



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT


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Cleveland Spruill, Sr.
Chief of Police

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 6, 2020

TO: Chief Cleveland Spruill 

FROM: Lieutenant Harrison Daniel 

SUBJECT: 2019 Early Warning System Annual Review

The purpose of this memorandum is to report the 2019 annual review of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department (ACCPD) Early Warning System (EWS). The reporting period is from January 01, 2019 through December 31, 2019. The EWS is not a disciplinary system. It is a positive approach to training and assistance for employees designed to identify and prevent potentially problematic behavior. The goal is to maximize the opportunity for employees to enjoy a healthy and positive career.

Pursuant to Written Directive A4/01/20¹, the Office of Professional Standards will annually review the EWS and compile statistical data of the categories tracked as part of the EWS and submit a report to the Chief of Police. The tracked categories are as follows:

- (1) Use-of-Force Incidents
- (2) Vehicle Pursuits
- (3) Complaints, Disciplinary Actions, and Documented Uncharacteristic Behavior
- (4) Excessive Sick Leave and Repeated Tardiness
- (5) Vehicle Accidents
- (6) Workers Compensation Claims
- (7) Below Standard Annual Performance Evaluations

¹ As of March 11, 2020 the department replaced Written Directive A4/01/20 with Police Directive 2.20 (EAP and Early Intervention Programs) as part of a broader effort to update, reorganize, and consolidate its policies and procedures.

As outlined in Written Directive A4/01/20 (II), supervisory personnel were authorized to refer an employee for early intervention review based on personal observations, or the Guardian Tracking System² auto-generated an early intervention flag based on statistical data (using the above-listed categories) that was sent to the appropriate supervisory personnel for review. An employee triggered a flag for any three (3) incidents within the same category occurring within a 30-day period or any combination of five (5) incidents occurring within a 60-day period. For any referrals for training or assistance, the appropriate supervisory personnel were required to submit the appropriate documentation to the Office of Professional Standards.

To conduct the annual review, the Office of Professional Standards relied upon a combination of department supervisory personnel, data collected by the Athens-Clarke County Human Resources, internal records of complaints and discipline, and entries into the Guardian Tracking System to compile statistical data and review the EWS categories for the reporting period.

Use-of-Force

Officers reported 283 use-of-force incidents in 2019. This was a 5% decrease from 2018. The use-of-force review and analysis was conducted by the Office of Professional Standards. Refer to **2019 Annual use-of-Force Report** memorandum (May 20, 2020) for the complete analysis.

Vehicle Pursuits

Officers reported 17 vehicle pursuits in 2019. This was a 70% increase from 2018. However, this remained below the average number of annual pursuits (29.4)³ over a five-year period. The future average is expected to decrease because the department implemented a more restrictive pursuit policy in 2017, a year when there were 40 reported pursuits. The vehicle pursuit review and analysis was conducted by the Office of

² The Guardian Tracking System was a data entry software used for supervisors to enter sick/tardy incidents, informal counseling statements, use-of-force reviews, and other employee performance measures. The Department replaced Guardian Tracking with a new system (IAPro and BlueTeam) beginning January 1, 2020.

³ From 2014 to 2018, there were 34, 34, 22, 40, and 10 vehicle pursuits respectively. The statistical average over this 5-year reporting period was 29.4 vehicle pursuits each year. The standard deviation from the norm was +/- 9.7. Therefore, 17 pursuits falls 2.7 below the standard deviation from the statistical mean.

Professional Standards. Refer to **Annual Report on Vehicle Pursuits for 2019**

memorandum (May 17, 2020) for the complete analysis.

Complaints, Disciplinary Actions, and Documented Uncharacteristic Behavior

There were 64 complaints submitted to the Office of Professional Standards in 2019. This was a 16% increase from 2018. This was 84% above the five-year average⁴ but remained within the standard deviation⁵. It should be noted that these increases are expected because the department has implemented more expansive and thorough reporting and documentation procedures for complaints. The complaints and discipline review and analysis was conducted by the Office of Professional Standards. Refer to **2019 Athens-Clarke County Police Department Grievance and Complaint Analysis** memorandum (July 22, 2020) for the complete analysis.

