

AN ANALYSIS OF 2009 USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS IN THE MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT



REPORT OF THE FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION

April 30, 2010

Dr. Steven Brandl,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee,
Criminal Justice Department

200 East Wells Street
City Hall, Room 706A
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 286-5000

Website: <http://www.milwaukee.gov/fpc>

Table of Contents

	page
Introduction.....	1
Frequency of Use of Force Incidents: Summary Baselines.....	2
Baseline 1: Use of Force by Day/Month.....	3
Baseline 2: Use of Force and Arrests.....	3
Baseline 3: Use of Force and Traffic Stops.....	5
Baseline 4: Use of Force and Field Interviews.....	5
Baseline 5: Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents..	6
Baseline 6: Use of Force and City Population.....	6
Baseline 7: Use of Force and Geographic Location Of Incidents.....	6
Situational Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents.....	10
Characteristics of Officers and Subjects Involved In Use of Force Incidents.....	10
Type of Force Used by Officers.....	12
Citizen Complaints Resulting From Use of Force Incidents.....	13
Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents.....	14
Force Used Against Dogs.....	15
Data Recommendations.....	16
Summary.....	18

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of use of force incidents recorded by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009. The analyses are intended to provide an understanding of the nature, frequency, and circumstances of use of force incidents in the MPD. The report is divided into two main sections: (1) summary baselines and (2) situational characteristics of use of force incidents. The report concludes with recommendations as to how to improve the overall quality and usefulness of the data, as well as a summary of the findings.

The data analyzed here were obtained from the MPD AIM system, which were manually converted to SPSS format for analysis.¹ Additional data (e.g., arrest, traffic stop, and subject stop tallies) were obtained from other sources in the MPD. The data in the AIM system are based on the Use of Force Reports that are completed by supervisory officers when a use of force incident occurs. According to MPD General Order 2009-51:

The Use of Force Report shall be completed by a supervisory officer when a Department member: discharges a firearm, uses a baton in the line of duty, discharges an irritant, chemical, or inflammatory agent, deploys an Electronic Control Device, Department canine bites a subject in the performance of their duty, [or] uses any other type of force which results in an injury to a person.

In addition, according to the Order, even if a subject claims to have been injured without those injuries being visible, a report is to be completed.

The database (and reports) contains a comprehensive list of variables on each use of force incident recorded by the MPD. Some data are related directly to the incident (e.g., date of incident, district of incident, number of officers involved in incident) but most of the data are related to the officers (e.g., officer race, officer rank, type of force used by officer, etc.) and subjects (e.g., subject age, race, charge, etc.) involved in the incidents. There are separate

¹ This conversion required substantial work and knowledge of the intricacies of the AIM computer system and SPSS software. This conversion was performed by Kristin Kappelman of the Fire and Police Commission.

variables for each officer (up to six officers) and each subject (up to three subjects) involved in the incident. To facilitate the analysis, additional variables were manually created based on the report narratives that were contained within the AIM system.

Frequency of Use of Force Incidents: Summary Baselines

From January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, there were 485 use of force incidents recorded by the MPD. Of these 485 incidents, six were accidental discharges of weapons² and 20 were for the purpose of euthanizing an injured or diseased animal.³ As these 26 incidents are fundamentally different from other use of force incidents in the purpose and intent of the force, these incidents are excluded from all subsequent analyses. Accordingly, 459 incidents are analyzed in this report. In addition, of the 459 incidents, 43 involved force being used against one or more dogs, two of the 43 incidents involved force being used against a subject and a dog. These incidents are included in most of the aggregate totals analyzed in this report and they are also analyzed separately (see p. 15).

One of the objectives of this study is to provide baseline statistics on use of force incidents in order to allow one to monitor changes in patterns, trends, and frequency of use of force incidents over time. On the basis of the AIM system and other departmental data, several baseline measures were computed and are provided here: (1) number of incidents by month, (2) number of incidents by number of arrests, (3) number of incidents by number of traffic stops, (4)

² Four of these incidents involved the accidental discharge of a firearm, two involved an accidental discharge of a Electronic Control Device (ECD).

