

AN ANALYSIS OF USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS IN THE MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2025



Report of the
Fire and Police Commission

200 East Wells Street
City Hall, Room 705
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 286-5000

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

May 1, 2026

Prepared by:

Barbara Cooley, Research and Policy Analyst

Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission

City of Milwaukee

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Types and Frequency of Force.....	5
Number of Force Incidents.....	5
Types of Force Used by Officers	6
Frequency of Force by Month of Year	7
Frequency of Force by Time of Day.....	7
Frequency of Force by Aldermanic District	8
Frequency of Force by Police District	8
Use of Force, Arrests, and Police District	9
Use of Force, Calls for Service, and Police District	9
Descriptive Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents.....	10
Characteristics of Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents	10
Characteristics of Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents.....	10
Injuries to Subjects in Use of Force Incidents	10
Injuries to Officers in Use of Force Incidents	11
Deadly Force Used Against People.....	11
Deadly and Other Force Used Against Dogs.....	11
Accidental Use of Force Incidents.....	11
Use of Force Internal Investigations	12
Summary	13

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of use of force incidents recorded by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. The data are based on "Use of Force Reports" completed by supervisory officers after an MPD officer uses force. Note that in 2025, the MPD transitioned from the AIM reporting system to the Benchmark reporting system in October 2025. Data from both systems have been combined for this analysis.

In total, there were 1,871 use of force incidents in the MPD in 2025. Of this total, 7 were accidental and 23 involved an animal only (10 were euthanized deer). These 30 incidents are excluded from the aggregate analysis in this report because they are fundamentally different from the other types of force. Thus, the aggregate analysis in this report is based on 1,841 incidents. Of these 1,841 incidents, 986 involved "pointing and/or displaying a firearm only" or other nonphysical methods. The remaining 855 incidents involved other types of force (e.g., hands-on physical force, the discharge of weapons). Most of the analyses in this report are based on this subset of 855 incidents.

Of the subset of 855 incidents, a total of 820 people were arrested in 715 incidents.

Other key findings based on the analysis of the subset of 855 incidents include:

- The most common type of force used by officers was "bodily force only."
- Of the subset of incidents, 46% resulted in injuries to that person. When injuries were sustained, 91% were classified as "minor".
- There were 13 incidents that involved a firearm discharge at a person. In 5 incidents a subject sustained a fatal gunshot injury.
- There were 13 incidents that involved force being used against one or more dogs only.
- Police Districts 7 and 3 had the most use of force incidents in 2025 and combined accounted for approximately 39% of all force incidents in the city in 2025 (40% in 2024).
- There were 17 use of force incidents that prompted investigations.

The report elaborates on these and other findings.

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of use of force incidents recorded by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. The report is part of a continuing systematic effort that began in 2009 to provide an understanding of use of force incidents in the MPD.

The data analyzed here are based on "Use of Force Reports" completed by supervisory officers after an MPD officer uses force. MPD officers are required to notify a supervisor when they use certain forms of force. The supervisor is then required to collect the facts of the incident and complete a Use of Force Report. In October 2025, the MPD transitioned from the AIM (Automated Incident Management) system to the Benchmark Analytics system. Data from both systems have been combined for this report.

The Use of Force Report shall be completed by a supervisory officer when a department member:

- (a) Discharges a firearm;
- (b) Points a firearm at a person;
- (c) Uses a baton to strike a subject or animal in the line of duty;
- (d) Discharges an irritant, chemical, or inflammatory agent;
- (e) Deploys a Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW), to include contact stun and probe deployment;
- (f) Department canine bites a person (except during a training session);
- (g) Forcible blood draws requiring use of force to obtain a sample where a subject claims injury or is injured as a result of police action;
- (h) Uses bodily force that involves focused strikes, diffused strikes, or decentralizations to the ground;
- (i) Uses any type of force in which a person is injured or claims injury, whether or not the injury is immediately visible;
- (j) Draws or displays a firearm to effect an arrest or seizure of a person [this category was removed from SOP 460 in 2024.¹ Pointing a firearm remains a recordable use of force. Also, drawing or displaying a firearm continued to be reported somewhat during 2025 even though it had been removed from SOP 460.]