Excessive Sick Leave and Repeated Tardiness

As reported by the department Human Resources Administrator, department personnel entered a total 13,099 sick hours into their time sheets. The estimated department cost for employee sick time was \$277,629. In comparison with 2018⁶, this marked a 17% decrease in sick time used department wide with an estimated 20% cost savings⁷. There were no complaints submitted to the Office of Professional Standards concerning excessive sick leave or repeated tardiness during 2019.

⁴ From 2014 – 2018 the department reported 6, 26, 48, 39, and 55 complaints respectively for an average of 34.8/year.

⁵ From 2014 – 2018 the standard deviation for annual complaints reported was +/- 38.8. This means that 73 complaints within a single year would remain within the standard deviation for the five-year time period.

⁶ Information derived from the 2018 Evaluation of Early Warning System memorandum for reporting period January 01, 2018 – December 31, 2018.

⁷ The estimated cost of sick time used and the estimated cost savings reflects calculations based on the calendar year. This does not reflect actual cost or savings for a single budgetary period or fiscal year.

Vehicle Accidents

According to Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Human Resources (HR), the department reported 74 loss claims in 2019. It should be noted that a loss claim does not necessarily indicate any fault or liability incurred by the department or the county; in some cases the department may be the claimant seeking to recover costs incurred due to property loss or damage. In comparison with 2018, this marked a 12% increase in liability claims filed. Of the total claims, 66 (or 89%) were related to automobile incidents. Further breakdown of the auto claims is as follows:

- 11 Auto liability for bodily injury (17%)
- 18 Auto liability for 3rd party property damage (27%)
- 37 Physical damage to department vehicle (56%).

ACC HR reported 50 vehicle accidents involving department vehicles in 2019. The circumstances of the reported accidents were reviewed by HR and ruled as either “preventable”⁸ or “non-preventable.”⁹ HR reported that 23 (or nearly 50%) of the reported accidents were preventable. In comparison with 2018, this marked an 18% decrease in preventable accidents. HR reported that the total dollar amount for claims paid for vehicle accidents was \$41,324.97 in 2019. It should be noted that HR reported that it could not make a preventable/non-preventable determination in 4 reported accidents in 2019.

Workers Compensation Claims

ACC HR reported that it received 51 notices of officer injuries in 2019. In comparison with 2018, this marked an 8.5% increase in reports of officer injuries. Of the injuries reported, there were 26 worker’s compensation claims involving department employees filed in 2019. These claims were filed in cases when officers were treated for injuries or treated for potential injuries. In comparison with 2018, this marked a 21% decrease in filed worker’s compensation claims. No worker’s compensation claims were filed in 25 reported injuries because the officer did not seek treatment. In comparison with 2018, this marked a 78% increase in reported injuries where the officer did not seek treatment.

⁸ An accident is deemed preventable if, based on the judgement of the HR’s risk management, the actions of the officer contributed to the cause of the accident, and the accident could have been prevented.

⁹ An accident is deemed non-preventable if, based on the judgement of the HR’s risk management, the actions of the officer did not contribute to the accident, and the officer could not have prevented the accident from occurring.

Below Standard Annual Performance Evaluations

As reported by the Accreditation Unit, there was one employee who received a below standard score¹⁰ on his/her annual performance evaluation in the most recent performance evaluation period¹¹ (March 16, 2019 – March 15, 2020). However, as of the time of this report, this person was no longer employed with the department.

Recommendations

As of January 1, 2020, the department no longer used Guardian Tracking as its EWS. Guardian Tracking was replaced by IAPro and BlueTeam to improve reporting and consistency of the EWS. Specifically, the IAPro system is the repository for commendations, complaints and disciplinary actions, sick and tardy use, vehicle accidents, use of force incidents, and vehicle pursuits. It features an auto-generated Early Warning Alert for incidents that is compliant with current departmental policy. Police Directive 2.20 (EAP and Early Intervention Programs) was issued on March 11, 2020 to update and replace Written Directive A4/01/20. These changes were in response to the 2018 EWS review recommendations. The current EWS will be reviewed in the 2020 annual review. There are no recommendations at this time.

¹⁰ A below standard score is considered anything below a 3.0 cumulative average on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0 for the individual performance evaluation period.

¹¹ The standard performance evaluation period is March 16 of the past calendar year through March 15 of the year the evaluation is completed (e.g., March 16, 2019 – March 15, 2020). It is not reflect a standard calendar year.