³ These animals consisted of 15 deer, two raccoons, one goose, one seagull, and one coyote. All 20 of these incidents involved the use of a firearm.

number of incidents by number of subject stops, (5) number of incidents by city population, and (6) number of incidents by police district and aldermanic district. Each is discussed below.⁴

Baseline 1: Use of Force by Day/Month

With 459 incidents occurring from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, there was an average of approximately 1.26 use of force incidents per day. Table 1 provides a breakdown of these incidents by month.

Table 1. Month of Incident

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
42	37	39	32	37	33	42	49	36	43	35	34	459

Note: No missing data.

As seen in Table 1, there was minimal variation in the frequency of incidents across month with no discernable monthly or seasonal pattern. The mean number of incidents per month was 38.3, with a high of 49 incidents in August and a low of 32 incidents in April.

Baseline 2: Use of Force and Arrests

Because most use of force incidents occur during arrests, it is reasonable to consider the number of use of force incidents in relation to the number of arrests made. Further, in this calculation, it is important to include only the use of force incidents that also involved an arrest. Again, from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, there were 459 use of force incidents. Of these 459 incidents, 418 involved a person who could have potentially been arrested (the other 41 incidents involved only a dog). Of these 418 incidents where someone could have been

⁴ The baseline measures used here have been calculated in other police departments as well; however, comparing use of force baselines across departments is hazardous because practices of recording use of force incidents (as well as arrests, traffic stops, etc.) are not standard across police departments.

arrested, in 370 of them, a subject was actually arrested (in ten additional incidents it was not specified if a subject was arrested). Also during this period, MPD officers made a total of 34,707 arrests.⁵ Accordingly, for each arrest where force was used, there were 93.8 arrests where force was not used ($34,707 / 370 = 93.8$). Overall, an average of approximately 1.07 percent of all arrests involved the use of force.

Interestingly, while there is a correlation between the number of use of force incidents that involved an arrest and the total number of arrests, by month, the correlation is not strong or statistically significant ($r = .32$; $p = .31$). In essence, it is difficult to accurately predict the number of use of force incidents that involve an arrest based on the total number of arrests that were made. In other words, just because total arrests increase (or decrease) in a particular month it does not mean that use of force arrests will similarly increase (or decrease) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Use of Force Arrest Incidents and Total Number of Arrests Made, by Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Number of Use of Force Incidents That Involved an Arrest	31	33	32	24	31	27	34	38	28	36	25	31	370
Total Number of Arrests Made	2810	2807	2938	2764	2914	2701	2894	3301	3133	2751	2951	2743	34707

Note: No missing data.

⁵ As defined here, an arrest refers to when an officer physically takes a subject into custody. Included here are arrests for felonies, misdemeanors, and ordinance violations.

Baseline 3: Use of Force and Traffic Stops

The third baseline compares the number of use of force incidents that resulted from traffic stops to the total number of traffic stops made by officers.⁶ As the overwhelming majority of traffic stops that involved force also involved at least one arrest, it must be understood that these traffic stop tallies are not independent of the arrest statistics discussed in Baseline 2. In 2009, MPD officers made 140,342 traffic stops and 52 of them involved the use of force. There was minimal meaningful variation in traffic stops across month. In total, there were 2,699 traffic stops for each traffic stop that involved the use of force ($140,342 / 52 = 2,699$). Overall, an average of approximately .04 percent of traffic stops involved the use of force.

Baseline 4: Use of Force and Field Interviews

The fourth baseline compares the number of field interviews (subject stops) where force was used to the total number of field interviews conducted by officers. As with traffic stops, the overwhelming majority of field interviews that involved force also involved at least one arrest. As a result, once again, these field interview figures are not independent of the arrest statistics discussed in Baseline 2.

In 2009, MPD officers conducted 27,270 subject stops and 53 of them involved the use of force. As one would expect, there were more subject stops conducted in the summer months than in the winter months. There were, on average, 515 subject stops for each stop that involved the use of force ($27,270 / 53 = 515$). Overall, an average of approximately .19 percent of subject stops involved the use of force. Based on these calculations and comparisons, it is accurate to conclude that the use of force in subject stops is a rare event, but it is more common than in traffic stops.

