

AN ANALYSIS OF USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS IN THE MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2024



REPORT OF THE FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION

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Table of Contents

	page
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Types and Frequency of Use of Force	5
Number of Force Incidents	5
Types of Force Used by Officers	7
Frequency of Force and Arrests	10
Frequency of Force by Calls for Service	11
Frequency of Force by Month of Year	11
Frequency of Force by Time of Day	12
Frequency of Force by Aldermanic District	13
Frequency of Force by Police District	14
Use of Force, Arrests, and Police District	15
Use of Force, Calls for Service, and Police District	16
Descriptive Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents	17
Characteristics of Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents	18
Characteristics of Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents	19
Injuries to Subjects in Use of Force Incidents	21
Injuries to Officers in Use of Force Incidents	23
Deadly Force Used Against People	23
Deadly and Other Force Used Against Dogs	24
Accidental Use of Force Incidents	25
Use of Force Internal Investigations	26
Summary	28

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of use of force incidents recorded by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. The data are based on “Use of Force Reports” completed by supervisory officers after an MPD officer uses force. 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.¹ Therefore, some data from 2021 through 2024 are not comparable to previous years.

In total, there were 2,215 use of force incidents in the MPD in 2024. Of this total, seven were accidental and ten involved euthanizing an injured animal. These 17 incidents are excluded from the aggregate analysis in this report because they are fundamentally different from other use of force incidents in their purpose and intent. One incident was excluded because it involved non-MPD officers. Accordingly, 2,197 use of force incidents were analyzed in this report. Further, of the 2,197 incidents, 1,280 involved displaying and/or pointing a firearm only (the categories of force made reportable in 2020); 917 involved other types of force (e.g., hands-on physical force, the discharge of weapons). For the main analyses in this report, the subset of 917 incidents was analyzed. When appropriate, analyses were also conducted on the full set of 2,197 incidents. Findings related to the full set of 2,197 incidents are reported in the footnotes.

Of the subset of 917 incidents, 912 incidents involved a person (the other five incidents involved a dog only), and in 839 incidents at least one person was arrested. A total of 974 people were arrested in these 839 incidents. In 2024, 7.5% of arrests made by the MPD involved hands-on physical force and/or the discharge of weapons. When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included in the calculation, 23.5% of arrests involved the use of force in 2024. These statistics are similar to 2023.

Other key findings based on the analysis of the subset of 917 incidents include:

- The most common type of force used by officers was “bodily force only.”
- Of the incidents that involved a person, approximately 50% resulted in injuries to that person. When injuries were sustained, “complaint of pain” was the most common.
- There were ten incidents that involved a firearm discharge at a person. In one incident a subject sustained a fatal gunshot injury.
- There were five incidents that involved force being used against one or more dogs. Two of the five incidents involved the discharge of a firearm at a dog. One dog sustained a fatal injury. The number of incidents in 2024 that involved the discharge of a firearm at a dog was at an all-time low (since 2009).
- Twenty-two officers discharged their firearms in a use of force incident in 2024 (including accidental discharges and discharges directed toward a person or dog, not

¹ SOP 460 was amended effective 10/16/24 to eliminate the displaying a firearm category entirely and restricting the pointing a firearm category by excluding warrant execution incidents.

including euthanizing an injured animal). No individual officer was involved in more than one of these incidents.

- Police Districts 3 and 7 had the most use of force incidents in 2024 and combined accounted for approximately 39% of all force incidents in the city in 2024. Police Districts 3 and 7 also accounted for approximately 38% of all arrests in the city in 2024.
- When comparing the subset of 917 incidents (those incidents that involved hands-on physical force and/or the discharge of weapons) to the full set of 2,197 incidents (i.e., the 1,280 incidents that involved “displaying and/or pointing a firearm only” and the 917 incidents that involved other types of force), there were several differences in findings:
 - “Pointing/display only” incidents involved more subjects per incident than those incidents that involved hands-on physical force and/or the discharge of weapons.
 - “Pointing/display only” incidents less often involved subjects who resisted arrest compared to those incidents that involved hands-on physical force and/or the discharge of weapons.
 - “Pointing/display only” incidents more often involved subjects who were armed.
 - “Pointing/display only” incidents less often involved subjects who were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol compared to those incidents that involved hands-on physical force and/or the discharge of weapons.
 - When analyzing the full set of 2,197 incidents, the proportion of MPD officers using force was larger than when considering only the subset of 917 incidents.
 - As noted, when analyzing the full set of 2,197 incidents, a larger proportion of arrests involved the use of force than when only the subset of 917 incidents were considered.
- There were 14 use of force incidents that prompted investigations. These 14 incidents involved 29 use of force allegations and 26 officers. The investigations resulted in various outcomes.

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, 2024 to December 31, 2024. The 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.² The purpose of this report is to provide information on use of force incidents in order to monitor changes in patterns, trends, and frequency of use of force incidents over time. The report is divided into two main sections: (1) types and frequency of force incidents and (2) descriptive characteristics of force incidents. The report concludes with a summary of the findings.

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 complete a “Use of Force” report. Specifically, according to MPD Use of Force policy 460.50:

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.

² Every report was written by me except for the 2019 report which was written by David Gelting, the FPC Policy Analyst during that time.

Importantly, MPD Use of Force policy 460.50 changed in December 2020. This change required additional incidents to be reported as uses of force. Specifically, whenever an officer points a firearm at a person (item b above) it must be reported and whenever an officer draws or displays a firearm to effect an arrest or seizure of a person (item j above) it must be reported. *As a result of this policy change, the aggregate number of force incidents in 2024 is not comparable to years prior to 2021 when these types of force were 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.

The “Use of Force Reports” provide descriptive details on each use of force incident. The data relate to the incident (e.g., date of incident, district of incident, types of force used in the incident) as well as the officers (e.g., officer age, officer rank) and subjects (e.g., subject age, race) involved in the incident. These data are contained in the MPD Administrative Investigation Management (AIM) system. I received these data in Excel format from Barbara Cooley, Research and Policy Analyst of the Fire and Police Commission (FPC), on February 25, 2025. I converted the data to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. In addition, I received information on MPD use of force internal investigations (see p. 26) from the FPC on April 11, 2025.