¹ As a result of the addition and later removal of this use of force category, the aggregate number of force incidents from 2021 through 2024 is not comparable to years prior to 2021 when drawing or displaying a firearm was not required to be reported. In addition, beginning January 1, 2013, all incidents that involved "bodily force only" were required to be reported regardless of whether the subject reported an injury; prior to January 1, 2013 "bodily force only" incidents that did not result in injury or a complaint of injury were not required to be reported. As a result of this policy change, some of the data from 2013 onward are not comparable to the data from 2009 to 2012.

Types and Frequency of Force

Number of Force Incidents

From January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, 1,871 use of force incidents were recorded by the MPD. Of these 1,871 incidents, 7 were accidental (e.g., service revolver or ECD fired accidentally, not during an interaction) and 23 involved an animal only. These 30 incidents are excluded from the aggregate analysis, leaving 1,841 incidents. Figure 1 shows the total number of force incidents in 2021 to 2025, the full years in which "pointing and/or display of firearm only" incidents are included in the data (although not fully in 2025, which may partly account for the reduction from 2024).

Figure 1, Total Use of Force Incidents, 2021-2025

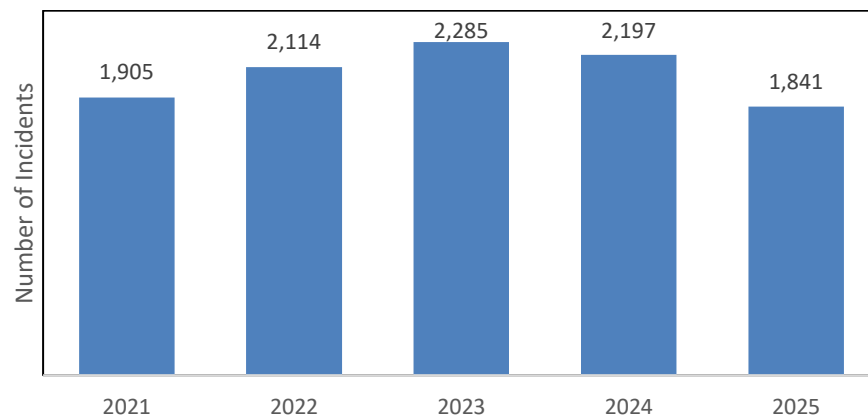


Figure 2 shows the number of force incidents in years 2013 to 2025 when "pointing and/or display of firearm only" incidents are excluded from the data. In 2025, there were 855 incidents of force, excluding those that involved "pointing and/or display of firearm only."

Figure 2. Use of Force Incidents (Excluding "Pointing/Display Firearm Only") 2013-2025

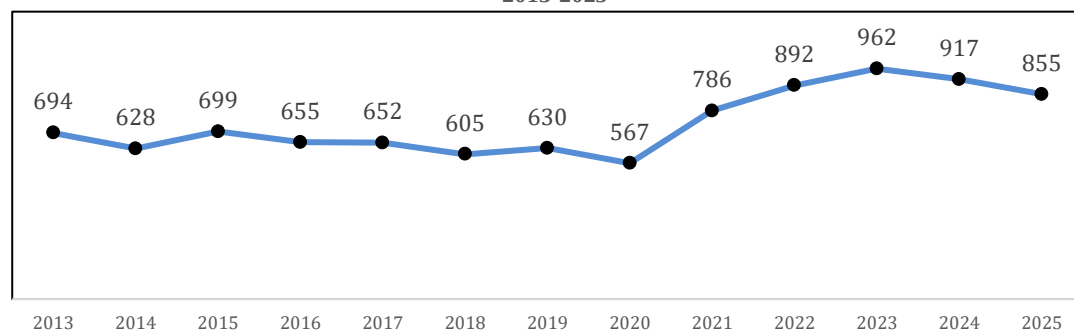


Figure 2 Note: The 2020 total excludes 45 incidents that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only (the policy to require the reporting of "pointing and/or displaying a firearm only" was implemented December 2020). The 2021 total excludes 1,116 incidents, 2022 total excludes 1,222, 2023 total excludes 1,323, 2024 total excludes 1,280, and 2025 total excludes 986 incidents.

