reports, 100% involved force applied to human recipients. Of the 19 human recipients of force in 2019, 37% (seven) were under the influence of alcohol, 21% (4) under the influence of drugs, 5% (1) was under the influence of both, drugs and alcohol.

**Conclusion:**

The data contained in the report supports that Wheat Ridge officers consistently make every effort to use the least amount of force necessary to affect arrests, as evidenced by the overwhelming majority of Use of Force incidents were Level 3.

The City's transient/motel population had been an area of concern for the past few years. The data suggests that proactive law enforcements efforts influenced the number of Use of Force incidents involving the transient population and individuals living in motels. In 2017, the transient/motel population was involved in 19% of the Use of Force incidents. That number decreased to 11% in 2018, of the Use of Force incidents; however, it appears to be on the rise as 16% in 2019 were from the transient population.

In 2019, Use of Force was used on 19 individuals, 63% were suspects who were resisting arrest, 26% were suspects who ran from officers, and 10% of the individuals were taken into protective custody due to mental health or intoxication (alcohol/drugs) reasons.

**A demographic breakdown of Use of Force:**

The most recent data regarding demographics in Wheat Ridge is found in the 2018 estimate provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. While these are the estimated demographics of city residents in 2018, these statistics do not include the individuals traveling through, commuting to, or temporarily residing in Wheat Ridge. For this reason, caution should be used when directly comparing Wheat Ridge resident demographics to police contact demographics.

The City of Wheat Ridge's population is 31,400 as of July 1, 2018. The population is comprised of 89% Caucasian, 20.9% Hispanic, 0.8% African-American, 1.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.5% American Indian/ Alaskan Native.

Caucasian males (11) and females (one) accounted for 64% percent of enforcement actions resulting in the Use of Force. Hispanic males (one) and females (one) accounted for 10%, and 10% for African-American males (two). Three individuals (16%) contacted in a Use of Force incident were not identified by ethnicity.

**Recommendations:**

**Policy:** Wheat Ridge Police Department's Use of Force policies are current and comprehensive. No policy changes are recommended.

**Tools:** Wheat Ridge police officers are well equipped and trained with the tools and equipment related to the application of force. Although rarely utilized, pepper gas spray and batons should remain as available use of force options should the need arise. In 2019, the department added additional personal protect equipment to each officer to include, helmet, and ballistic vests at a cost of over forty-four thousand dollars.

**Training:** Statistical data indicates that Wheat Ridge police officers strive to use the lowest level of force required to accomplish their objective, as dictated by policy. The department continues to provide training to officers related to arrest control, policy review, and force on force. In

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2019, the department provided six hours of training to each officer on use of force and nine hours on arrest control.