Along with the data entered into the AIM system for each use of force incident, narrative descriptions of each incident were also written by supervisory officers at the time of the incident. These written narratives are based on information obtained from the officers and subjects involved; witnesses; and body-worn camera and/or other video, if available. These narratives are

stored in the AIM system. The 2024 narratives in aggregate were 15,781 pages in length. In preparing this report, I used the narratives to verify and/or supplement the AIM system data of some of the cases (e.g., circumstances of accidental incidents). Tallies of previous years' cases were obtained from the previous use of force annual reports (i.e., An Analysis of Use of Force Incidents in the Milwaukee Police Department). I received additional data directly from the MPD on the number of officers employed in the MPD, the number of calls responded to by the MPD, and the number of arrests made by the MPD in 2024.

Types and Frequency of Force

Number of Force Incidents

From January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, there were 2,215 use of force incidents recorded by the MPD. Of these 2,215 incidents, seven were accidental³ and 10 involved euthanizing an injured animal.⁴ These 17 incidents are excluded from the aggregate analysis in this report because they are fundamentally different from other use of force incidents in their purpose and intent. Incident(s) involving non-MPD officers during the Republican National Convention in the city were also excluded. Accordingly, in 2024 there were 2,197 use of force incidents in the MPD. These 2,197 incidents are analyzed in this report. Further, of the 2,197 incidents, 1,280 (58.3% of the total number of incidents) involved displaying and/or pointing a firearm only, the categories of force made reportable in December 2020 (see Table 1). A police officer displaying and/or pointing a firearm at a citizen is serious; however, these incidents are

³ In addition to these seven incidents, there were four incidents that involved intentional *and* accidental force. These eleven incidents are described later in the report (p. 25).

⁴ Eight of these incidents involved deer, one involved a raccoon, and one involved a dog. All of these incidents involved a firearm.

substantially different from incidents that involve hands-on physical force or the discharge of a weapon. As a result, incidents that involved “displaying or pointing a firearm only” are most often analyzed separately and the findings are reported in footnotes.

Figure 1 shows the total number of force incidents in 2021 to 2024, the full years in which “pointing and/or display of firearm only” incidents are included in the data. The number of incidents increased from 1,905 in 2021 to 2,285 in 2023, and then declined to 2,197 in 2024.

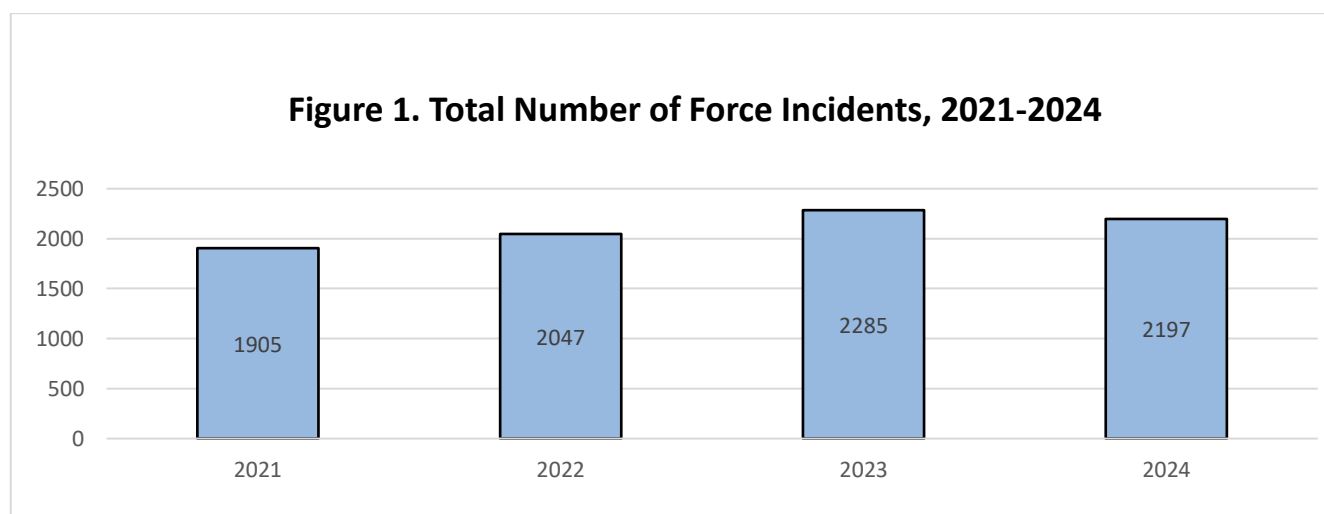


Figure 2 shows the number of force incidents in years 2013 to 2024 when “pointing and/or display of firearm only” incidents are excluded from the data. In 2024, there were 917 incidents of force, excluding those that involved “pointing and/or display of firearm only.”