⁶ In the AIM system there was a variable that related to the type of call that led to the use of force incident. Unfortunately however, data for this variable was missing for nearly every case. Through a review of the incident narratives, data on this dimension of use of force incidents was captured.

Baseline 5: Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The 459 use of force incidents that occurred in 2009 involved 387 different MPD officers. Nearly all of the officers involved in the incidents were at the rank of police officer, sergeant, or detective (one incident involved a captain⁷). In 2009, the MPD employed 1,965 sworn officers of whom 1,805 were police officers, detectives, or sergeants. As such, approximately 20 percent of *all* MPD officers ($387 / 1965 = .197$) were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2009 and approximately 21 percent of just police officers, detectives, and sergeants ($387 / 1805 = .214$) were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2009. Stated differently, 80 percent of all sworn officers, and 79 percent of just police officers, detectives, and sergeants, were *not* involved in any use of force incidents in 2009.

Baseline 6: Use of Force and City Population

According to 2008 U.S. Census estimates, the City of Milwaukee had a population of 604,477 (at the time of this report, 2009 population estimates were not yet available). Considering the 459 incidents of force in relation to the population of the city, there was, on average, one incident of force for every 1,259 Milwaukee residents in 2009.

Baseline 7: Use of Force and Geographic Location of Incidents

Two variables in the AIM system are related to the geographic location of the incidents: police district (Table 3) and aldermanic district (Table 4). As seen in Table 3, there was substantial variation in the number of use of force incidents across police district. By far, the largest proportion of use of force incidents occurred in District 7 (33.9%), the smallest proportion occurred in District 1 (2.8%). As for aldermanic district, District 6 had the largest

⁷ This incident involved an off-duty Captain who shot a dog that was attacking another dog.

share of use of force incidents (18.0%), while District 5 had the smallest share of incidents (1.4%) (Table 4).

Table 3. Location of Use of Force Incidents: Police District

Police District	Frequency	Percentage
1	12	2.8
2	37	8.5
3	78	18.0
4	41	9.4
5	89	20.5
6	30	6.9
7	147	33.9
Total	434	100.0

Note: Missing data (25 cases) are excluded from the analyses.

Table 4. Location of Use of Force Incidents: Aldermanic District

Aldermanic District	Frequency	Percentage
1	48	11.2
2	21	4.9
3	10	2.3
4	29	6.8
5	6	1.4
6	77	18.0
7	57	13.3
8	12	2.8
9	23	5.4
10	24	5.6
11	8	1.9
12	22	5.2
13	10	2.3
14	13	3.0
15	67	15.7
Total	427	100.0

Note: Missing data (32 cases) are excluded from the analyses.

Given the wide variation in the number of use of force incidents across police district, it is necessary to explore possible corresponding variation in population and arrests across districts. Table 5 shows the total number of arrests, the number of arrests that involved force, the total number of force incidents, and the population of each police district. From these figures, the number of arrests for each use of force arrest and the number of residents for each use of force incident is calculated.

Table 5. Arrests, Population, and Use of Force by Police District

Police District	Total Arrests Made (a)	Number of Use of Force Incidents That Involved an Arrest (b)	Number of Arrests for Each Use of Force Arrest	Total Number of Use of Force Incidents (c)	Population (d)	Number of Residents for Each Use of Force Incident (e)
1	1471	10	147.1	12	42775	3565
2	6158	29	212.3	37	82631	2233
3	6790	58	117.1	78	88155	1130
4	4453	35	127.2	41	94118	2296
5	5948	67	88.8	89	72857	819
6	2295	24	95.6	30	110944	3698
7	5664	124	45.7	147	105494	718
Total	32779	347	94.5	434	596974	1376

Notes: (a) Total arrests made excludes 1,928 arrests because the arrest could not be placed in a district due to the address of the arrest being unknown or unmatched; (b) 23 missing cases (unknown district); (c) 25 missing cases (unknown district); (d) Population based on 2000 U.S. Census data; (e) figures are rounded.