Types of Force Used by Officers

Table 1 shows the number of incidents in which each type of force was used. The largest proportion of incidents (53.8%) involved "pointing firearm." The second most common type of force used by officers was "bodily force" (32.9%). The total of uses of force (2,209) is greater than the total number of incidents (1,817) because more than one type of force might be used per incident.

Table 1. Types of Force Used by Officers, 2025

Types of Force Used, Alone or in Combination	Frequency	Percentage
Pointing/displaying firearm	1,188	53.8%
Bodily force	726	32.9%
CEW* discharge	134	6.1%
Handcuffing	104	4.7%
OC spray** discharge	34	1.5%
Firearm discharge	13	0.6%
Baton	8	0.4%
Forced blood draw	1	0.0%
Canine bite	1	0.0%
Total uses in all incidents	2,209	100.0

Note: Total percentage does not equal 100 due to rounding; *CEW refers to Conducted Energy Weapon (Taser); **OC refers to Oleoresin Capsicum spray.

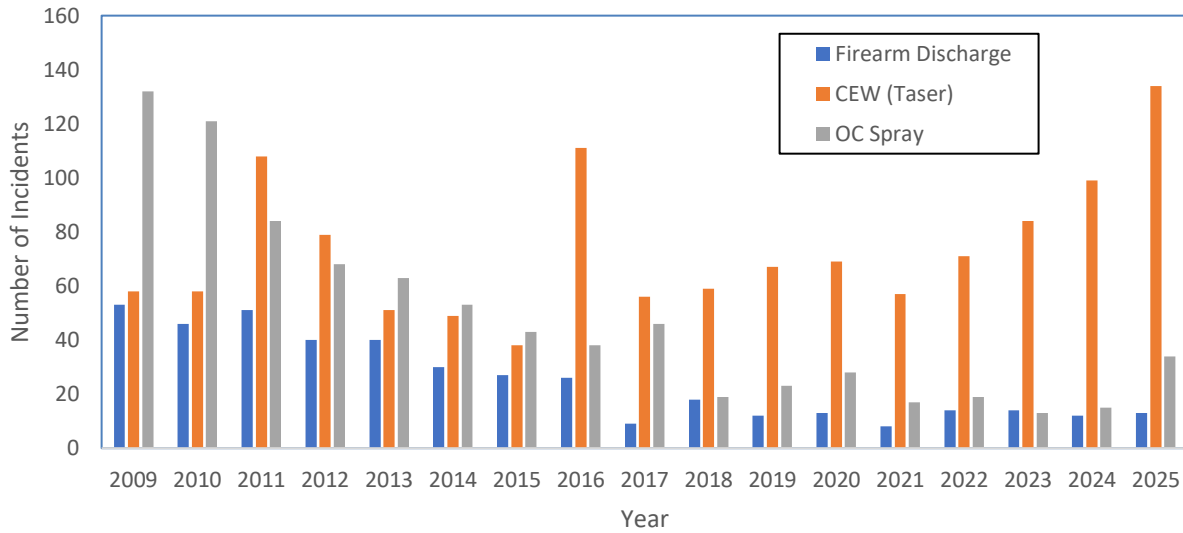
In total, 13 incidents involved the discharge of a firearm (highlighted in bold in Table 1). Clearly, in a relative and absolute sense, the discharge of a firearm was a rare event. This has been the case since 2017.

Table 2 and Figure 3 detail the use of firearm, OC spray and CEW from 2009 through 2025.

Table 2. Firearm, CEW, OC Spray Force Used, by Year (Number of Incidents)

Type of Force Used	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Firearm Discharge Alone or with Other	53	46	51	40	40	30	27	26	9	18	12	13	8	14	14	12	13
CEW Alone or with Other (not with firearm discharge)	58	58	108	79	51	49	38	111	56	59	67	69	57	71	84	99	134
OC Spray Alone or with Other (not with CEW or firearm discharge)	132	121	84	68	63	53	43	38	46	19	23	28	17	19	13	15	34

Figure 3. Firearm Discharge, OC Spray and CEW Incidents by Year



Frequency of Force by Month of Year

With a total of 855 incidents involving a person and not including incidents of “display or pointing of firearm only” occurring from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, there was an average of approximately 71 use of force incidents per month, a drop from 2024 (83). Table 3 provides a breakdown of incidents by month. The largest proportion of incidents occurred in June.