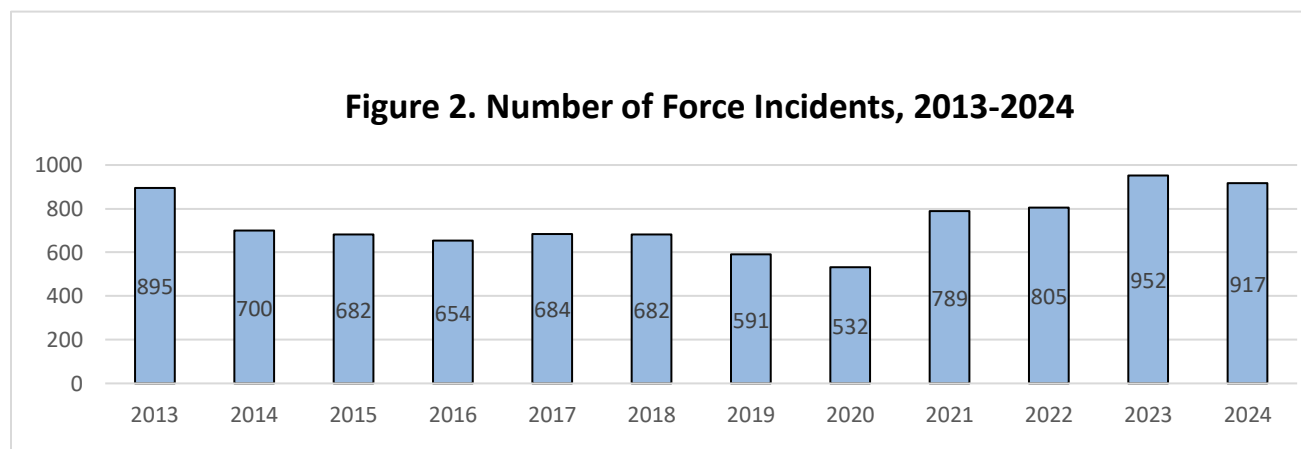


Figure 2 Notes: The 2020 total excludes 45 incidents that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only (the policy to require the reporting of “pointing and/or displaying a firearm only” was implemented December 2020). The 2021 total excludes 1,116 incidents that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only. The 2022 total excludes 1,242 incidents

that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only. The 2023 total excludes 1,333 incidents that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only. The 2024 total excludes 1,280 incidents that involved pointing or displaying a firearm only.

In 2024, five incidents involved force being used exclusively against one or more dogs. Except when noted, these incidents are included in most of the aggregate totals analyzed in this report and are also analyzed separately (see p. 24).

Types of Force Used by Officers

With regard to the types of force used by the officer(s) in the incident, it is seen in Table 1 that the largest proportion of incidents (36.9%) involved “pointing firearm only.” The second most common type of force used by officers was “bodily force only” (19.6%).⁵ Again, the incidents that involved “pointing and/or displaying a firearm only” are excluded from the main analyses in this report because these incidents are substantially different than those involving other types of force.

In total, 12 incidents involved the discharge of a firearm (highlighted in **bold** in Table 1). As discussed in more detail below, ten of these 12 incidents involved a person, two involved a dog. Clearly, in a relative and absolute sense, the discharge of a firearm in a use of force incident was an uncommon event.

⁵ The most common form of bodily force was “decentralization.”

Table 1. Types of Force Used by Officers, 2024

Type of Forced Used	Frequency	Percentage
Pointing Firearm Only	810	36.9
Bodily Force Only	431	19.6
Pointing and Display of Firearm Only	288	13.1
Display of Firearm Only	182	8.3
CEW Only*	35	1.6
Chemical Agent Only (OC)**	19	.86
Firearm Discharge Only	9	.41
Baton Only	1	.05
Handcuffing Only	17	.77
Bodily Force, Pointing Firearm	141	6.4
Bodily Force, Handcuffing	67	3.0
Bodily Force, Pointing, Display	30	1.4
Bodily Force, CEW	44	2.0
Bodily Force, Display	14	.64
CEW, Pointing	24	1.1
Bodily Force, Pointing, Display, Handcuffing	1	.05
Handcuffing, Pointing, Display	7	.32
Handcuffing, Pointing	12	.55
Bodily Force, Pointing, Handcuffing	9	.41
Bodily Force, Pointing, CEW	11	.50
Handcuffing, Display	2	.09
Bodily Force, OC	10	.46
CEW, Pointing, Display	3	.14
OC, Pointing	1	.05
Bodily Force, CEW, Handcuffing	6	.27
Bodily Force, Display, CEW	2	.09
Bodily Force, CEW, Baton, Handcuffing	1	.05
CEW, Display	3	.14
Bodily Force, CEW, OC	1	.05
Bodily Force, Display, Handcuffing	3	.14
Bodily Force, OC, Handcuffing	1	.05
Bodily Force, Pointing, Display, CEW, Handcuffing	1	.05
Bodily Force, Pointing, Display, CEW	2	.09
Bodily Force, Baton	1	.05
Baton, Pointing, CEW	1	.05
CEW, Handcuffing	2	.09
OC, Handcuffing	1	.05
Baton, Pointing	1	.05
Firearm Discharge, Pointing	1	.05
Firearm Discharge, Bodily Force, OC, Display, Handcuffing	1	.05
Firearm Discharge, Pointing, Display	1	.05
Total	2,197	100.1

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

Additional analyses were performed to examine patterns in the types of force used over time (Table 2; Figure 3). These analyses are limited to incidents that involved the use of a chemical agent (OC Spray), a CEW (Taser), or the firing of a firearm.⁶ The findings show:

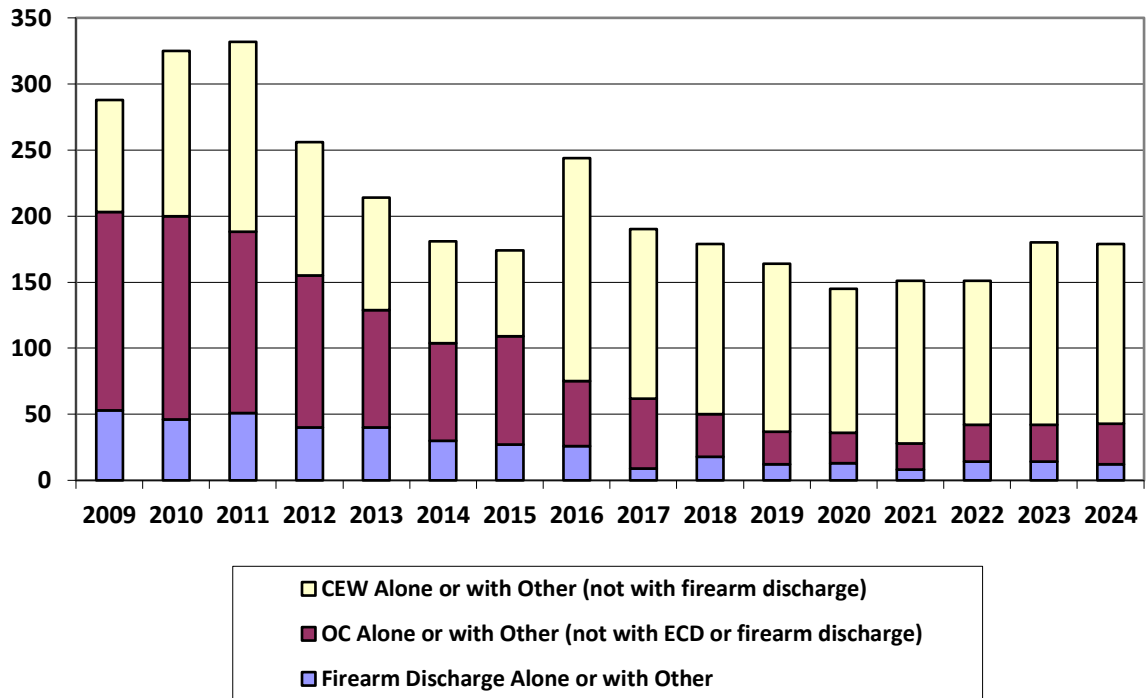
- From 2009 to 2024 there has been a decline in police firearm discharges. The 2017 and 2021 totals appear unusually low in the overall trend.
- Police use of a CEW increased in frequency from 2009 to 2011, declined from 2012 to 2015, dramatically increased in 2016, declined in 2017 and remained mostly steady until an increase in 2023 and 2024.
- Regarding the use of OC spray, there was a steady decline from 2009 to 2016, a slight increase in 2017, and a large decrease in 2018. The frequency of police use of OC spray has remained relatively stable since 2018.

