

AN ANALYSIS OF 2011 USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS
IN THE MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Prepared by

Steven G. Brandl, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

June 14, 2012

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.....	7
Situational Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents.....	11
Characteristics of Officers and Subjects Involved In Use of Force Incidents.....	11
Type of Force Used by Officers.....	13
Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents.....	15
Force Used Against Dogs.....	16
Data Recommendations.....	17
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, 2011 to December 31, 2011. This report is part of a continuing systematic effort that began in 2009 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 (Administrative Investigation Management) system, which were manually converted to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 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

¹ This conversion required substantial work and knowledge of the intricacies of the AIM computer system. This conversion was performed by Joseph Lawler of the Fire and Police Commission.

subjects (e.g., subject age, race, charge, etc.) involved in the incidents. There are separate variables for each officer (up to five officers) and each subject (up to four 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, 2011 to December 31, 2011, there were 531 use of force incidents recorded by the MPD. Of these 531 incidents, 10 were accidental² and 27 were for the purpose of euthanizing an injured or diseased animal.³ As these 37 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, 494 incidents are analyzed in this report.⁴ In addition, of the 494 incidents, 38 involved force being used against one or more dogs. These incidents are included in most of the aggregate totals analyzed in this report and they are also analyzed separately (see p.16).

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 discussed 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 Seven of these incidents involved the accidental discharge of a firearm, one involved an accidental discharge of an Electronic Control Device (ECD; Taser), one involved an accidental discharge of a chemical agent (OC), and one involved a department canine biting an officer. One additional incident involved an accidental discharge of an ECD; however, this incident also involved the intentional deployment of an ECD so this incident is not included as one of the ten accidental incidents.

³ Twenty-three of these incidents involved deer, three incidents involved raccoons, and one incident involved an opossum. All of these incidents involved the use of a firearm.

⁴ For comparison, in 2010 there were 511 incidents; in 2009 there were 459 use of force incidents

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.⁵

Baseline 1: Use of Force by Day/Month

With 494 incidents occurring from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, there was an average of approximately 1.35 use of force incidents per day. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the incidents by month.

Table 1. Month of Incident

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
45	25	38	46	54	50	41	40	42	45	25	43	494

Note: No missing data.

As seen in Table 1, there was variation in the frequency of incidents across month but no discernable monthly or seasonal pattern. The mean number of incidents per month was 41.2, with a high of 54 incidents in May and a low of 25 incidents in February and November.

Baseline 2: Use of Force and Arrests

Because most use of force incidents occur during arrests, it is necessary 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, 2011 to December 31, 2011, there were 494 use of force incidents. Of these 494 incidents, 456 involved a person who could have potentially been arrested (the other 38 incidents involved only a dog). Of these 456 incidents where someone could have been

⁵ 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 defining and recording use of force incidents (as well as arrests, traffic stops, etc.) are not standard across police departments.

arrested, in 435 of them a subject was actually arrested. Also during this period, MPD officers made a total of 36,884 arrests.⁶ Accordingly, for each arrest where force was used, there were approximately 85 arrests where force was not used ($36,884/435 = 84.8$). Overall, an average of 1.18 percent of all arrests involved the use of force ($435/36,884 * 100 = 1.18$). In contrast, in 2010, approximately 1.15 percent of all arrests involved the use of force. In 2009, approximately 1.07 percent of all arrests involved the use of force.⁷

Interestingly, and as expected, there is a moderately strong correlation between the number of use of force incidents that involved an arrest and the total number of arrests, by month ($r = .61$). In essence, one can reasonably (but not perfectly) predict the number of use of force incidents that involved an arrest based on the total number of arrests that were made. In other words, more arrests translate into more use of force incidents, fewer arrests translate into fewer use of force incidents.

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	40	23	36	40	50	39	37	39	37	36	21	37	435
Total Number of Arrests Made	2811	2683	3319	3399	3430	3027	3232	3500	3068	2907	2818	2690	36884

Note: No missing data.

⁶ Included here are arrests for felonies, misdemeanors, and ordinance violations.

⁷ For comparison, in 2010 there were 38,641 arrests and 445 involved the use of force. In 2009 there were 34,707 arrests and 370 involved the use of force.