If use of force incidents were simply a function of arrests made and the size of the population served, one would expect there to be minimal variation across districts in the total number of arrests for each use of force arrest, as well as minimal variation in the number of residents for each use of force incident (i.e., districts that have more arrests would also have more use of force arrests). Clearly, as shown in Table 5, this is not the case; there is substantial variation across police districts in the number of arrests for each use of force arrest, and the

number of residents for each use of force incident. Most notable are the figures that correspond to District 7 and District 2. In District 7, there were, on average, 46 arrests for each arrest that involved the use of force, and 718 residents for each use of force incident. Contrast these figures with District 2 where there were approximately 212 arrests for each use of force arrest, and 2,233 residents for each use of force incident.

To further explore this issue, additional analyses were conducted. Table 6 shows the number of traffic stops, field interviews, total police-citizen contacts (traffic stops and field interviews combined), the number of use of force incidents, and the calculated rate of use of force incidents per 1,000 police-citizen contacts (i.e., number of use of force incidents / total police-citizen contacts x 1,000).

Table 6. Use of Force Incidents and Police-Citizen Contacts by Police District

Police District	Traffic Stops (a)	Field Interviews (b)	Total Number of Police-Citizen Contacts	Total Number of Use of Force Incidents (c)	Use of Force Incidents per 1,000 Police-Citizen Contacts
1	7406	2058	9464	12	1.27
2	24794	6392	31186	37	1.19
3	20505	5513	26018	78	3.00
4	12473	3099	15572	41	2.63
5	17888	5033	22921	89	3.88
6	9825	1353	11178	30	2.68
7	20713	3592	24305	147	6.05
Total	113604	27040	140644	434	3.09

Notes: (a) 26,738 missing cases (the stop could not be placed in a district due to the address of the stop being unknown or unmatched); (b) 230 missing cases (the interview could not be placed in a district due to the address of the stop being unknown or unmatched); (c) 25 missing cases (unknown district).

Once again, as with Table 5, it is seen that the use of force is the least frequent in District 2 (1.19 use of force incidents per 1,000 police citizen contacts) and most frequent in District 7 (6.05 use of force incidents per 1,000 police-citizen contacts). Overall, there were 3.09 use of force incidents per 1,000 police–citizen contacts.

On the basis of the analyses presented in Table 5 and Table 6, it appears that in District 7 (a) force is more frequently used in arrest situations, (b) force is more frequently used in relation to the number of persons who reside in the district, compared to other districts, and (c) force is more frequently used in relation to the number of police-citizen contacts, compared to other districts. The possible reasons for this disparity cannot be determined definitively with the data analyzed here.⁸ Other data are required to address this issue (see p.16).

Situational Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Along with providing baseline measures of use of force, the other purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the circumstances of use of force incidents. The following characteristics of use of force incidents are discussed here: (1) characteristics of officers and subjects involved in use of force incidents, (2) types of force used, (3) citizen complaints resulting from use of force incidents, (4) other characteristics of use of force incidents, and (5) force used against dogs.

Characteristics of Officers and Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The 459 use of force incidents involved 387 officers. Most incidents (324 out of 456; 71.1%; 3 cases with missing data) involved one officer, 35 out of 456 incidents (7.7%) involved

⁸ Some possible explanations may be that (1) the 1,928 arrests that could not be assigned to districts were not equally distributed across districts, (2) that force is more likely to be used in certain types of arrests (e.g., robbery vs. shoplifting) and that districts vary in terms of the types of arrests made, (3) that citizens are more likely to be combative or resistive in some districts than in others, (4) that officers are more likely to use force in some districts than in others, and/or (5) that force is more likely to be reported by officers in some districts than in others.

three or more officers. With regard to the number of officers involved in one or more incidents, 232 officers (59.9%) were involved in just one incident, 94 officers (24.2%) were involved in two incidents, 34 officers (8.8%) were involved in three incidents, and 27 officers (7.0%) were involved in more than three incidents. The most incidents an officer was involved in were nine.