Table 2. Type of 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
Firearm Discharge Alone or with Other	53	46	51	40	40	30	27	26	9	18	12	13	8	14	14	12
CEW Alone or with Other (not with firearm discharge)	85	125	144	101	85	77	65	169	128	129	127	109	123	109	138	136
OC Alone or with Other (not with CEW or firearm discharge)	150	154	137	115	89	74	82	49	53	32	25	23	20	28	28	31

⁶ The 2013 use of force reporting policy change does not preclude an analysis of weapon use (OC Spray, Taser, or firearm discharge) across years but it does preclude an analysis of “bodily force only” incidents. Since 2009, all incidents that involved the use of OC spray, a Taser, or a firearm discharge were required to be reported. However, bodily force incidents that did not result in a subject injury, or a subject complaint of an injury, were not required to be reported until 2013.

Figure 3. Type of Force Used, by Year



Frequency of Force and Arrests

Because most use of force incidents occur during arrests, it is necessary to consider the number of force incidents in relation to the number of arrests made. In this calculation, it is necessary to examine the force incidents that also involved an arrest. Again, in 2024 there were 917 use of force incidents (not including “display and/or pointing of firearm only”). Of these 917 incidents, 912 involved a person (5 incidents involved a dog only). Of these 912 incidents that involved a person, in 839 of them at least one person was arrested (92.0%).⁷ In the 839 incidents a total of 974 people were arrested. Also, during 2024, MPD officers made a total of 13,029

⁷ For example, a person may not be arrested if the incident involved a suicide attempt, a drug overdose, or a mental health crisis; if the person escapes; or if it is determined that a crime was not committed. When the “display and/or pointing a firearm only” incidents are included in the calculation, 89.2% of incidents (1,956 incidents out of 2,192) involved at least one arrest. In these 1,956 incidents, a total of 3,060 people were arrested.

arrests. Accordingly, in 2024, 7.48% of all arrests involved the use of force ($974 \div 13,029 \times 100 = 7.48$).⁸ This percentage is similar to 2023 (8.07%).

Frequency of Force by Calls for Service

Dispatched calls for service represent a rough estimate of the frequency of contact between police officers and citizens. It is an estimate of police-citizen contacts primarily because it does not include officer proactive activity (i.e., self-initiated activities such as traffic stops). Nevertheless, calls for service can provide a basis on which to assess the relative frequency of use of force incidents. In 2024, the MPD handled 250,888 calls for service. Again, there were 917 use of force incidents during this time. Accordingly, approximately .37% of calls for service involved the police use of force ($917 \div 250,888 \times 100 = 0.37$)⁹. Stated differently, for every 1,000 calls for service there were approximately four use of force incidents. This percentage is nearly identical to 2023 (.35%).

Frequency of Force by Month of Year

With a total of 917 incidents occurring from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, there was an average of approximately 76 use of force incidents per month. Table 3 provides a breakdown of incidents by month. The largest proportion of incidents occurred May through September.¹⁰

⁸ When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included in the calculation, 23.5% of arrests involved the use of force in 2024 ($3,060 \div 13,029 \times 100 = 23.5$).

⁹ When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included in the calculation, .88% of calls for service involved the use of force in 2024 ($2,197 \div 250,888 \times 100 = .88$).

¹⁰ When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included, there was an average of approximately 183 incidents per month. There is minimal change in the distribution of incidents across month.

Table 3. Use of Force Incidents by Month

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
67	86	65	75	82	79	77	89	92	83	55	67	917

It is worthwhile to examine the number of force incidents and the number of arrests by month. Table 4 provides the number of force incidents that involved an arrest and the total number of arrests made by month.

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	59	80	60	70	78	70	68	78	83	79	51	63	839
Total Number of Arrests Made	1125	1090	1143	1102	1140	1064	947	1109	1124	1135	999	1061	13039 (1)

Note: (1) Due to issues related to the coding of the month of arrest in the MPD arrest system, the total number of arrests is overcounted by 10. There were 13,029 arrests made by the MPD in 2024.

Table 4 shows that, in general, months with more arrests have slightly more use of force incidents.¹¹

Frequency of Force by Time of Day

With 917 incidents occurring from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, there was an average of approximately 2.5 use of force incidents per day. These incidents did not occur

¹¹ When the 1,280 “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included, this conclusion is still valid.

randomly throughout the day. As seen in Table 5, nearly half occurred between 4:01 p.m. and 11:59 p.m., which approximates the MPD “Early” shift.¹²

Table 5. Use of Force Incidents by Time of Day

Time / Shift	Frequency	Percentage
8:01am-4pm / Day	258	28.1
4:01pm-11:59pm / Early	447	48.7
12am-8am / Late	212	23.1
Total	917	99.9

Note: Percentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

Frequency of Force by Aldermanic District

Table 6 shows the distribution of force incidents by Aldermanic District.