Table 3. Use of Force Incidents by Month

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
51	73	78	70	75	84	82	76	74	70	58	64	855

Table 4. 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	42	65	69	59	68	73	69	63	67	53	35	52	715
Total number of arrests made	1,126	1,041	1,205	1,173	1,125	1,126	1,197	1,174	1,191	1,234	1,137	1,053	13,772

Frequency of Force by Time of Day

With 855 incidents occurring from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, there was an average of approximately 2.3 use of force incidents per day.

Table 5. Use of Force Incidents by Time of Day

Time / Shift	Frequency	Percentage
8:01am-4pm / Day	218	26%
4:01pm-12am / Early	417	49%
12:01am-8am / Late	215	25%
Total	855	100%

Frequency of Force by Aldermanic District

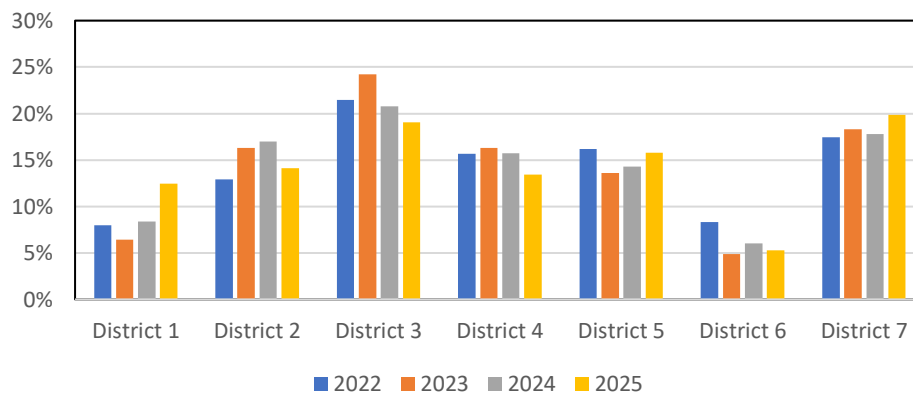
Although this was included in prior reports, the Benchmark system does not categorize use of force incidents by aldermanic district. Therefore, the results would not be comparable to prior years and have been omitted in this report.

Frequency of Force by Police District

Table 6. Location of Use of Force Incidents: Police District

Police District	Frequency	Percentage
1	106	12%
2	120	14%
3	162	19%
4	114	13%
5	134	16%
6	45	5%
7	169	20%
Total	850	100%

In 2025, District 7 accounted for 20% of all use of force incidents in the city, followed by District 3 (19%). Five incidents did not specify a district.

Figure 4. Percentage of Use of Force Incidents by Police District 2022-2025

Use of Force, Arrests, and Police District

Given the variation in the number of force incidents across police district (Table 7), it may be useful to explore possible corresponding variation in the frequency of force in relation to arrests across districts. Table 8 shows the total number of subjects arrested, the number of subjects that were arrested in use of force incidents, and the percentage of arrests that involved use of force for each district in 2025 (subjects arrested in force incidents $\div$ total subjects arrested $\times$ 100 = percent of arrests that involved force). Arrests made in “displayed/pointed firearm only” incidents are not included..

Table 7. Arrests that Involved the Use of Force by Police District, 2025

Police District	Total Arrests	Use of Force Arrests	Percent of Total
1	820	71	9%
2	1,925	99	5%
3	2,524	137	5%
4	2,285	88	4%
5	2,168	119	5%
6	1,177	112	10%
7	2,330	143	6%

As can be seen, in each district a small proportion of arrests involve the use of force; arrests that involve the use of force range from 4 % in District 4 to 10% in District 6. Overall, the percentage of arrests in each district that involved force was lower than in 2024.