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. 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 2011, MPD officers made 189,556 traffic stops and 37 of them involved the use of force. There was minimal meaningful variation or patterns in traffic stops across month or by season. In total, there were approximately 5,123 traffic stops for each traffic stop that involved the use of force ($189,556 / 37 = 5,123.14$). Overall, an average of approximately .02 percent of traffic stops involved the use of force ($37 / 189,556 * 100 = .02$). For comparison, in 2010, an average of .03 percent of traffic stops involved the use of force; in 2009 this percentage was .04.⁸

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 2011, MPD officers conducted 61,138 subject stops and 74 of them involved the use of force. Approximately 50 percent of all subject stops occurred in May through September. There were, on average, approximately 826 subject stops for each stop that involved the use of force ($61,138 / 74 = 826.19$). Overall, an average of approximately .12 percent of subject stops

⁸ In 2010, there were 192,230 traffic stops and 50 of them involved the use of force. In 2009, there were 140,342 traffic stops and 52 of them involved the use of force.

involved the use of force ($74 / 61,138 * 100 = .12$). In comparison, in 2010 approximately .13 percent of subject stops involved the use of force; in 2009 this percentage was .19.⁹

Based on these data, it is reasonable to conclude that use of force in subject stops is an extremely rare event, and the use of force in traffic stops is even more uncommon. In addition, the proportion of traffic stops and subject stops where force was used was less in 2011 than it was in 2009 and 2010.

Baseline 5: Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The 494 use of force incidents that occurred in 2011 involved 422 different MPD officers. In 2011, the MPD employed 1,876 sworn officers. As such, approximately 26 percent of all MPD officers ($494 / 1876 * 100 = 26.3$) were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2011. Stated differently, approximately 74 percent of all sworn officers were not involved in any use of force incidents in 2011. For comparison, in 2010, 79 percent of sworn officers were not involved in any use of force incidents. In 2009, 80 percent of sworn officers were not involved in any use of force incidents.

Baseline 6: Use of Force and City Population

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the City of Milwaukee had a population of 594,833. Considering the 494 incidents of force in relation to the population of the city, there was, on average, one incident of force for every 1,204 Milwaukee residents in 2011.¹⁰

⁹ In 2010, there were 47,578 subject stops and 63 involved the use of force. In 2009, there were 27,270 subject stops and 53 involved the use of force.

¹⁰ For comparison, in 2010 there was one incidents of force for every 1,164 Milwaukee residents; in 2009 there was one incident of force for every 1,259 Milwaukee residents.

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, similar to 2009 and 2010, the largest proportion of use of force incidents occurred in District 7 (26.0%), the smallest proportion occurred in District 1 (6.6%). As for aldermanic district, District 15 had the largest share of use of force incidents (15.8%), while District 11 had the smallest share of incidents (2.4%) (see Table 4).

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

Police District	Frequency	Percentage
1	32	6.6
2	58	12.0
3	87	18.0
4	53	11.0
5	84	17.4
6	44	9.1
7	126	26.0
Total	484	100.1

Note: Missing data (10 cases) are excluded from the analyses; percentage does not sum to 100 due to rounding.

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

Aldermanic District	Frequency	Percentage
1	28	6.1
2	23	5.0
3	21	4.6
4	50	10.9
5	20	4.4
6	50	10.9
7	70	15.3
8	19	4.2
9	16	3.5
10	17	3.7
11	11	2.4
12	29	6.3
13	15	3.3
14	16	3.5
15	72	15.8
Total	457	99.9

Note: Missing data (37 cases) are excluded from the analyses; percentage does not sum to 100 due to rounding.

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	1842	31	59.4	32	42775	1337
2	5778	54	107.0	58	82631	1425
3	7932	73	108.7	87	88155	1013
4	5167	44	117.4	53	94118	1776
5	6221	72	86.4	84	72857	867
6	3228	38	84.9	44	110944	2521
7	6444	114	56.5	126	105494	837
Total	36612	426	--	484	596974	--

Notes: (a) Total arrests made excludes 272 arrests because the arrest could not be placed in a district due to the address of the arrest being unknown or unmatched; (b) 9 missing cases (unknown district); (c) 10 missing cases (unknown district); (d) Population based on 2000 U.S. Census data; (e) figures are rounded.

If use of force incidents were simply and completely 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; districts that have more population would have more use of force incidents). 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. In District 7, there were, on average, 57 arrests for each arrest that involved the use of force (i.e., 1.77% of arrests involved the use of force), and 837 residents for each use of force incident. These figures are higher than in any other district. However, in an absolute and relative sense, the use of force in arrest situations is a very uncommon event, even in District 7. A similar

pattern was noted in 2010 and 2009 with District 7 although the differences among District 7 and the other districts are less pronounced in 2011 than in the previous years.

