

Billings Police Department

2023 Annual Report



Committed to improving the quality of life through a customer service, problem solving partnership with the community.

Billings Police Department 2023 Annual Report

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Officers Ihde and Gilmore, Sgt. J. Stovall and Officer Anderson were among the BPD contingent who worked during the Yellowstone International Air Show.

The Aug. 12-13 events featured the Blue Angels and were attended by more than 20,000 people. Getting attendees safely in and out of the airport and keeping everyone safe at the events required months of planning and additional staffing by Billings Police Department and other law enforcement agencies.

Mayor, City Council, and Billings residents:

I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Billings Police Department.

It is both an honor and source of pride to reflect on our accomplishments, progress, and challenges. Our commitment to ensure the safety and well-being of every resident or visitor remains unwavering. The report summarizes the incredible work of the men and women of the Billings Police Department and gives you some insight into future challenges.

Despite the many challenges of the last few years, we have accomplished much this past year. Within the pages of this report you will find statistics, charts, graphs, and other information that documents and measures the department's activity and performance in the face of complex issues, both within the community and criminal justice system. More importantly, the report highlights our dedication to provide excellent, efficient, and responsive police services to the citizens of Billings.

As you review this report, keep in mind that it also represents the dedication of the police department employees. None of our accomplishments would have been achieved without their dedicated service.

I would like to thank our Mayor, City Council members, City Administration, and community partners. They have been instrumental in creating an environment that fosters innovation and success.

It has been my honor to serve as the Chief of Police for Billings. Thank you for the trust and support you have given the department. Your support goes neither unnoticed nor unappreciated. We will continue to innovate, persevere, and stay resilient as we provide exceptional service and the best of contemporary policing. And we will do so with a professional and dedicated staff.

I welcome you to visit our website www.BillingsPolice.com and become a follower of the Billings Police Department Facebook page.

Sincerely

Rich St. John
Chief of Police

Mission Statement

The Billings Police Department is committed to improving the quality of life through a customer service, problem solving partnership with the community.

Organizational Values

We are committed to delivering professional police service to Billings under the philosophy of community oriented policing through:

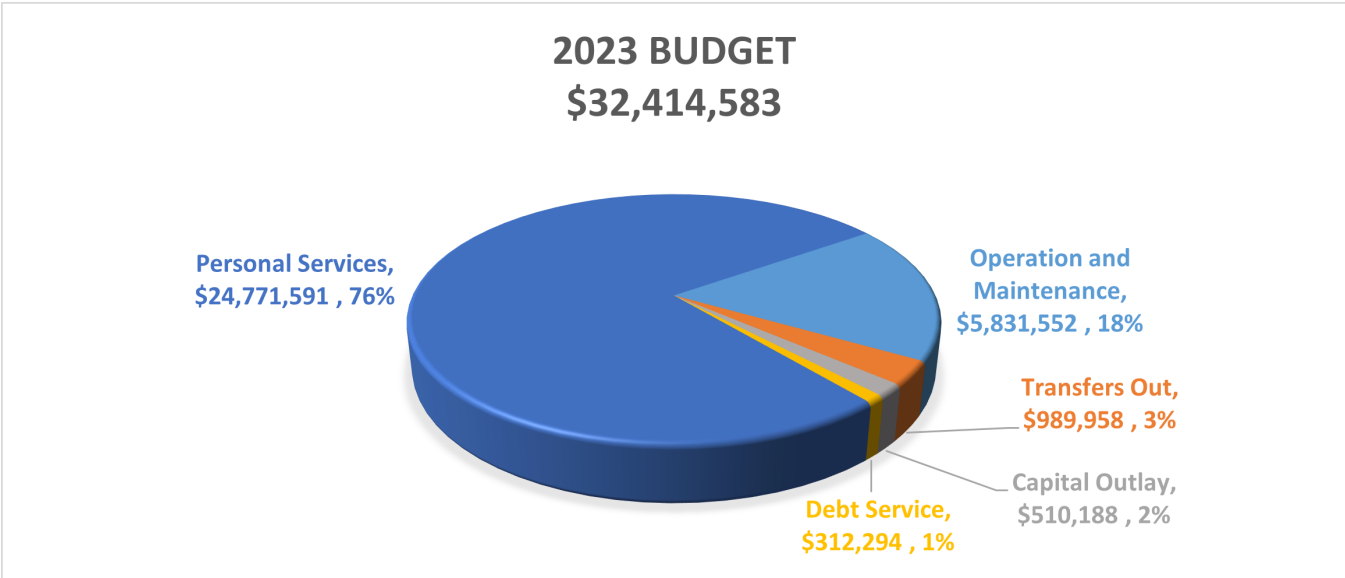
COMMITMENT – Being responsive to the need for increased community livability

SERVICE – Employing a customer service approach ~ Recognizing that our customers are the community, other personnel within the Department and other City employees

PARTNERSHIP – Utilizing a strong police-community partnership for problem solving

INTEGRITY – Applying moral, ethical and professional standards

Funding at a Glance



Grant	Uses	Amount
Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)	Implement Billings Peer Support Program	\$ 900,000
2024 Domestic Violence Grant (DVI)	Domestic Violence Investigator overtime, training, supplies	\$ 79,442
Railroad Trespassing Enforcement Activities Program	Pays overtime for railroad trespass enforcement	\$ 120,000
2023 HIDTA Grant	Aids drug investigations with clerical staff overtime and equipment	\$ 228,101
2021 Homeland Security Grant	Bomb Squad training and equipment	\$ 95,971
2022 Homeland Security Grant	Bomb Squad training and equipment	\$ 80,000
2022 Homeland Security Grant	Explosive Ordinance Disposal transport vehicle	\$ 365,000
2023 Homeland Security EMPG Grant	Night Vision equipment	\$ 345,000
2023 Homeland Security Grant	Bomb Squad Training	\$ 70,000
2020 JAG Grant	Purchases equipment for BPD and YCSO	\$ 84,237
2021 JAG Grant	Purchases equipment for BPD and YCSO	\$ 88,394
2022 JAG Grant	Purchases equipment for BPD and YCSO	\$ 123,669
2023 JAG Grant	Purchases equipment for BPD and YCSO	\$ 152,772
2023 Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant	Funds internships to analyze violent crime data	\$ 45,185
Total Grants 2022-2023		\$ 2,777,771

Billings Police Department Chain of Command



Chief St. John

Chief of Police
Rich St. John

Administrative Coordinator
Jamie Wegner



Assistant Chief Lawrence

Assistant Chief
Neil Lawrence

Animal Control Supervisor
Tom Stinchfield

Captain Operations (Patrol)
Shawn Mayo

Captain Professional Standards
R.D. Harper

Captain Investigations
Brian Korell



Capt. R.D. Harper

Captain Professional Standards
R.D. Harper

Administrative Lieutenant
Matthew Lennick

Sergeant Public Relations
Sgt. West

Administrative Sergeant
Sgt. Puckett

Admin Secretary/ Training Coord
Taylor Bernhardt

Volunteer Coordinator
Jesus Ochoa

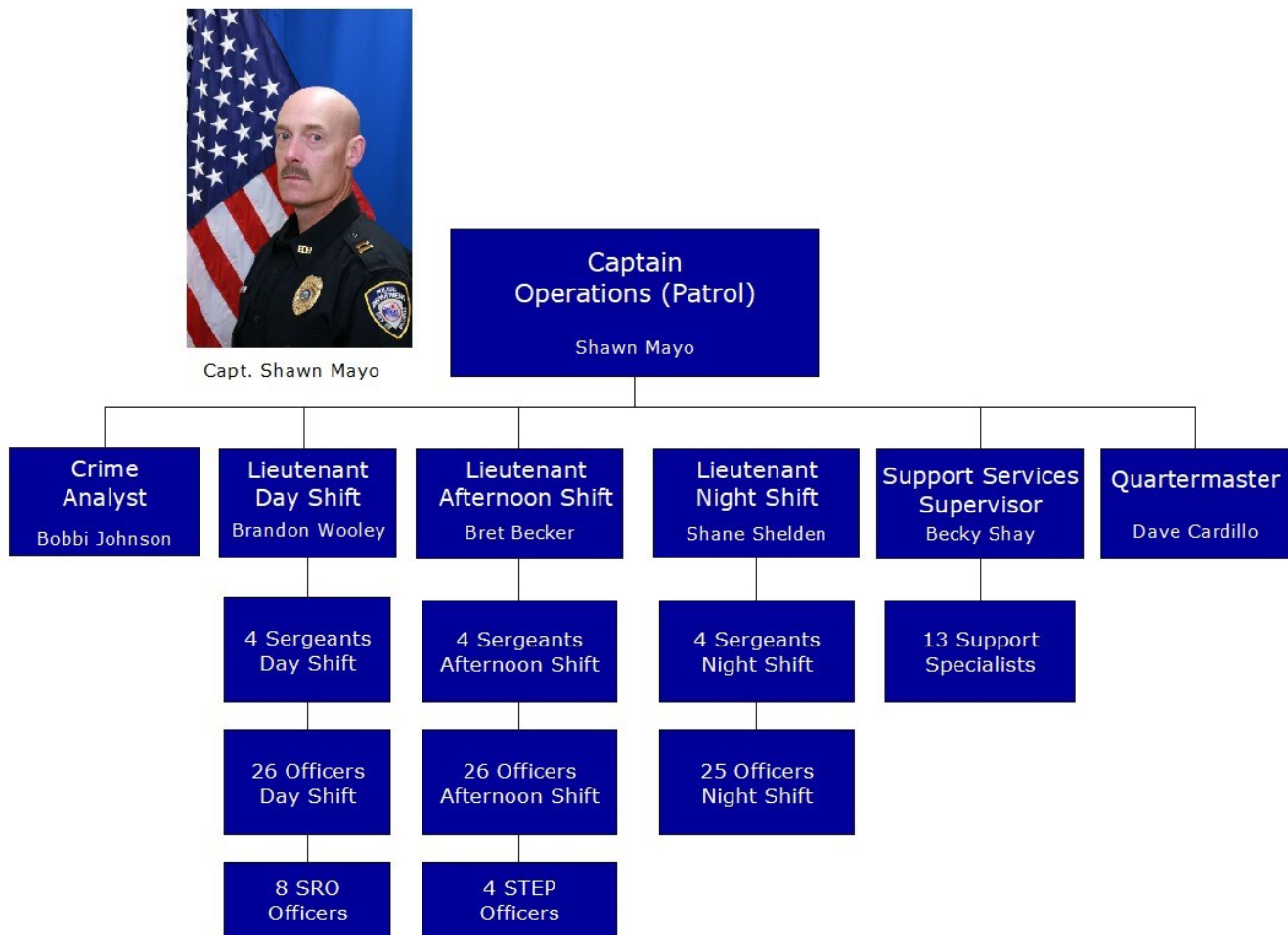
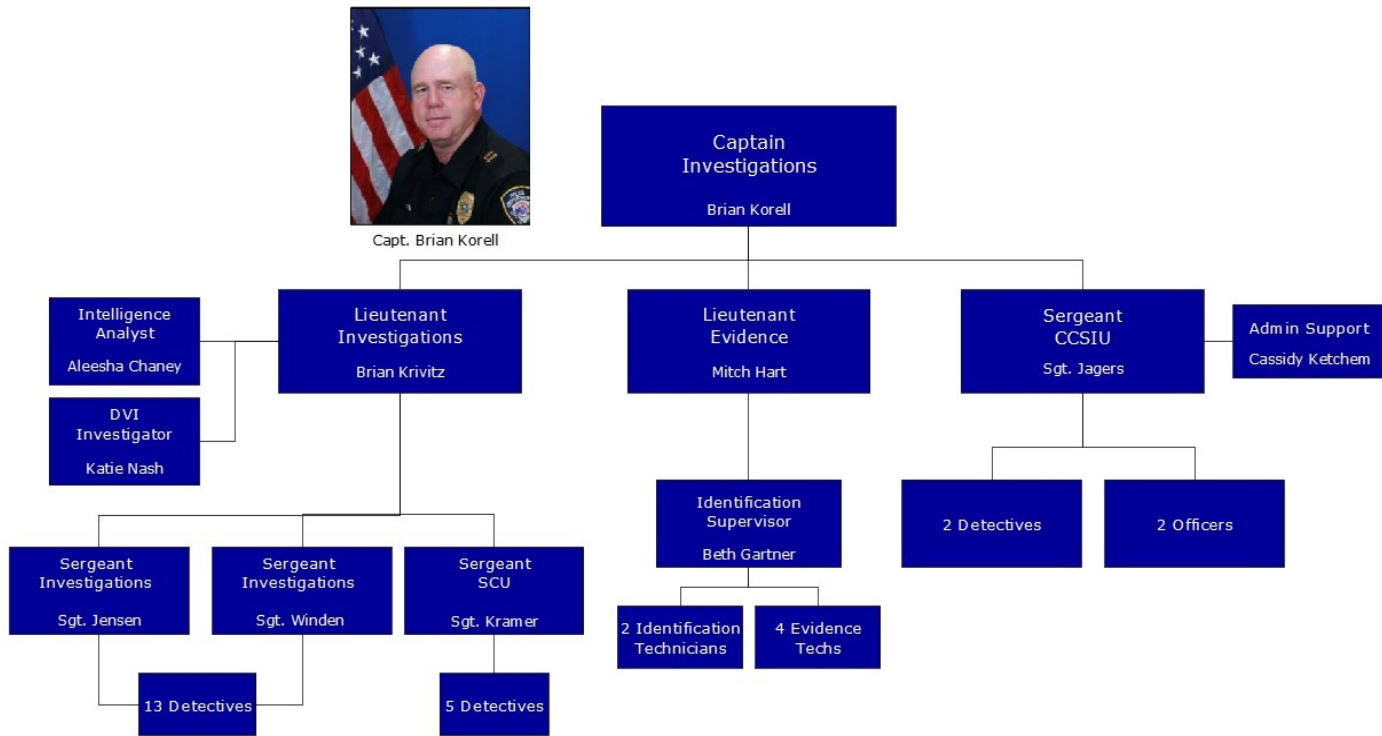
Crime Prevention Officer

3 DBA Officers

Parks & Rec Officer

7 CSOs

Billings Police Department Chain of Command



Billings Police Department Chain of Command



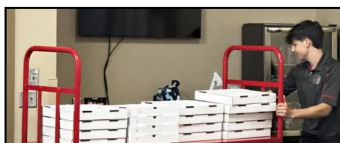
Supervisor Tom Stinchfield

Animal Control
Supervisor
Tom Stinchfield

5 Animal
Control Officers

Administrative
Assistant

Nearly every week community members bring donations to Billings Police Department—all of which are deeply appreciated and much enjoyed! At right: A church youth group brought donuts on National Day of Prayer. Below, from left, The Affinity Group provided lunch for Billings Police Department in July. Dozens of pizzas are delivered every year. Mayor Cole bought lunch in November and Girl Scout Layla Cash donated cookies.



Calls For Service

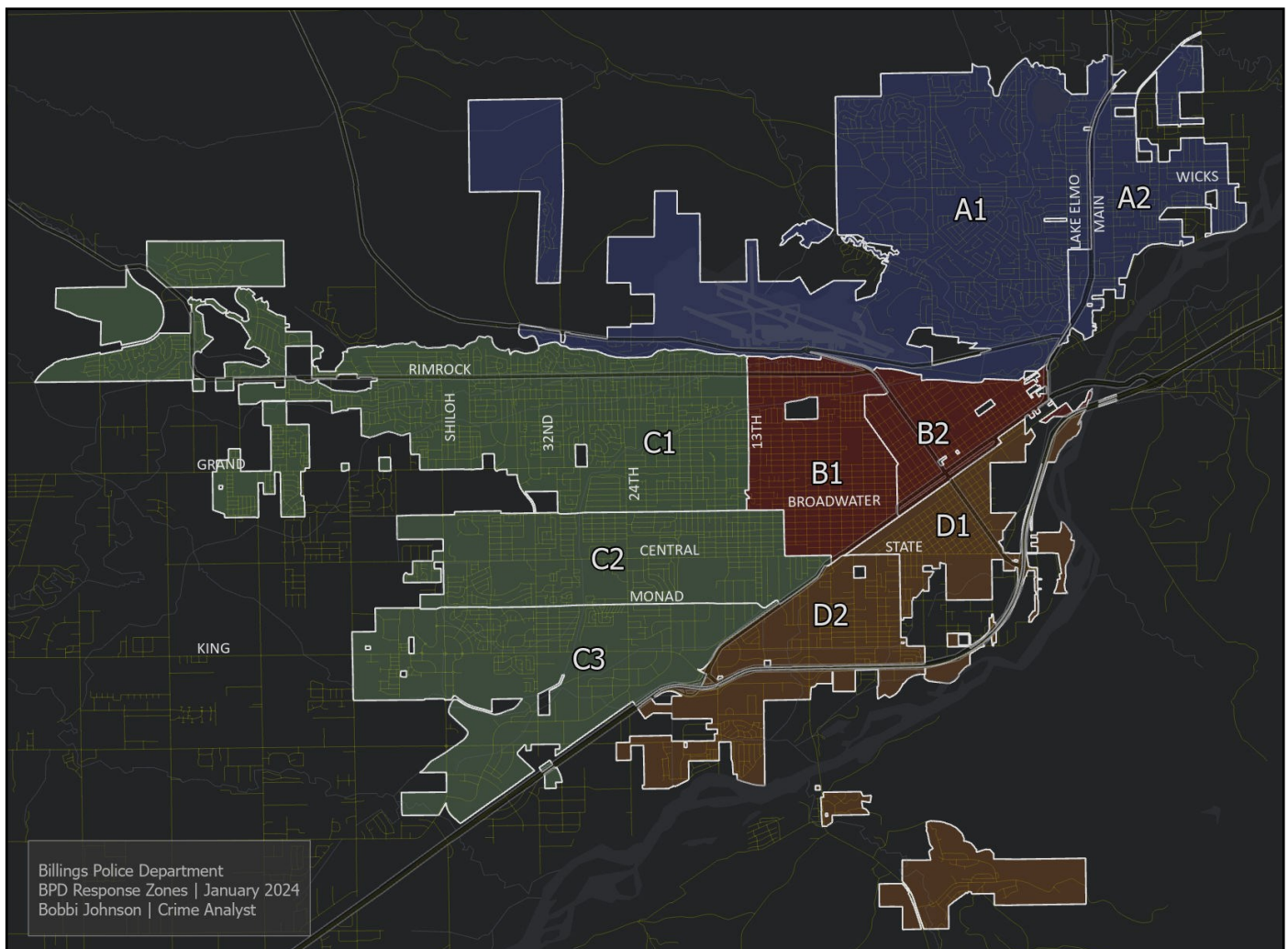
Where We Work

There are an average of 16 patrol officers and commanders on each of the three shifts Billings Police Department operates every day. At the beginning of each shift, commanders determine which part of Billings each officer will patrol that day. There are never less than 9 officers on duty.

Billings Police Department has divided the city into Zones. The boundaries are based on natural borders, such as the Rimrocks, obvious boundaries, such as arterial roads and the railroad tracks, and some boundaries are unique to the Department's call load.

Officers work predominately in their assigned Zones, however they may need to leave their zones for a variety of tasks, including transport a person to jail, deliver seized items to the Evidence Facility or go to a hospital to speak with a victim. When officers must leave their zones, Commanders and the Dispatch Center staff work to ensure citizens receive a Police response by sending officers from other zones.

There are always enough officers to have one in each zone and if there are additional officers on duty, they work the busier zones. They also assist across the City as citizen requests increase during a shift or critical incidents pull officers into service outside of their assigned zones.



Crime Reporting

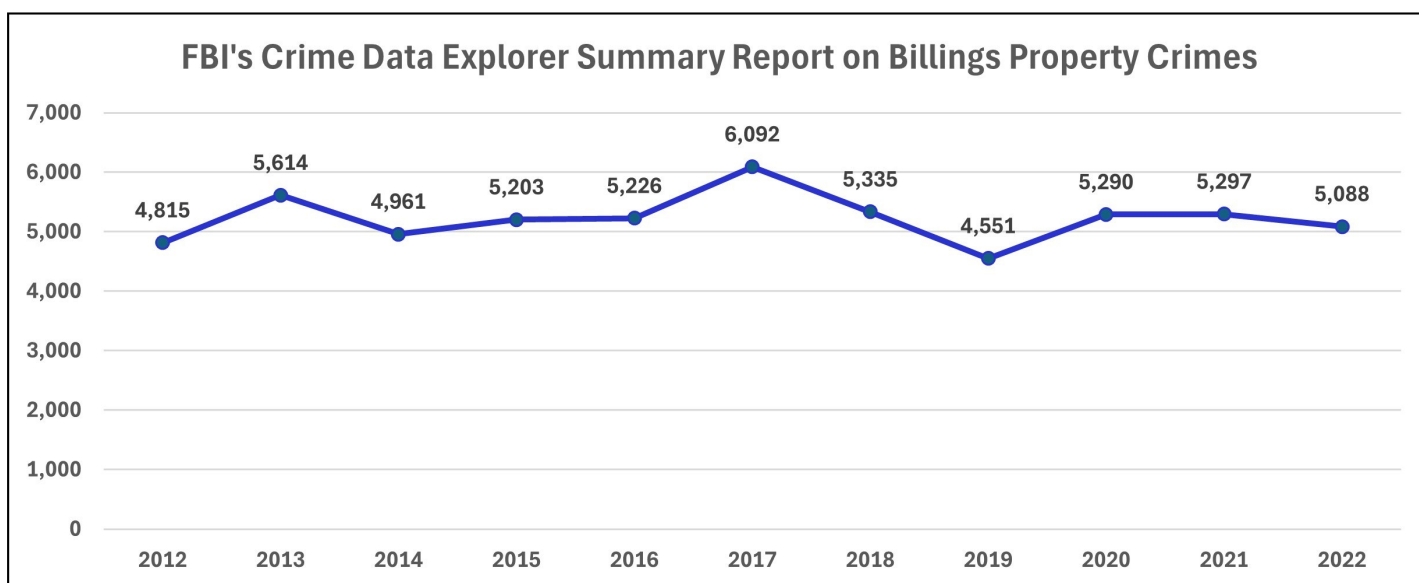
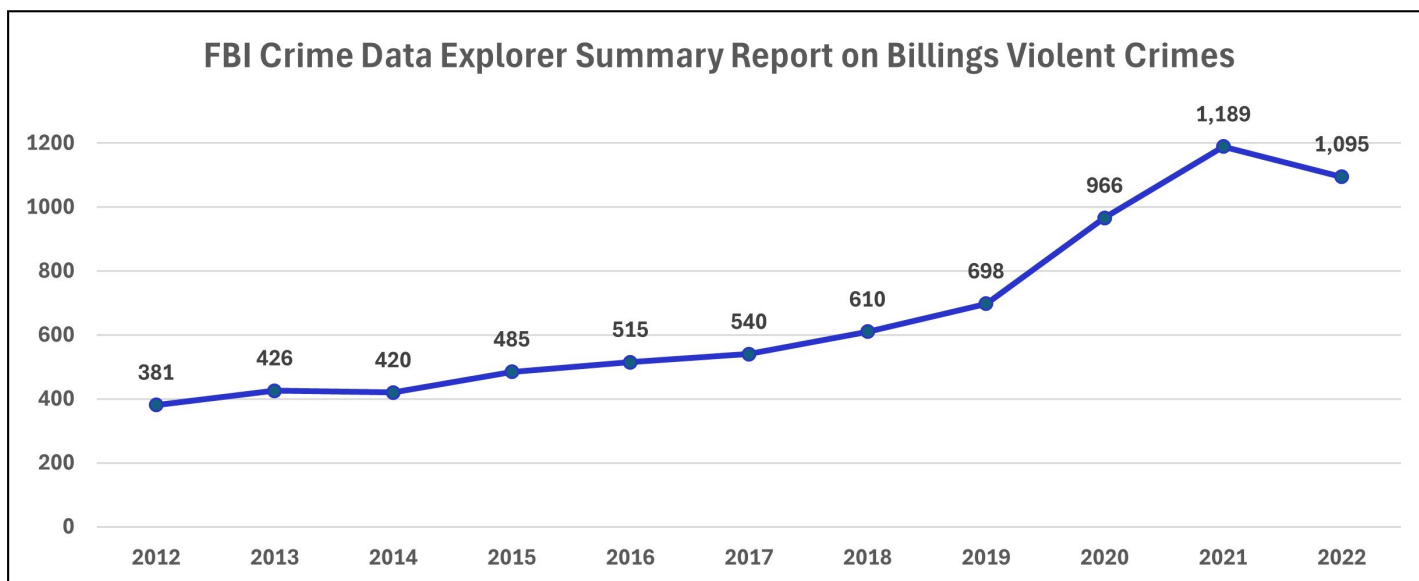
Billings Police Department reports crimes to the Montana Board of Crime Control and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The crime data is submitted under definitions and standards in the FBI's National Incident-Based Report System, NIBRS.

The charts on this page are from the FBI's Crime Data Explorer database. The public database has crime information submitted through May 1, 2023, making the most recent summaries from 2022.

NIBRS assigns offense codes to crimes so that any agency using the system will report in the same manner, although the definitions of crimes may vary state to state. Crimes are further divided into Group A and Group B offenses based on seriousness. All Group A offenses are reported in NIBRS, whereas Group B offenses are only used to report arrest data.

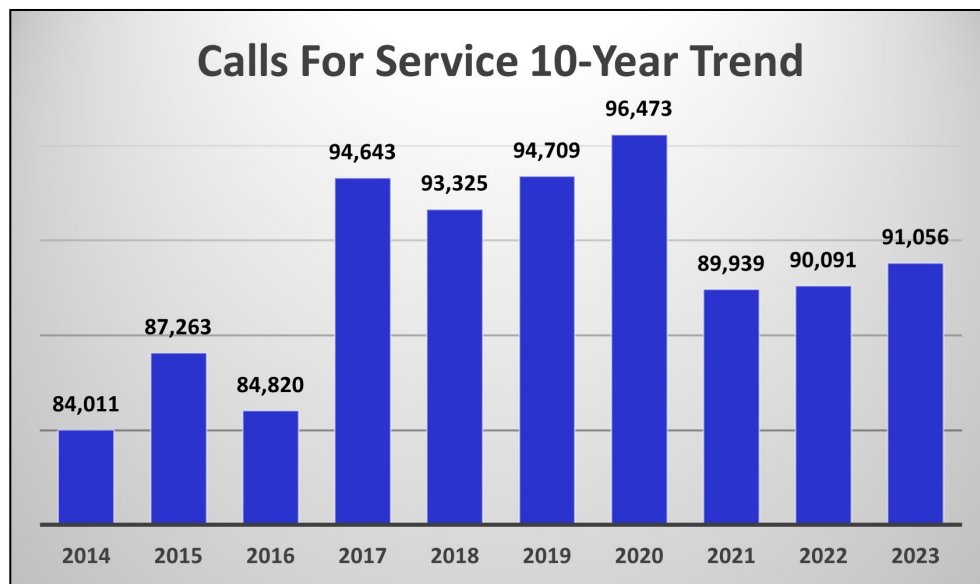
The following pages contain data from BPD's Records Management System. This is the same database that is used to submit to NIBRS, however the charts in this report reflect all offenses officers investigated, regardless of federal report standards, prosecution or arrest. This data gives the department and the community a specific look at Billings crime data in all categories.

Crime data is ever changing to reflect updates in investigations and arrests that may happen years after the crime was committed. Visit the FBI's Crime Data Explorer at <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/>.



Calls For Service

Zone	2023
A1	7,992
A2	6,953
B1	9,037
B2	18,286
C1	9,717
C2	10,000
C3	9,671
D1	7,540
D2	8,144
Unknown offense location or initial call mapped outside of Billings	3,716
	91,056

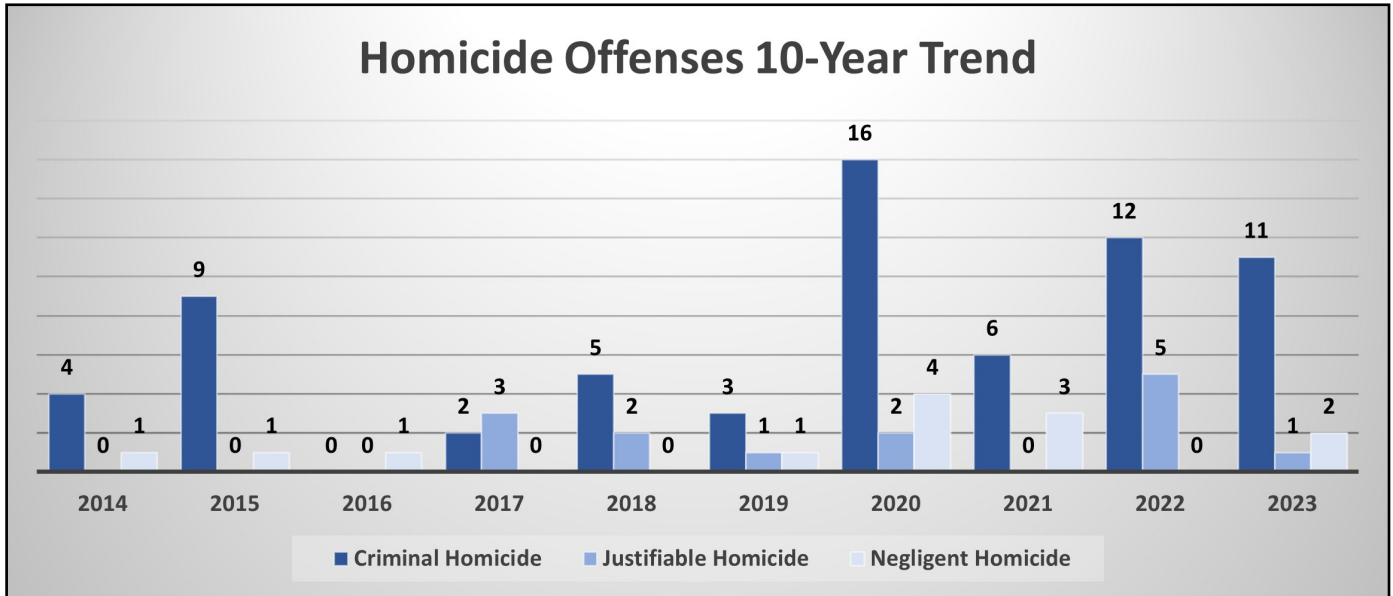


Policing starts with an incident

When citizens request a police officer, the information provided is used to create a Call For Service (CFS) which is labeled with an incident type. The type of incident determines if one of two officers are dispatched. Depending on the circumstances or events, more officers may be called to assist. These are the most frequent incident types reported by citizens and initiated by officers. Not all incidents require that officers create a case, but if they do the offense listed in the case is what is used for state and federal crime reporting.

