

**AN OVERVIEW OF MILWAUKEE POLICE
DEPARTMENT USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS:
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO JUNE 30, 2012**



**REPORT OF THE
FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION**

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the number and nature of “use of force” incidents recorded by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) from January 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012. More detailed analyses of annual baseline measures will be provided in the 2012 year-end report. As 2012 represents the fourth year in which MPD use of force incidents have been analyzed, the 2012 year-end report will provide comparisons of use of force incidents from 2009 to 2012 in order to identify patterns and trends in incidents.

As with the previous interim and annual reports, the data analyzed here were contained in the MPD AIM (Administrative Investigations Management) System. The AIMS database contains a comprehensive list of variables on each use of force incident recorded by the MPD. Some data relate directly to the incident (e.g., date of incident, district of incident, number of officers involved in incident) but most of the data relate 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 variables for each officer (up to five officers) and each subject (up to two subjects) involved in the incident. The AIMS data were manually converted to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) format for analysis.¹ Along with the entry of data into the AIM System for each use of force incident, narrative descriptions of each incident were also completed by supervisory officers at the time of the incident. In preparing this report, these narratives were reviewed and used to verify and, in some cases, supplement the quantitative data in AIMS. The narratives for the first six months

¹ The creation of this database required substantial work and knowledge of the intricacies of the AIM System and SPSS software. This work was performed by Joseph Lawler of the Fire and Police Commission.

of 2012 comprised 547 pages of text. Additional data on the number of arrests made by MPD officers were obtained separately from the MPD.

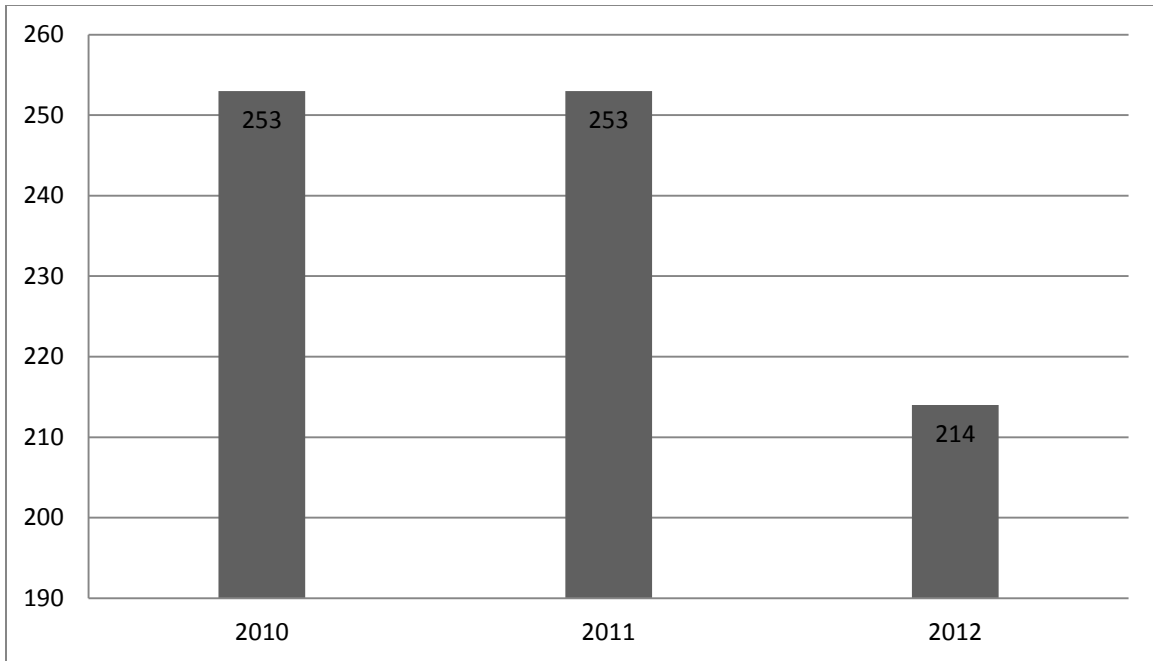
Frequency of Use of Force Incidents

From January 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012 there were 222 reportable use of force incidents recorded by the MPD.² Of the 222 incidents, seven were for the purpose of euthanizing an injured animal (3 deer, 4 raccoons). One incident was completely accidental and did not involve a subject in any way (i.e., an accidental discharge of an ECD in a district station). As these eight incidents are fundamentally different from other use of force incidents in purpose and intent of the force, these incidents are excluded from all subsequent analyses. Accordingly, 214 use of force incidents are analyzed in this report (compared to 253 incidents during each of the first six months of 2011 and 2010; the 2012 figure represent a decline of approximately 15% from 2011 and 2010 levels; see Figure 1). Of the 214 incidents, 15 involved force being used against one or more dogs. These incidents are included in most of the analyses and are also analyzed separately later in the report.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the 214 incidents by month. As seen in Table 1, there was variation in the frequency of incidents across month, but no pattern is clear. The mean number of incidents per month was 35.7, with a high of 45 incidents in January

² 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.