Use of Force, Calls for Service, and Police District

Another way to explore the variation in the number of force incidents across police districts is to examine the frequency of force incidents in relation to calls for service across police districts. Table 8 shows the number of calls for service, the number of force incidents, and the calculated number of use of force incidents per 1,000 calls for service for each district in 2024 (use of force incidents $\div$ calls for service $\times$ 1,000 = number of force incidents per 1,000 calls for service). Incidents of “displayed/pointed firearm only” are not included.

Table 8. Use of Force Incidents per 1,000 Calls for Service, 2025

Police District	Total Calls for Service	Use of Force Incidents	Number of Use of Force Incidents per 1,000 Calls for Service
1	22,2635	106	4.8
2	32,101	120	3.7
3	41,913	162	3.9
4	35,977	114	3.2
5	41,163	134	3.3
6	25,190	45	1.8
7	45,294	169	3.7

Note: Dispatched calls for service data was obtained from Hexagon Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, counting distinct calls for the time period of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. Hexagon dispatched calls exclude: Priority 9 calls, calls that were not assigned, cancelled calls, proactive calls, 911 abuse calls that resulted in no police response, and calls with a null first unit arrival time. In addition, this table does not include 1,252 calls for which the district is unknown.

Descriptive Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Characteristics of Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents

There were 605 individual officers involved in the 855 incidents of force. Most were involved in one incident. At the end of 2025, MPD employed 1,146 sworn police officers. Thus, 53% of all sworn police officers were involved in incidents of force.

Gender of the officers was only available in the AIM data from January through September. For those months, 8% were female and 92% were male. In MPD as a whole, 14% were female and 86% were male. Therefore, female officers were underrepresented in use of force incidents while males were overrepresented. This is consistent with a National Policing Institute 2022 [survey](#) of studies on women in law enforcement.

There were 19 officers who discharged their firearm in 13 use of force incidents. Two of the 19 officers did so in two separate incidents.

Characteristics of Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents

The number of subjects in each incident ranged from 1 to 5. Of the 855 incidents, 834 involved just one subject. (98%, up from 86% in 2024).

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of subjects involved were male; 84% were Black, 9% were White, and 5% were Hispanic.

Injuries to Subjects in Use of Force Incidents

Overall, of the 855 incidents that involved physical force or the discharge of a weapon, in 390 (46%) the subject sustained injuries. When subjects were injured, most of the time (356 of 390; 91%) those injuries were classified as "minor." In 25 instances injuries were classified as "moderate," in 4 instances as "major," and in 5 instances as "fatal." Only firearm discharge caused fatal injuries. "Bodily force only" caused minor injuries. The most common type of injury was "complaint of pain."

Table 9. Type of Injury Sustained by Subjects, by Injury Category

Injury Category	Count
Minor	356
Moderate	25
Major	4
Fatal	5

Injuries to Officers in Use of Force Incidents

Of the 855 incidents that involved physical force or the discharge of a weapon, in 13% officers were injured. Officers were more likely to be injured when using bodily force than when using other types of force. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the time that officers were injured during use of force incidents it was during the use of bodily force alone or with another type of force; however, only 14% of all bodily force incidents resulted in injury to officers. These findings are similar to 2024.

Deadly Force Used Against People

In 2025, there were 13 incidents that involved the use of deadly force (the discharge of a firearm) against a subject. In 9 of these incidents, a subject received injuries. In each case the subject was armed with a firearm. One incident involved an off-duty officer.

- In 5 incidents, subjects sustained fatal gunshot injuries.
- In 4 incidents, subjects sustained non-fatal gunshot injuries.

Table 10. A Person as the Focus of Police Firearm Discharge, by Year (Number of Incidents)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	14	12	15	9	14	8	12	7	5	5	5	7	5	10	10	10	13

Deadly and Other Force Used Against Dogs

In 2025, 13 incidents involved some type of force being used against at least one dog. All were pit bulls with the exception of one Rottweiler. In each case force was used in self-defense except in one case when it was used to euthanize. In five incidents, gunshot wounds were fatal. One incident involved OC spray injury. Two dogs suffered severe gunshot wound injuries and one a moderate gunshot wound injury. In two incidents there were no injuries and in one there was a minor injury.