20 Most Frequent Incident Types	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Suspicious Activity	10,910	11,955	12,916	13,086	15,018	14,402	13,686	14,008
Traffic Stop	10,135	14,224	11,035	12,442	10,898	8,872	10,232	10,466
Disturbance	8,114	8,912	9,323	8,830	8,844	8,250	6,983	6,728
Welfare Check	3,713	3,892	4,562	5,211	6,245	6,084	6,624	6,442
Trespass	1,678	2,015	2,813	3,512	5,590	5,402	5,357	6,050
Theft	5,298	5,856	5,032	4,529	4,728	3,628	4,556	4,336
Traffic Complaint/Investigation	3,073	3,207	3,405	3,811	3,693	3,843	3,638	3,714
Alarm	4,740	5,239	5,234	5,066	4,372	4,411	4,110	3,606
Area Check	2,982	5,567	5,210	3,512	3,402	2,440	3,163	3,249
Abandoned Vehicle	2,220	2,297	2,572	2,593	1,913	850	1,271	2,198
Accident Property Damage	2,250	2,274	2,321	2,301	1,993	2,297	2,252	2,154
Threats/Harassment	1,336	1,465	1,346	1,484	1,444	1,683	1,654	1,867
Service Assist Law Enforcement	1,184	1,202	1,009	1,098	1,432	1,307	1,439	1,524
Suicide Attempts/Threats	1,162	1,321	1,463	1,490	1,478	1,574	1,538	1,485
Vandalism	1,859	1,482	1,322	1,079	1,211	1,183	1,414	1,295
Lost/Found Property	1,078	964	1,026	1,013	1,000	1,046	800	1,264
Follow Up	1,374	2,206	2,491	2,034	1,620	1,466	1,442	1,099
Accident Hit and Run	984	1,026	987	1,069	931	1,192	987	1,078
DUI	1,515	1,308	1,417	1,459	1,370	1,361	1,133	1,034
Weapons	484	674	441	558	806	994	706	1,003

Violent Crime Statistics



The FBI defines crimes that are reported through its National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRs) program. These are the NIBRs definitions for homicide:

Negligent Homicide (Manslaughter) - the killing of another person through negligence

Justifiable Homicide - the killing of a perpetrator of a serious criminal offense by a peace officer in the line of duty, or the killing, during the commission of serious criminal offense, of the perpetrator by a private individual

Criminal Homicide - the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.

There was one justifiable homicide with law enforcement in Billings during 2023 which involved a Yellowstone County Sheriff's Deputy.

Detectives closed 10 of 13 homicide cases and suspects are identified in the remaining cases. The two-year decrease in the number of homicides follows a national trend.

Among the cases that weren't closed in 2023, one features 100 statements, several of them lengthy. The efforts of identifying, finding, arranging an interview and then fitting that information into the context of the rest of the case often takes numerous staff hours, which draws out the time between the crime and closure.

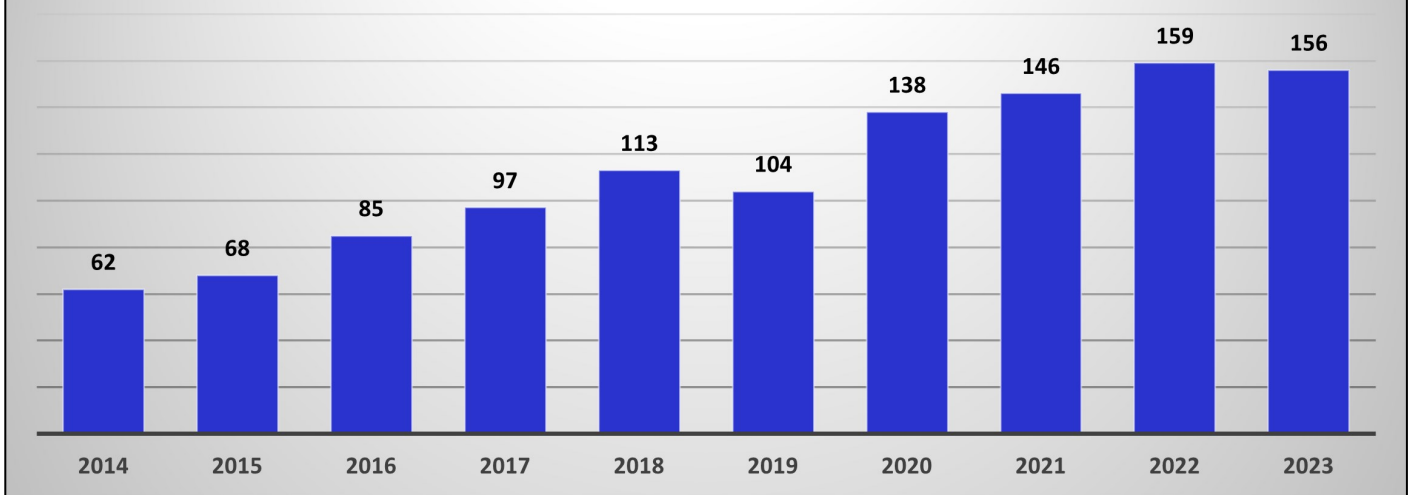
Detectives also investigated nine attempted homicides, all but one of which involved a firearm. There were an additional nine investigations into suspicious deaths, which include children.



All files utilized in the creation of this report are dynamic. Dynamic files allow additions, deletions and/or modifications at any time, resulting in more complete and accurate records in the database. Due to continuous data entry after reports are compiled, numbers may vary in previous or subsequent reports

Violent Crime Statistics

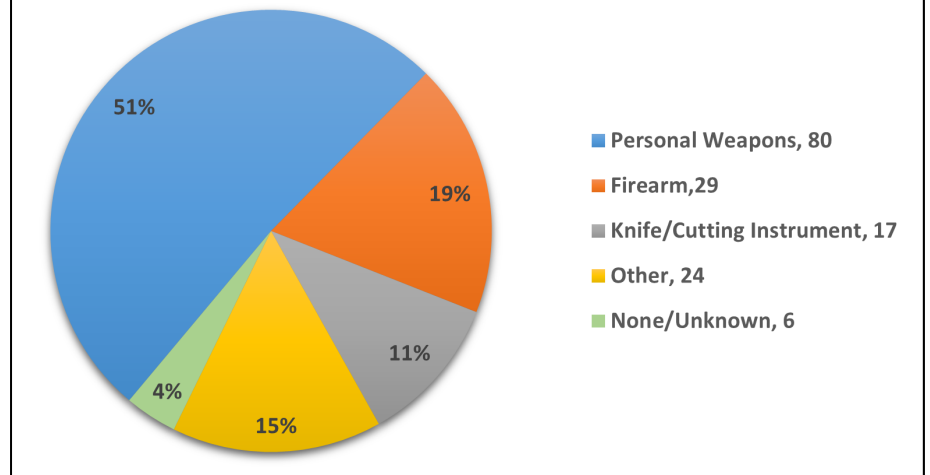
Robbery Offenses 10-Year Trend



Federal and state crime reporting standards define robbery as taking, or attempting to take, something of value by use of force or threat of force.

Robberies range from someone being threatened by the suspect's words and/or demeanor to a suspect using a gun to a shoplifter fighting with a store employee while trying to get away with stolen items

Weapons Used in 2023 Robberies



Did you know?

Billings Police Department Support Services Specialists are trained to enter and query stolen items, missing and wanted persons in state and national databases. They remove entries as appropriate.

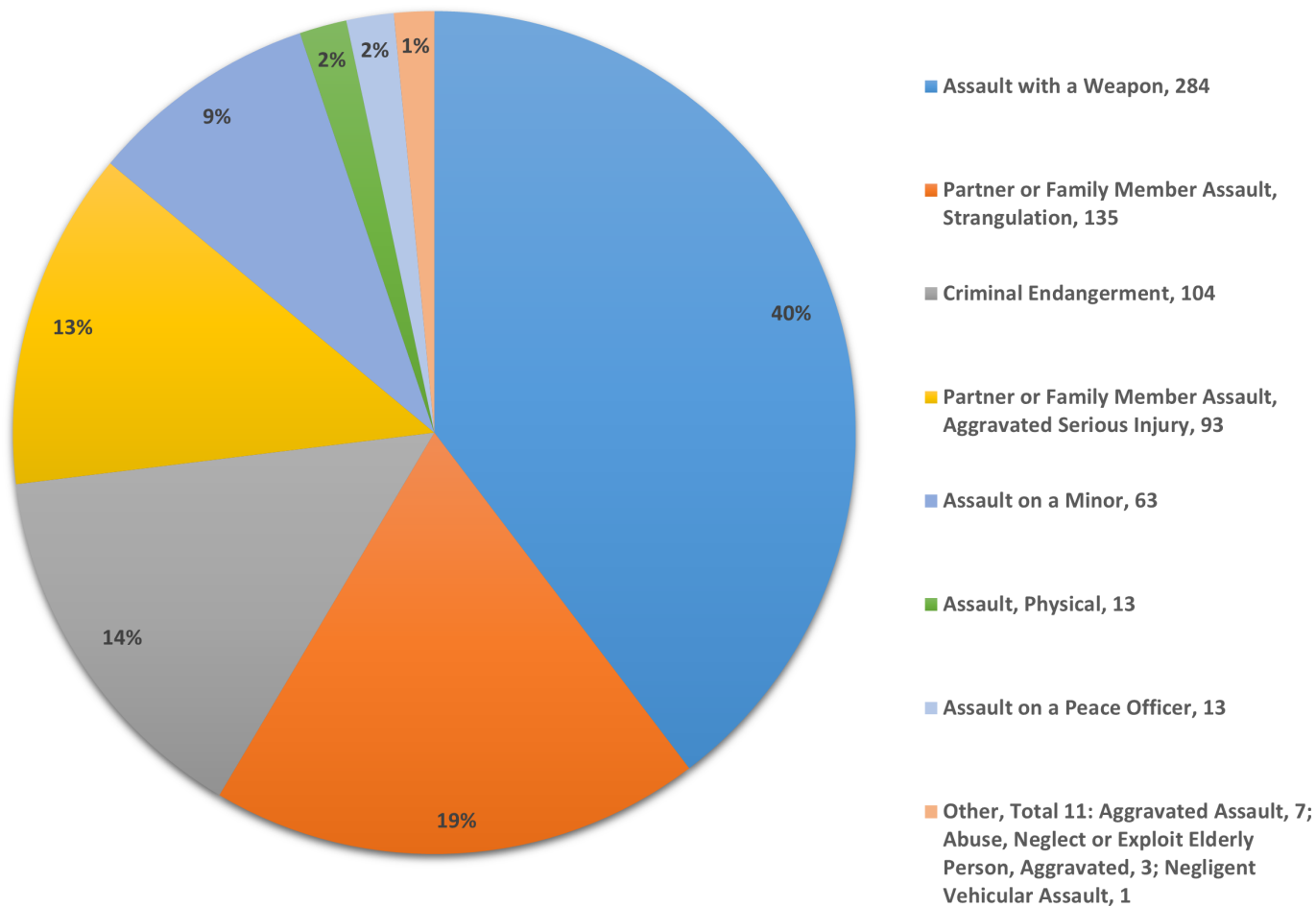
The databases connect agencies across the United States so they can share information, locate items and people. The databases are operated by state and federal agencies and follow rigid protocols for use and physical as well as digital security.

For example, if a vehicle is stolen in Billings it is listed in the databases. If an officer in another state runs its license or Vehicle Identification Number, that officer's agency will receive notification that the vehicle may be stolen from Billings. Staff at the two agencies then confirm the vehicle is the one listed as stolen and take steps to recover it, notify the owner and remove it from the national database. Criminal charges may ensue.

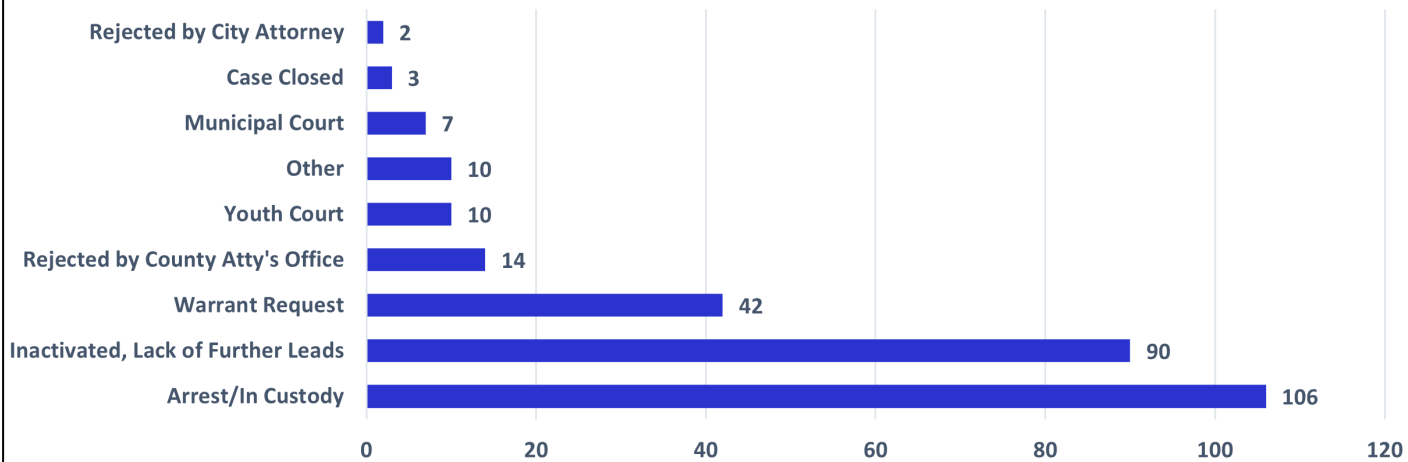
Officers have limited query access to these databases from the computers in their vehicles. BPD has nearly 200 licenses for various levels of access and our employees make about 400,000 transactions a year through the systems. The annual bill for the services is usually between \$35,000 and \$40,000.

Violent Crime Statistics

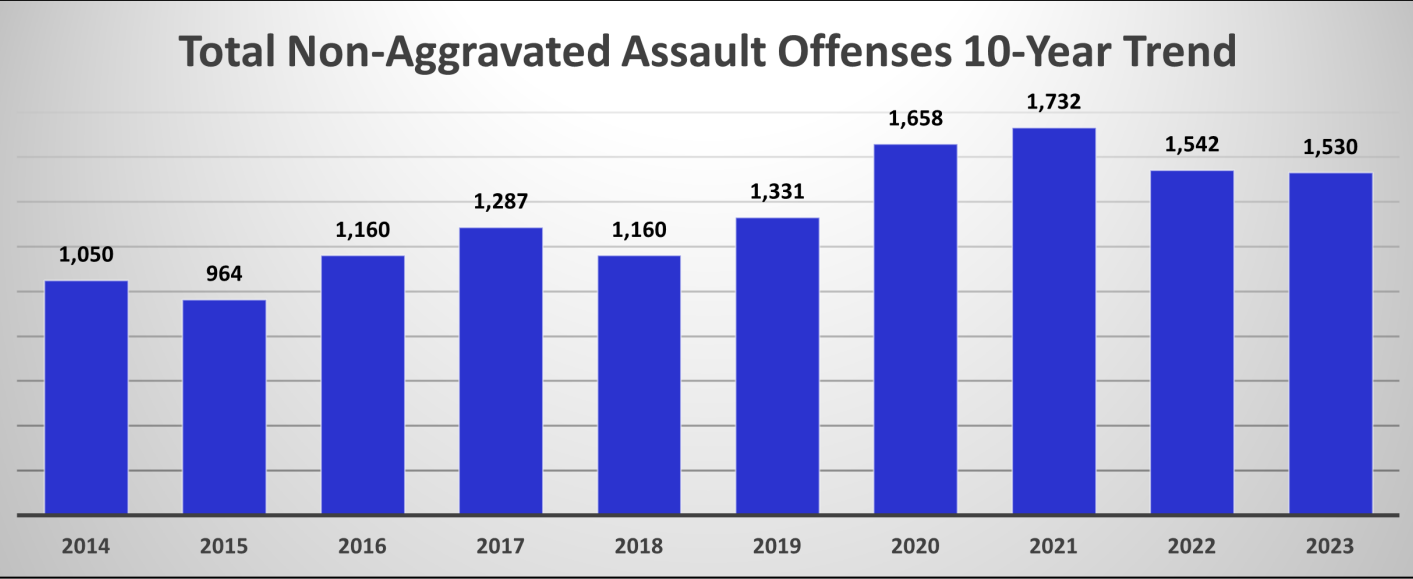
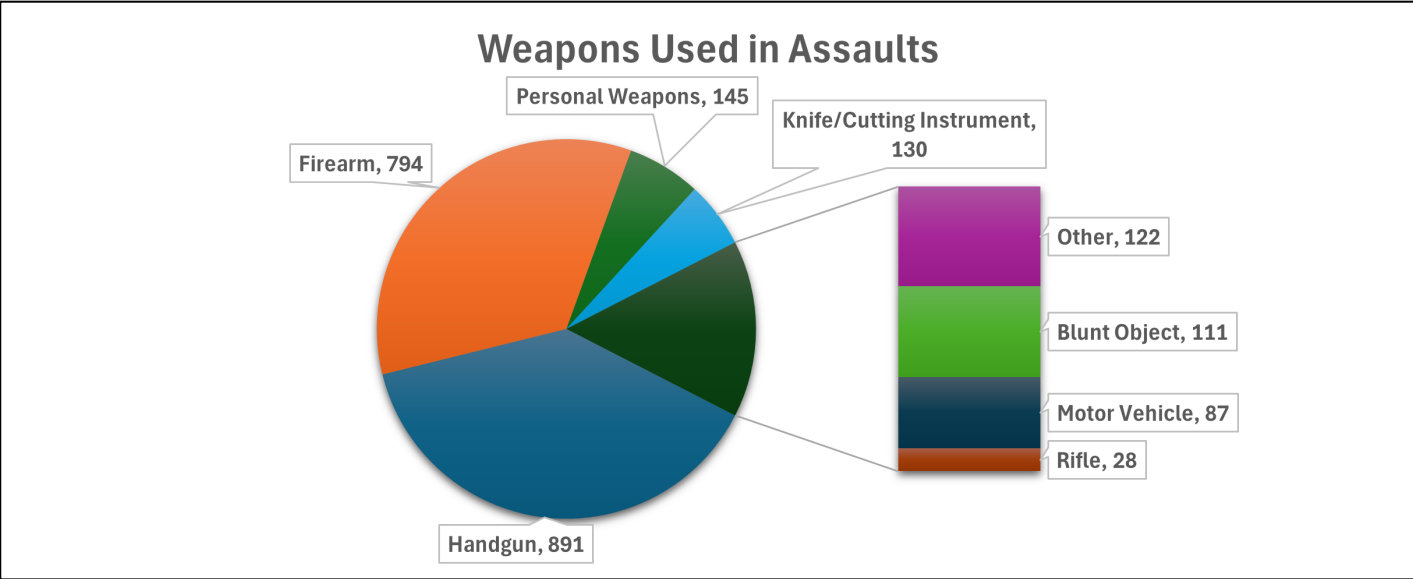
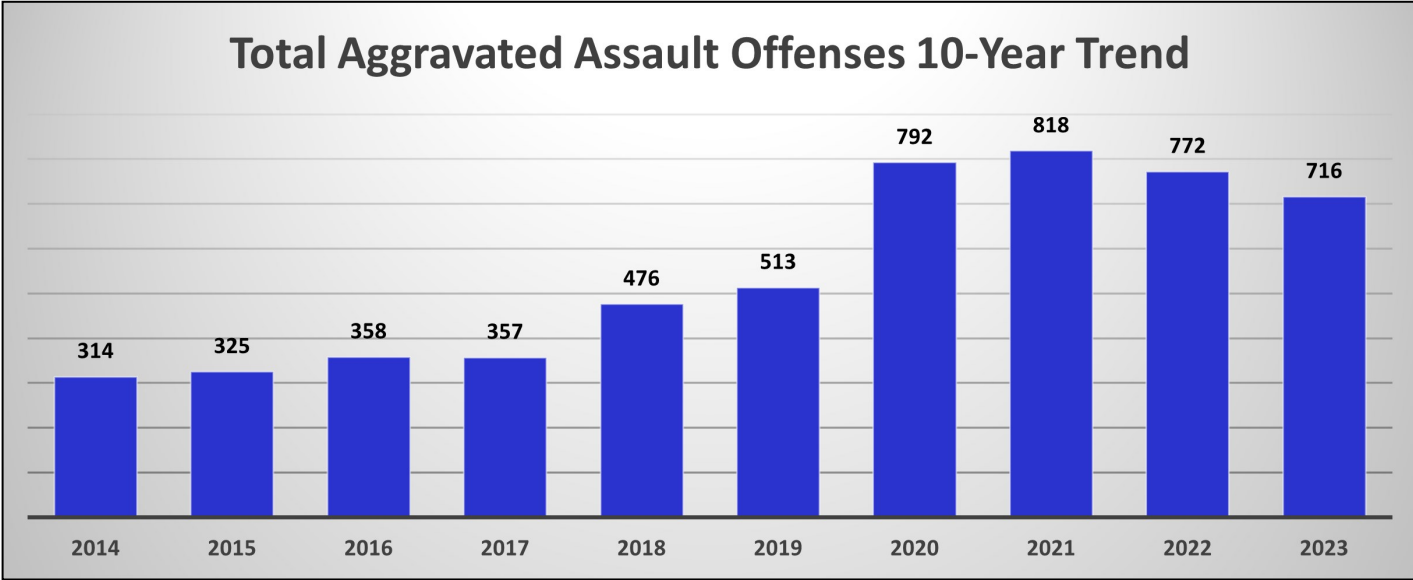
Aggravated Assault Offenses



Assault with a Weapon Dispositions

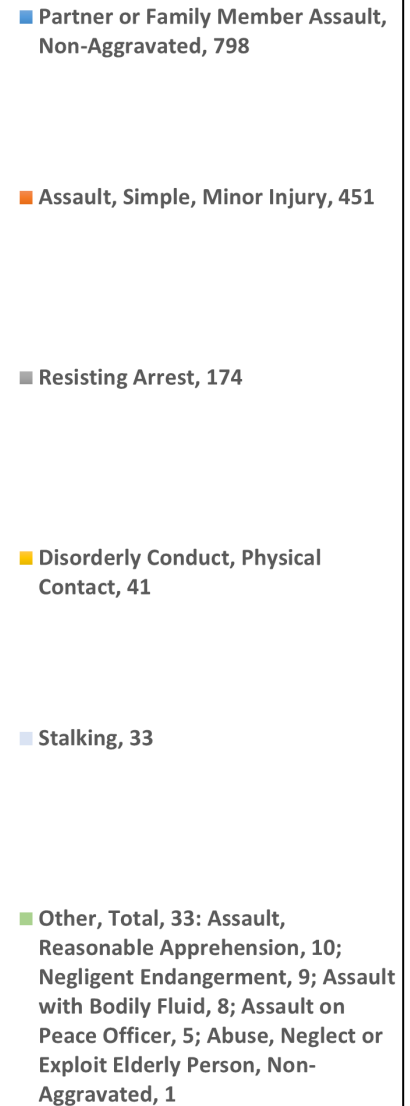


Violent Crime Statistics



Violent Crime Statistics

Non-Aggravated Assault Offenses



Did you know?

Billings Police Officers hosted 162 people on ride alongs during 2023.

Citizens ride with officers during their shift. The rides usually last a few hours and can be done any time of day or day of the week. These experiences give citizens the opportunity to see first-hand how officers work and to better understand law enforcement in our community.

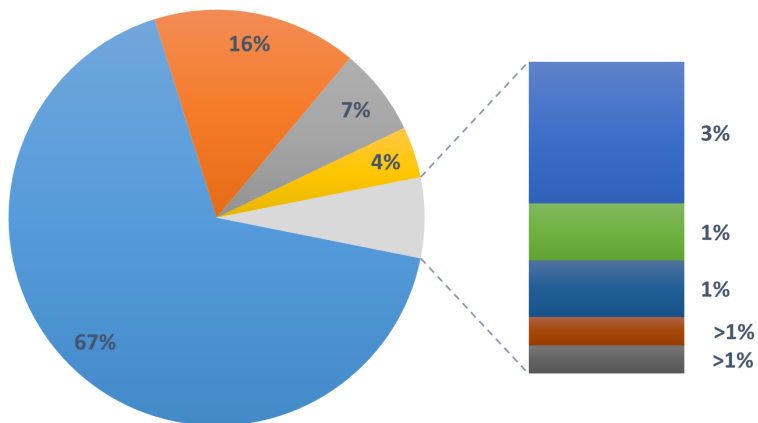
Ride-along applicants who are younger than 18 require a parent or guardian's signature. All riders must provide identification when submitting a ride-along request.

More information and the request form is available on the Community Services page at www.billingspolice.com.



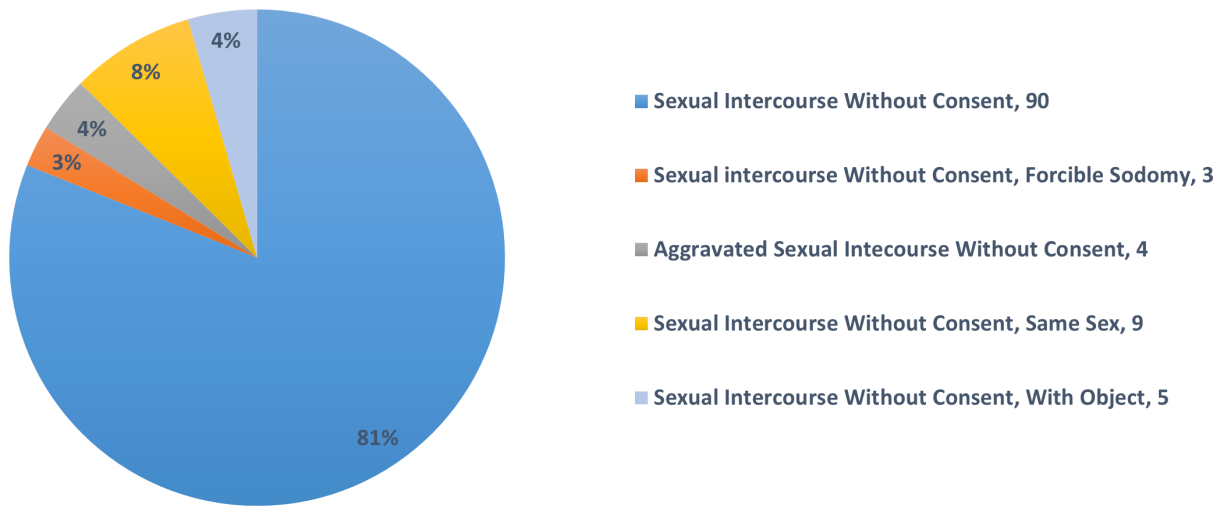
Violent Crime Statistics

Other Sexual Offenses



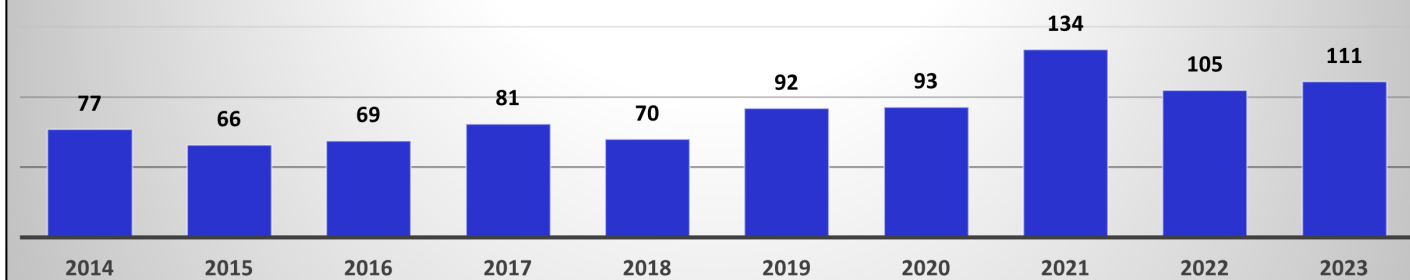
- Sexual Assault, 118
- Sexual Abuse of Children, 28
- Statutory Rape, Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, 12
- Incest, 7
- Prostitution, 5
- Surreptitious Observation, 2
- Obscenity, 2
- Human Trafficking, Involuntary Servitude, Commercial Acts, 1
- Prostitution, Aggravated Promotion, 1

Sexual Assault Offenses



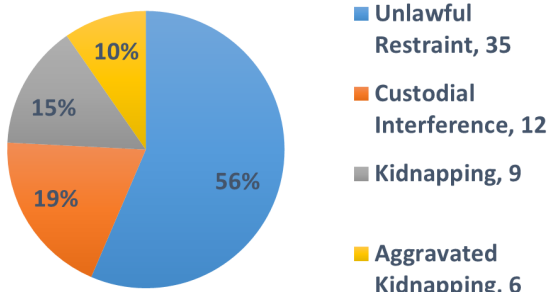
- Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, 90
- Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, Forcible Sodomy, 3
- Aggravated Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, 4
- Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, Same Sex, 9
- Sexual Intercourse Without Consent, With Object, 5

Sexual Assault Offenses 10-Year Trend



Violent Crime Statistics

Kidnapping Offenses

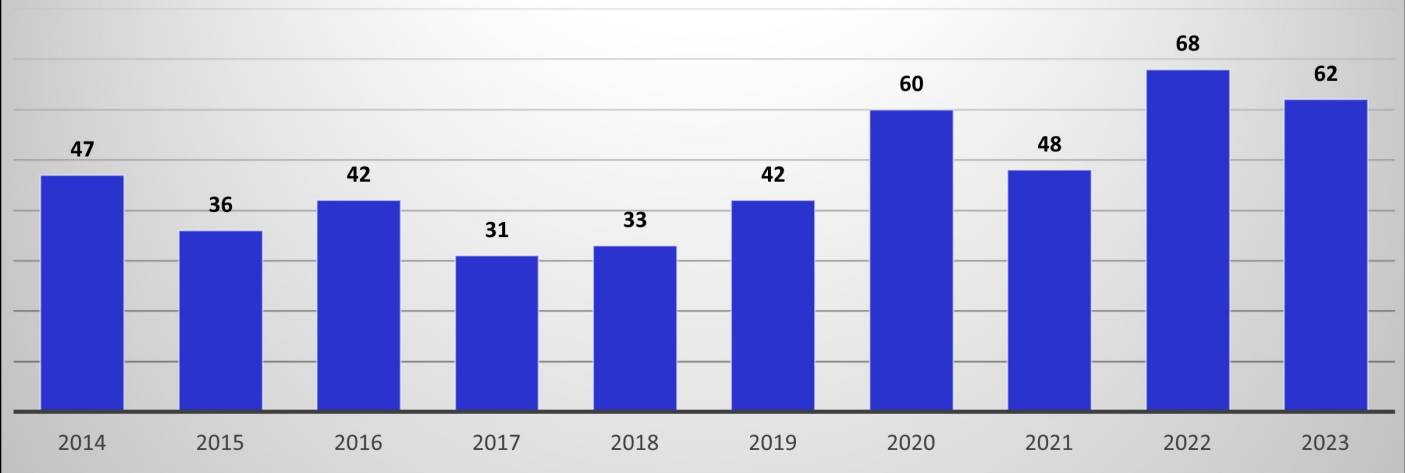


The FBI definition of kidnapping is the unlawful seizure, transportation and/or detention of persons against their will or of minors without the consent of their custodial parents or legal guardians.