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	14563	4059	18622	32	1.72
2	21116	9336	30452	58	1.90
3	31858	12391	44249	87	1.97
4	28633	11979	40612	53	1.31
5	27477	10017	37494	84	2.24
6	28073	3971	32044	44	1.37
7	36838	9327	46165	126	2.73
Total	188558	61080	249638	484	1.89 (mean)

Notes: (a) 998 missing cases (the stop could not be placed in a district due to the address of the stop being unknown or unmatched); (b) 58 missing cases (the interview could not be placed in a district due to the address of the stop being unknown or unmatched); (c) 10 missing cases (unknown district).

Once again, in Table 6 it is seen that the use of force is most frequent in District 7 (2.73 use of force incidents per 1,000 police-citizen contacts – i.e., traffic stops and subject stops) compared to other districts. However, use of force in District 7 is much less frequent than in previous years. Specifically, in 2010 there were 3.55 use of force incidents per 1,000 police-

citizen contacts in District 7; in 2009, District 7 had 6.05 use of force incidents per 1,000 police-citizen contacts.

Despite the decline in frequency in use of force in relation to police-citizen contacts, and the overall rarity of use of force incidents, 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, compared to other districts (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 (traffic stops and subject stops), compared to other districts. The possible reasons for this disparity cannot be determined definitively with the data analyzed here.¹¹

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) other characteristics of use of force incidents, and (4) force used against dogs.

Characteristics of Officers and Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The 494 use of force incidents involved 422 officers. Most incidents (361 out of 494; 73.1%) involved one officer, 28 incidents (out of 494; 5.7%) involved three or more officers. With regard to the number of officers involved in the incidents, 264 officers (of the 422 officers; 62.5%) were involved in just one incident, 95 officers (22.5%) were involved in two incidents,

¹¹ Some possible explanations may be that (1) 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, (2) that citizens are more likely to be combative or resistive in some districts than in others, (3) that officers are more likely to use force in some districts than in others, and/or (4) that force is more likely to be reported by officers in some districts than in others.

38 officers (9.0%) were involved in three incidents, and 25 officers (5.9%) were involved in more than three incidents. The most incidents an officer was involved in were seven (2 officers). These figures are similar to 2010 and 2009.

In 94 percent of the incidents, the first officer¹² involved was male, in 70 percent the officer was white, in 98 percent of incidents the officer was in uniform, in 99 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 13 percent of the incidents, an officer involved in the incident was injured. These characteristics are similar to those in 2010 and 2009.

The 456 incidents involved 465 subjects.¹³ Most incidents (95.2%; 434 out of 456) involved just one subject, 22 out of 456 incidents (4.8%) involved two or more subjects. Four subjects were involved in multiple incidents.

In 86 percent of the incidents, the first subject involved was male, in 75 percent the subject was Black, in 48 percent the subject was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the average age of the first subject was 30 years (with a range of 14 to 66), and in 91 percent of incidents the subject was injured with the greatest proportion of these injuries classified as “minor.” In two incidents, the injuries sustained by the subject were fatal. In 12 percent of incidents, the subject was armed with a weapon (not including personal weapons). In 77 percent of the incidents the subject had a previous criminal record. In 88 percent of incidents, the officer noted that the subject resisted arrest. These characteristics are similar to those in 2010 and 2009.

¹² Due to the structure of the data, most descriptive statements regarding the officers and subjects relate only to the first officer or subject involved.

¹³ In an additional 12 cases the name of the subject was not provided. Excluded from these analyses are the 38 incidents that involved a dog.

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 the use of an ECD only, chemical agent only, firearm only, bodily force and chemical agent, and bodily force and ECD.

Table 7. Type of Force Used

Type of Forced Used	Frequency	Percentage
Bodily Force Only	167	33.8
ECD Only	92	18.6
Chemical Agent Only	68	13.8
Firearm Only	50	10.1
Baton Only	4	.8
Bodily Force and Chemical	47	9.5
Bodily Force and ECD	34	6.9
ECD and Chemical	8	1.6
Firearm and ECD	1	.2
Other Combination (no firearm)	23	4.7
Total	494	100.0

Note: No missing data.

In total, 51 incidents (10.3%) involved the use of a firearm,¹⁴ and as discussed below, 36 of these incidents involved a dog (one incident that involved a dog involved the use of an ECD, one involved the use of a chemical agent). Clearly, in a relative and absolute sense, the use of a firearm in a use of force incident was a rare event. The most notable proportional pattern of change from 2009 to 2011 with regard to the type of force used is that the use of a chemical agent (as a single category or in combination with other types of force) has steadily declined in frequency while the use of an ECD has steadily increased in frequency.¹⁵

¹⁴ Pointing or aiming a firearm (or ECD) without discharging the weapon was not a reportable use of force category.