Table 11. A Dog as the Focus of Police Firearm Discharge, by Year (Number of Incidents)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	39	34	36	31	26	22	15	19	4	13	7	6	3	4	4	2	12

Unfortunately, it is difficult to put these dog-related 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 upon which force is notused.

Accidental Use of Force Incidents

There were 7 incidents in 2025 where force was used entirely accidentally. These were generally caused by mishandling a firearm, but not in the context of apprehending a suspect. None resulted in injury.

Table 12. Accidental Discharges of Police Firearms, by Year (Number of Incidents)

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
4	2	7	1	5	3	3	5	0	2	4	8	2	4	1	1	7

Use of Force Internal Investigations

As explained previously in this report, when officers notify their supervisors that they used force in an incident, supervisors are required to collect the facts about the incident via interviews with the officer(s) involved, other officers at the scene, the subject(s) involved, other witnesses at the scene, and through review of body camera and/or other video footage of the incident. The supervisor is then required to write a narrative report which contains this information. After review, in 2025, 17 officers in 15 incidents received either counseling or policy review.

In some instances, use of force incidents come to the attention of the MPD Internal Affairs Division for further investigation. Internal Affairs investigations can be initiated as a result of citizen complaints, internally generated complaints, and/or supervisory referrals. All critical incidents are also investigated by Internal Affairs.² These cases are briefly summarized here.

In 2025, 10 use of force incidents resulted in Internal Affairs investigations. The 10 incidents involved 19 officers and 34 allegations. An incident could involve several officers, more than one allegation could be made against each officer, and an allegation could involve more than the use of one type of force. Of the 34 allegations:

- Seven involved the intentional use of a firearm;
- Twelve involved the use of bodily force;
- One involved integrity; and
- Fourteen involved not treating the public with courtesy and professionalism;

In all but one incident, in which the officer received a reprimand, allegations were not sustained, unfounded, or findings were of exoneration or no code of conduct violation. There were seven critical incidents of major or fatal harm to a subject; one of which remains open. Two of those seven incidents, one each of major and fatal harm to a subject, were under criminal investigation. Those cases are now closed.

² According to MPD SOP 453: Critical incidents (a) involve “a death of an individual that results directly from an action or an omission of a law enforcement officer while the law enforcement officer is on duty or while the law enforcement officer is off duty but performing activities that are within the scope of his or her law enforcement duties,” and (b) involve a department member that results in death or great bodily harm to a person that is caused by a member’s actions, occurs while in police custody, or any incident that the Chief of Police, or his/her designee (must be assistant chief or inspector rank), declare a critical incident. Any injury to a person as a result of a firearm discharge by a department member, not resulting in death, shall also be considered a critical incident.

Summary

This report is part of a continuing effort on the part of the City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission to better understand use of force incidents in the Milwaukee Police Department. Based on an analysis of the reportable incidents that occurred from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, the following conclusions are noted:

- Use of force reporting requirements changed near the end of 2020 to require the reporting of incidents that involved officers pointing a firearm at a person and/or displaying a firearm to effect an arrest. Therefore, some data from 2020 through 2025 are not directly comparable with data from years prior to 2020.
- There were 1,841 use of force incidents in 2025, not including animals as subjects and accidental uses of force; 986 involved "displaying and/or pointing a firearm only," 855 involved other types of force (e.g., hands-on physical force, the discharge of weapons) (Table 1).
- For the main analyses in this report, the subset of 855 incidents was analyzed.
- The most common type of force used by officers was "bodily force".
- There were approximately 2.3 use of force incidents per day (down from 2.7 in 2024), varying by month and time of day (Table 3, Table 5).
- Police Districts 7 and 3 had the most use of force incidents in 2025, as in 2024, and combined accounted for approximately 39% of force incidents in the city (Table 6).
- In 2025, there were 13 incidents that involved a firearm discharge at a person.
- In 2025, 13 incidents involved force being used against one or more dogs.
- There were 7 incidents in 2025 in which force was used accidentally.
- In 2025, there were 10 use of force incidents that prompted investigations.

This report provides information for understanding and interpreting the nature, frequency, and circumstances of use of force incidents in the MPD. These data can be used to monitor use of force incidents over time.