In 93 percent of the 459 incidents, the first officer⁹ involved was male, in 75 percent the officer was white, in 95 percent the officer was the rank of police officer, in 96 percent of incidents the officer was in uniform, in 98 percent of the incidents the officer was on duty, and in 83 percent of incidents the officer was assigned to squad patrol. The average (mean) age of the first officer was 35 and the average length of service was nine years. In 16 percent of the incidents, an officer involved in the incident was injured.

The 459 incidents involved 503 subjects.¹⁰ Most incidents (424 out of 456; 93.2%; 3 cases were missing) involved just one subject, 12 out of 456 incidents (2.6%) involved three or more subjects. Due to missing data, it is not possible to determine how many subjects were involved in multiple incidents.

In 87 percent of the incidents, the first subject involved was male, in 76 percent the subject was Black, in 44 percent the subject was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the average age of the first subject was 29 years, and in 84 percent of incidents the subject was injured with the majority of these injuries classified as “minor.” In seven incidents, the injuries sustained by the subject were fatal. In 17 percent of incidents, the subject was armed with a weapon (in 24 percent of the incidents where a subject was armed it was with a firearm). In 82 percent of the incidents the subject had a previous criminal record. In 88 percent of incidents,

⁹ Due to the structure of the data, most descriptive statements regarding the officers and subjects relate only to the first officer or subject involved.

¹⁰ Excluded from these analyses are incidents that involved a dog.

the officer noted that the reason that force was used was that the subject resisted arrest.¹¹ In 18 percent, the subject fled on foot to avoid arrest.

Type of Force Used by Officers

With regard to the type of force used, it is seen in Table 7 that the largest proportion of incidents involved bodily force only, followed by bodily force and a chemical agent, chemical agent only, ECD only, firearm only, baton only, and bodily force and firearm.

Table 7. Type of Force Used

Type of Forced Used	Frequency	Percentage
Bodily Force Only	163	35.9
Chemical Agent Only	70	15.4
ECD Only	64	14.1
Firearm Only	49	10.8
Baton Only	4	.9
Bodily Force and Chemical	71	15.6
Bodily Force and Firearm	4	.9
ECD and Firearm	1	.2
Other Combination (no firearm)	28	6.1
Total	454	100.0

Note: Missing data (5 cases) are excluded from the analyses.

In total, 54 incidents (11.8%) involved the use of a firearm.¹² Clearly, in a relative and absolute sense, the use of a firearm in a use of force incident was a rare event. Table 8 shows how the firearm was used in these incidents. In the rare instance that a firearm was used, it was most commonly used for the purpose of neutralizing a dog.

¹¹ Actual arrest data, including the charges filed against the subject, were not available.

¹² Pointing or aiming a firearm or ECD without discharging the weapon was not a reportable use of force category.

Table 8. Incidents Where the Force Used was a Firearm

Target of Firearm	Frequency	Percentage	Result
Dog(s)	39	72.2	43 dogs hit
Subject	12	22.2	7 subjects hit
Subject and Dog	2	3.7	2 dogs hit; 0 subjects hit
Gun Pointed at Subject	1	1.9	--
Total Number of Incidents	54	100.0	--

Note: No missing data.

Citizen Complaints Resulting From Use of Force Incidents

Of the 459 use of force incidents that occurred in 2009, 28 (6.1%) resulted in a formal complaint being filed by a citizen with either the MPD or the Fire and Police Commission. Analyses were performed to determine how the incidents that resulted in a complaint differed from those that did not. Statistical tests performed on the data (i.e., Chi-Square, t-tests, and ANOVA) reveal that complaints were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) to be filed when the incident involved:

- more than one officer
- officers using bodily force or a firearm (no complaints resulted from incidents where officers used a chemical agent only or ECD only)
- a traffic stop
- any injury to the subject as a result of the use of force (except injuries relating to chemical agents or ECDs)

It did not matter if the subject had a criminal record, or if the subject was arrested, in whether or not a complaint was filed. Officers were more likely to have been injured in incidents that led to complaints being filed (a likely function of the increased injury risk when officers used bodily force). In addition, when *deadly* force was used, complaints were most likely to have been filed when the force was directed toward a subject or when more than one dog was involved (no complaints resulted from incidents where a single dog was shot).

Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Along with the situational characteristics of use of force incidents that have already been discussed, three additional characteristics are worthy of brief mention. First, as seen in Table 9, (p.15) most often use of force incidents occurred as a result of officers conducting investigations or while at a calls for service, followed by subject stops and traffic stops. As mentioned earlier, given the absolute volume of police-citizen contacts in these and other situations, the relative rarity of use of force incidents is significant. Second, the largest proportion of incidents occurred on the street or sidewalk; the overwhelming majority of incidents occurred outside. This is not surprising as most police activity is oriented to the streets. As such, most of these incidents may have occurred in areas accessible to potential eye-witnesses. Finally, approximately equal proportions of use of force incidents occurred at night as during daylight.

Table 9. Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Characteristic	freq	% (a)
Activity That Led to Incident (b)	353	99.9
Investigation/Call for Service	199	56.4
Subject Stop	53	15.0
Traffic Stop	52	14.7
Vehicle Pursuit	16	4.5
Other	33	9.3
Location of Incident (c)	446	100.0
Street/Sidewalk	195	43.7
Inside-Dwelling	72	16.1
Outside-Yard	59	13.2
Outside-Field/Parking Lot	39	8.7
Outside-Alley	31	7.0
Inside-Public Place	31	7.0
Other	19	4.3
Time/Lighting of Incident (d)	454	99.9
Dark/Night	229	50.4
Light/Daytime	188	41.4
Dusk/Dawn	37	8.1

Notes: (a) Percentages may not tally to 100 due to rounding; (b) 106 missing cases; (c) 13 missing cases (d) 5 missing cases.

Force Used Against Dogs

Of the 459 incidents of force that occurred in 2009, 43 involved force being used against at least one dog. These 43 incidents involved 47 dogs. Forty-five of the 47 dogs were shot (or were shot at), two were struck with a ECD. In total, of the 47 dogs upon which force was used, 45 died (the 45 that were shot).

Of the 47 dogs, the breed of the dog was specified for 25 of them. Of the 25 where the breed was specified, 19 (76%) were Pit Bulls, three (12%) were German Shepards, two (8%) were Rottweilers, and one (4%) was a Husky.

Regarding the circumstances in which force was used against dogs, the most common was when officers were responding to a citizen’s complaint of a loose dog, followed by a search warrant situation, and conducting another investigation (see Table 10). In addition, similar to other use of force incidents, most often one officer used force in the incident (31 of 43 incidents; 72.1%).

Table 10. Circumstance of Incidents Where Force was Used against Dogs

Circumstance	Frequency	Percentage
Loose Animal Complaint	18	47.4
Search Warrant	7	18.4
Other Investigation	6	15.8
On Patrol	2	5.3
Tactical Situation	1	2.6
Other	4	10.5
TOTALS	38	100.0

Note: 5 Missing cases

Unfortunately, it is difficult to put these incidents into perspective as no reliable estimates of the number of dogs, by breed, in Milwaukee were located, nor are there statistics that indicate the number of dogs that are confronted by MPD officers but are not shot.

Data Recommendations

The Use of Force Reports and the AIM system provide a good method for recording and storing details on use of force incidents. However, several improvements could be made to enhance the usefulness of the data for analysis purposes. These recommendations pertain only to specific data collection procedures and do not suggest or identify any department policy or

procedural recommendations concerning the broader scope of how or when officers should use force.

First, as noted throughout this report, there are substantial missing data in the file. Data on some variables (e.g., type of call) are nearly completely missing. Missing data severely compromise the quality and usefulness of the database for analysis purposes. Relatedly, there is substantial variation in the completeness of the narratives associated with the reports. Some narratives are pages long; others are only a single sentence or are non-existent. Even attempts to fill-in missing data through a manual review of the narratives proved to be difficult given the often incomplete nature of the narratives. The narratives need not be (and should not be) long but they should contain basic information about the incident (e.g., who, what, where, when, why). Additional emphasis (and/or training) should be provided to ensure the accurate and complete completion of use of force reports.