¹⁵ In 2010, 140 incidents (27.4%) involved the use of a chemical agent and 117 incidents (22.9%) involved the use of an ECD. In 2009, 141 incidents (31%) involved the use of a chemical agent and 65 incidents (14%) involved the use of an ECD.

It is worthwhile to note that certain forms of force were more likely than others to lead to “major” or fatal injuries to subjects. Fifteen incidents (of the 456 incidents that involved a subject, not a dog) resulted in 15 subjects sustaining major or fatal injuries. Eight of these incidents involved police use of a firearm, six involved bodily force, and one involved bodily force and a baton. Analyses also reveal that certain forms of force were more likely than others to lead to officer injuries. Specifically, officers were more likely to be injured when using bodily force than when using a chemical agent or an ECD. In addition, the more officers involved in the incident, the more likely more forms of force were used in the incident and the more likely that more officers were injured in the incident.

Table 8 shows how firearms were used in use of force incidents. In the rare instance that a firearm was used, it was most commonly used for the purpose of neutralizing a dog.

Table 8. Incidents Where the Force Used was a Firearm

Target of Firearm	Frequency	Percentage	Result
Dog(s)	36	70.6	32 dogs hit
Subject	15	29.4	8 subjects hit
Total Number of Incidents	51	100.0	--

Note: No missing data.

Of the 15 incidents that involved the intentional use of a firearm against a subject,¹⁶ two involved fatal injuries and five involved non-fatal injuries. In seven of the 15 incidents, a subject was shot at but not was struck. In one incident, a subject was non-fatally injured by the police but then he fatally shot himself. Of the 15 incidents, ten involved a subject who was armed (8 with a gun, 2 with a knife). In three other instances the officer involved believed that the subject

¹⁶ In 2010, 12 incidents involved the use of a firearm against a subject. In 2009, 12 incidents involved the use of a firearm against a subject.

was armed with a gun. These 15 incidents involved a variety of situations; most frequent were calls about a suspicious subject or trouble with a subject.

Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Along with the situational characteristics of use of force incidents that have already been discussed, two additional characteristics are worthy of mention. First, as seen in Table 9, most often use of force incidents occurred as a result of officers conducting investigations or while at calls for service, followed by subject stops and traffic stops. As discussed earlier, given the absolute volume of police-citizen contacts in these and other situations, the relative rarity of use of force incidents is significant. In addition, approximately equal proportions of use of force incidents occurred at night as during daylight. These characteristics are generally similar to the incidents in 2010 and 2009.

Table 9. Other Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Characteristic	freq	% (a)
Activity That Led to Incident (b)	340	100.0
Investigation/Call for Service	167	49.1
Subject Stop	74	21.8
Traffic Stop	37	10.9
Other	62	18.2
Time/Lighting of Incident (c)	489	100.1
Dark/Night	216	44.2
Light/Daytime	235	48.1
Dusk/Dawn	38	7.8

Notes: (a) Percentages may not tally to 100 due to rounding; (b) 154 missing cases; (c) 5 missing cases.

Force Used Against Dogs

Of the 494 incidents of force that occurred in 2011, 38 involved force being used against at least one dog.¹⁷ These 38 incidents involved 39 dogs (one incident involved two dogs). Thirty-seven of the 39 dogs were shot or were shot at (one was sprayed with a chemical irritant; one was struck with an ECD). Four dogs were shot at but not hit. In total, of the 39 dogs upon which force was used, 17 died.

Of the 39 dogs, 33 (84.6%) were Pit Bulls, three (7.7%) were German Shepards, and three (7.7%) were other breeds. With regard to the circumstances in which force was used against dogs, the most common was when officers were responding to a call for service, followed by a loose dog complaint, and a search warrant situation (see Table 10). In two of the 38 incidents, an officer was bit by the dog prior to force being used against the dog (in both instances the officer was bit in the arm).

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

Circumstance	Frequency	Percentage
Call for Service/Investigation	13	34.2
Loose Dog Complaint	11	28.9
Search Warrant	7	18.4
Traffic Stop/Accident Investigation	3	7.9
Field Interview	3	7.9
Other	1	2.6
TOTALS	38	99.9

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.