Most of the kidnapping offenses investigated by Billings Police are unlawful restraint that occur during Partner or Family Member Assaults.

Officers responded to 200 Custodial Interference Calls For Service, but only 12 of them rose to the level of crime. The remainder were parents documenting children not exchanged in timelines outlined in parenting plans or who were not working with a court ordered plan.

Kidnapping Offenses 10-Year Trend



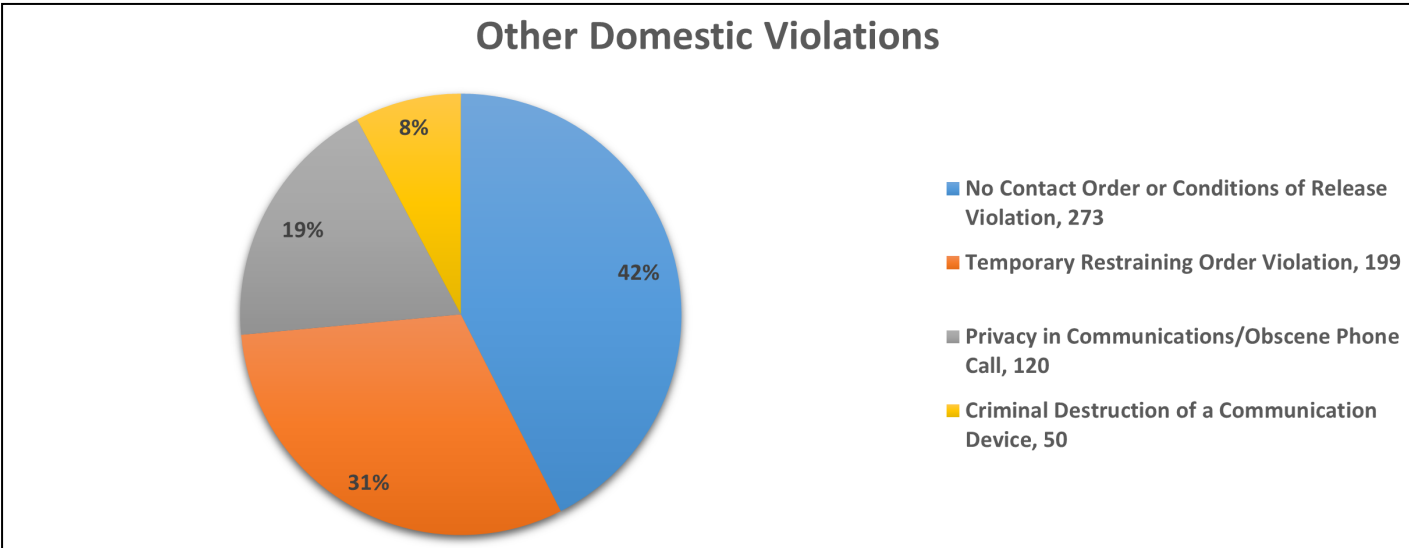
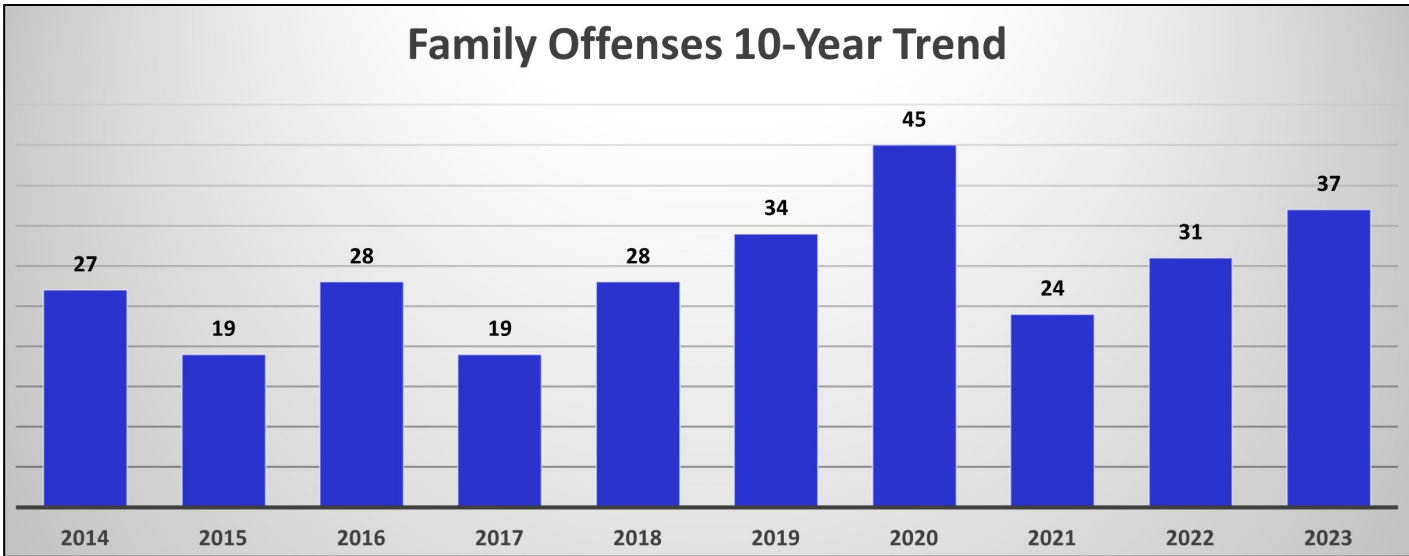
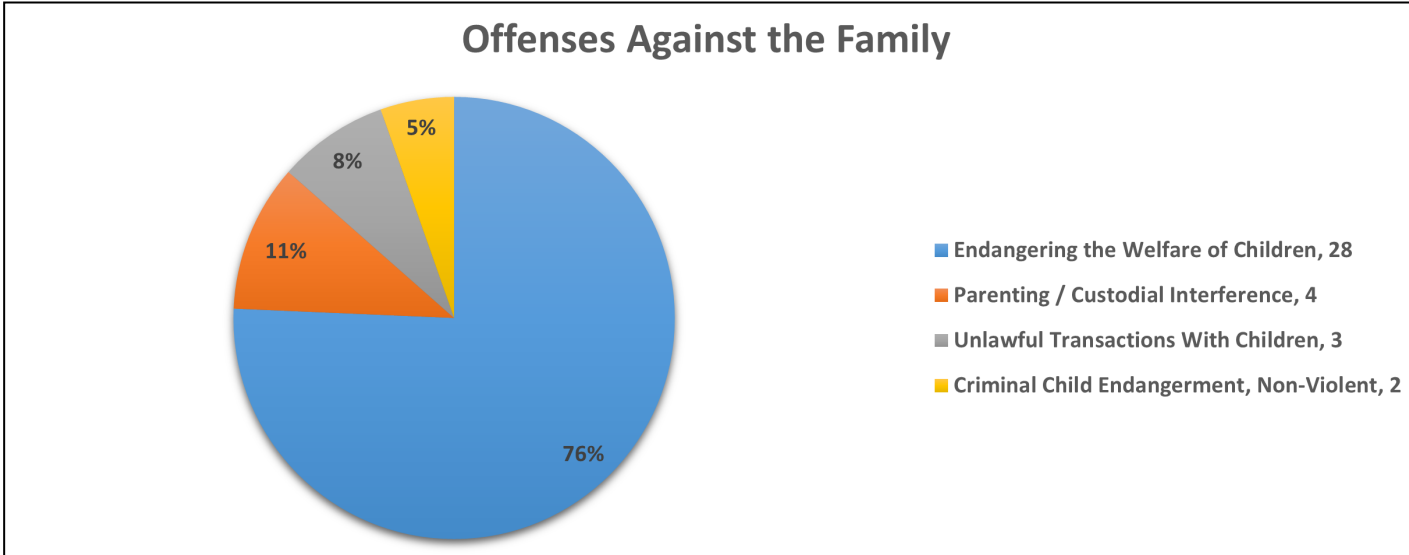
Did you know?

Billings Police Department hosts a Getting Through the Grind Course several times each year. Officers from local, state and federal agencies attended the training. BPD's Detective Lange and Sergeant J. Stovall instruct on the physiological and emotional effects of trauma and stress on law enforcement. The three-session course includes testimony from people who have been impacted by traumas related to their work in law enforcement. Getting Through the Grind is open to law enforcement members, their significant others and civilians who work in law enforcement.

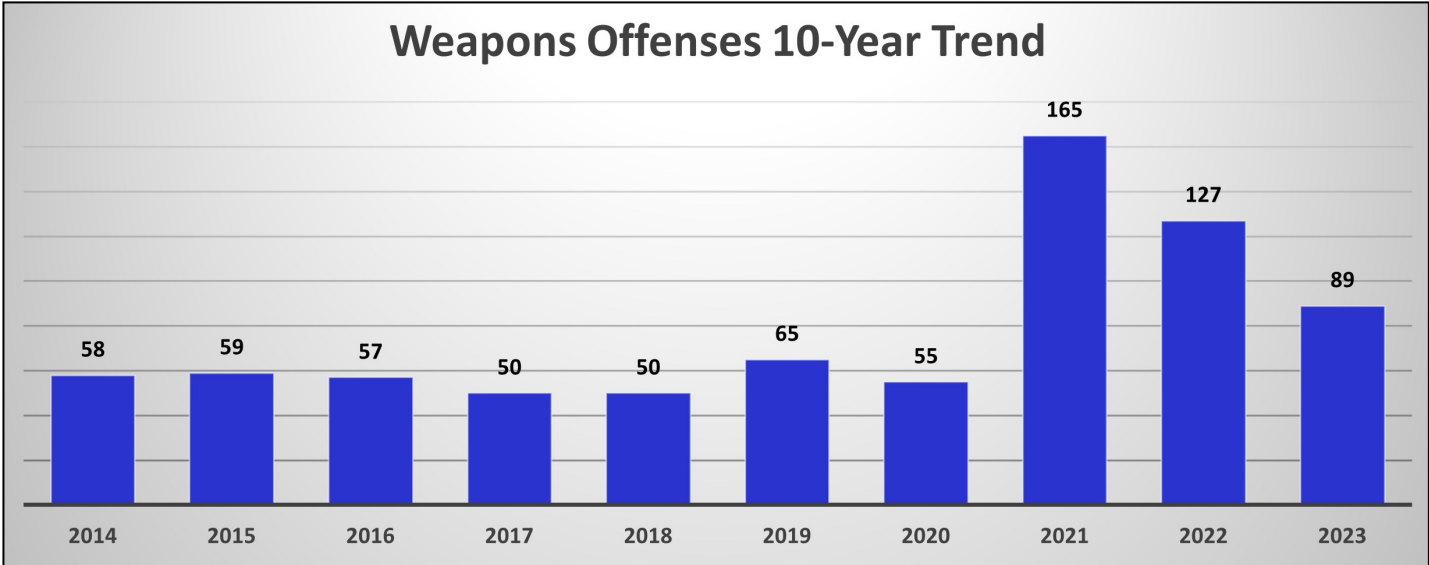


Family Offenses

The FBI defines family offenses as “unlawful, nonviolent acts by a family member (or legal guardian) that threaten the physical, mental or economic well-being or morals of another family member that are not classifiable as other offenses such as assault, incest or statutory rape.”



Weapons Offenses

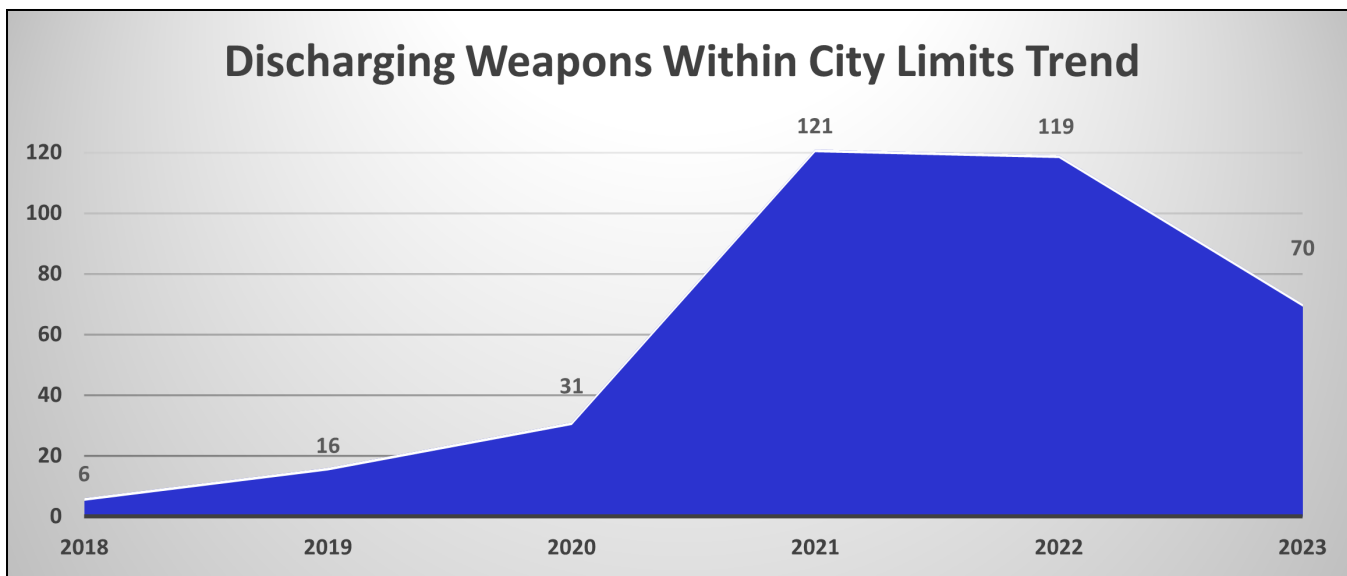


Weapons discharge cases continued to decline. However they are still about one third more than Billings' most active year before the steep increase in 2021. Firearms were listed as the weapon used in 120 assault with a weapons cases and 50 criminal endangerment cases during 2023.



This follows a national decrease but also reflects BPD efforts. One of which is BPD focused on gang related crimes as well as those committed by juveniles. It paid off, as some repeat offenders were identified and their crimes disrupted.

The department also has enhanced investigations by submitting casings collected at shooting incidents to the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network. Known as NIBIN, the federal labs are able to link crimes that involved the same weapon, across town and the nation. That doesn't identify shooters but it does increase the probability of closing numerous cases once a suspect is found.

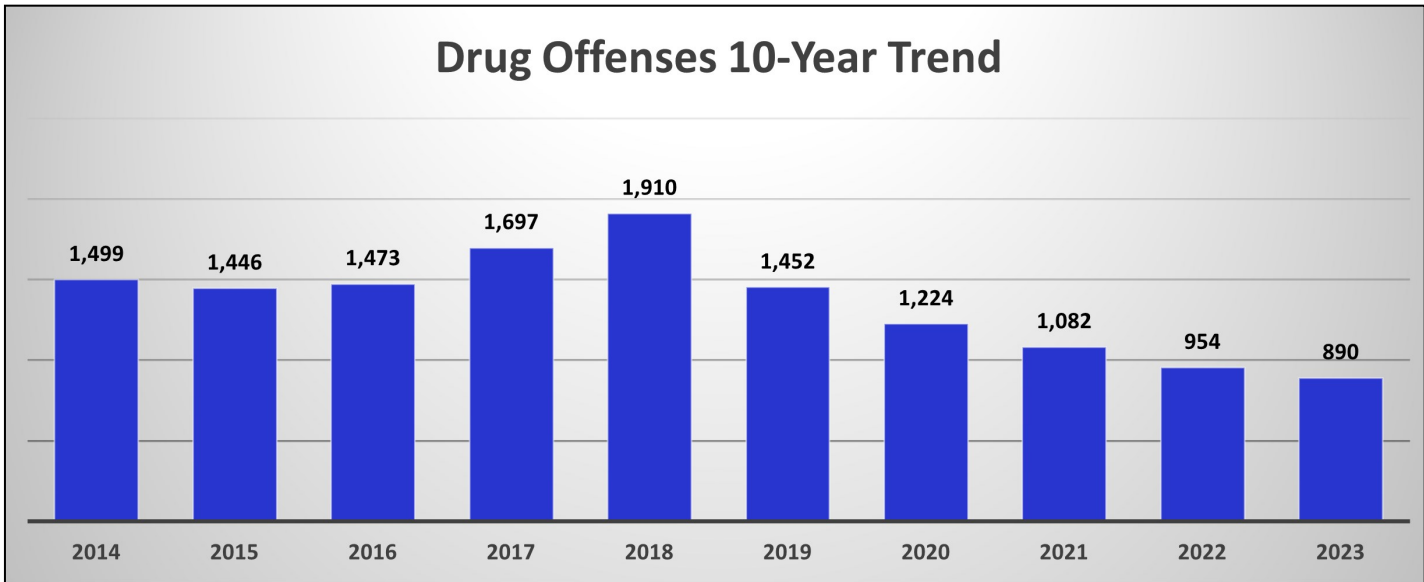
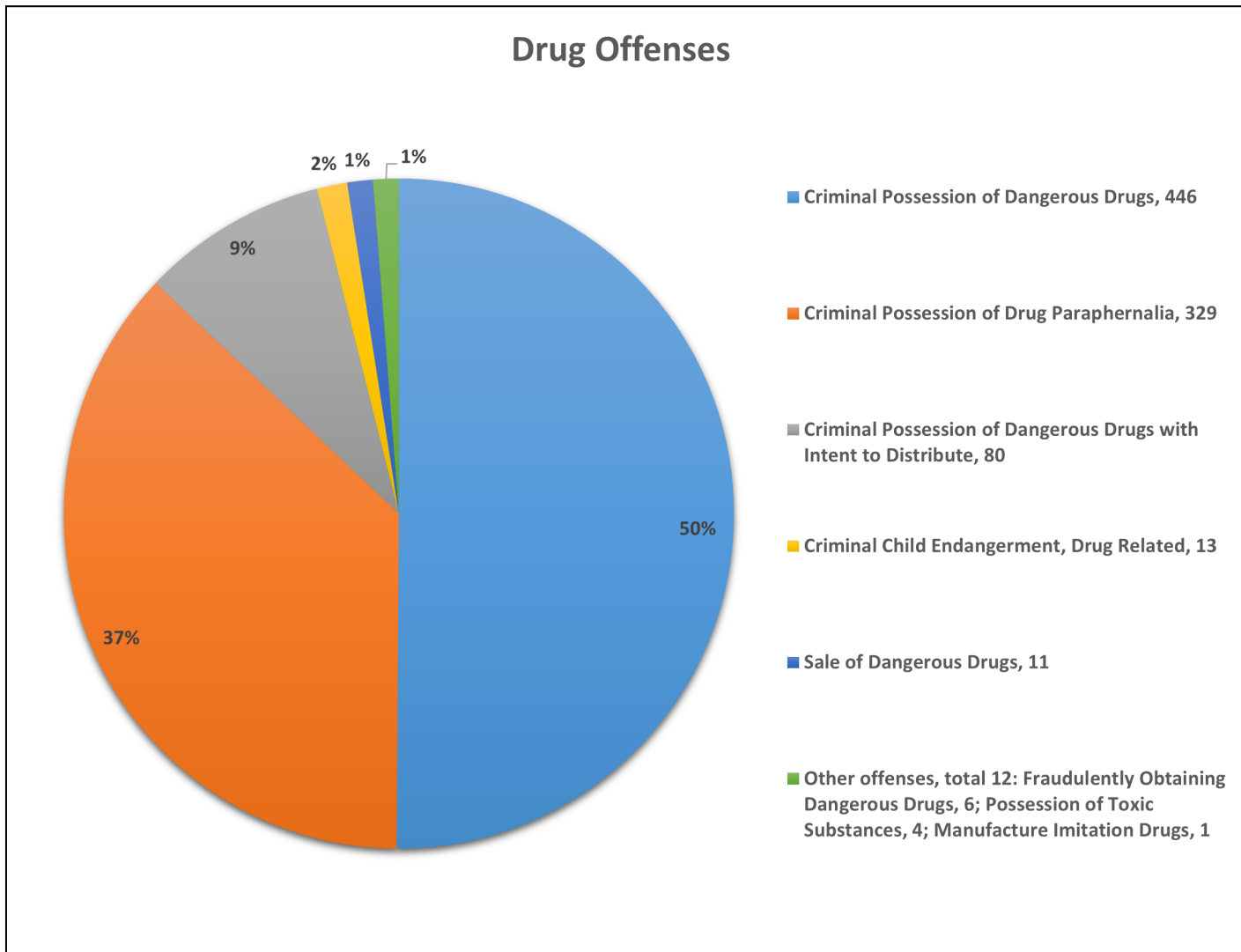


Did you know?

Billings Police Department's Crime Analyst posts crime data hub on the Department's web site.

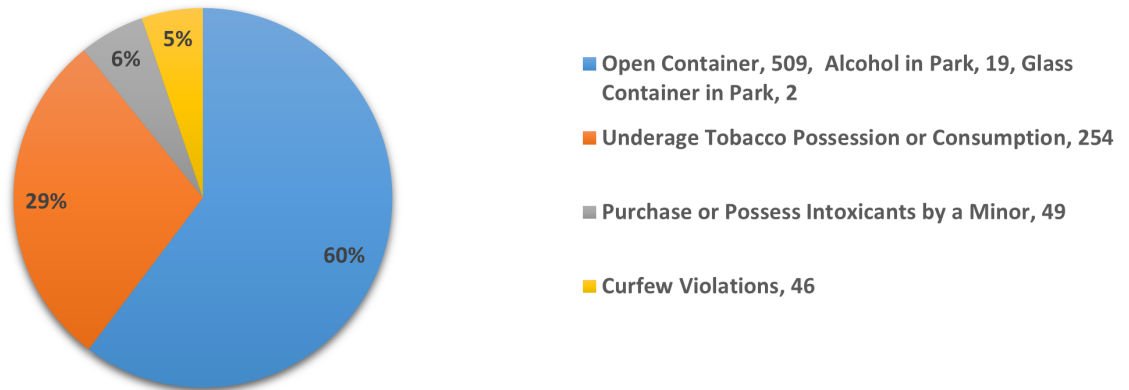
Access the hub by taking BPD Crime Stats link on the Community Services page of www.billingspolice.com

Drug Offenses

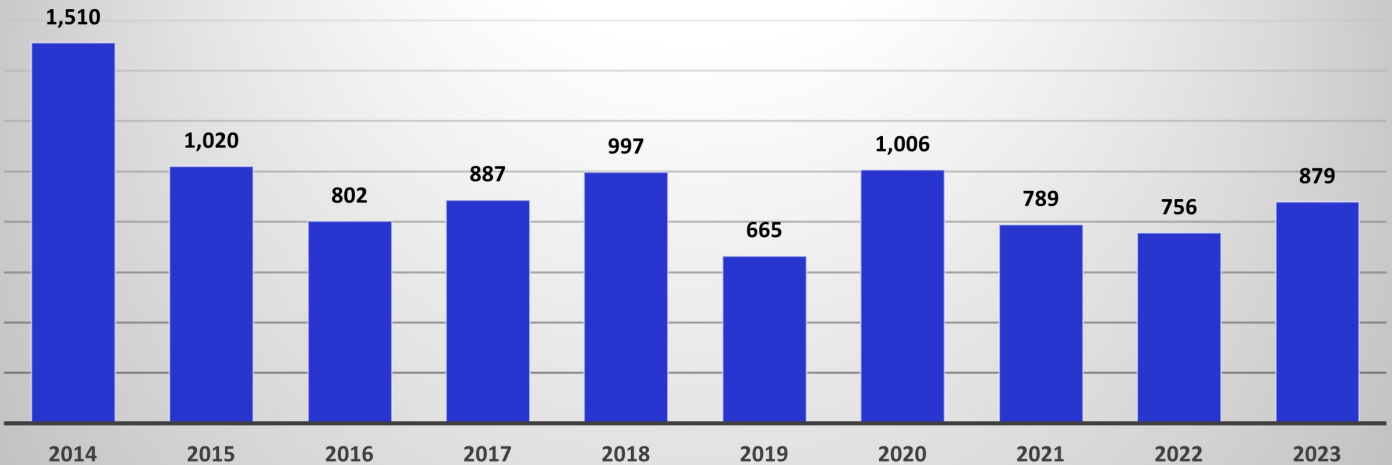


Liquor Law and Youth Violations

Liquor Law and Underage Tobacco Violations



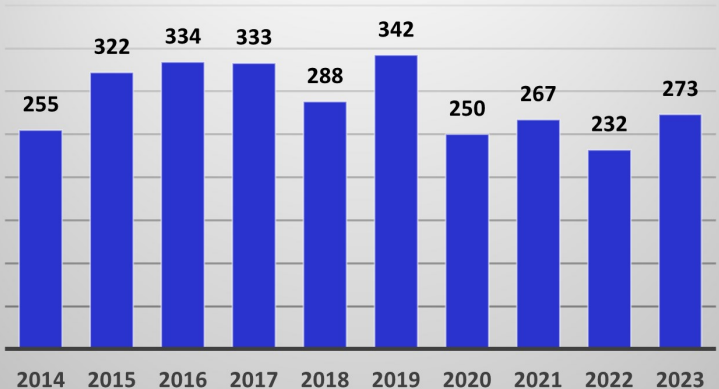
Liquor and Tobacco Violations 10-Year Trend



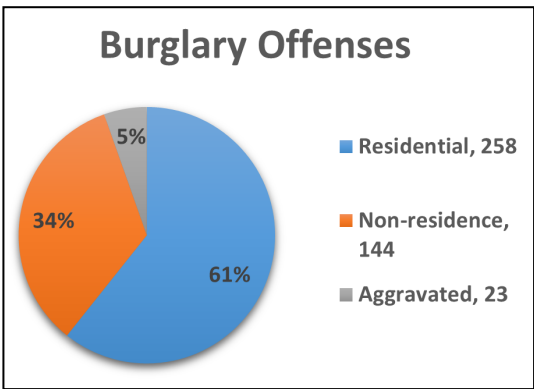
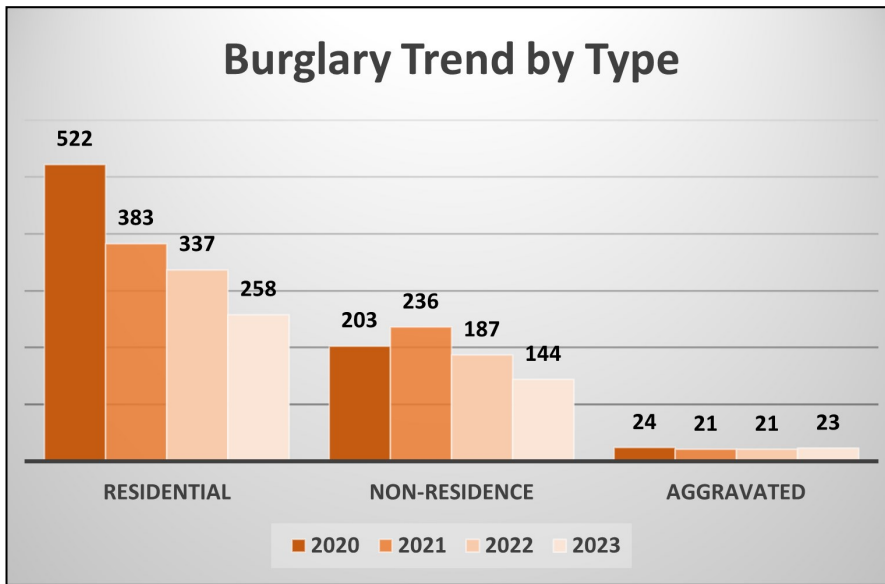
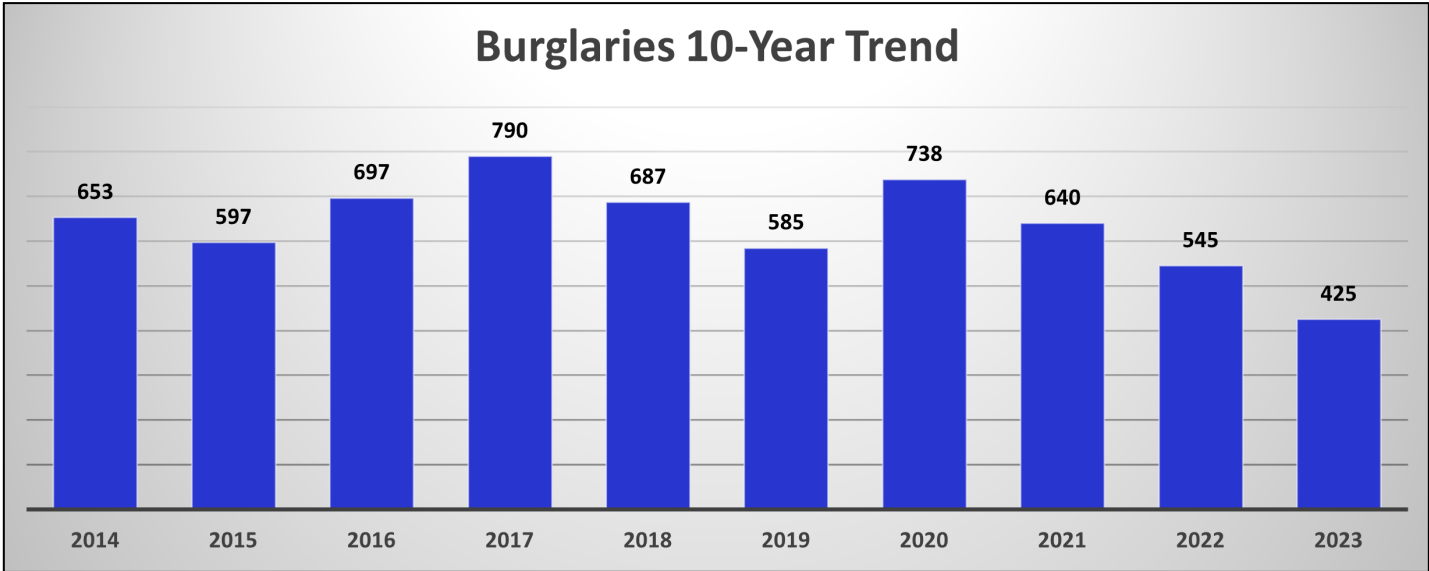
Running away is not a crime, but it is included in crime reporting. Children who are reported as runaways are considered missing persons and listed in a national law enforcement database until they are found.

Billings Police Department works with the Montana Department of Justice Missing Persons Clearinghouse and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) to list local missing and runaway children on their web sites.