Second, that the database was organized with the use of force *incident* as the unit of analysis caused certain difficulties when attempting to analyze the characteristics of officers and subjects. For example, through the manual manipulation of the data, it was possible to determine the number of officers who were involved in multiple incidents; however, with regard to the characteristics of officers, the analyses were limited to the officer identified as the “first officer” in the database. That is because each officer (and the characteristics of each officer) involved in the incident was coded as a separate variable (e.g., officer 1, officer 2, officers 3, etc.). In one incident, a particular officer may have been listed as officer 1, in another incident that same officer might have been listed as officer 2, and in another incident that officer might have been listed as officer 3, etc. As a result, when analyzing the data, it would be possible for a single officer (and the characteristics of that officer) to be represented multiple times in summary statements. That, of course, would lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Finally, given the structure of the data and the nature of the data collected in the use of force reports, this study was not able to directly address issues regarding the involvement of officers in multiple incidents nor was it able to address potentially related questions such as the variability of use of force incidents across police districts. These issues could be addressed if a separate database with officers as the unit of analysis was constructed and analyzed. In such a database, every officer in the department would be listed and associated data on each officer would be included. Such variables would include background characteristics of the officers along with the number of use of force incidents each officer was involved in, number and type of arrests each officer made, the district/shift to which the officer was assigned, and any other pertinent data related to the officer. These improvements in the data could allow for a more complete analysis of use of force in the MPD.

Summary

This report represents a starting point in understanding use of force incidents in the Milwaukee Police Department. Based on an analysis of the 459 incidents that occurred between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009, the following summary statements can be made:

- There was an average of 1.26 use of force incidents per day in 2009.
- There were 93.8 arrests for every one arrest that involved the use of force.
- Approximately 1.07 percent of arrests involved the use of force.
- There were 2,699 traffic stops for each traffic stop that involved the use of force.
- Approximately .04 percent of traffic stops involved the use of force.
- There were 515 subject stops for each subject stop that involved force.
- Approximately .19 percent of subject stops involved the use of force.

- Approximately 20 percent of MPD sworn officers were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2009.
- There was one incident of force for every 1,259 persons in Milwaukee in 2009.
- The largest proportion of use of force incidents in 2009 occurred in Police District 7 (33.8%) and in Aldermanic District 6 (18.0%).
- There was substantial variation across police districts in the number of arrests for each use of force arrest, in the number of residents for each use of force incident, and in the number of use of force incidents per 1,000 police-citizen contacts.
- The 459 use of force incidents involved 387 officers. Approximately 60 percent of these officers were involved in just one incident; approximately 16 percent of the officers were involved in three or more incidents..
- Fifty-four incidents (11.8%) involved a firearm; in 39 of these incidents (72.2%) the firearm was used to shoot a dog(s).
- Of the 459 use of force incidents, in 28 a complaint was filed. Complaints were more likely to be filed when more than one officer was involved, where bodily force or a firearm was used, when the subject was injured, and when the incident resulted from a traffic stop.
- Approximately nine percent of incidents (43 of 459) involved force being used against one or more dogs. Most of the dogs were Pit Bulls and the largest proportion of incidents resulted from a loose dog complaint.

Based on the analyses conducted here, the typical use of force incident:

- Involved one uniformed police officer and one subject. The officer was a white male, 35 years old, with nine years of service. The officer was not injured as a result of the

incident. The subject was a Black male with a previous record. The subject was not armed with a weapon. The subject resisted arrest and sustained “minor” injuries as a result of the incident.

- The incident most likely involved the officer using “bodily force only” against the subject. The incident related to a call for service/investigation and occurred on the street/sidewalk at night. The incident did not result in a complaint being filed with the MPD or the Fire and Police Commission.

This study provides information for understanding and interpreting the nature, frequency, and circumstances of use of force incidents in the MPD. The study also provides useful information on data collection practices concerning use of force incidents. These data can be used to provide initial baseline metrics for future analyses of use of force incidents.