Figure 1. Use of Force Incidents, 2010-2012 (January – June)



and June and a low of 22 incidents in February. There was an average of approximately 1.19 use of force incidents per day from January to June 2012 (compared to 1.40 incidents per day during the first six months of 2010 and 2011).

Table 1. Monthly distribution of Incidents

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	TOTAL
45	22	36	28	38	45	214

Note: No missing data.

Frequency of Use of Force Incidents and Arrests

Because most use of force incidents occur during arrests, it is important to consider the number of use of force incidents in relation to the number of arrests made. Further, in this calculation, it is reasonable to include only the use of force incidents that involved an arrest. Again, from January 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012, there were 214 reportable use of force incidents. Of these 214 incidents, 199 involved a person who could have been arrested (the other 15 incidents involved a dog). Of the 199 incidents where someone could have been arrested, in 176 of them a subject was actually arrested. Also during this time period, MPD officers made a total of 18,497 arrests.³ Accordingly, for each arrest where force was used, there were 105.1 arrests where force was *not* used ($18,497 / 176 = 105.1$). Overall, less than 1% (.95%) of all arrests involved the use of force ($176 / 18,497 * 100 = .95\%$). During the same time period in 2011, 1.15% of arrests involved the use of force; in the first six months of 2010, 1.12% of arrests involved the use of force; and during the first six months of 2009, 1.05% of all arrests involved the use of force.⁴

Table 2 shows the results of analyses on use of force incidents where an arrest was made in relation to the total number of arrests made, by month.

³ 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.

⁴ From January 1 to June 30, 2011, MPD officers made 18,891 arrests and 217 of them involved force. From January 1 to June 30, 2010, MPD officers made 19,987 arrests and 223 involved force. During the January 1 to June 30, 2009 time period, MPD officers made 16,934 arrests and 178 of them involved force.

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

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	TOTAL
Number of Use of Force Incidents That Involved an Arrest	40	19	32	23	33	29	176
Total Number of Arrests Made	3163	2979	3306	3089	3209	2751	18497
% of Arrests that Involved Use of Force	1.26%	.63%	.97%	.74%	1.03%	1.05%	.95%

In an absolute sense, there is minimal variation in the percentage of arrests that involved force by month, and again, no pattern is clear. Interestingly, and as expected, there is a moderate correlation between the number of use of force incidents that involved an arrest and the total number of arrests, by month ($r = .42$). 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 are related to more use of force incidents, fewer arrests are related to fewer use of force incidents.

Characteristics of Officers and Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The 214 use of force incidents involved 230 different officers. Most incidents involved one officer (150 incidents out of 214; 70%) and one subject (189 incidents out of 199; 95%).⁵

In 92% of incidents, the first officer involved was male, in 66% the officer was white, in 96% the officer was the rank of police officer, in 98% of the incidents the officer was on duty, and in 99% the officer was in uniform. The average (mean) age of the first officer involved was 36.7 years and the first officer's mean length of service was 9.7 years.⁶

In 84% of the incidents, the first subject involved was male, in 73% the subject was Black. The average (mean) age of the first subject involved in the incident was 28.7 years. In 39% the subject was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, and in 88% of the incidents the subject was arrested. The most common charge was "resisting/obstructing an officer." In 73% of incidents, the first subject had a criminal record. The characteristics of officers and subjects involved in use of force incidents did not differ significantly from previous six month reporting and analysis periods.

⁵ In this section, analyses relating to "subjects" do not include incidents involving dogs (n = 15).

⁶ The statistical statements relating to officer (and subject) characteristics are not unambiguous. Ideally, one would like to be able to state the overall representation of officers who were involved in use of force incidents (e.g., "The average age of all officers involved in use of force incidents was 36.7 years"). Rather, due to the structure of the database and that each officer involved in the incident is listed as a separate variable, the closest corresponding statement is that "the average age *of the first officer* involved in use of force incidents was 36.7 years." The latter statement is less meaningful than the first.

The Type of Force Used in Use of Force Incidents

With regard to the type of force used, it is seen in Table 3 that the largest proportion of incidents involved bodily force only (41.6%), followed by ECD only (18.7%), and chemical agent only (12.9%). Sixteen incidents (7.7%) involved a firearm.