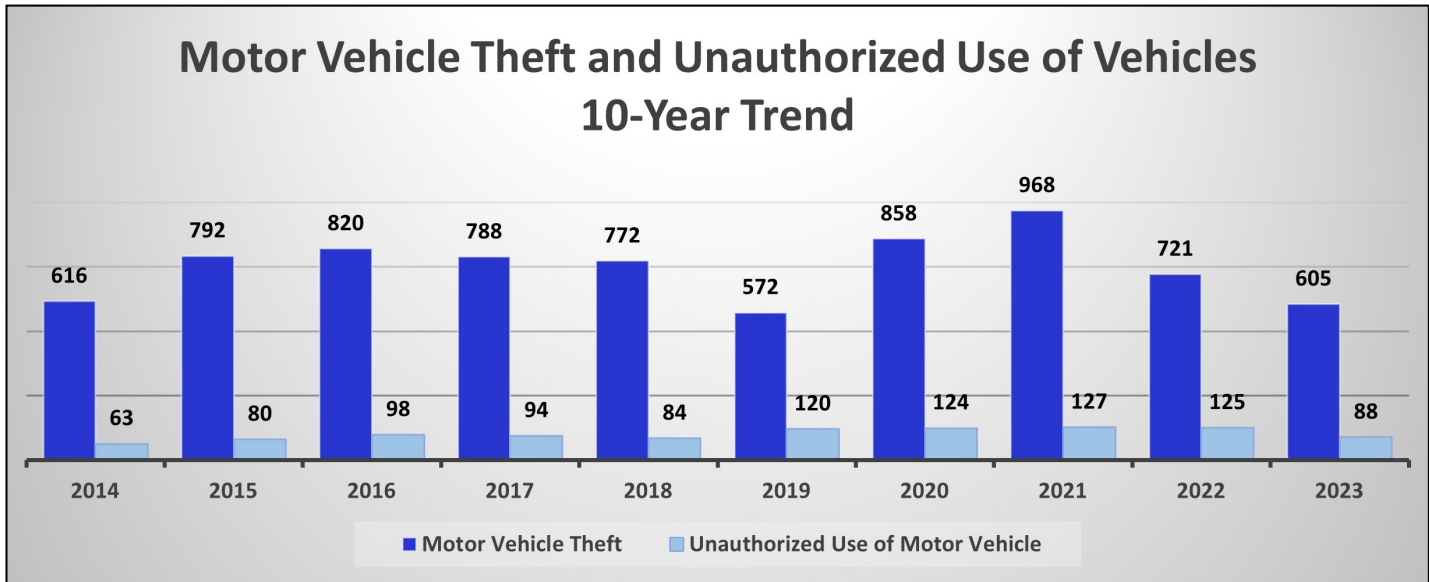
Runaway Offenses 10-Year Trend



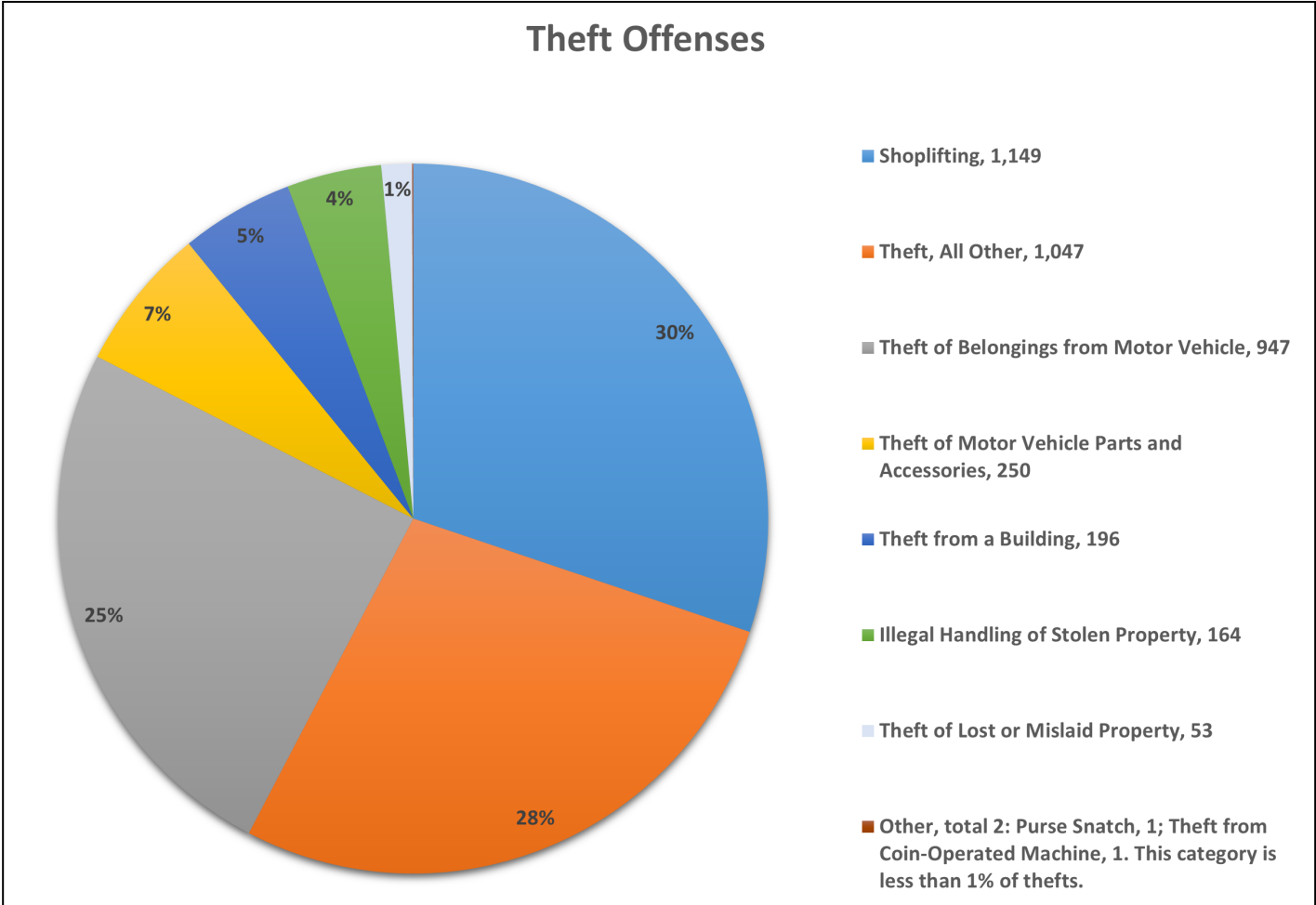
Property Crime Statistics



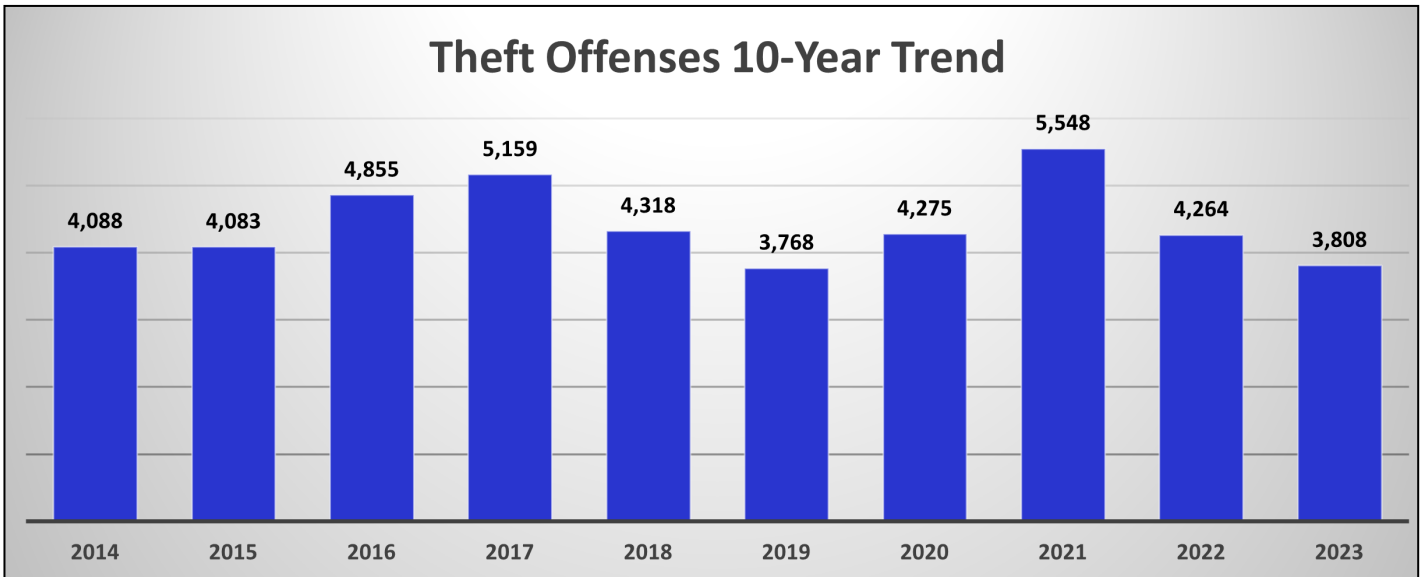
Total burglary offenses are down in Billings for the fourth year. However, aggravated burglaries, which involved suspects entering buildings while people were inside increased slightly.



Property Crime Statistics

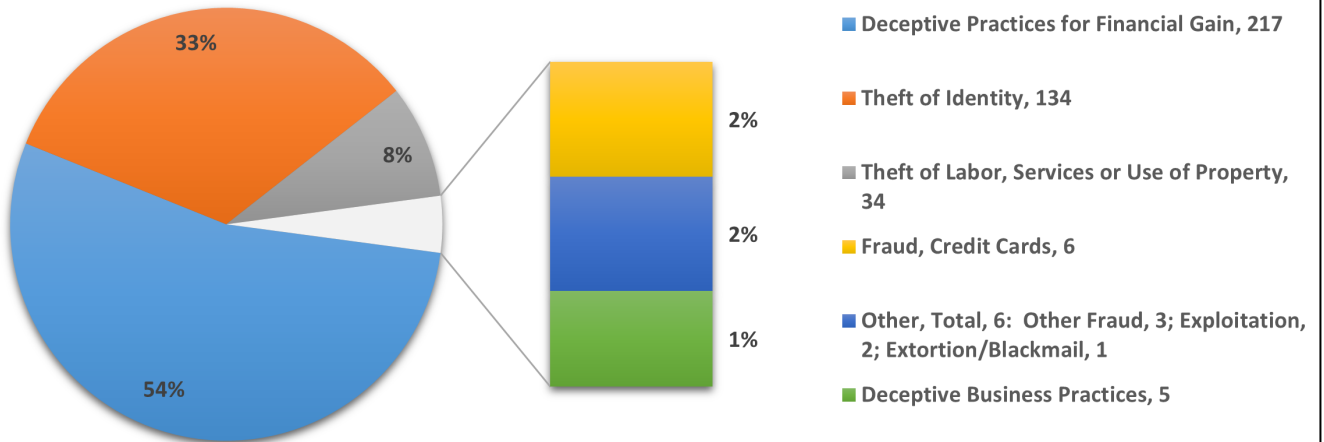


Shoplifting was the only category of theft that did not decrease during 2023. There were 62 more shoplifting offenses reported in 2023 than in 2022. Shoplifting reports are strongly tied to business practices. Some businesses report each known offense, regardless of the value of the loss, others set a minimum loss for reporting while yet others don't report any shoplifting crimes. Numerous Billings businesses belong to the Montana Organized Retail Crime Alliance which facilitates loss prevention professionals working together to identify shoplifters and industry collaboration. Billings Police Department participates with the group.

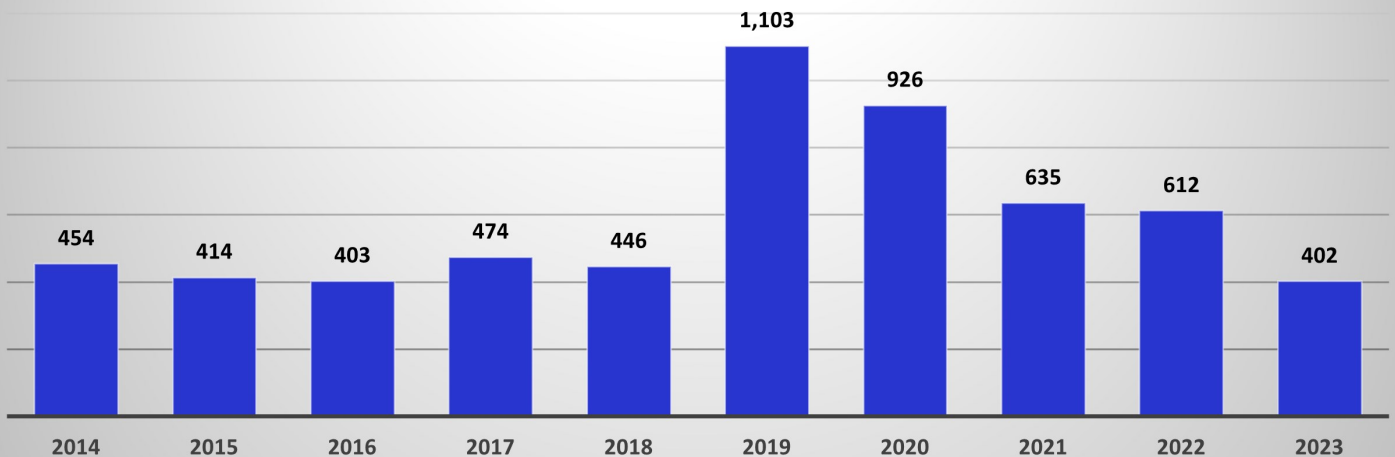


Fraud Offenses

Fraud Offenses



Fraud Offenses 10-Year Trend



Did you know?

Naloxone nasal spray is an opioid overdose treatment that is available to all BPD officers, as well as civilian staff.

The drug will restore normal breathing to a person whose breathing has slowed or even stopped due to overdose from drugs such as heroin, fentanyl or prescription medications, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

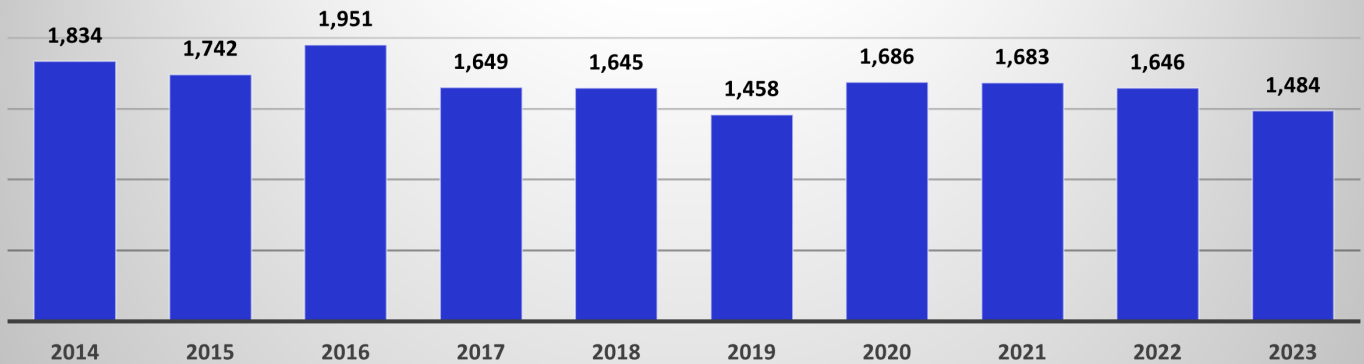
Training is required to be allowed to use the medication while working at BPD. The training a combination of online and classroom.

At right, Sgt Mansur teaches a classroom session of the training.

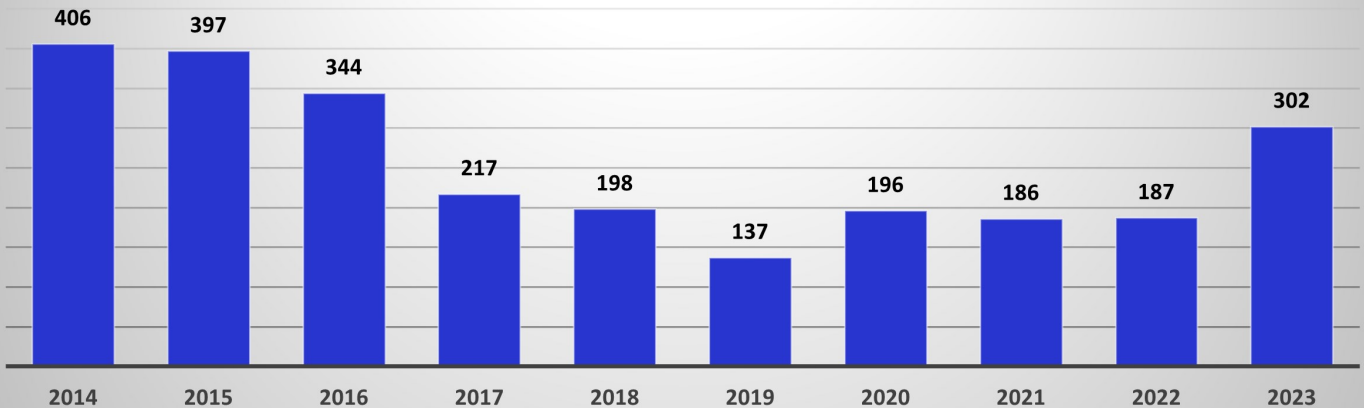


Crimes Against Public Order

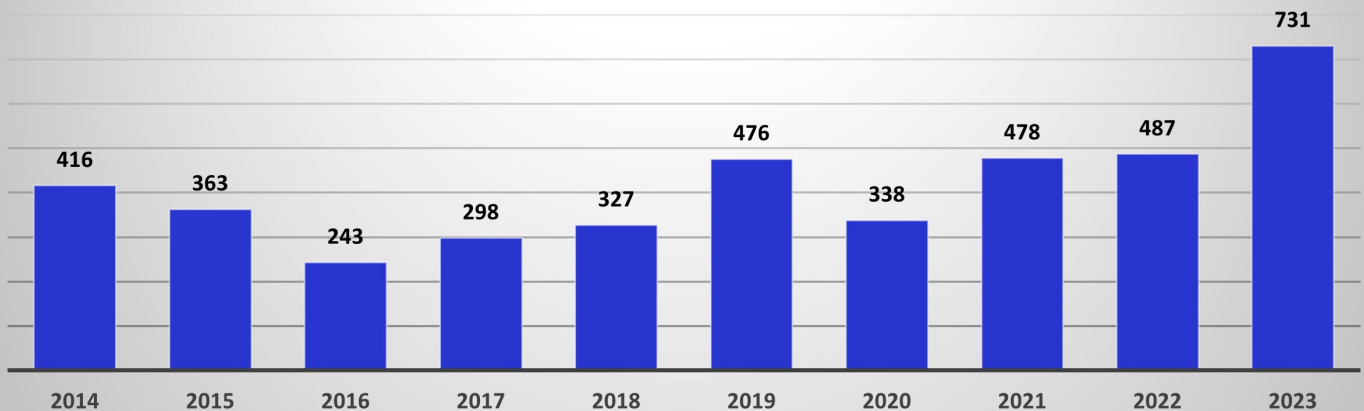
Criminal Mischief Offenses 10-Year Trend



Disorderly Conduct Offenses 10-Year Trend

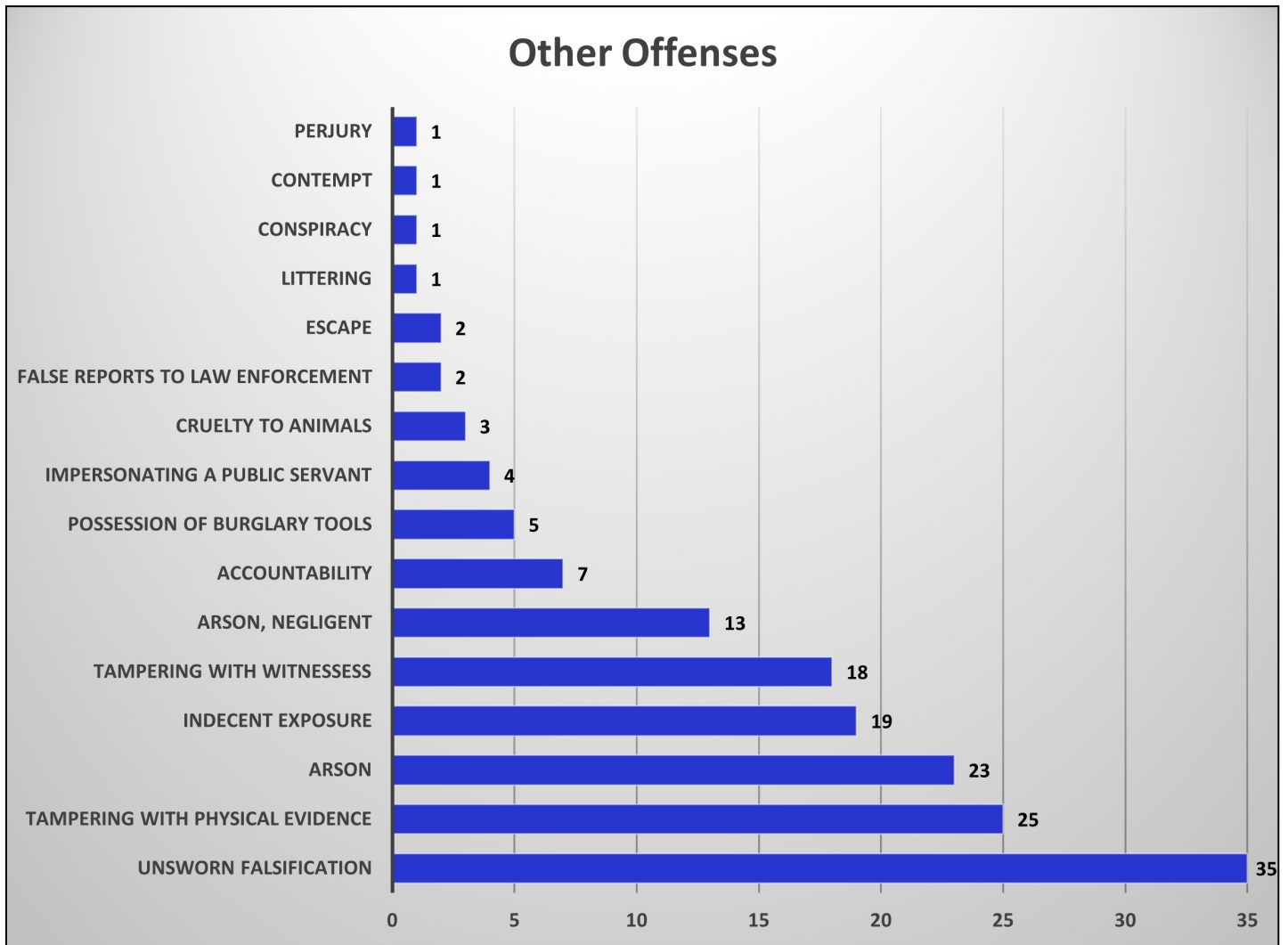


Trespass Offenses 10-Year Trend



Trespass offenses increased significantly during 2023. Trespass offenses may be to property, such as homes and businesses when unwelcomed people are present, or to vehicles during a theft. With 390 occurrences, commercial spaces were the most frequently location of trespasses. Residences were second at 170, then parking lots or outdoor areas at 152. Of all trespass violations, there were 531 closed by arrest or sent to prosecutors for review.

Crimes Against Public Order

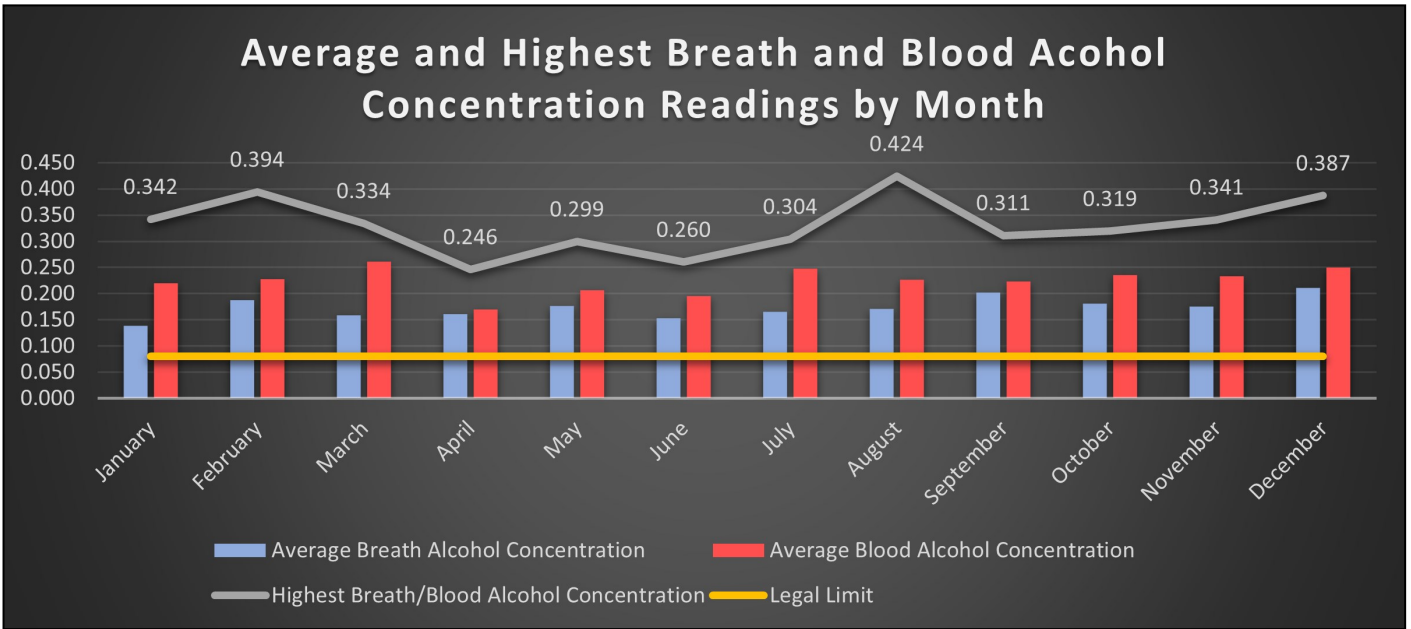
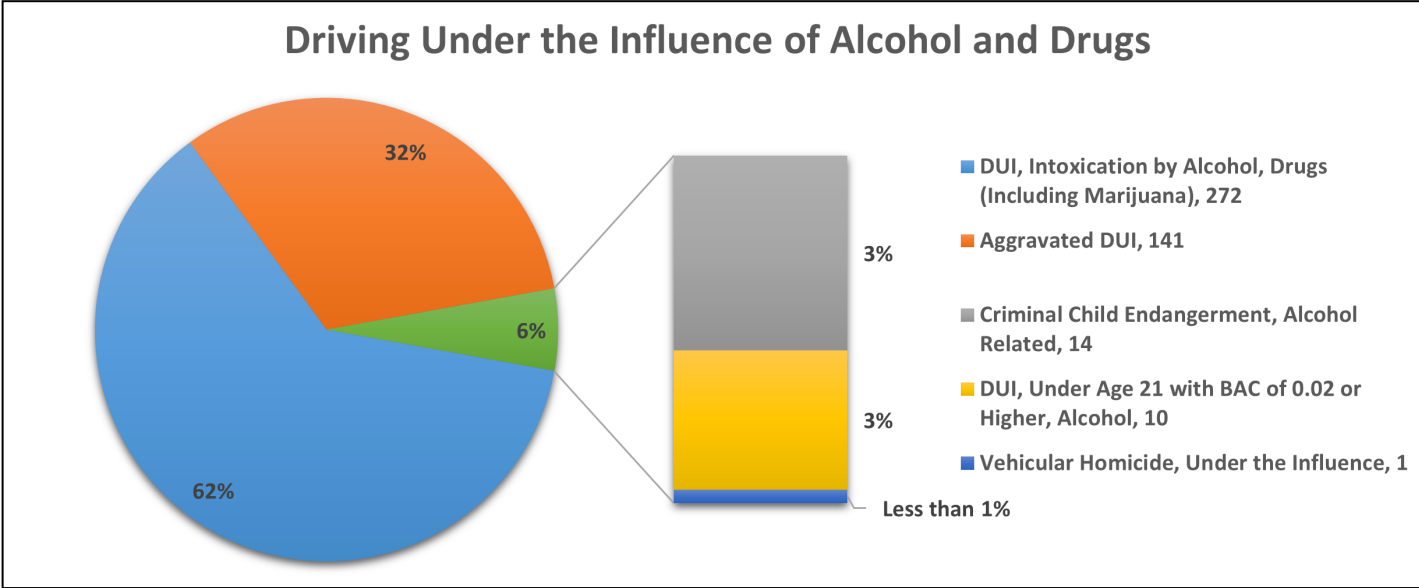


Did you know?

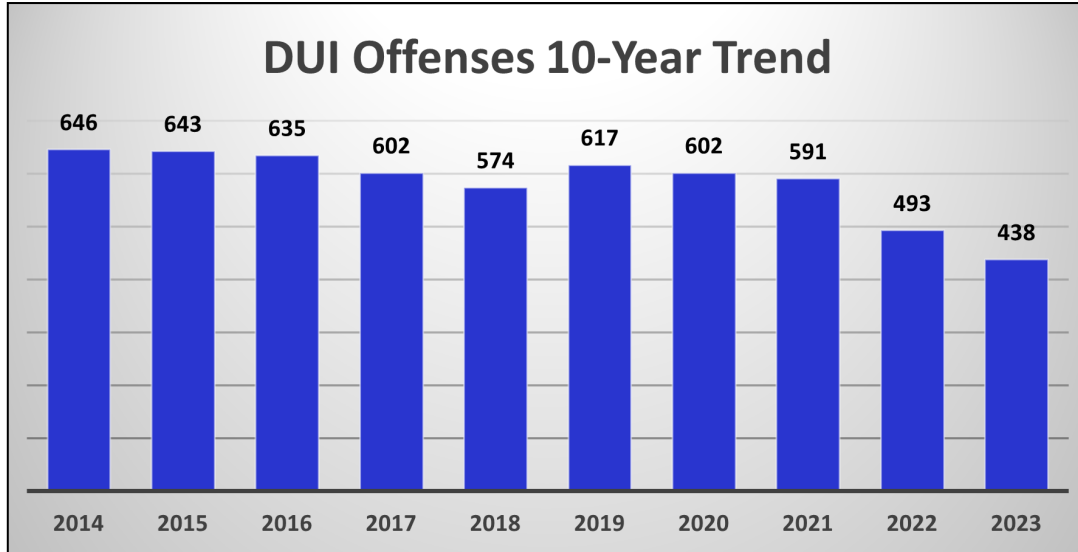
Community Service Officers were recognized by Chief St. John and the Billings City Council on Sept. 26, 2023, with a Meritorious Service Award and unit citation. The CSO positions were created in 2021 with funding through the Public Safety Mill Levy. The officers in the photo below (from left) Francisco Santiago, Amanda Newell, Kevin Rockwell and Coltin Wevley were the first CSOs hired. Their work ranges from vehicle inspections to taking theft and burglary reports. In late 2023 they were trained to take crash reports. The CSO program has expanded from four to seven officers.