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

Aldermanic District	Frequency	Percentage
1	82	9.1
2	75	8.4
3	41	4.6
4	95	10.6
5	23	2.6
6	70	7.8
7	84	9.4
8	65	7.2
9	59	6.6
10	40	4.5
11	18	2.0
12	90	10.0
13	25	2.8
14	16	1.8
15	115	12.8
Total	898	100.2

Notes: In 19 cases the Aldermanic District was not recorded; these 19 cases are not included here. Percentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

¹² When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included, fewer incidents occurred during the “Early” shift (43%) and more occurred during the “Day” shift (33%).

Aldermanic District 15 had the largest share of use of force incidents (12.8%), while District 14 had the smallest share (1.8%).¹³

Frequency of Force by Police District

Table 7 shows the number of force incidents for each police district in 2024 along with the corresponding percentage of total incidents. In 2024, District 3 accounted for 20.8% of all use of force incidents in the city, followed by District 7 (17.8%).¹⁴

Table 7. Location of Use of Force Incidents: Police District

Police District	Frequency	Percentage
1	76	8.4
2	154	17.0
3	188	20.8
4	142	15.7
5	129	14.3
6	54	6.0
7	161	17.8
Total	904	100.0

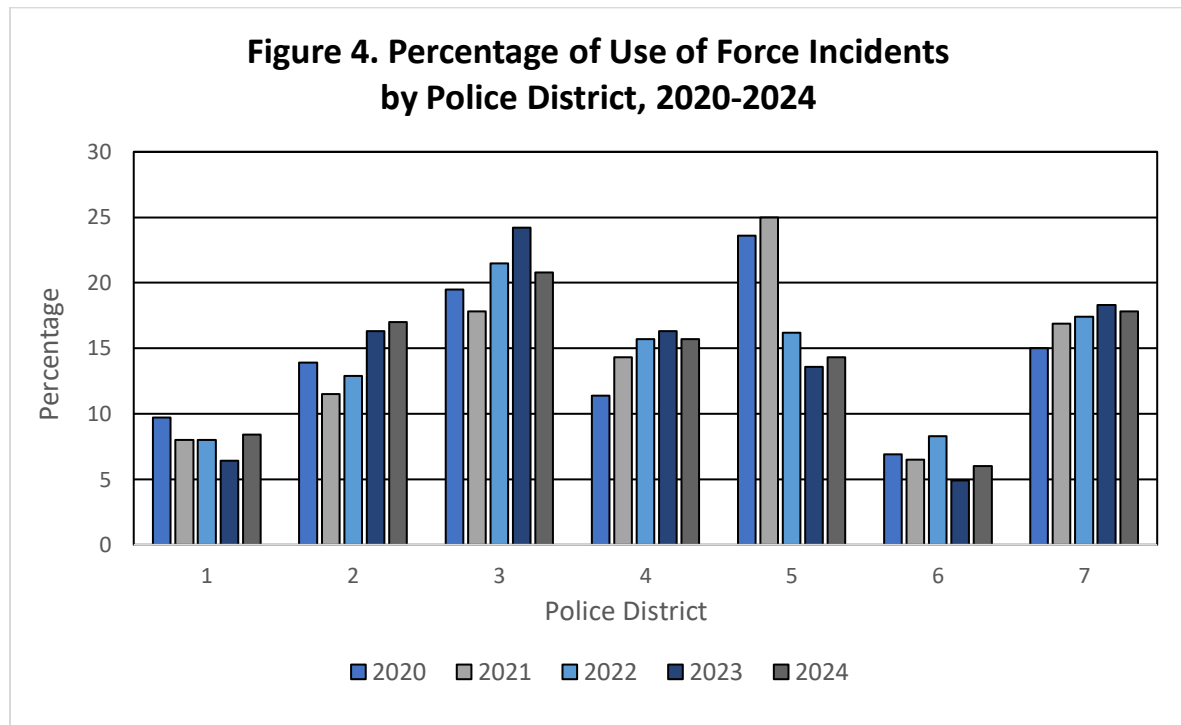
Note: In 13 cases the police district was not recorded; these 13 cases are not included here.

The percentage of incidents for each police district for 2020 through 2024 is graphically represented in Figure 4, providing a five-year snapshot of use of force by police district. In 2020 and 2021, District 5 accounted for the greatest share of incidents. In 2022, 2023, and 2024, District 3 accounted for the greatest share of incidents. Considering the entire timeframe,

¹³ When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included, there is minimal change in the distribution of incidents across Aldermanic Districts.

¹⁴ When “pointing and/or display of a firearm only” incidents are included, the distribution of incidents across police districts is very similar. Districts 3 and 7 account for the largest share of incidents.

Districts 3, 5, and 7 stand out from the others in having the greatest share of incidents, although the proportion of incidents attributed to District 5 dropped since 2021.



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 ($\text{subjects arrested in force incidents} \div \text{total subjects arrested} \times 100 = \text{percent of arrests that involved force}$) in 2024.

Table 8. Arrests that Involved Use of Force by Police District, 2024

Police District	Total Number of Subjects Arrested (1) (2)	Number of Subjects Arrested in Use of Force Incidents (3)	Percent of Arrests that Involved Use of Force
1	666	71	10.66
2	1,840	170	9.24
3	2,298	201	8.75
4	2,239	156	6.97
5	1,985	144	7.25
6	1,105	51	4.62
7	2,443	166	6.79

Notes: (1) 495 arrests are excluded because the arrest could not be placed in a district due to the address of the arrest being unknown or out of the city. (2) Due to issues related to the coding of the district of arrest in the MPD arrest system, the total number of arrests is overcounted by 42. As stated previously, the total number of arrests made in 2024 was 13,029. This coding issue has minimal impact on these results. (3) In 15 arrests the police district was not recorded; these cases are not included here. Table does not include arrests made in “display/pointing firearm only” incidents.

The results in Table 8 show that, in each district, a small proportion of arrests involve the use of force; arrests that involve the use of force ranges from 4.62% in District 6 to 10.66% in District 1. Overall, the percentage of arrests that involved force was similar in each district except for District 6. These findings are similar to 2023.

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 9 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).