The most significant change in the type of force used from previous years is the increased use of an ECD, alone or in combination with bodily force. The use of a chemical agent (alone or in combination with other force) has correspondingly decreased, as has, in 2012 in particular, the use of a firearm (results not tabled).⁷

Table 3. Type of Force Used

Type of Force Used	Frequency	Percentage
Bodily Force Only	87	41.6
ECD only	39	18.7
Chemical Agent Only	27	12.9
Bodily Force and Chemical	20	9.6
Firearm Only	16	7.7
Bodily Force and ECD	9	4.3
Baton Only	2	1.0
Other Combination (no firearm)	9	4.3
Total	209	100.1

Note: Missing data (5 cases) are excluded from the analyses; percentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

Firearm Force

Given the absolute and relative seriousness of force delivered via a firearm, additional details about these incidents are provided here. Of the 16 incidents in which a

⁷ During the first six months of 2009, 27 incidents involved a firearm; in 2010, 18 incidents involved a firearm, and in 2011 there were 26 incidents that involved a firearm.

firearm was used, one involved a (non-fatal) shooting of a subject. The other 15 incidents involved the shooting of one or more dogs.⁸ The one incident that involved a subject stemmed from a “man with gun” complaint (this person was armed with a shotgun at the time of the shooting).

Of the 15 shooting incidents that involved a dog, 13 involved one dog and two incidents involved two dogs (17 dogs total). The 15 incidents that involved a dog resulted in nine dogs being killed and one dog being non-fatally injured. The other seven dogs were shot at but were not hit. All 17 dogs were Pit Bulls. Four of the incidents related to a call for service or other assignment that did not involve a dog, one incident involved an off-duty officer who was going for a walk, one was associated with a traffic stop, and nine incidents involved a dog-related complaint. In four of the incidents, a citizen was bit by the dog; in no incidents was an officer bit by the dog.

Location of Use of Force Incidents

Two variables are provided in the AIM System database that relate to the geographic location of the incidents: police district (Table 4) and aldermanic district (Table 5).

Similar to 2009, 2010, and 2011, the largest proportion of use of force incidents occurred in Police District 7 (33.7%), the smallest proportion occurred in District 6 (6.8%) and District 1 (7.3%) (Table 4).

⁸ From January to June 2009, of the 27 incidents that involved the use of a firearm, five involved a subject, 21 involved a dog, and one involved a subject and a dog. From January to June 2010, of the 18 incidents that involved the use of a firearm, four involved a subject and 14 involved a dog. From January to June 2011, of the 26 incidents that involved a firearm, nine involved a subject and 17 involved a dog.

As for aldermanic district, District 7 had the largest share of use of force incidents (16.8% of the total), while District 11 had the smallest share (1.0%) (Table 5). This pattern is similar to that reported in previous years.

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

Police District	Frequency	Percentage
1	15	7.3
2	17	8.3
3	38	18.5
4	30	14.6
5	22	10.7
6	14	6.8
7	69	33.7
Total	205	99.9

Note: Missing data (9 cases) are excluded from the analyses; percentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 5. Location of Use of Force Incidents: Aldermanic District

Aldermanic District	Frequency	Percentage
1	18	9.1
2	19	9.6
3	10	5.1
4	16	8.1
5	3	1.5
6	18	9.1
7	33	16.8
8	7	3.6
9	11	5.6
10	10	5.1
11	2	1.0
12	6	3.0
13	8	4.1
14	8	4.1
15	28	14.2
Total	197	100.0

Note: Missing data (17 cases) are excluded from the analyses.

Conclusion

Based on an analysis of the 214 incidents that occurred between January 1, 2012 and June 30, 2012, it is seen that incidents were relatively stable across month, were infrequent in relation to the number of arrests made, involved relatively few officers, and most involved officers using bodily force only. Most incidents involved white male police officers who were on duty. Most incidents involved Black male subjects with a prior criminal record and, in the large majority of incidents, the subjects involved were arrested. Finally, the largest proportion of incidents occurred in Police District 7 and in Aldermanic District 7. In these ways, the incidents in the first six months of 2012 were quite similar to those that occurred during of the first six months of 2009, 2010 and of 2011.

It is important to highlight that the number of use of force incidents declined substantially during the first six months of 2012 compared to the first six months of 2009, 2010, and 2011. In relation to arrests, use of force is a very unlikely event so far in 2012, just as it was in previous years.

In addition, along with the decline in the overall number of force incidents, it is also important to note that the number of incidents that involved a firearm also declined in frequency. Once again, from January to June 2012, one incident involved the use of a firearm against a subject and 15 involved the use of a firearm against a dog. During the first six months of 2011, nine incidents involved the use of a firearm against a subject, 17 against a dog. During the first six months of 2010, four incidents involved the use of a firearm against a subject and 14 involved the use of a firearm against a dog. In the same time period in 2009, there were six incidents that involved a subject and 21 that involved a dog. These are all relatively small numbers but should be closely monitored for emerging patterns or trends. In addition, the use of an ECD (by itself or in combination with other forms of force) continues to represent an increasing proportion of all use of force incidents.

Finally, the quality of the data contained in the AIM System remains high compared to those data first analyzed in 2009. The narrative reports are thoroughly written and the amount of missing data in the database is minimal. This has implications regarding the quality of the findings and the confidence one can have in the conclusions drawn from the data.