Driving Under the Influence

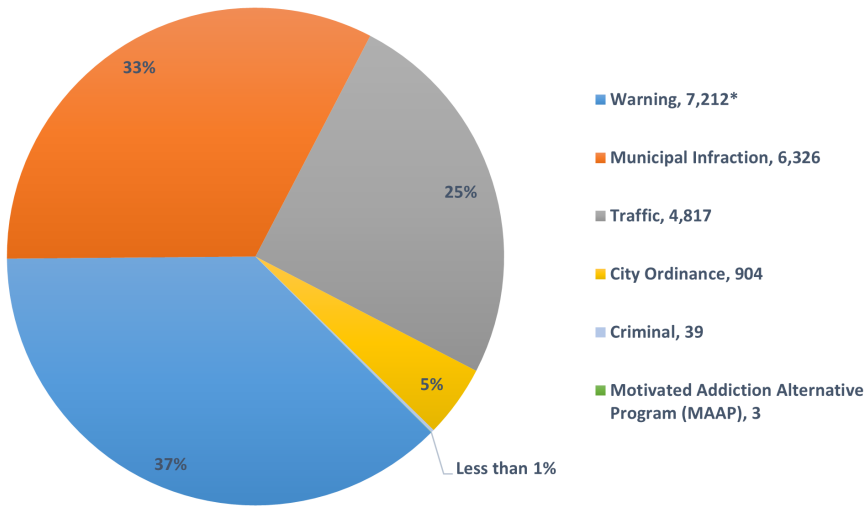


Officer Bishop's was recognized at the Yellowstone County DUI Task Force's Angel Tree Ceremony.



Traffic Statistics

Citations by Type



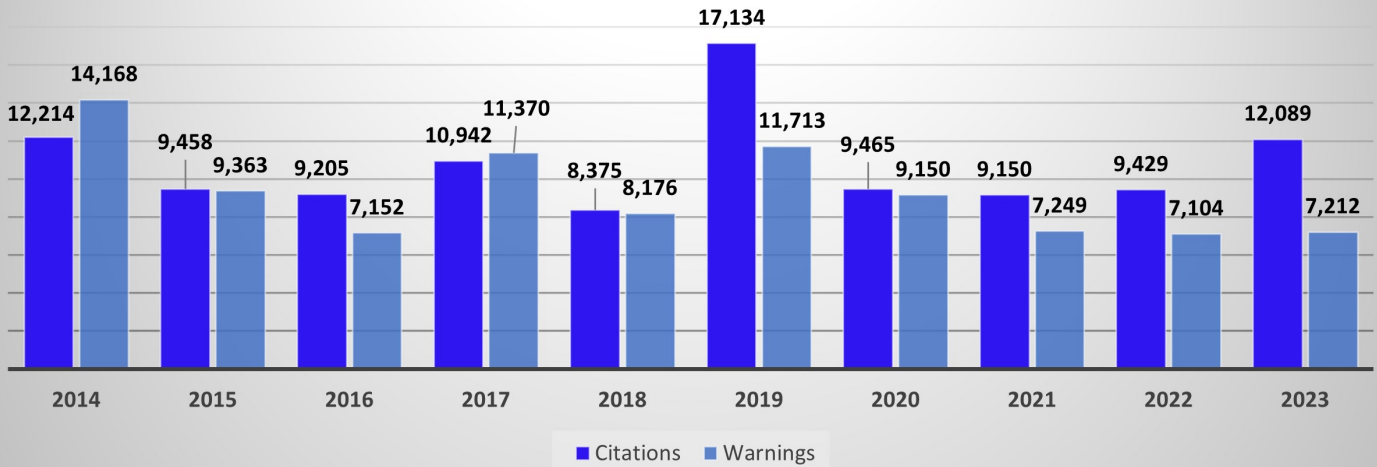
Due to limited civilian staffing, not all warnings were entered into the records system in time for the 2023 report.

The number of warnings used in this report, 7,212 issued, is the number officers wrote and was determined through a hand count.

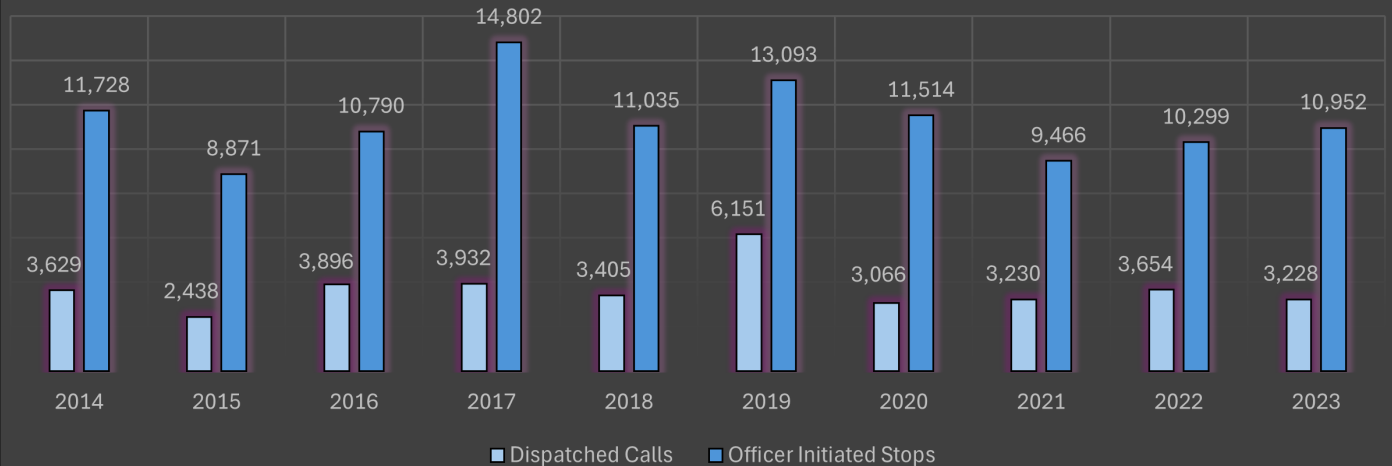
The overall number of offenses and counts for gender and race in all other graphics may be under-represented by about 3 percent.

The totals will be updated in the 2024 annual report's trend data.

Traffic Citations vs. Warnings 10-Year Trend



Dispatched Calls vs. Officer Initiated Stops 10-Year Trend

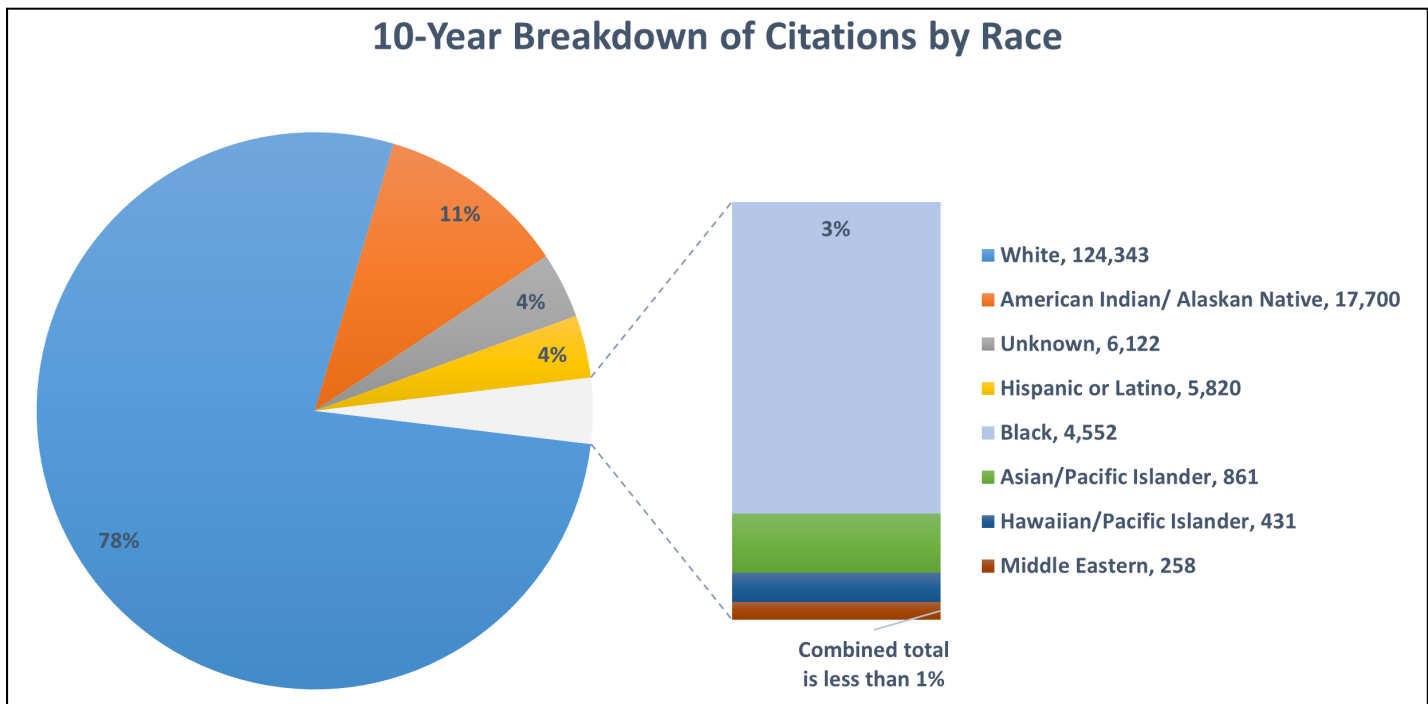
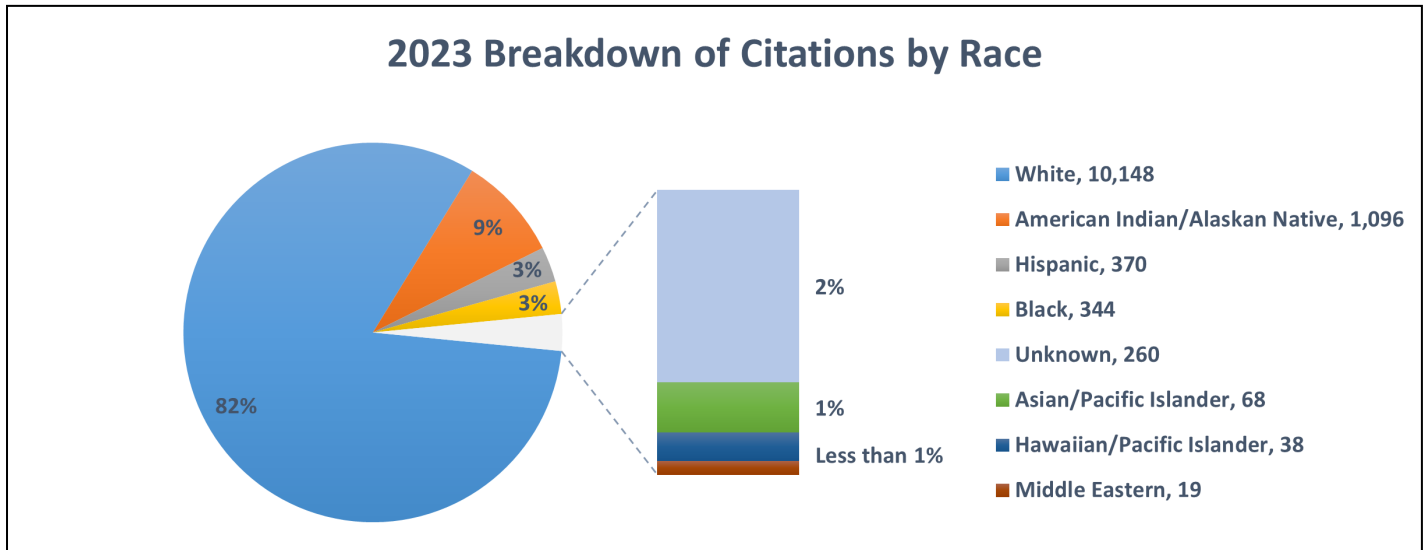
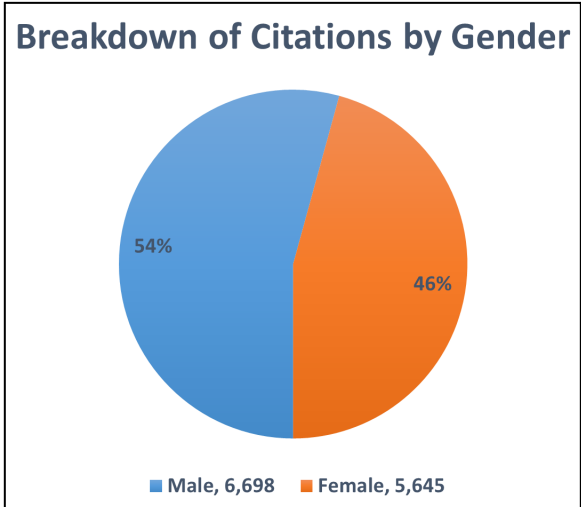


Traffic Statistics

Officers wrote 19,301 citations and warnings to 12,343 individuals. Drivers may receive multiple citations plus a warning on a single traffic stop, due to court requirements.

State law requires law enforcement to track race and ethnicity which is based on observations by officers, not self-reporting.

Billings Police Department continues to add citation writing software to patrol cars to reduce citizen and officer time on traffic stops. The software and in-car printers are available to about two-thirds of patrol officers.

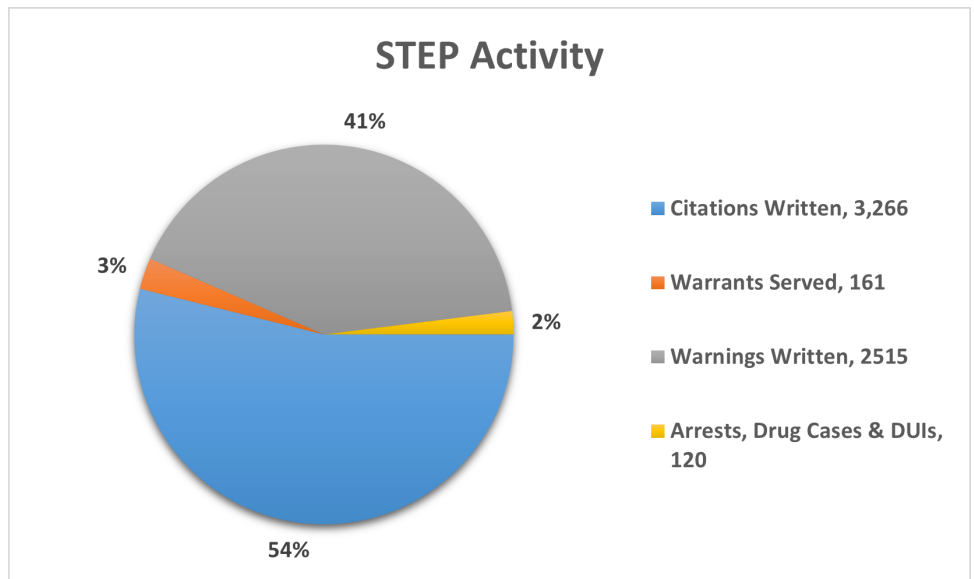


Selective Traffic Enforcement Program

Officers assigned to the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program, known as STEP, wrote 3,266 citations and 2,515 warnings during 2023.

The 2023 team, led by Sgt. Gunther, included officers Ihde, D. Stovall, Gilmore, and Z. Wallis.

Officers must have three years experience at Billings Police Department before they can apply for a STEP position. Applicants go through an interview process to be chosen for the team. STEP officer is a 3-year assignment.



The team works adjusted shifts so they are available during busier traffic times. They conduct special details in high-volume accident areas and locations where they are known traffic problems such as cell phone use in school zones. When needed, STEP officers work regular patrol and provide backup to other officers for increased safety.

Citizens can contact the STEP team with traffic questions or requests for extra traffic enforcement by sending an email to step@billingsmt.gov. Learn more on the patrol pages in the divisions section of www.billingspolice.com.

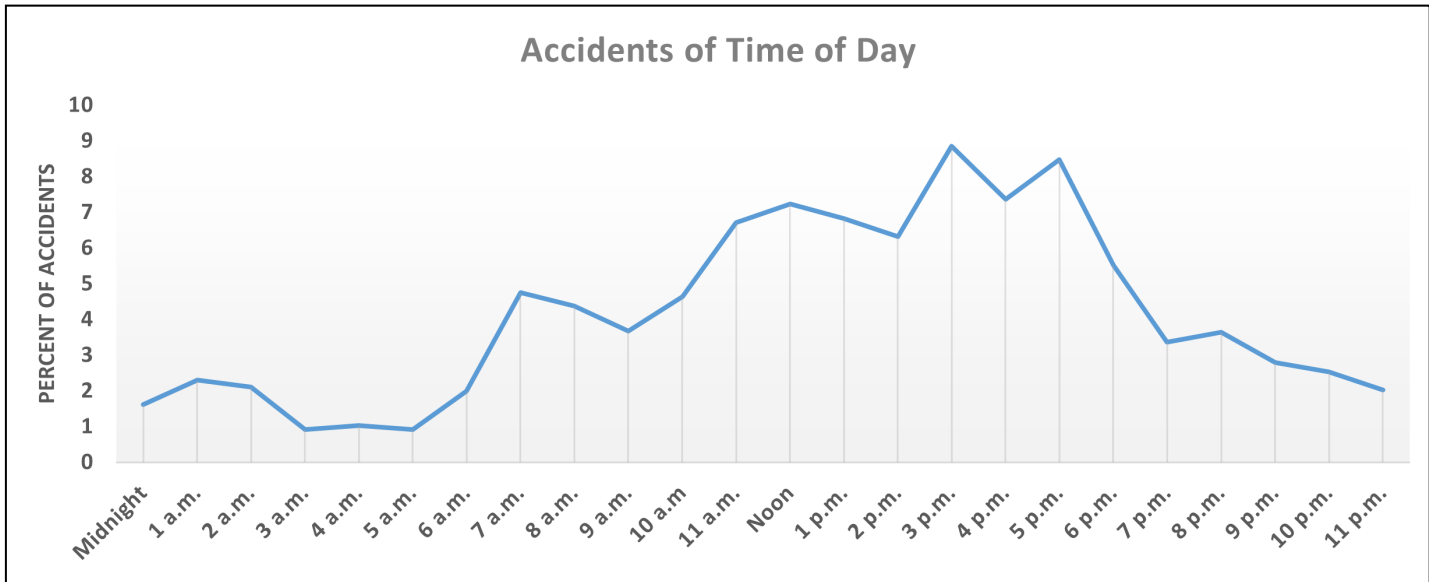
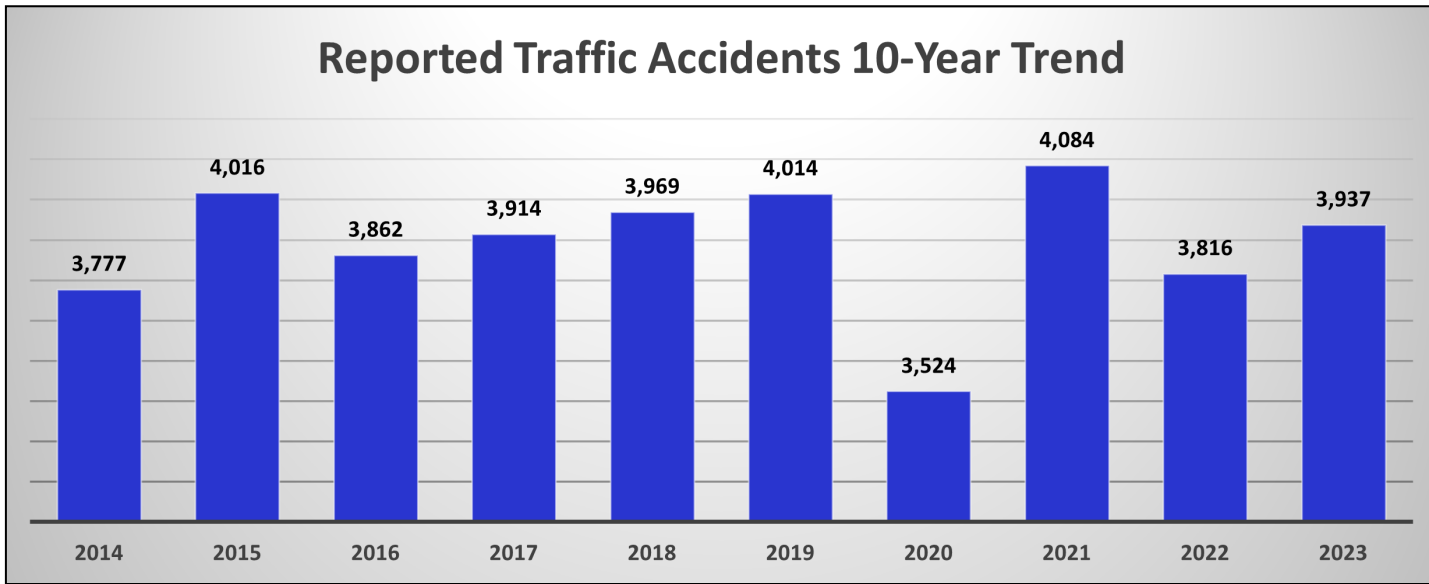
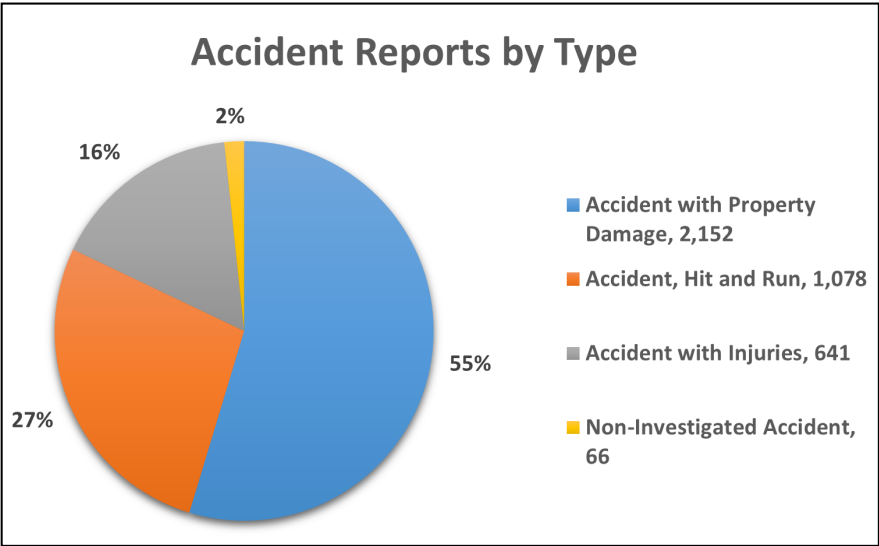
Did you know?

Billings Police Department employees are active in the community we serve. Members of our staff coach youth sports, volunteer with veterans, at their churches and kids' schools, promote and assist with Special Olympics Montana and help kids through Shop with a Cop. Clockwise from right: Officers volunteered with the Montana Miss Amazing Pageant; support staff handed out candy during Downtown Trick or Treating; the Bomb Squad truck was outfitted for the Holiday Parade and the BPD hockey team won the Battle of the Badges hockey tournament.

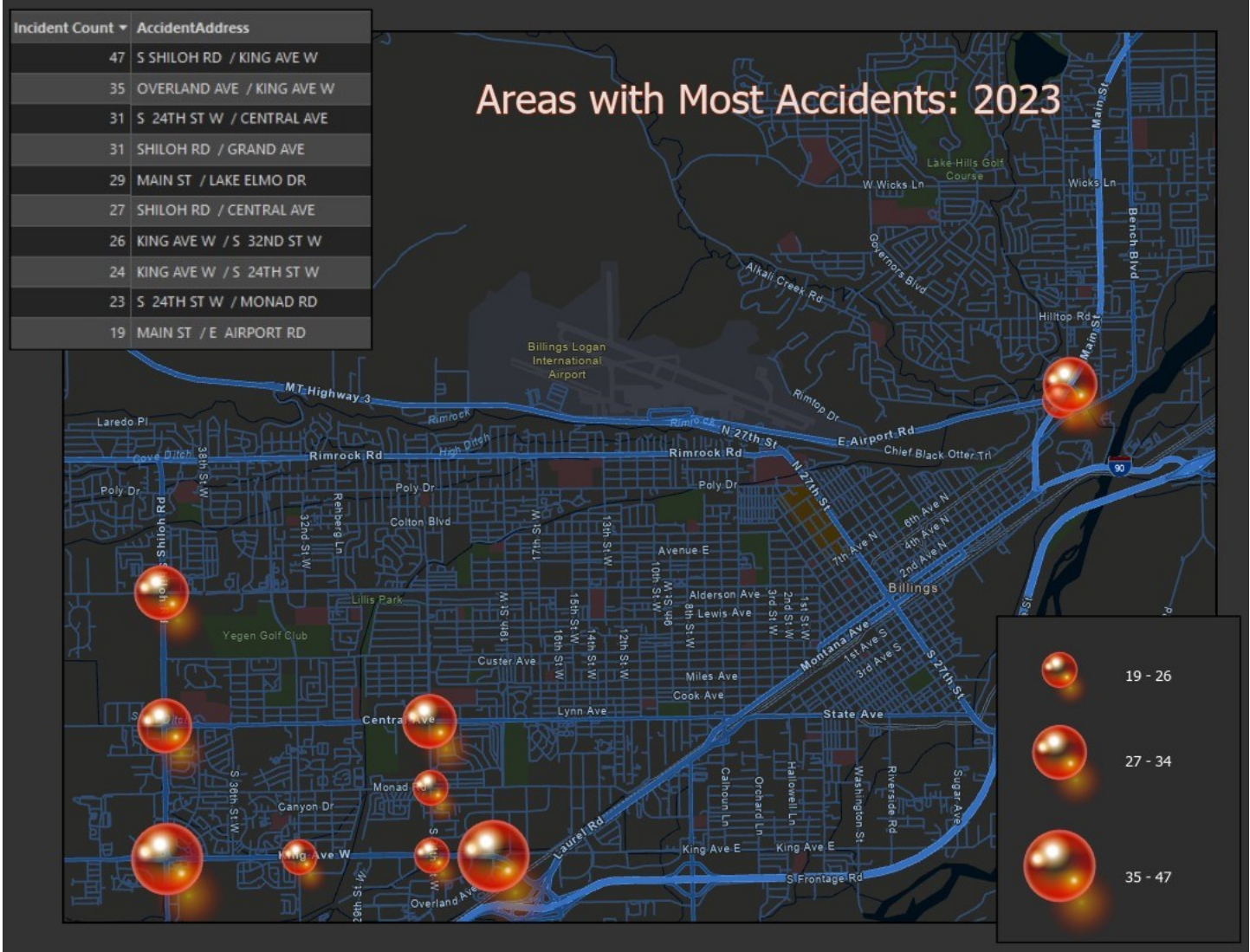


Accident Statistics

Not all crashes require an officer to investigate, including private property or minor damage accidents like fender-benders. During some storms and in good weather when calls about crimes are high, there are not enough officers to investigate every minor damage accident. During these times, the Department implements the “slick streets” or accident diversion policy. Under this protocol, only accidents with injuries, impaired drivers and disabled vehicles are investigated. Commanders went to this status 243 times during 2023.



Accident Statistics



Did you know?

Billings Police Department has a team of crash investigators who are called out on major injury accidents. The team responded to 14 crashes in 2023, 11 of them including the deaths of 15 people. The other three responses involved serious injuries.

Officers have to interview to join the team and then go through week-long training to learn the detailed investigations.

Crash investigations generally take upward of 200 hours to complete. They start at the scene of the accident with photographs and measurements. To provide all the resources the team needs BPDs crime scene van is taken to the site of the crash.

The work continues after the scene is cleared and traffic is moving again. The tasks include obtaining and executing search warrants on involved vehicles; taking numerous statements; completing calculations to determine speed and writing a detailed account of the crash scene, including weather, a summary of the crash investigation and involved vehicles.

All fatal and serious injury crashes are sent for prosecutorial review.

BEAT THE HEAT



GUNS & HOSES SOFTBALL GAME



The Beat the Heat 5K Family Fun Run and Walk and the Guns and Hoses Softball Game were held Aug. 5, 2023. The events raised money for Special Olympics Montana and were sponsored by Faithful Disaster Restoration. Billings Fire Department won the third annual softball game.