Table 9. Use of Force Incidents per 1,000 Calls for Service by Police District, 2024

Police District	Total Calls for Service (1)	Number of Use of Force Incidents (2)	Number of Use of Force Incidents per 1,000 Calls for Service
1	22,435	76	3.4
2	34,930	154	4.4
3	43,173	188	4.4
4	36,778	142	3.9
5	41,881	129	3.1
6	24,323	54	2.2
7	45,707	161	3.5

Notes: (1) 1,661 calls for service are excluded due to unknown district. (2) In 13 cases the police district was not recorded; these cases are not included here. The table does not include arrests made in “display/pointing firearm only” incidents. (3) Call for service data were obtained from the MPD Computer Aided Dispatch and consist of distinct dispatched calls for service for the time period of January 1 - December 31, 2024. These data do not include proactive activity, canceled calls, training units and training calls, Priority 5 calls, misdials, calls where a primary unit was not assigned, 911 abuse calls that resulted in no response, or calls with a disposition type of MCSO (Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office), DRU (Differential Response Unit), or MFD (Milwaukee Fire Department). The police district reflects the location of the call rather than the work location of responding officers.

Table 9 shows that Police District 7 had the highest number of calls for service in 2024, followed closely by District 3. Districts 3 and 7 also account for the largest share of force incidents (also see Table 7). When considering the number of force incidents per 1,000 calls for service, Districts 2 and 3 have the highest rate (4.4 use of force incidents for each 1,000 calls for service), and District 6 has the lowest rate (less than 3 force incidents for every 1,000 calls for service). All of these findings are similar to 2023.

Descriptive Characteristics of Use of Force Incidents

Along with providing information about the types and frequency of force, this report also seeks 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 involved in force incidents; (2) the characteristics of subjects involved in force incidents; (3) injuries to subjects in force incidents; (4) injuries to officers in force incidents; (5) deadly force used against people; (6) force used against dogs; and (7) accidental use of force incidents. This section concludes with a brief discussion of MPD Internal Affairs investigations into use of force incidents.

Characteristics of Officers Involved in Use of Force Incidents

In the largest proportion of incidents (361 out of 917; 39.4%) one officer used force. In 321 incidents (35.0%), two officers used force, and 235 incidents (25.6%) involved three or more officers. On average, 2.3 officers were involved in each use of force incident.¹⁵ The 917 use of force incidents involved 680 different MPD officers. At the end of 2024, the MPD employed 1,589 sworn officers. As such, approximately 43% of all MPD officers ($680 \div 1,589 \times 100 = 42.8$) were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2024.¹⁶ There were 22 officers who discharged their firearms in 2024 (including accidental discharges, and discharges directed toward a person or dog). No officers were involved in more than one of these incidents.

In 95% of the incidents,¹⁷ the first officer involved was male, in 56% the officer was white, in 97% of incidents the officer was in uniform, in 99% of the incidents the officer was on-duty, and in 85% of incidents the officer was assigned to squad patrol. The average (mean) age

¹⁵ When all 2,197 incidents are included in the calculation, an average of 2.2 officers were involved in each incident.

¹⁶ When all 2,197 incidents are included in the calculation, there were 834 different officers who used force in 2024 which equates to approximately 52% of all MPD officers.

¹⁷ Due to the structure of the data set, most descriptive statements regarding the officers relate only to the first officer involved; percentages are rounded.

of the first officer was 35 (ages ranged from 23 to 61) and the average length of service was eight years.¹⁸ All of these findings are similar to 2023.

Characteristics of Subjects Involved in Use of Force Incidents

Most incidents (83.8%; 764 out of 912) involved just one subject; 148 of the 912 incidents (16.2%) involved two or more subjects.¹⁹ An average of 1.2 subjects were involved in each incident.²⁰ In 83% of the incidents the first subject involved was male; in 77% the subject was Black.²¹ The average age of the first subject was 30 years (subject ages ranged from 6 to 76; 10% of subjects were under the age of 18, and 2% were 60 or older). In 24% the subject was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. In 79% of incidents, the officer noted that the subject resisted arrest.²² In 16% of incidents the subject was armed with a weapon (not including personal weapons such as fists or feet); when armed with a weapon, it was most often a firearm (68%).²³ These findings are similar to 2023.

¹⁸ When “display and/or pointing firearms only” incidents were included in the analysis, there is minimal change in these findings except that officers were less often assigned to squad patrol and more often assigned to tactical operations (6.5% versus 1.7%)

¹⁹ Excluded from these analyses are the five incidents that involved a dog only.

²⁰ When all 2,192 incidents are included in the calculation, an average of 1.4 subjects were involved in each incident and 24% of the incidents involved two or more subjects.

²¹ Percentages are rounded. Due to the structure of the data, the descriptive statements relate only to the first subject involved.

²² When all 2,192 incidents are analyzed, only 49% (versus 79%) of subjects resisted arrest during the incident, and 15% of incidents (versus 24%) involved a subject who was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

²³ When all incidents are included, subjects were more often armed (19% versus 16%).

Analyses were conducted to examine possible disparities in subjects' race and sex in involvement in use of force incidents and arrests. Table 10 shows the representation of subjects, by race and sex, in use of force incidents and total citywide arrests made by the MPD in 2024.

Table 10. Race and Sex of Subjects in Force Incidents and Arrests, 2024

		Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Female	Male
Subjects Involved in a Use of Force Incident (1)	Number	672	64	137	4	75	383
	Percentage	76.6%	7.3%	15.6%	.5%	16.4%	83.6%
Subjects Arrested Citywide (2)	Number	9604	1894	1332	196	3158	9871
	Percentage	73.7%	14.5%	10.2%	1.5%	24.2%	75.8%

Notes: (1) In 35 cases, the subject's race was not recorded in the AIM system and in 454 cases the subject's sex was not recorded in the AIM system. These cases are not included here. (2) In three cases, the subject's race was not recorded in the arrest system. These cases are not included here.