¹⁷ For comparison, in 2010, there were 35 incidents that involved at least one dog. In 2009, there were 43 incidents that involved at least one dog.

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. Since 2009, and as recommended, numerous significant improvements have been made that enhance the value and usefulness of these data. In particular, the amount of missing data in the file has decreased substantially and the completeness of the narratives associated with the reports has greatly improved. However, several additional changes 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, several modifications should be made to how the data are coded. With regard to officer and subject injuries, for each officer and subject injured in each incident, separate variables/fields that specify the “nature of the most serious injury sustained” should be included. The measurement scheme presently provided in the reporting system is simply too limited to be of use in the analysis. For officer injuries, the following values could be used: (1) sprain/strain, (2) tore ligaments/tendons, (3) cut, puncture, abrasion, laceration, (4) bruise, black eye, contusion, (5) broken bones, dislocations, broken teeth, (6) eye/ respiratory issues, (7) human bite, (8) dog bite, (9) contact with infectious disease, (10) knife wound, (11) gunshot wound, (12) other pain, and (13) other. For subject injuries, a similar measurement scheme could be used: (1) sprain/strain, (2) tore ligaments/tendons, (3) cut, puncture, abrasion, laceration, (4) bruise, black eye, contusion, (5) broken bones, dislocations, broken teeth, (6) eye/ respiratory issues, (7) dog bite, (8) gunshot wound, (9) ECD puncture only, (10) other pain (11) other.

Second, several additional items of information should be captured and coded. In particular:

- During the incident was an officer assaulted (i.e., was an officer intentionally hit, kicked, bit, shot, stabbed, or spat upon)? (0) no, (1) yes.
- If injured, did the officer receive medical treatment at or before the time of the use of force report was completed? (0) no, (1) yes.
- If injured, did the subject receive medical treatment at or before the time of the use of force report was completed? (0) no, (1) yes
- With regard to the force used in the incident, the first and last type of force used in the incident should be specified as separate variables/fields. This specification will allow for an examination of the efficacy of the various forms of force in relation to officer and suspect injuries, and the termination of the incident.
- Also for analysis purposes, it would be useful to have accurate and up-to-date data on the height and weight of officers who used force, and more complete data on subject height and weight.

These improvements may allow for a more complete and detailed understanding of use of force in the MPD.

Summary

This report is part of a continuing effort to better understand use of force incidents in the Milwaukee Police Department. Based on an analysis of the 494 reportable use of force incidents that occurred between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, the following summary statements can be made:

- There were 494 use of force incidents in 2011 (compared to 459 in 2009 and 511 in 2010).
- There was an average of 1.35 use of force incidents per day in 2011.
- There were 89.4 arrests for every one arrest that involved the use of force.

- Approximately 1.18 percent of arrests involved the use of force in 2011 which represents minimal change from previous years (i.e., 1.15% in 2010 and 1.07% in 2009).
- There were 5,123 traffic stops for each traffic stop that involved the use of force.
- Approximately .02 percent of traffic stops involved the use of force.
- There were 826 subject stops for each subject stop that involved force.
- Approximately .12 percent of subject stops involved the use of force.
- Approximately 26 percent of MPD sworn officers were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2011.
- There was one incident of force for every 1,204 persons in Milwaukee in 2011.
- The largest proportion of use of force incidents in 2011 occurred in Police District 7 (26.0%) and in Aldermanic District 7 (15.3%).
- Similar to previous years, there was 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 (traffic stops and field interviews). In spite of this variation, use of force was a rare event in all districts.
- The 494 use of force incidents involved 422 officers. Approximately 62 percent of these officers were involved in just one incident; approximately six percent of the officers were involved in more than three incidents.
- The most common type of force was bodily force only (33.8%) followed by ECD only (18.6%) and chemical agent only (13.8%). Compared to 2010 and 2009, use of a chemical agent (as a single category or in combination with other types of force) has steadily declined in frequency while the use of an ECD has steadily increased in

frequency. This represents the most notable change over the three years in which data were analyzed.

- Fifty-one incidents (10.3%) involved a firearm; in 36 of these incidents (70.6%) the firearm was used to shoot (or shoot at) a dog.
- Approximately eight percent of incidents (38 of 494) involved force being used against one or more dogs (and 36 of the 38 involved a firearm). Most of the dogs were Pit Bulls and the largest proportion these incidents related to a call for service.

Based on the analyses conducted here, and similar to previous years, 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 during day-time.

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 compare baseline metrics to monitor use of force incidents.