Arrest Statistics

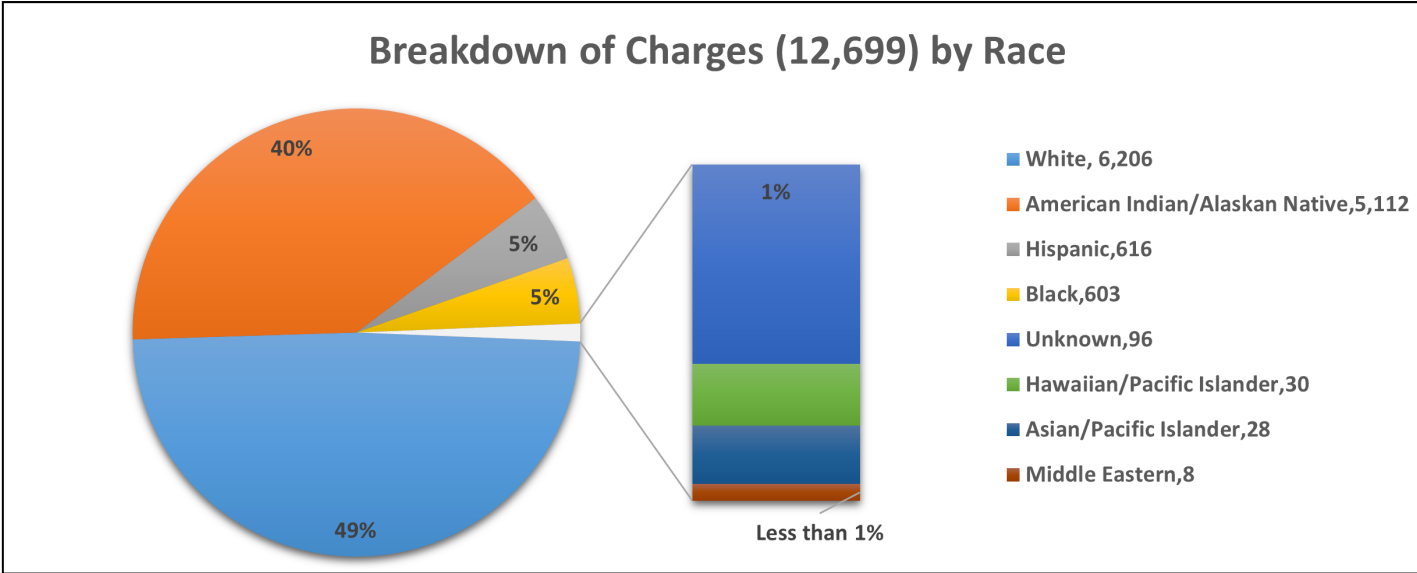
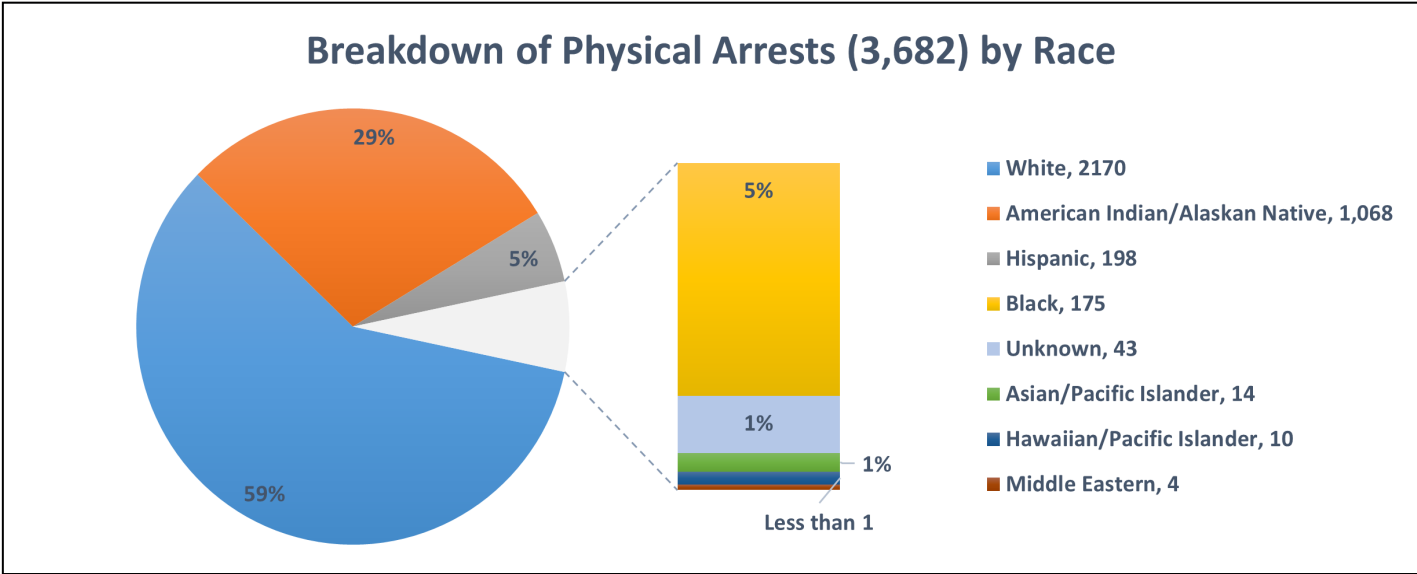
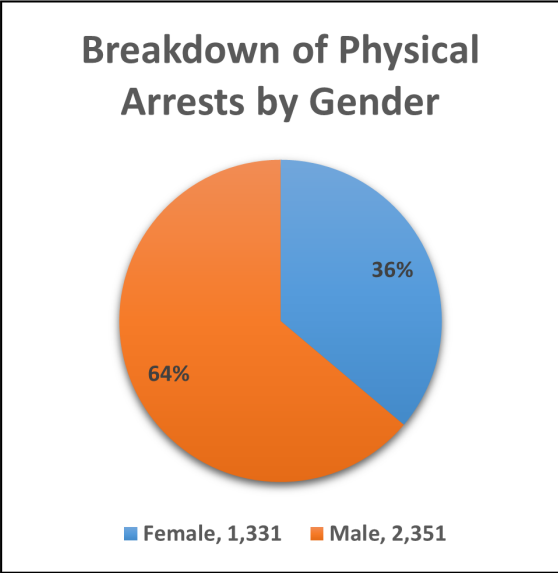
Arrests	Most Frequent Adult Arrest Charges
3,234	Warrant-Municipal / Misdemeanor
849	Warrant Contempt - Municipal/Justice
700	Criminal Contempt
675	Revocation of Suspended (Deferred) Sentence
502	Trespass to Property, Criminal
498	Partner or Family Member Assault, Non-Aggravated
497	Shoplift
446	Obstructing a Police Officer
365	DUI, Intoxication by Drugs or Alcohol
355	Possession of Dangerous Drugs
259	Probation Violation
247	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
222	Violation of Conditions of Release
205	Violation of No Contact Order
194	Criminal Mischief
161	Resisting Arrest
155	Assault, Simple - Minor Injury
143	Assault with a Weapon
135	Disorderly Conduct
132	Theft, All Other
117	Illegal Handling of Stolen Property
101	Violation of Protective Order
Arrests	Most Frequent Juvenile Arrest Charges
295	Underage Tobacco Possession or Consumption
93	Disorderly Conduct
78	Shoplift
74	Assault, Simple - Minor Injury
68	Possession of Dangerous Drugs
65	Partner or Family Member Assault, Non-Aggravated
47	Criminal Mischief
47	Obstructing a Police Officer
46	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
41	Purchase/Possess Intoxicant by a Minor
31	Criminal Contempt
26	Warrant - Municipal / Misdemeanor
22	Criminal Endangerment
22	Assault with a Weapon
19	DUI, Intoxication by Drugs or Alcohol
18	Resisting Arrest
15	Illegal Handling of Stolen Property
14	Theft, All Other
14	Contempt of Court - Justice
11	Robbery
11	Obscene Phone Call / Privacy in Communications
10	Disorderly Conduct, Physical Contact

Arrest Statistics

Officers made 3,682 physical arrests that resulted in 12,699 separate charges. One physical arrest can result in multiple charges. This illustrates why there are more charges than physical arrests. The physical arrests involved 3,017 adults and 665 juveniles.

Arrests do not always result in a person going to jail. On some crimes, the person may be given a notice to appear in Court. They also maybe taken to jail, have pictures and fingerprints taken, and then be released with a Court date. Officers did this on about 40% of arrests in 2023.

Also, officers may not always arrest on warrants. When this occurs, the person is notified of the warrant and told to take care of it with the court. Billings Police Department tracks this activity. During 2023 officers used the notification 1,777 times. Officers also track when someone is taken to jail but upon arrival could not be remanded into custody. This occurred 383 times.



Investigations Division

The Investigations Division staff is a mix of detectives and patrol officers, many of whom are assigned to special details. The Division command staff is made up of a Captain, Lieutenant and two sergeants. There are two additional sergeants who supervise the City-County Special Investigations Unit and the Street Crimes Unit. The civilian staff includes two clerical employees, an intelligence analyst and a crime analyst. The Evidence and Identifications section is also part of Investigations.

The detectives assigned specifically to Investigations shared a case load of 424 felony investigations during 2023. They were called out to major crimes scenes 29 times, down considerably from 54 in 2022. These responses include homicides, shootings and stabbings, officer-involved incidents, sexual assaults, crimes against children and suspicious deaths.

- The Investigations Division received 424 cases during 2023.
- Detectives cleared 300 cases, 87 of those closed with arrests or were referred for prosecution.
- Detectives achieved a 70% case clearance rate and a 29% arrest rate.
- Ten of 13 homicide investigations were cleared. The other three have suspects identified and detectives anticipate submitting requests for warrants.
- Received and reviewed 443 Department of Health and Human Services reports. That is a 21% increase from 2022. The reports that are criminal in nature, including sexual and other abuse of children, are assigned for investigation and, if appropriate, prosecuted.
- The Division investigated three officer involved shootings.
- Conducted 43 forensic interviews. These interviews are conducted by detectives who are certified in forensic interview. They specialize in talking with children who are victims of physical and sexual abuse. This number is lower than 2022 due to a change in BPD staffing and Child Protective Services adding employees who conduct the interviews rather than having them done by detectives.
- The intelligence analyst downloaded 216 cell phones. The Division uses two types of software to download phone data. It is common practice to use this investigative tool and almost every major investigation requires cell phone data download and analysis.



The 2023 Investigations Division Detectives and Support Staff included: (front row) Intelligence Analyst Chaney, Support Services Clerk Smith, Det. Jones, Support Services Clerk Yakel, Detectives Dennler, Yarina, Gaertner, Haider, Baum, Prindle, Abel and Chartier (back row) Lt. Krivitz, Sgt. Jensen, Sgt. Winden, Detectives Lange, Raschkow, Sutton, Cook, Johnson, Woog and Miller.

Did you know?

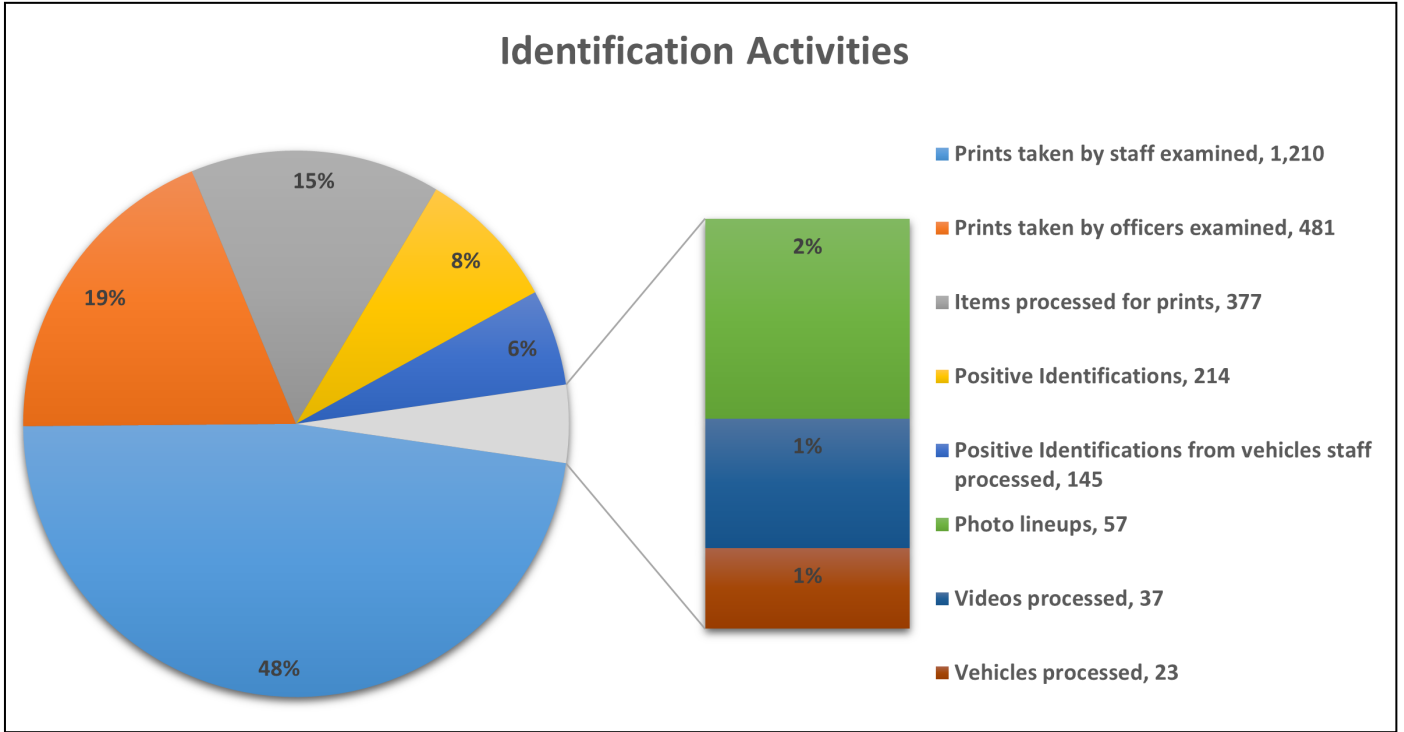
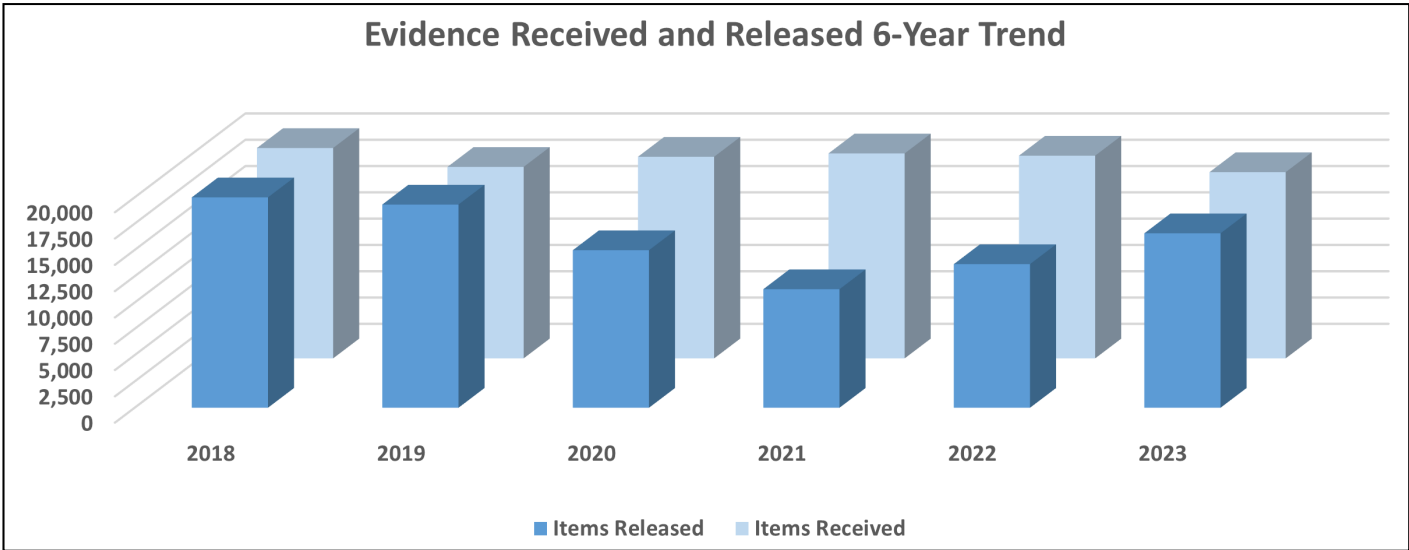
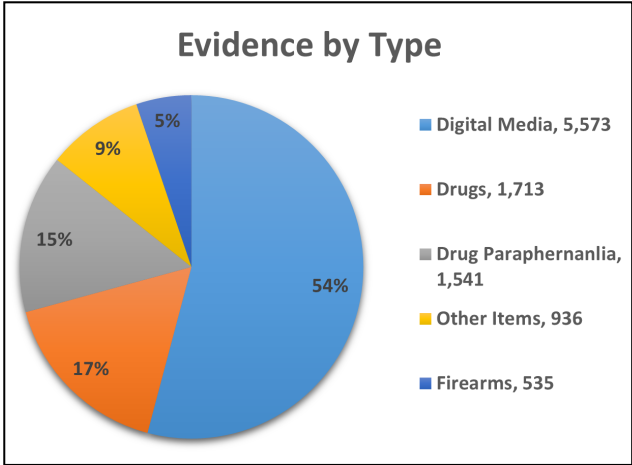
BPD has a detective assigned to the FBI's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. The members of this group conduct child sexual exploitation investigations, many of them undercover. The ultimate goal of these task forces is to recover victims and investigate traffickers at the state and federal levels.

Investigations Division

Evidence and identification are a section of the Investigations Division. Staffed by a sworn Lieutenant and 7 civilians, this section processes all evidence gathered by Billings Police Department.

The identifications staff analyze video, still photos and fingerprints and creates photo lineups for criminal cases.

Evidence technicians see that items are properly stored and, as appropriate, destroyed or returned to their owners. They also work with prosecutors and the public defenders' office when they require information. During 2023, they completed 3,527 discovery requests for attorneys.



Specialized Units

Montana Violent Offender Task Force

One Billings Police Department officer serves with the Billings District Violent Offenders Task Force of the U. S. Marshals Service. This groups makes high-risk arrests, predominately on warrants. There are also task forces in Missoula and Great Falls, Since 2005, these task forces have closed 20,891 warrants. Statewide in 2023, they groups closed 1,404 warrants with 591 of those completed in the Billings Division.

Handguns	33
Long guns	30
Meth	2,325.37 grams
Cocaine	113.6 grams
Vehicles	5
Currency	\$55,460
Fentanyl Pills	8,513
Fentanyl Powder	30.5 grams

City-County Specialized Investigations Unit

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program (HIDTA) is a component of the President's National Drug Control Strategy which provides additional federal resources to help eliminate or reduce drug trafficking. Law enforcement organizations within HIDTAs assess drug trafficking problems and design specific initiatives to reduce or eliminate the production, manufacture, transportation, distribution and chronic use of illegal drugs and money laundering, and to reduce drug trafficking and related crime and violence. Among its goals is to reduce drug availability by eliminating or disrupting drug trafficking organizations. The Eastern Montana HIDTA Drug Task Force was created in 1996 and is part of Rocky Mountain Region which covers Colorado, Montana, Utah, & Wyoming.



Methamphetamine	37.30 pounds	Drug Trafficking Organizations	
Heroin	36.3 grams	Local Targeted	6
Cocaine	3.75 pounds	Local Disrupted	3
	83.49		
Marijuana/Dabs/Vapes	pounds	Multi-State Targeted	10
Fentanyl Pills	65,823	Multi-State Disrupted	8
Fentanyl Powder	66.11 grams	Multi-State Dismantled	9
Psilocybin Mushrooms	217.3 grams		
Club Drugs	206 doses	Federal Indictments	38
Pharmaceuticals	657 doses	Assets Seized	\$368,422
Drug Loads Intercepted	99	Firearms	108

Billings Police Bicycle Patrol

About 30 police officers participated in bicycle patrol during 2023. They put in a combined 159 hours cycling through Billings doing law enforcement duties and providing a police presence. They issued 38 citations and 22 warnings and effected 5 arrests. Bicycle patrol requires more than just hopping on a bike and going to work. The officers much pass intensive specialized training with classroom and riding sections. The officers ride heavy-duty bicycles that are marked as Police. The 2022 BPD started its own training program after BPD officers became certified as instructors. Officers who participate in the program must ride a minimum number of hours each year.



At left, the bike patrol officers participate in firearms training day.

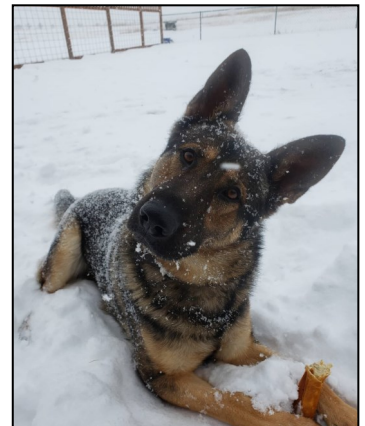
Specialized Units

K9 Program

The Billings Police K9 team deployed their dogs 854 times during 2023. The dogs regularly sniff vehicles suspected of transporting drugs. Handlers also worked with various shipping organizations where the dogs sniffed parcels for contraband. The K9 team doesn't only find drugs during their work. During 2023 the value of stolen property they recovered is estimated at around \$38,000. They also recovered 16 stolen firearms. The team combined made 142 arrests.



Methamphetamine	25 pounds, 4,384.1 grams	Fentanyl Pills	21,298
Cocaine	617.68 grams	Fentanyl Powder	1,090.6 grams
LSD	200 grams	Psilocybin Mushrooms	82 grams



The Billings Police dogs are, from left: Czar the newest member of the unit who joined in August 2023 after his handler, Sgt. Weston, and he trained in Utah; Sam, whose handler is Officer Anderson, is sitting with a large seizure of methamphetamine that was being transported in aluminum foil logs; Chevy and his handler Officer Schultz, after they located a large bag of Fentanyl, and Evan, whose handler Officer Best took this photo of him off work while playing with his chew toy in the snow.

Hostage Negotiators

The negotiators are called out to situations with hostages, barricaded people and other situations where de-escalation is needed, including with suicidal subjects. The SWAT team, negotiators and bomb squad work in conjunction on critical incidents, however negotiators may be called to work with people in any tumultuous situation. While negotiators are speaking to the subjects involved, they are evaluating the stability of the situation, and relaying crucial information to other on-scene officers. The information they gather and provide influences the decisions and actions of command personnel on the scene. Ultimately, the dialogue they enter into can potentially save the lives of not only any hostages, but also those of responding officers and the subjects they are speaking with.

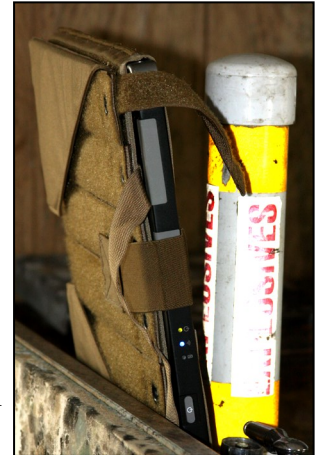
SWAT

BPD has a group of 15 highly trained officers who specialize in high-risk warrant service, fugitive apprehension, hostage rescue, response to people barricaded with guns as well as active shooters, dignitary protection and sniper/observer support of these activities. The SWAT team is activated when a situation requires advanced training or tools that are not commonly available to the patrol division. They work with other specialized units to complete their duties and share resources as well as skills.

Specialized Units

Bomb Squad

Billings Police Department has 1 of the 2 FBI accredited bomb squads in Montana. The squad's six bomb technicians, all of whom work as officers, and the Department's specialized equipment may be called on to respond to critical incidents in Eastern Montana but can deploy anywhere in the state if needed. They examine and safely dispose of suspicious packages and devices, collect and dispose of fireworks and ammunition as well as commercial and military explosives. The Bomb Squad has two response vehicles, robots, bomb suits, X-ray equipment and a total containment vessel to safely dispose of items. They were called out to examine the yellow container shown here which was determined to be harmless after it was X-rayed with the device to the left of the canister.



Street Crimes Units

The Billings Street Crimes Unit was established in 2018. Due to successes in disrupting crime, the unit was expanded in 2020 and again in 2022 and now includes a sergeant, one detective and four patrol officers. A second detective, who is assigned to pawn shops works closely with the unit. The members must apply and interview for these positions. The patrol officer slots are on a two-year rotation.



	Cases	193	Items Recovered / Seized	
Arrests on Scene	79	Firearms	157	
Warrant Arrests	212	Fentanyl Pills	20,616	
Citations / Warnings	113	Fentanyl Powder	13.25 pounds	
Search Warrants	73	Currency	\$178,251	

Domestic Violence Investigations

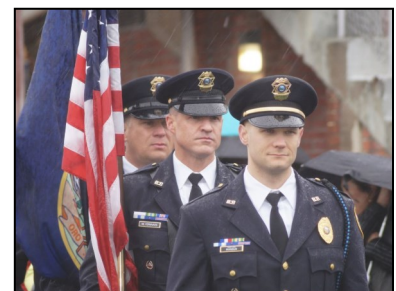
Billings Police Department has two officers in its Domestic Violence Investigator program. All BPD officers investigate domestic violence, but these officers are tasked with completing additional follow up and documentation to strengthen the cases. They also have more availability to victims and can help them access needed resources to stay safe. That contact helps them identify and document additional offenses including stalking, court order violations and additional partner-family member assaults.

Frequently, crimes occur after suspects are put in jail. To help identify and prosecute those crimes, BPD uses grant money to pay overtime for BPD officers to assist with tasks such as listening to jail calls and writing supplemental reports about their content.

Longtime BPD Domestic Violence Investigator Katie Nash is one of the people working to open a Family Justice Center in Billings which will house an array of services in one location.

Honor Guard

The Police Department Honor Guard provides ceremonial duties. They will conduct flag presentations at local events and accompany the caskets of retired Billings officers and line-of-duty deaths of officers through the state. The Honor Guard members are trained in protocols and exacting precision.



Specialized Units

Downtown Resource Officers

The Downtown Billings Alliance and Billings Police Department partnership provides officers who focus on downtown safety. To be more visible the officers bike and walk as much as possible. Their shared patrol vehicle was changed for higher visibility as well.

The three officers who work downtown strive to engage with business owners and staffs. They offer a training class on de-escalation that helps citizens learn how to handle the time period between when police are called and when they arrive. Topics include how to talk to someone in crisis and the benefit of following one's instincts. They completed 15 of these sessions in 2023.

The Resource officers work closely with the Homeless Outreach Team, or HOT, in diversion programs to help those suffering from addiction and frequent downtown.

Defensive Tactics

Billings Police Defensive Tactics was introduced in 2017 as a response to a growing need for officer safety as assaults on Officers increased both nationally and locally. The program has expanded to include six Billings Police Officers who are skilled in multiple styles of self-defense systems. All six are certified instructors and often travel to the Montana Law Enforcement Academy in Helena to assist teaching new recruits self-defense and fight scenarios.

BPD requires all officers to attend an annual 10-hour training day with the option of several quarterly training days. The BPD defensive Tactics program is a Judo based system, however, other martial arts are taught including Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Krav Maga and boxing.

Officers learn basics such as how to "break fall" to help prevent injuries due to falls or takedowns. As Officers progress, they learn several controlled takedowns, ground defense, vehicle extractions, weapon defense and advanced handcuffing techniques.

Since training became mandatory in 2022, BPD Officer involved Taser deployments have been significantly reduced which is consistent with national trends where defensive tactics training is mandatory. Having defensive tactics training gives officers more options when dealing with violent suspects and by design can help protect the officers as well as preventing injury to suspects in these violent encounters.



Parks Officer



Officer Schara works with the Parks and Recreation Department to patrol trails, assist parks employees and work toward keeping the public safe while they enjoy time in Billings' parks. During 2023 he responded to more than 700 Calls for Service, the vast majority of which were in parks.

Officer Schara is also a Crisis Invention instructor, bicycle Officer and works with the South Side Task Force.

Did you know?

Billings Police Department's Project Eyes on the Block informs officers of participating citizens and business owners who are willing to share video when a crime or incident occurs in their area. Learn more and find an online form to join the program on the Community Services page of www.billingspolice.com

Specialized Units

Drone Program

The BPD Drone team flew on 57 incidents during 2023. The drones are flown by officers who are licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration to pilot the Department's five drones.

The drones have been effective in increasing officer and citizen safety. They've been used to search for missing persons, to enter buildings with barricaded suspects and to give tactical teams a bird's eye view of the scene they are encountering.

Any information gained by using the drone must pass search warrant standards to be entered in court.

At right: Lt. Shelden, who supervises the BPD program, shows the drone at a public event.

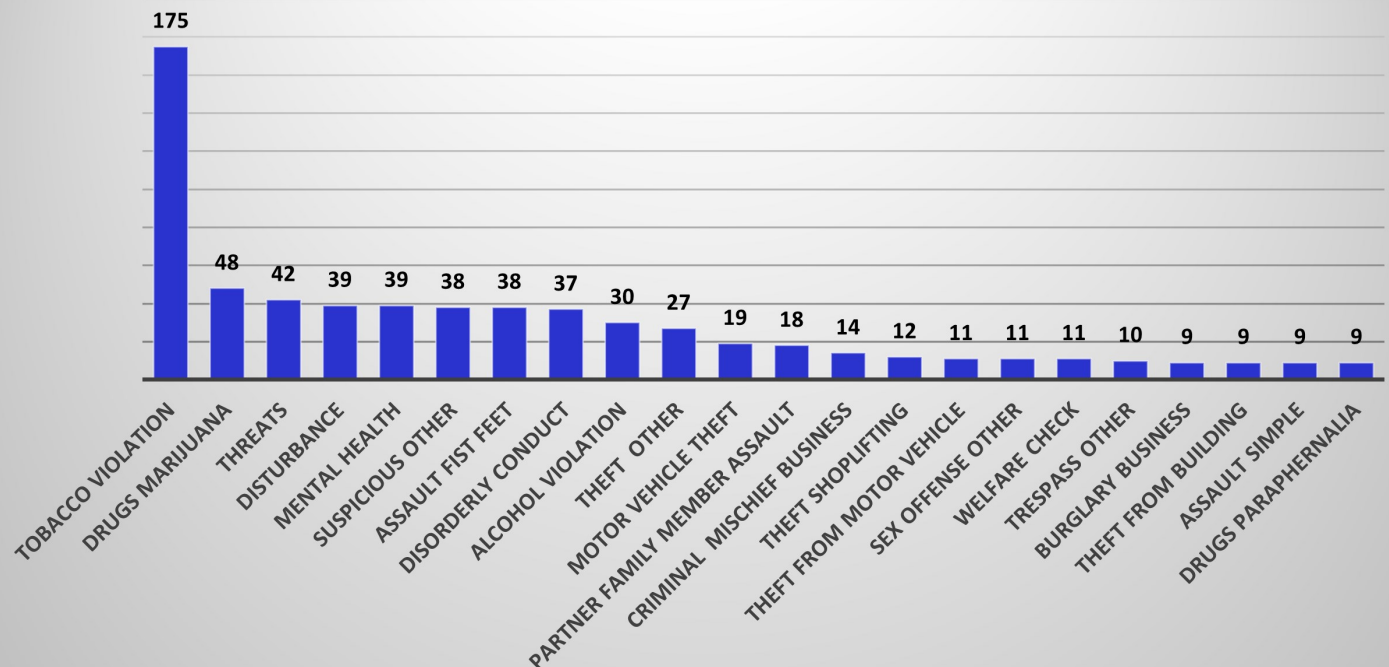


School Resource Officers

School Resources Officers are funded in cooperation with School District 2. There are 8 SROs and a Sergeant who work in schools. The officers are assigned to individual high schools or middle schools and visit several elementary schools as part of their duties.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the officers wrote 798 cases. The SROs work to build rapport and trust with students. They serve in mentorship capacities and help students, school staff and families find solutions to problems outside of the criminal justice system.