It is seen in Table 10 that Hispanics and females were underrepresented as subjects in use of force incidents compared to their representation as arrestees. Black, White, and especially male subjects were overrepresented in use of force incidents compared to their representation as arrestees.²⁴ Blacks accounted for 73.7% of all arrestees in 2024 and 76.6% of use of force subjects. Whites accounted for 10.2% of arrestees and 15.6% of use of force subjects. Males accounted for 75.8% of arrestees and 83.6% of use of force subjects. The same pattern was present in the 2023 data.

²⁴ When all incidents are included, the same conclusions are true.

Injuries to Subjects in Use of Force Incidents

Injuries to subjects were classified by the MPD into the following categories in the AIM system:

- No injury
- Minor
- Moderate
- Major
- Fatal
- OC Related Only
- ECD Related Only

Overall, of the 912 incidents that involved physical force or the discharge of a weapon, in 457 (50.1%) the subject sustained injuries.²⁵ When subjects were injured, most of the time (355 of 457; 77.7%) those injuries were classified as “minor.” In 23 incidents the injuries were classified as “moderate.” In six incidents, injuries were “major.” One incident resulted in a fatal injury to a subject (see p. 23). The remaining injuries were specified as “CEW or OC related only.” As for the type of injury sustained, “complaint of pain” was the most common. These findings are similar to 2023. Table 11 shows the type of injury sustained by subjects within each injury category.

²⁵ Due to the structure of the data, these findings relate only to the first subject involved. Incidents that involved dogs were not included.

Table 11. Type of Injury Sustained by Subjects, by Injury Category

Type of Injury								
Injury Category	Abrasion/ Cut/ Laceration	Broken Bones/ Teeth	Bruise/ Contusion	Complaint Of Pain	Eye/ Respiratory	Gun Shot Wound	N o n e	Total
Minor	108	1	43	198	2		3	355
Moderate	13	5	2	2		1		23
Major		2				4		6
Fatal						1		1
OC Related Only	1			6	1		2	10
CEW Related Only	3			9			1	13
None	2		1	45	1			49
Total	127	8	46	260	4	6	6	457

Notes: In 49 incidents the injury category was coded as “none” in the AIM system; in six incidents the type of injury was coded as “none” in the AIM System. It is unknown why the “None” category was sometimes used when coding injuries.

It is important to note that certain forms of force were more likely than others to lead to injuries to subjects. Forty percent of incidents in which a firearm was used against a subject resulted in either major injuries (3 of 10 incidents; 30%) or fatal injuries (1 of 10 incidents; 10%).²⁶ No other type of force caused fatal injuries. As noted earlier (Table 1), “bodily force only” was by far the most common type of physical force used against subjects. Most of the time (61%) when bodily force alone was used by officers a subject was not injured. In an additional 38% of the “bodily force only” incidents, injuries to the subject were classified as “minor.” In five incidents (1%), bodily force resulted in “major” injury.

²⁶ In one incident two subjects were shot; one sustained “major” injuries, the other sustained “minor” injuries.

Injuries to Officers in Use of Force Incidents

Of the 917 incidents that involved physical force or the discharge of a weapon, in ten percent officers were injured.²⁷ Analyses also reveal that certain types 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 other types of force. Ninety-two percent 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 11% of all bodily force incidents resulted in injury to officers. These findings are similar to 2023.

Deadly Force Used Against People

In 2024, there were ten incidents that involved the use of deadly force (the discharge of a firearm) against a subject. One of these incidents involved two subjects. In these ten incidents:

- One subject sustained fatal gunshot injuries
- Five subjects sustained non-fatal gunshot injuries
- Five subjects did not sustain any gunshot injuries (i.e., a subject was shot at but not struck).

All ten of the incidents involved subjects who were armed with a firearm. These incidents related to a variety of calls including a wanted subject, shots fired, carjacking, burglary, and domestic violence. Nine of the ten incidents involved on-duty officers.

Table 12 shows the frequency of incidents where a person was the focus of a firearm discharge from 2009 to 2024. It is seen that there has been a substantial but uneven decline in these incidents since 2009 with a low of five incidents in each of 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021.

²⁷ Due to the structure of the data, these statements relate to the first officer involved.

Table 12. 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
Number	14	12	15	9	14	8	12	7	5	5	5	7	5	10	10	10

Deadly and Other Force Used Against Dogs

In 2024, five incidents involved some type of force being used against at least one dog. One dog was involved in each incident. Of the five dogs, three were pit bulls, one was a German Shepard, and one was a Cane Corso (mastiff).

Two of the five incidents involved the discharge of a firearm, two incidents involved the use of a CEW, and one involved the use of a snare (classified as “bodily force” in the AIM System). One officer was bitten by the dog in one incident. In another incident, five citizens were bitten by a dog. Most of the calls which summoned officers to the scene were about a loose dog.

Regarding *deadly* force used against dogs specifically, in 2024 there were two incidents that involved the discharge of a firearm against a dog. In one of these incidents, a dog was struck by gunfire and died; in the other incident, a dog was shot at but not struck. In addition, in the incident where a snare was used, the dog died.

Table 13 shows the frequency of incidents where dogs were the focus of a firearm discharge from 2009 to 2024. There has been a substantial and steady decline in the number of firearm discharge incidents that involve a dog, with 2024 being a record low.

Table 13. 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
Number	39	34	36	31	26	22	15	19	4	13	7	6	3	4	4	2

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 not used.

Accidental Use of Force Incidents

There were eleven incidents in 2024 where force was used accidentally. In these incidents officers used one of the types of force that was required to be reported but that force was not intentionally used. Seven incidents involved accidental force only, four incidents involved intentional *and* accidental force. As noted earlier, the seven accidental incidents that involved accidental force only were not included in any of the prior analyses conducted for this report. Table 14 shows the types of force that were used accidentally in 2024.

Table 14. Types of Force Used Accidentally, 2024

Type of Force	Frequency	Percentage
Firearm Discharge – Officer’s Gun	1	9.1
Pointing of Firearm	2	18.2
CEW Discharge	5	45.5
Police Canine Bite	3	27.3
Total	11	100.1

Note: Total percentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Injuries were sustained in the police canine incidents (an officer was bitten in each incident). No other injuries were reported in the other incidents.

The firearm discharge occurred on-scene. With regard to the five accidental discharges of CEWs, one occurred on police department premises during a standard pre-shift test of the weapon, four occurred on-scene.