Most Frequent Cases and Offenses Investigated by SROs



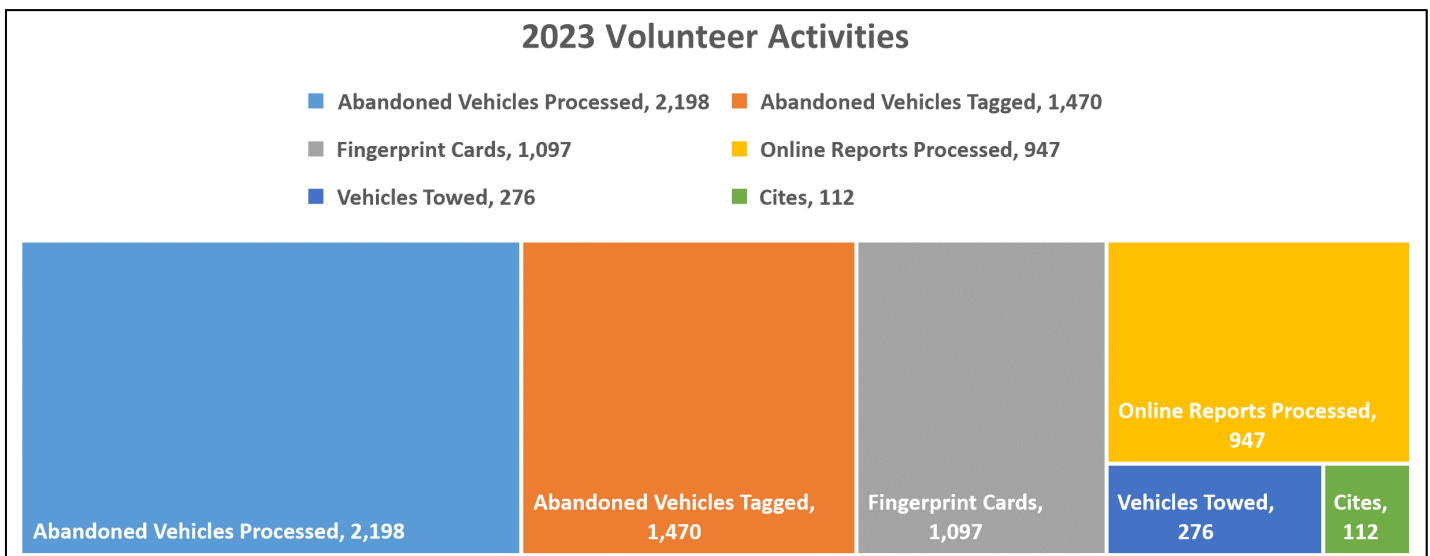
Billings Police Volunteer Program

The Billings Police Volunteers make a significant contribution to the Department and the community. In 2023, they donated a total of 3,464.75 hours, which is an impressive increase of 1,063 hours from the previous year. These hours translate into an estimated savings of \$102,557 for the city of Billings. In addition, they generated \$17,246 in revenue by processing fingerprint cards. According to Volunteer Coordinator Jesus Ochoa, the main benefit of their assistance is that it reduces the workload of the police staff, allowing them to focus more on the safety and traffic concerns of the city.

Over the years, the 2023 volunteer group has accumulated a total of 22,930 hours of service to the City of Billings. Each week, 20-30 volunteers ranging in age from their 20s to their 90s participate in the program.

Currently, the Billings Police Volunteer Program is located at the Crime Prevention Center at 2910 3rd Avenue North. However, it will soon move to the Stillwater Building and be integrated with the Police Department sometime in 2024.

In addition to daily activities, volunteers during 2023 assisted in the Strawberry Festival, Rocky Mountain College Recruiting Fair, Beat the Heat Run, Guns and Hoses Softball Game, the Billings Air Show, and hosted the Holiday Package Pickup.



Gathered at a downtown event are, from left, Volunteer Coordinator Jesus Ochoa, Volunteers Al Redman, Steve Davies, Sharon Nolte and Ed Hostettler and Sgt. West.

Did you know?

There are a police sergeant and an officer who work with the volunteers.

The Public Relations Sergeant oversees some officers and assists with volunteer programs. In 2023 the sergeant completed 55 threat assessments and active shooter presentations for groups and businesses.

Officer Nichols conducted about 20 presentations to groups, clubs and businesses.

BPD has been posting photos and videos of unidentified suspects on the volunteers Facebook page, Billings Police Crime Prevention Center. More than 60% of the time, the public has been able to make identifications and police can request warrants.

Billings Police Volunteer Program

You Are Invited

TO JOIN BPD VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering supports Billings and
the Police Department!

For information call

247-8590

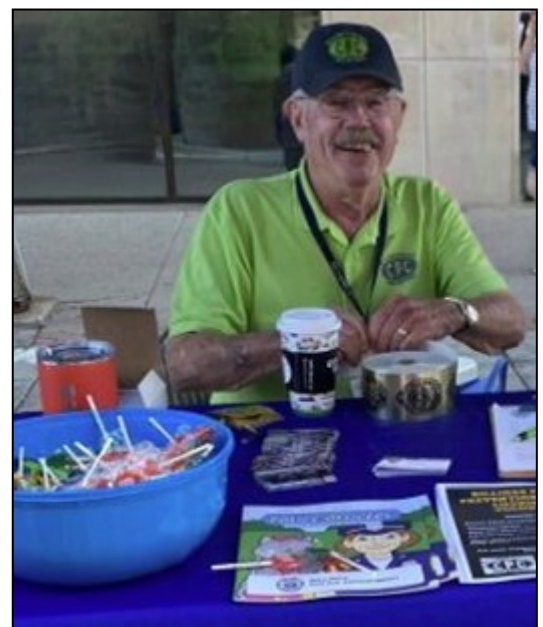
Applications are available
at www.BillingsPolice.com



Volunteers serve in several capacities, including the enforcement of abandoned vehicle and parking ordinances, fingerprinting the public, assisting with special events, and data entry of some police reports.



Volunteers provide an invaluable service to Billings Police Department. The group above was celebrating their successes during an appreciation banquet. They are, from left: Shannon Kitzman, Buddy Kastrop, Steve Davies, Doug Peterson, Sharon Nolte, Wayne Hansen, Terry Struck, James Mariska, Patti Doble, Cheryl Malia-McCall, Marion Schaaf, Al Redman, Kathy Redman and Jesus Ochoa.



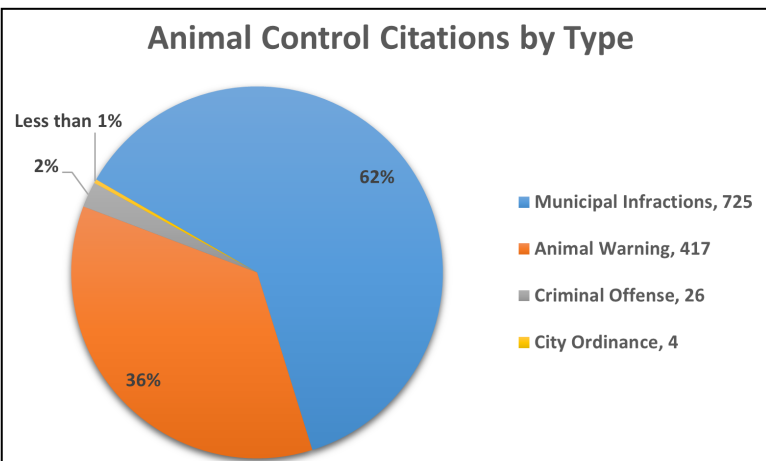
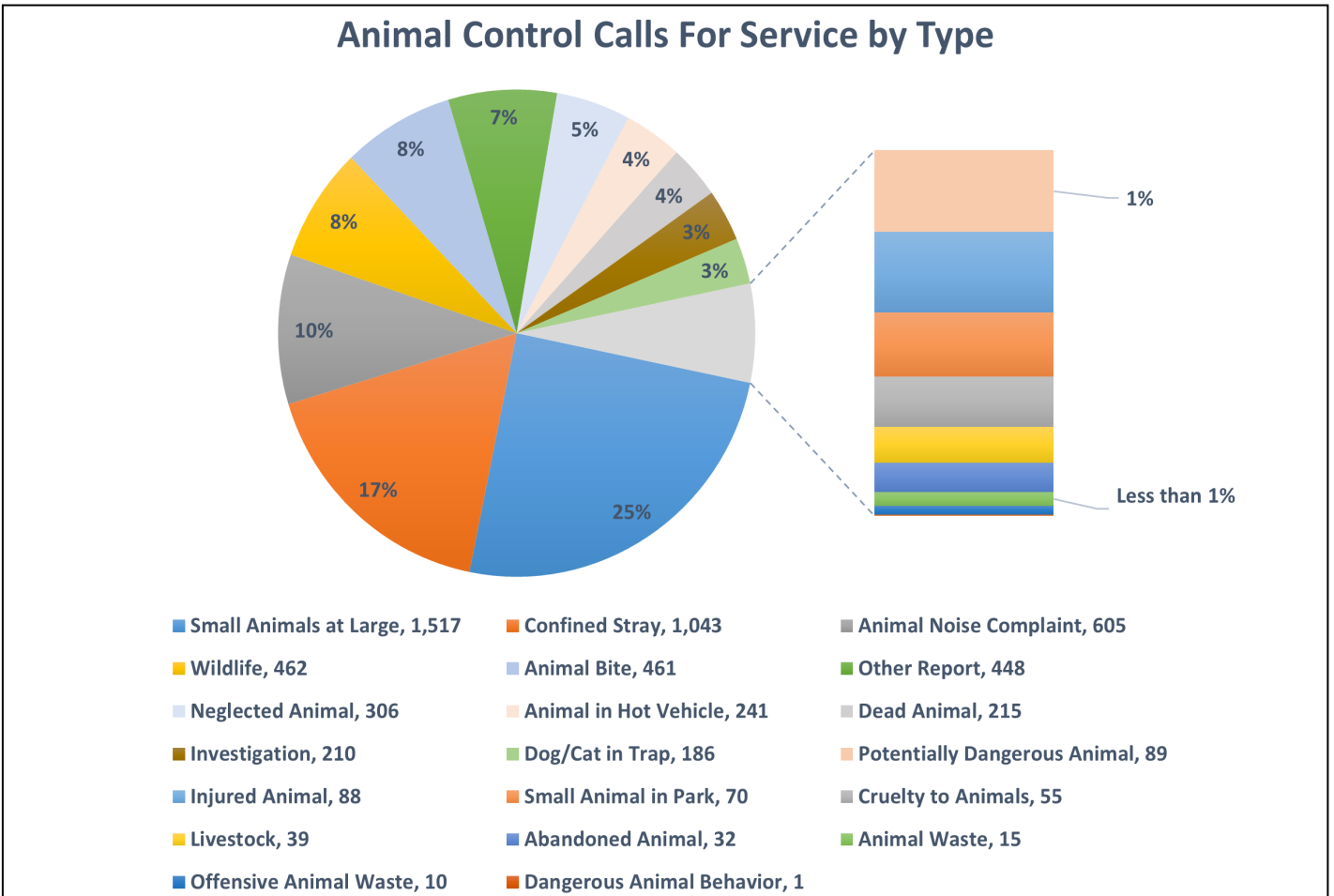
Animal Control Division

Animal Control Supervisor Tom Stinchfield has a staff of 5 Animal Control Officers and an Office Assistant. The officers respond to citizen complaints and are dispatched through the Billings Communications Center. Animal Control Officers are on call around the clock to respond to emergency animal-related calls. They are authorized to cite animal owners and write criminal cases to submit to Billings Municipal Court.

“The Animal Control Division partners with our community and provides vital education regarding the humane care and treatment of animals. While encountering dynamic circumstances, they investigate violations of the Municipal Code and State law. They are professional and care about bringing quality cases forward for prosecution. On behalf of the City Attorney’s Office, I want to express gratitude for everything they do!”

“They are professional and care about bringing quality cases forward for prosecution.”

Chantel Anderson,
Deputy City Attorney



Did you know?

Animal Control Officers had an about 16% increase in Calls For Service during 2023. They drove 66,171 miles throughout Billings. They wrote 1,172 citations. The most frequent offenses were: Dog at Large, 443; Unregistered Dogs/Cats, 295; No Rabies Vaccination, 287, Potentially Dangerous Animal, 81. The Animal Control Office is at 1735 Monad Road, adjacent to the Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter. Office hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

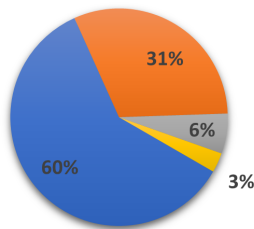
Animal Control Division

The Billings Police Department Animal Control Division shares a location with the Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter at 1735 Monad Road. YVAS and the City have a contract for the shelter to care of Billings' lost and stray animals. Because of this partnership, shelter statistics are included in this report.

During 2023, the shelter took in 4,492 animals and facilitated 2,445 adoptions. It costs the shelter \$109 to shelter a dog and about \$88 for a cat.

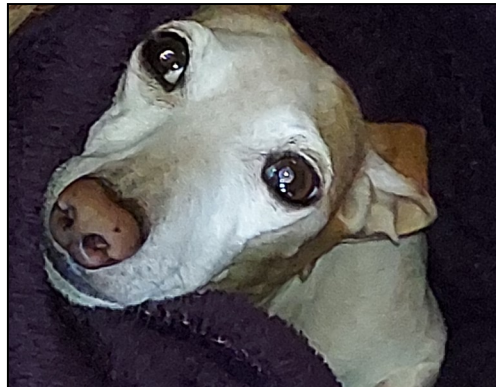
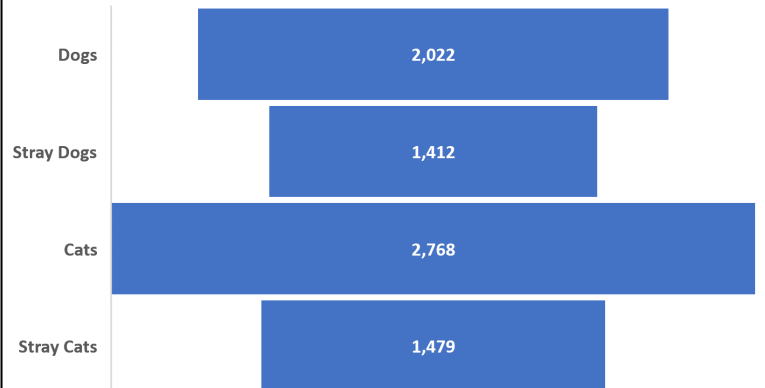


Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter Adoptions



■ Cats, 1,581 ■ Dogs and Puppies, 823
 ■ Working Cats, 157 ■ Other Animals, 77

Animals Brought to Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter



Billings Police Department Support Services Division

More commonly known as "records," the BPD Support Services Division is staffed 24/7 to provide records support to police officers and to meet an FBI requirement that Billings has an around the clock, staffed connection to criminal justice databases.

The clerks process all of officers' paperwork to meet department, state and federal requirements. Among their tasks are to gather documentation and provide it to the correct prosecutors' offices and other criminal justice agencies. They maintain paper and digital databases and have responsibility for records quality.

Two of the clerks are assigned to the Investigations Division and do similar work for detectives. Their main tasks is to transcribe audio statements taken by officers and detectives.

Clerks become experts on the criminal justice system and the City of Billings as they serve as a resource to officers and citizens. Clerical staff goes through a background process before being hired and are trained for up to four months to learn all of the details involved in the position.

Welcomes and Farewells

New Officers

Alfredo Campana	Edward Tanzosh	Joshua Bruns
Brett Asher	Hunter Klewin	Zachary Figg
Troy Chandley	Owen Longabaugh	Alex Walker
Stephen Mierke	Jake Dolan	Cesar Diaz
Ashley Tuschling	Blackshear Brian	Grant Armstrong
Douglas Williams	Corey Cayko	Collin Johnson



Above: Assistance Chief Lawrence (far left) and Captain Mayo (far right) congratulating Officers Figg, Chandley, and Longabaugh at their Montana Law Enforcement Academy graduation.

Retirees

Shawn Wanchena 2001 George Zorzakis 2005

Promotion

Detective Steven Gaertner ~ Sergeant

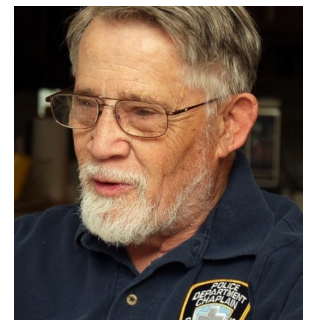
Commendations

Annual award recipients are nominated by their peers and supervisors at the end of each year. Command Staff receives nominations and votes to determine recipients.

Supervisor of the Year - Sgt. Benjamin Beck

Sgt. Ben Beck has been with the Billings Police Department since 2010 and is commander of the Hostage Negotiator Team, Taser program coordinator, active trainer for the Mobile Field Force, and is part of the Central-Terry Task Force. Sgt. Beck has proven himself to be an exemplary supervisor on many occasions. In one instance, a homicide had taken place and detectives had no information other than grainy residential footage of a vehicle that had fled. The next day, in addition to his regular patrol duties, Sgt. Beck took it upon himself to search for several hours, checking surrounding locations and neighborhoods where criminals were known to frequent. He located a vehicle outside of an apartment building and determined it matched the description of the suspect vehicle. He contacted the detective division and with coordination of the SWAT team a search warrant was served on the residence which led to the arrest of the suspect and his accomplice. Another instance of Sgt. Beck's outstanding supervisory abilities was when dispatch had received information that a shooting had occurred at a residence and an active disturbance was still in progress. Sgt. Beck was one of the first to arrive and immediately took charge of the chaotic scene. Sgt. Beck organized the rescue of the victim and directed officers to treat the victim while simultaneously organizing the capture of the suspect. With surrender commands, two people were apprehended without incident. Sgt. Beck's diligence of duty, acceptance of responsibility, and willingness to make hard decisions are benchmarks of a superior leader and one worthy of this organization's recognition.

Chaplain Paul Reeder passed peacefully during 2023. Chaplain Reeder was one of the original BPD Chaplains. During his 40 years with BPD, Chaplain Reeder gave support to an untold numbers of officers and community members in times of need. He was honored at the International Conference of Police Chaplains in 2012. Chaplain Reeder was a frequent guest at Police briefing meetings. He provided baked goods to the Department every Christmas and his annual breakfasts for officers are remembered by all.



Commendations

Officer of the Year - Detective Dylan Sutton

Detective Dylan Sutton has been with the Billings Police Department since 2016. He has served in many roles, starting as a patrol officer, then a member of our street crimes unit, and eventually making his way to the detective division. In addition to his regular duties, he is also an Field Training Officer, Firearm Instructor, and a member of the SWAT team. In his time in the Investigations Division, he has continued to excel and proven himself to be a highly proactive and effective investigator, handling some of our most challenging and high-profile cases. During 2023, he was assigned to 4 homicides, 2 shootings, conducted a total of 17 serious felony investigations, and responded to 10 detective callouts. Aside from his primary duties as a detective, Detective Sutton secured a federal grant to obtain expensive equipment for the SWAT team along with drafting a proposal that led to donations for breaching materials. He regularly leads by example and is a positive influence not only to the department but the Billings community as a whole.

Deb Unruh Memorial/Civilian Employee of the Year - Aleesha Chaney

Aleesha Chaney was hired in 2022 as an Investigative Analyst. This position was created from the public safety mill levy, designed to help alleviate the strain put on detectives from data collection and cell phone extractions, allowing them to focus more on their investigations. Aleesha quickly jumped right into her role and has proven herself to be an invaluable asset to the department. In 2023, she downloaded 172 phones and prepared 29 detailed written reports on major cases to include homicides and crimes against children. Aleesha has also assisted other agencies in their investigations, including HIDTA, FBI, DEA, DCI, Lewis and Clark County, and Carbon County. She has responded to late night callouts for homicide investigations with no hesitation. In 2023, she was able to find a confession to a homicide while going through text messages and, in another instance, was able to prove the subject innocent after he was accused of meeting with an under-aged child. Aleesha is a wonderful person to work with and is an invaluable asset to the Billings Police Department.

Alex Mavity Memorial/Respect for Law Award - Officer Adam Combs

Officer Adam Combs has been with the Billings Police Department since 2020. Every officer has something that motivates them on shift whether it is stolen cars or DUI drivers. But for Officer Combs, his motivation is to improve the lives of young kids; he especially has a soft spot for the youngest of kids, those who cannot defend themselves and do not have a voice. In an effort to make a positive impact on the lives of students, Officer Combs volunteers for the Adopt a Cop program within the schools and has earned the trust of the students at his school. In one incident, a student made suicidal comments and with proper medical care and compassion from Officer Combs, the boy opened up and learned to trust officers. Officer Combs truly cares about the mental health and well-being of all the kids. We all know it only takes one positive influence to change a life.



Chief St. John, Officers Asher, Campana, Cerovski, Bruns and Tanzosh after the new officers were sworn in by District Court Judge Davies.



Longtime School Resource Officer George Zorzakis (center) was surrounded by the current SROs during his retirement party. They are, from left, Officer Richter, Sergeant Chaney, Zorzakis, Officers Nienhuis, Contreras, and Doll

Commendations

Officers of the Year - Officer Nicholas Fonte

Officer Nicholas Fonte has been with the Billings Police Department since 2019 and has been assigned as one of our DBA officers in the downtown area. He jumped right into his position, building strong relationships with downtown property owners and the DBA staff. He is very active in policing the downtown area, commonly dealing with intoxicated individuals or those in a crisis. Officer Fonte is very respectful, professional and effective in de-escalation. In addition to his enforcement efforts, he has provided training to downtown businesses, and has worked closely with the city attorney's office to get the most chronic misdemeanor offenders to court in an effort to improve the downtown area. In partnership with Billings Clinic, Officer Fonte is involved in a mental health committee whose goal it is to improve the evaluation and treatment procedures when individuals are taken for mental health evaluations. He is a great ambassador for the Billings Police Department, the Downtown Billings Alliance and the City of Billings as a whole and is a great asset to our team.

Shawn Finnegan Memorial / American Legion Award Officers Cody Carriger & Matt Bistline

Officer Cody Carriger has been with the Billings Police Department since 2020 and has proven himself to be an important member of the department and community. He has been involved with the Special Olympics for over 10 years, dedicating his time to the organization and its athletes. He also volunteers with the Billings Senior High Football program, which is just another example of him reinvesting his passion into the community. Along with his dedication to the community, Officer Carriger is a devoted friend and colleague. Any major law enforcement event, such as homicides and officer-involved shootings, places immense amounts of stress on officers and their families. Officer Carriger routinely rises above it all and checks in on his fellow officers after the incidents, helping those affected and providing comfort to his brothers and sisters in blue. Between his interactions with the athletes of the Special Olympics, the football players of Billings Senior High, and his dedication and loyalty to his coworkers, this shows he is a true hero in every sense of the word.

Officer Matthew Bistline has been with the Billings Police Department for almost 3 years and came with 9 years of experience from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. He hit the ground running and has proved to be a highly motivated and proactive police officer. In June of 2023 The BPD recognized an escalation of gang related violent crimes. Having extensive knowledge and expertise in the area of gang culture, he took it upon himself to educate not only his fellow officers, but the department as a whole. His actions led to a temporary assignment with the Street Crimes Unit where he has been instrumental in gathering gang intelligence. Since his assignment he has assisted the team with identifying more than 100 gang members, making 30 gang arrests and recovering several firearms and drugs. He continues to be a positive influence on the department and community as a whole and brings great honor upon himself, the Police Department and the City of Billings.

Did you know?



Billings Police Department has a U.S. Department of Justice grant which pays for college interns to analyze Billings' violent crimes and chronic violent offenders. The grant is part of the Project Safe Neighborhood initiative. The interns and the BPD Crime Analyst have developed information sharing tools so BPD's state and federal partners can use their work product to impact crime in Billings.



A memorial table is a tradition of the annual Police Ball. Commendations are presented during the event, which is attended by current and retired employees and their guests. Photo Courtesy Amber Renee Photography



OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Office of Professional Standards is directed by a police Captain who reports directly to the Chief of Police and Assistant Chief.

The primary function of this office is to receive, assign and investigate complaints on employees' actions received from citizens or initiated by the department. This office monitors all investigations for timely completion and reports the findings to the complaining parties and subject employees.

Citizens may submit complaints and commendations by completing an on-line form found on the Office of Professional Standards page at www.billingspolice.com. The BPD Policy Manual is also posted on this page.

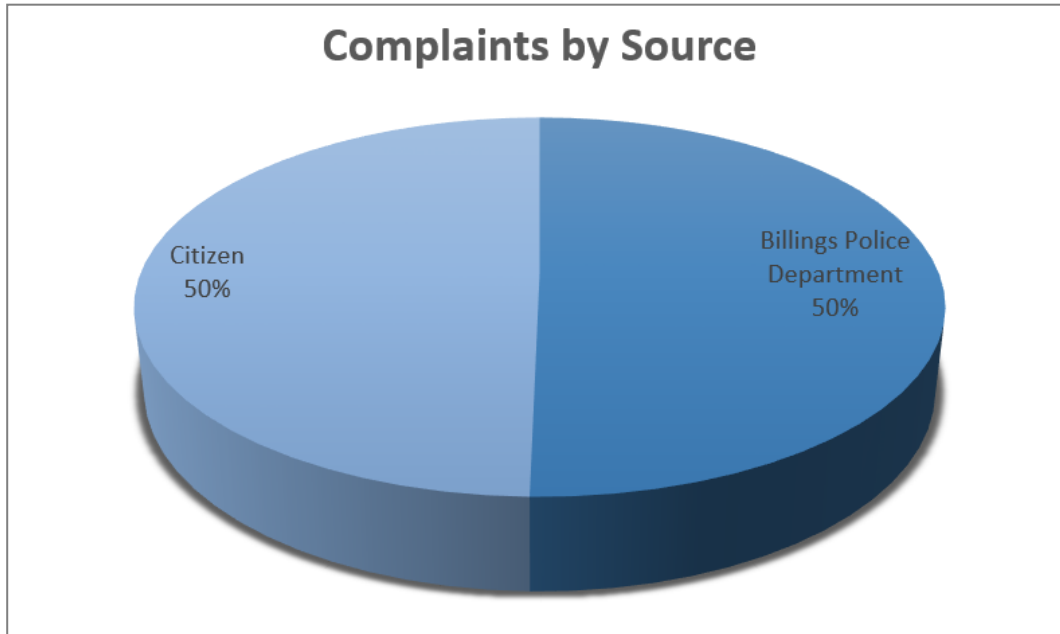
The office records and evaluates all incidents of Response to Resistance.

Complaints

A complaint is an incident which gives rise to one or more allegations of misconduct. A single complaint may allege misconduct by multiple employees and/or multiple violations of departmental policies.

The number of complaints filed may not equal the number of allegations and findings resulting from the investigation.

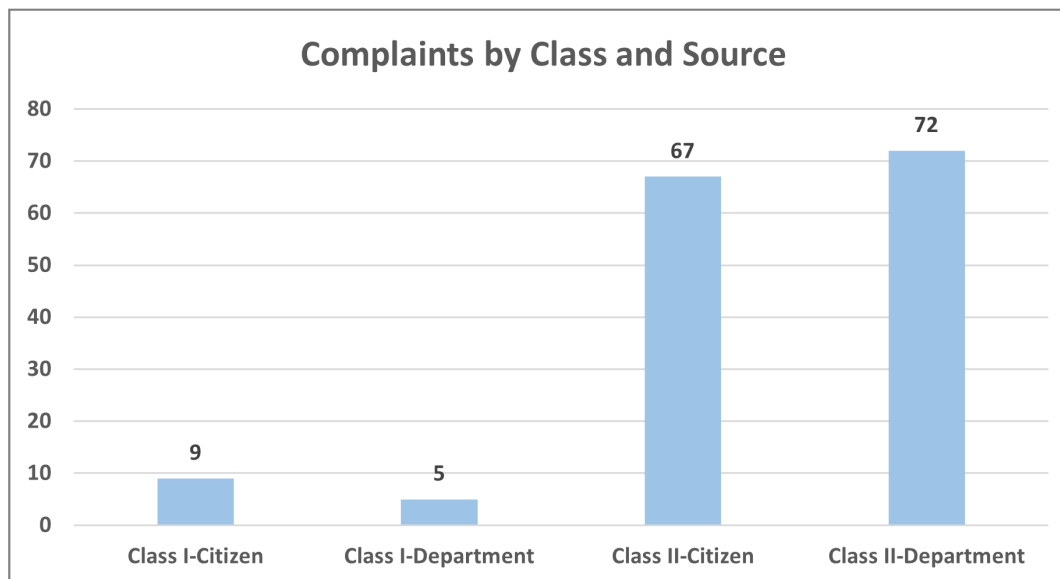
Complaints may be *external* which are entered by citizens or *internal* which are from Billings Police Department supervisors.



Class I complaints are more serious and include allegations such as excessive force, violations of criminal law, breach of civil rights, bias policing and other, more serious, allegations. A pattern of Class II complaints is elevated to a Class I level.

Class II complaints include allegations of inadequate service, discourtesy, minor performance issues, improper procedure and other less serious and non-criminal conduct.

Billings Police Department tracks the findings for each allegation, rather than a single overall finding for individual complaints. This approach helps gain a more accurate understanding of areas of concern to citizens and the department.