Table 15 shows the subset of accidental discharges of police firearms from 2009 to 2024. There were 52 accidental firearm discharges from 2009 to 2024. The number per year has varied from zero (in 2017) to eight (in 2020). In four of the 52 incidents, an officer was injured as a result of the accidental discharge; in four other incidents a subject was injured. None of the injuries were life-threatening.

Table 15. Accidental Discharges of Police Firearms, by Year (Number of Incidents)

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

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. 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.²⁸ Information on the cases investigated

²⁸ 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

by Internal Affairs was obtained for this report via the Fire and Police Commission. These cases are briefly summarized here.

In 2024, 14 use of force incidents resulted in investigations.²⁹ The 14 incidents involved 26 officers and 29 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 29 allegations:

- Nine involved the intentional use of a firearm;
- Seven involved the use of bodily force;
- Two involved the use of handcuffs;
- One involved the failure to intervene when a code of conduct violation occurred;
- Four involved not treating the public with courtesy and professionalism;
- Two related to competence – use of force procedures;
- Two related to competence – animals;
- One related to competence during off-duty, extra duty, or special event employment; and
- One related to competence – use of force notification.

In seven of the 14 incidents, some or all allegations against the officers involved were either not sustained or findings were exoneration or no code of conduct violation. In nine incidents, at least some allegations remain open. There were five critical incidents, three of which remain under investigation.

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.

²⁹ FPC investigations that did not result in any finding were not included.

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 between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024, the following summary statements can be made:

- 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 2024 are not comparable to previous years.
- There were 2,197 use of force incidents in 2024; 1,280 involved “displaying and/or pointing a firearm only,” 917 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 917 incidents was analyzed. When appropriate, analyses were also conducted on the full set of 2,197 incidents. Findings regarding the full set of incidents are reported in footnotes.
- Although “pointing and/or displaying firearms only” are substantially different forms of force compared to hands-on physical force and the discharge of weapons, the characteristics of these categories of force are quite similar. When “pointing/display firearm only” incidents were included in the analyses, there are several notable differences in findings: (1) “pointing/display only” incidents involved more subjects per incident; (2) “pointing/display only” incidents less often involved subjects who resisted arrest; (3) “pointing/display only” incidents less often involved subjects who were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol; (4) “pointing/display only” incidents more often involved subjects who were armed; (5) inclusion of “pointing/display only” incidents

showed that a larger proportion of MPD officers used force in 2024; and (6) when “pointing/display only” incidents were included in the calculation, a larger proportion of arrests by the MPD involved the use of force.

Regarding the 917 incidents that involved hands-on physical force or the discharge of weapons:

- 912 incidents involved a person, five incidents involved a dog only.
- Out of the 912 incidents that involved a person, in 839 incidents at least one person was arrested. In total, 974 persons were arrested in these 839 incidents. MPD officers made 13,029 arrests in 2024. Therefore, 7.48% of arrests involved the use of force in 2024. This statistic is similar to 2023.
- The most common type of force used by officers was “bodily force only” followed by “bodily force and handcuffing” and “bodily force and CEW.” As noted, when “pointing/display only” incidents were included, the most common type of force was “pointing firearm only” (Table 1).
- There were approximately four use of force incidents for every 1,000 calls for service.
- There were approximately 2.5 use of force incidents per day, varying by month and time of day (Table 3, Table 5).
- Police Districts 3 and 7 had the most use of force incidents in 2024 and combined accounted for approximately 39% of force incidents in the city in 2024 (Table 7).
- Police Districts 3 and 7 had the largest number of arrests made in 2024, and combined accounted for approximately 39% of all arrests in the city in 2024 (Table 8).
- Police District 7 had the largest number of calls for service but not the largest rate of use of force per 1,000 calls for service (Table 9).
- On an absolute basis, the use of force was a rare event in all districts.

- Approximately 43% of MPD sworn officers were involved in at least one use of force incident in 2024.
- The typical use of force incident in 2024:
 - Involved one police officer and one subject. The officer was a white male, 35 years old, with eight years of service. The officer was in uniform and on-duty. The officer used “bodily force only” in the incident. The officer was not injured. The subject was a black male, 30 years old. The subject resisted arrest and was slightly more likely to be injured as not injured. If injured, the injury was classified as “minor.” The subject was not armed with a weapon. The incident occurred in Police District 3 between 4:01 pm and 11:59 pm.
- There were 22 officers who discharged their firearms in 2024 (including accidental discharges and discharges directed toward a person or dog). No officers were involved in more than one of these incidents.
- Since 2009, firearm discharges have declined in a steady but uneven manner. In 2009 there were 53 such incidents, in 2024 there were 12 incidents (Table 2). The decline is especially evident with incidents that involved a dog (Table 13).
- Since 2009, use of a chemical agent has declined substantially. The use of a CEW has fluctuated since 2009 (Table 2).
- In 2024, there were ten incidents that involved a firearm discharge at a person. These incidents related to a variety of calls. The number of incidents that involved a firearm discharge at a person has remained relatively stable since 2009 (Table 12).
- In 2024, one incident involved a subject sustaining a fatal gunshot injury.
- In 2024, there were five incidents that involved force being used against one or more dogs. Most of these incidents related to loose dog complaints. Two of these incidents

involved the discharge of a firearm, two involved the discharge of a CEW, one involved the use of a snare. Two dogs sustained fatal injuries in these five incidents. The number of incidents in 2024 that involved the discharge of a firearm at a dog was an all-time low (since 2009, Table 13).

- There were eleven incidents in 2024 in which force was used accidentally (Table 14). Seven of the ten incidents involved accidental force only, the other four incidents involved accidental and intentional force. Three of the ten unintentional uses of force incidents resulted in injuries (three officers were injured, all related to police canine bites). One of the eleven incidents involved an accidental discharge of an officer's firearm. Accidental firearm discharges have varied from zero in 2017 to eight in 2020 (Table 15).
- In 2024, there were 14 use of force incidents that prompted investigations. These 14 incidents involved 29 use of force allegations and 26 officers. The allegations were related to various police actions. The investigations resulted in various outcomes.

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.