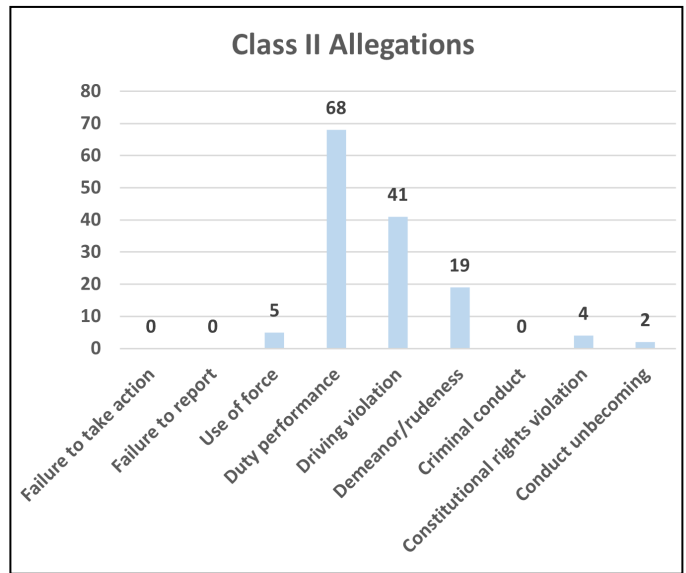
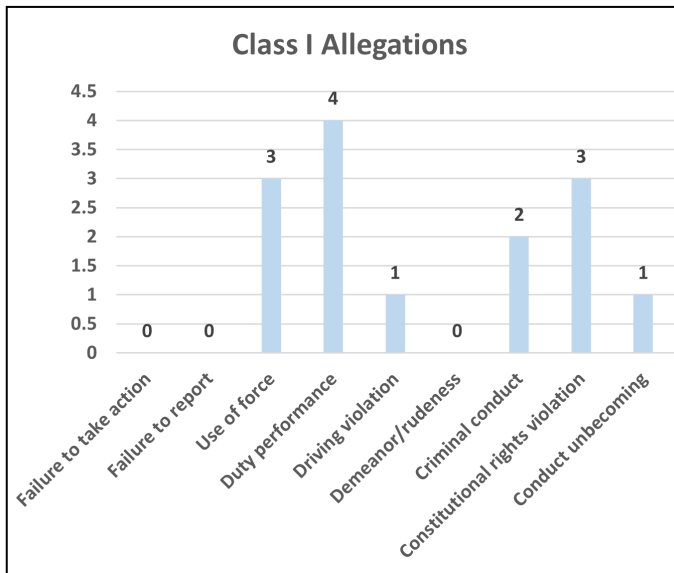
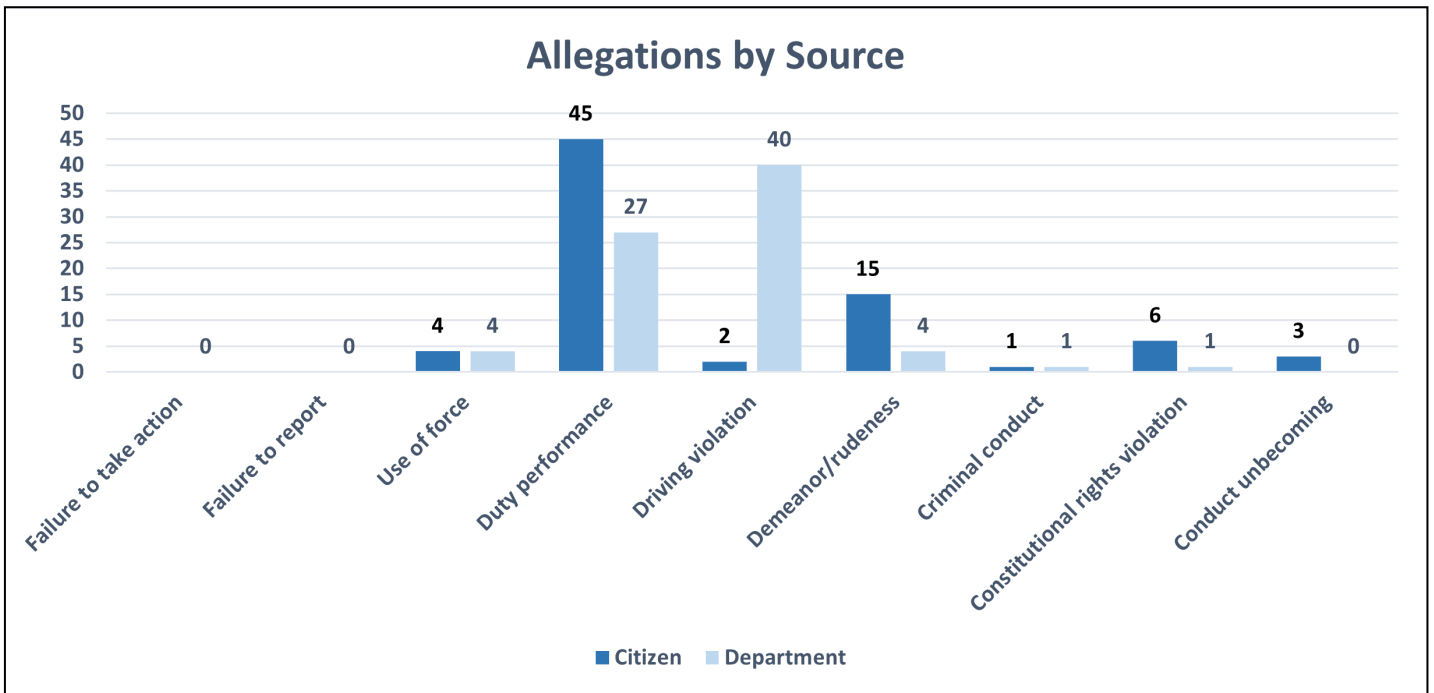


Allegations — This is a distinctly different category than complaints. They are assertions of an employee’s behavior that, if proven, would amount to a violation of department policy. A single complaint may result in multiple allegations of misconduct against one employee, single allegations against multiple employees or a combination of these.

Findings — A finding is issued for each allegation in an investigation, including those made by the complainant and those discovered during the investigation. Findings also are issued when policy violations are discovered during a review of employee performance following an incident such as a pursuit, response to resistance, or employee vehicle accident. For these reasons, the number of findings issued will exceed the number of complaints reported.

A complaint is an incident which gives rise to one or more allegations of misconduct. A single complaint may allege misconduct by multiple employees and/or multiple violations of departmental policies.

The number of complaints filed may not equal the number of allegations and findings resulting from the investigation.



Billings Police Department uses these definitions for complaint findings

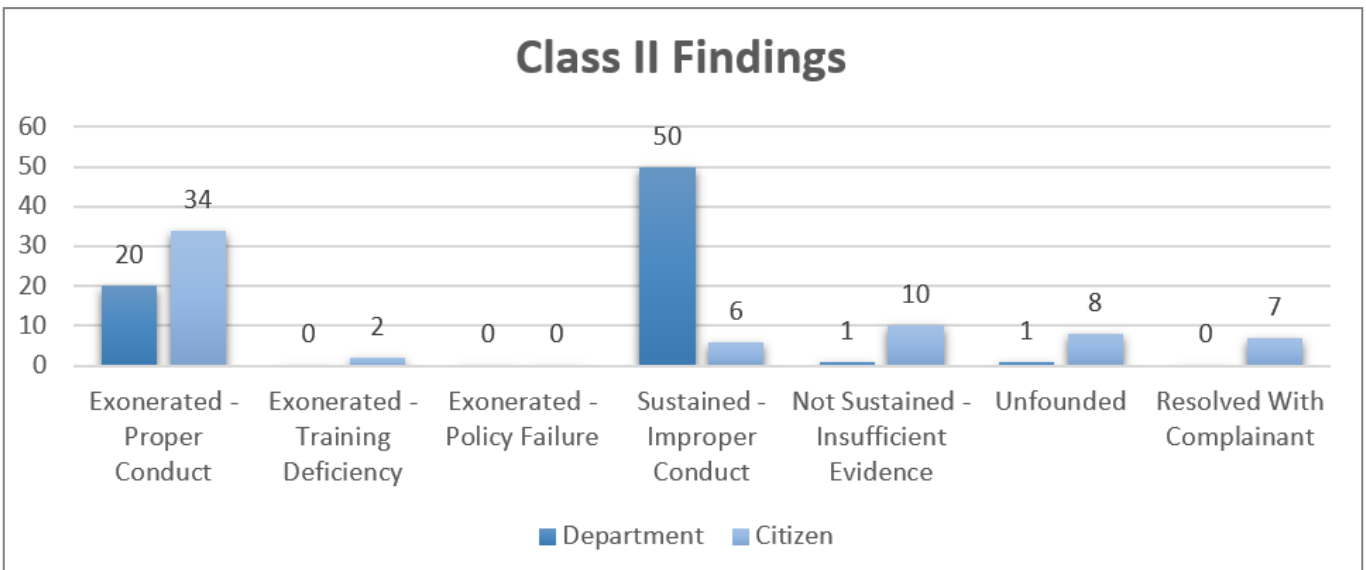
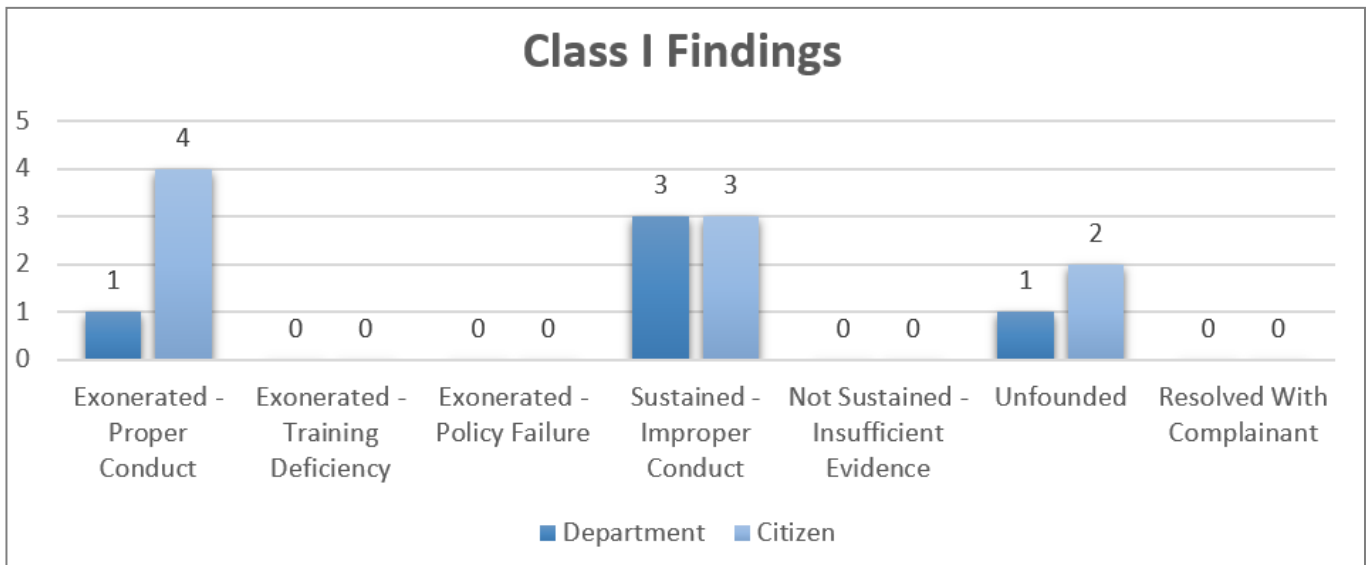
Exonerated — Findings of proper conduct, training deficiency and policy failure. Overall, the acts which were the basis for the complaint or allegation occurred but were justified, lawful and proper *or* the acts were not proper or justified but resulted from a lack of training or policy.

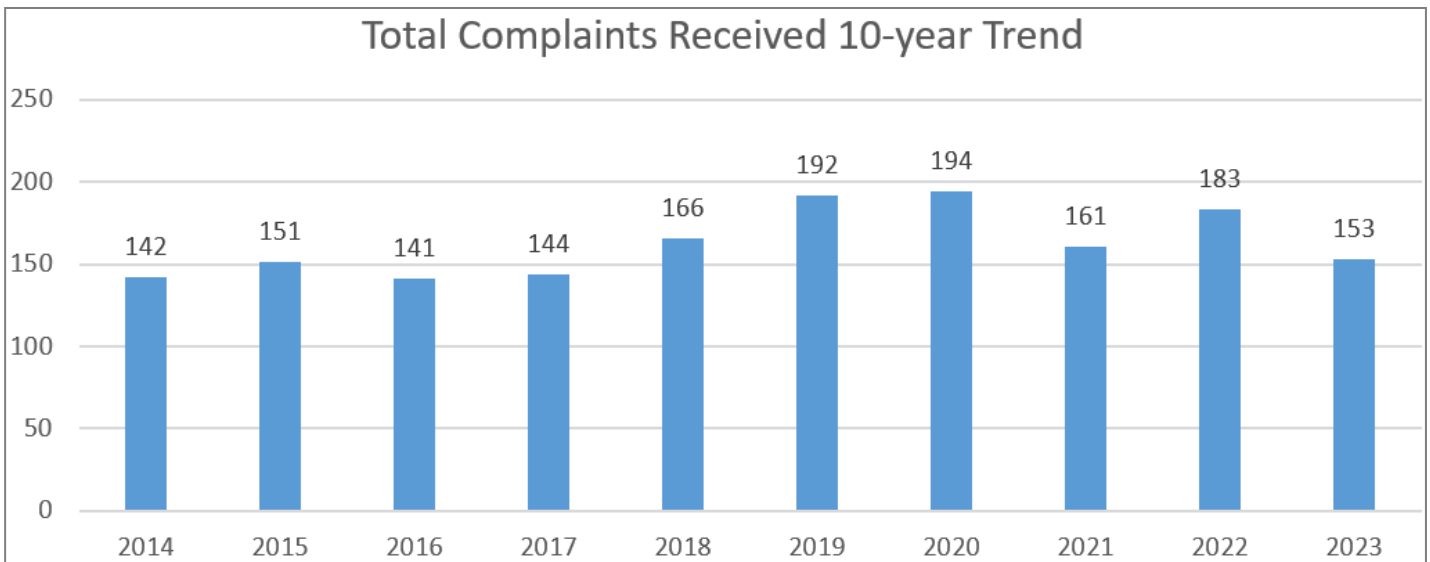
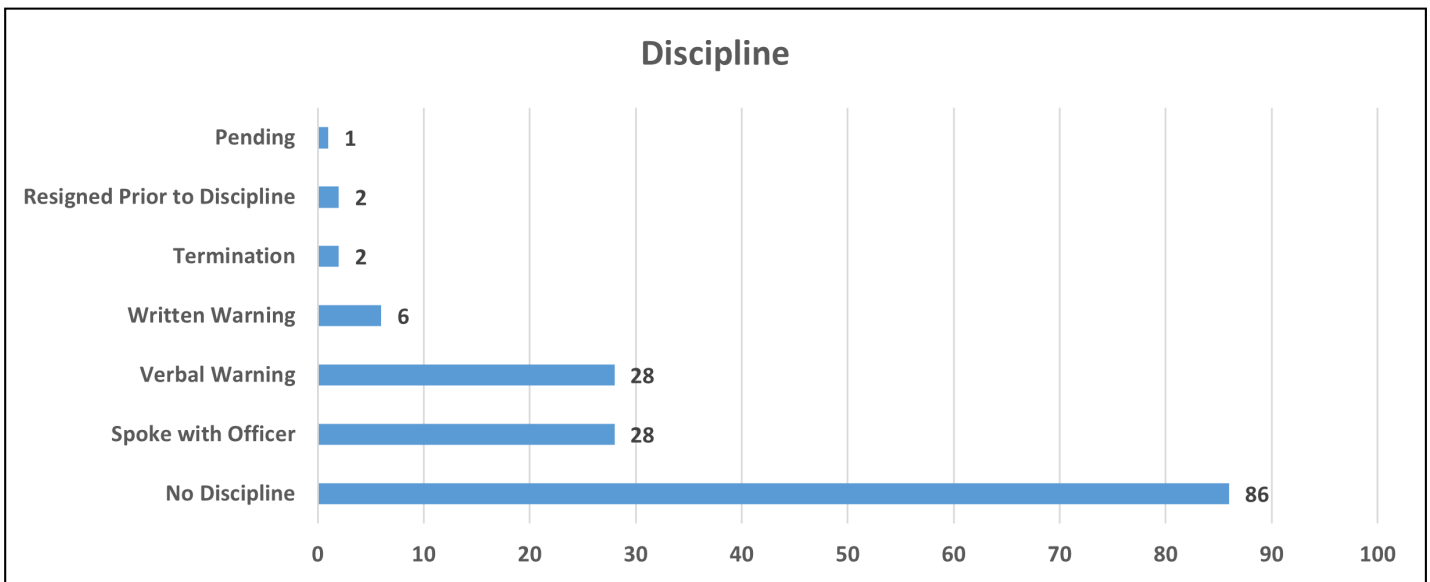
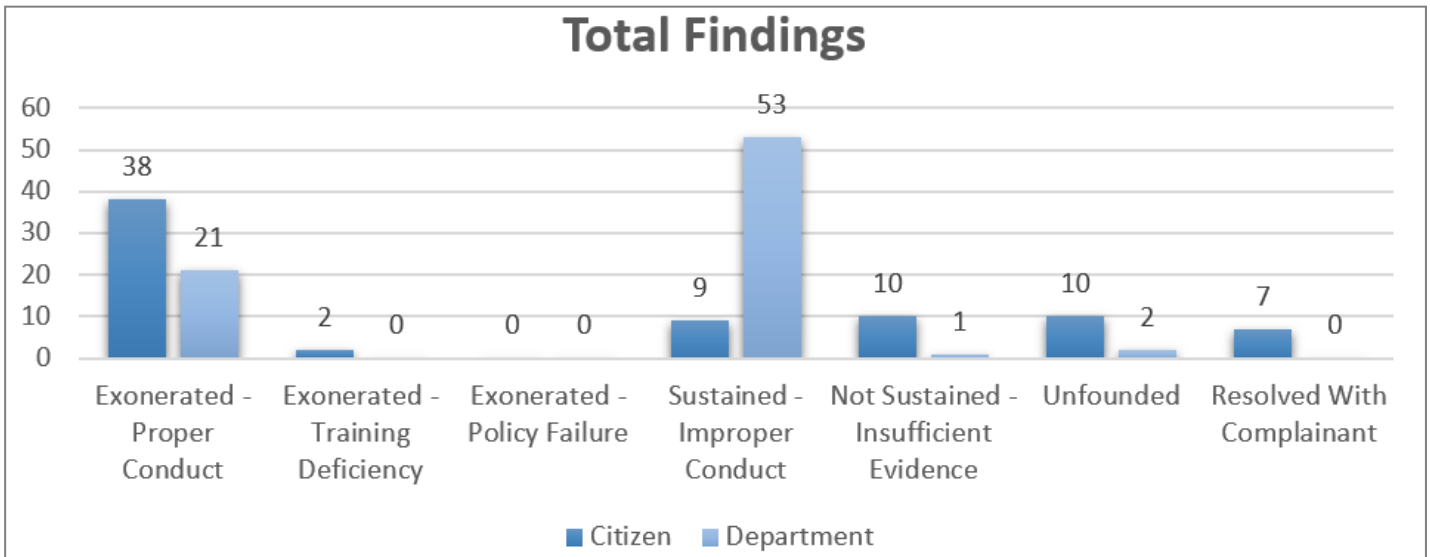
Sustained — Improper conduct. The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegations made.

Not Sustained — Insufficient evidence. The investigation failed to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegations.

Unfounded — The investigation conclusively proved the act(s) in the complaint did not occur. This also applies when individual officers or employees were not involved in acts which may have occurred.

Resolved with Complainant — This applies only to Class II complaints. The determination of guilt may or may not be sustained but the complainant is satisfied with the results of the investigation.





Response to Resistance Report

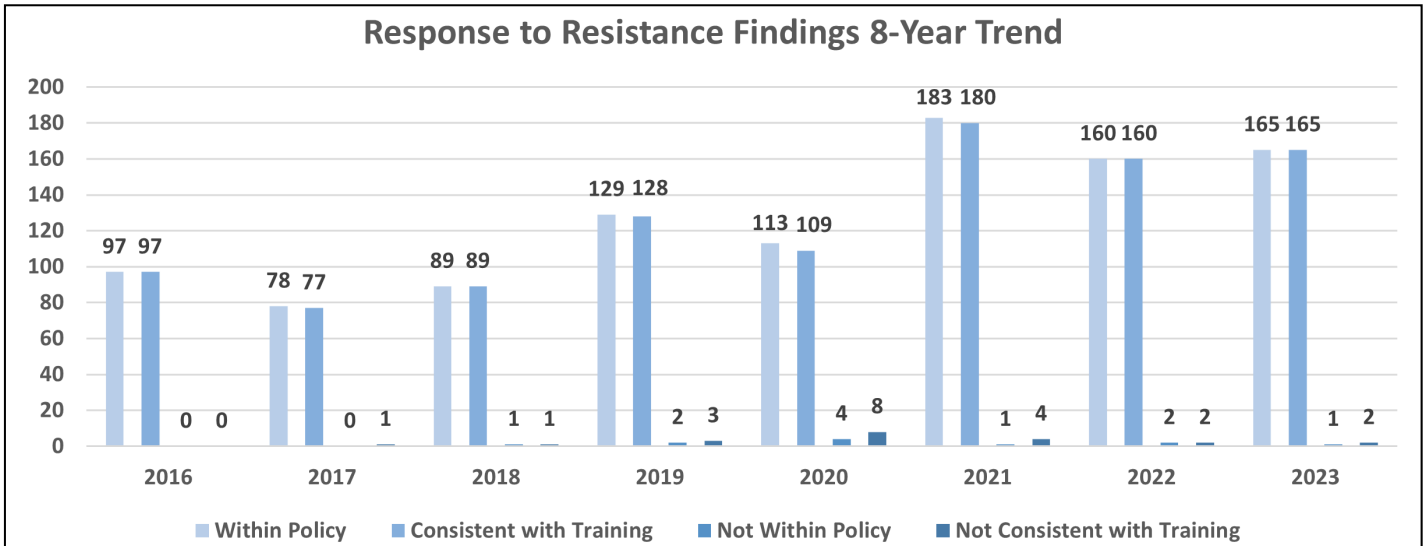
Officers are trained on numerous techniques to de-escalate situations so the public, themselves and the subjects involved remain as safe as possible. Officers may use any of these techniques, at any time, to meet the circumstances of the situation. Officers record the details of the incidents for their commanders to assess. The Office of Professional Standards evaluates the incidents throughout the year. There were 166 incidents during 2023.

The decision to use force requires careful attention to the facts and circumstances of each particular case, including the severity of the crime at issue, whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officer or others, and whether the subject is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

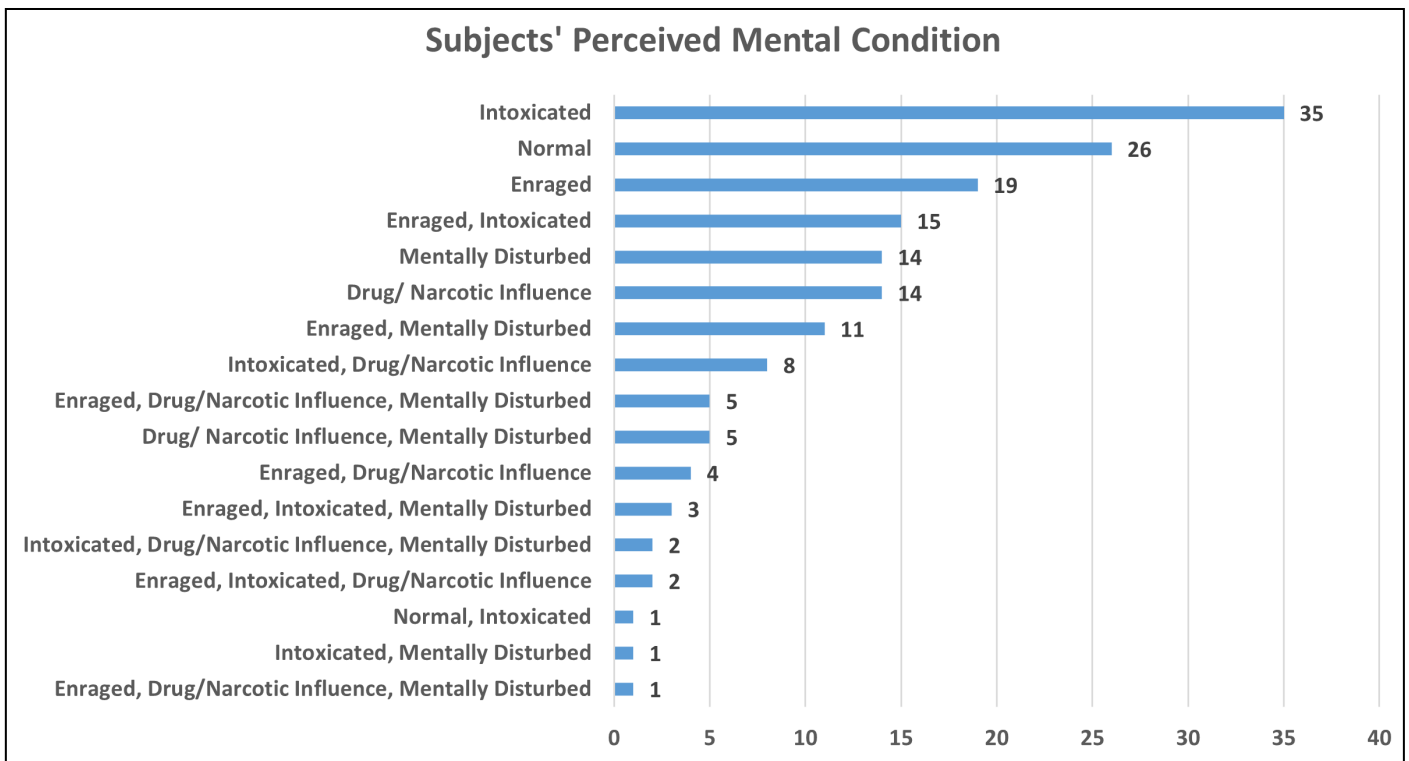
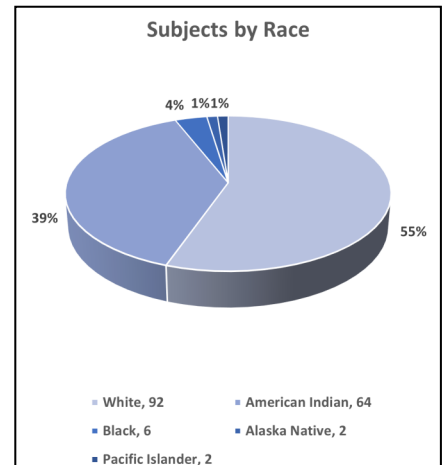
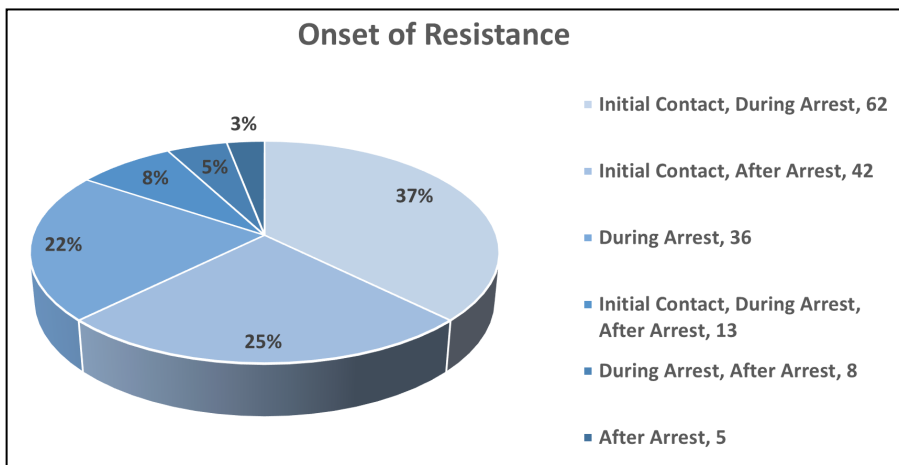
The reasonableness of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight. The question is whether the officers' actions are 'objectively reasonable' in light of the facts and circumstances confronting them in the moment.

THREAT RESPONSE DIAGRAM





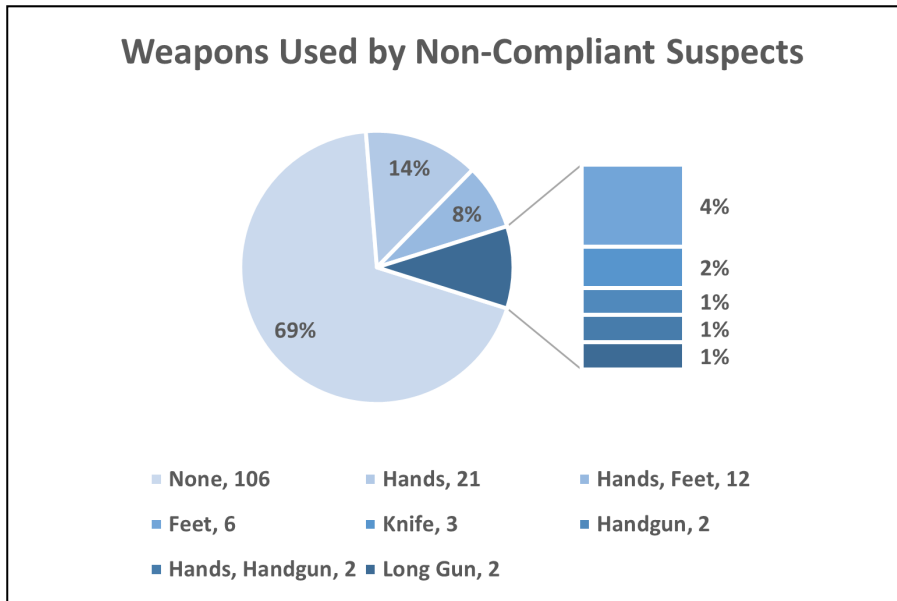
Billings Police Department updated its requirements for Response to Resistance data in 2020. The resulted in an more reports the following year, but gives a better analysis of what occurred during the incidents.



Response to Resistance reporting includes a category to document when non-compliant suspects use no weapons.

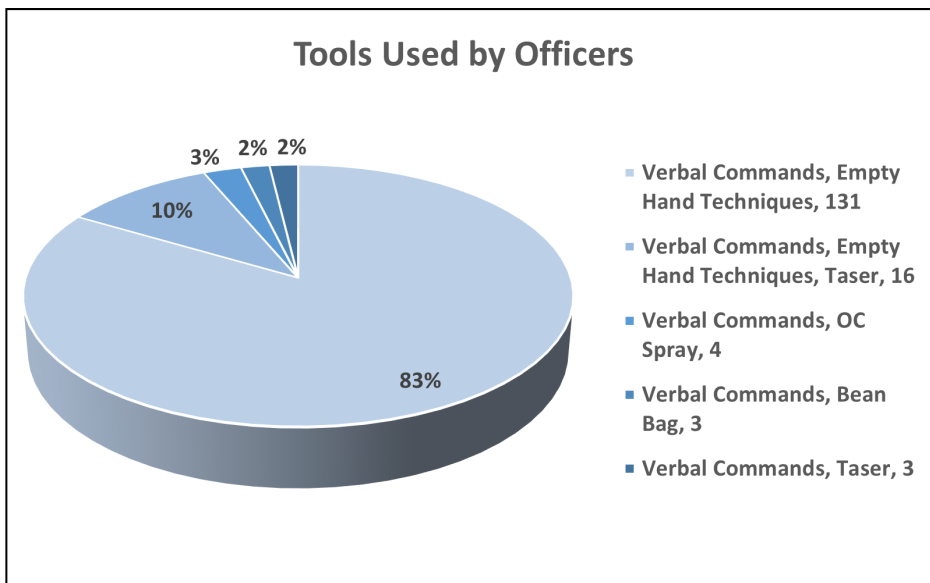
This was added to reporting in 2021 in response to commonalities commanders found when reviewing reports and videos of incidents. They found that officers were able to contain the situation before suspects in a fight posture or using verbal aggression were able to become physical. Further, in the vast majority of incidents, resisting suspects are perceived to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs which can inhibit their ability to engage physically.

These weapons were each listed as used once by suspects in 2023 Response to Resistance reporting:



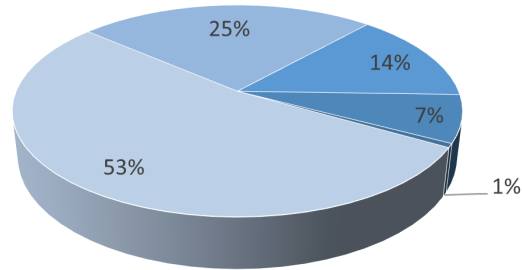
- Bite
- Body
- Feet, Bite
- Glass Bottle
- Hands, Bite
- Hands, Feet, Head
- Hands, Feet, Bite
- Hands, Knife
- Hands, Threat of Gun
- Head
- Metal Flashlight
- Threat of Gun

These tools were each listed as used once by officers in 2023 Response to Resistance reporting:



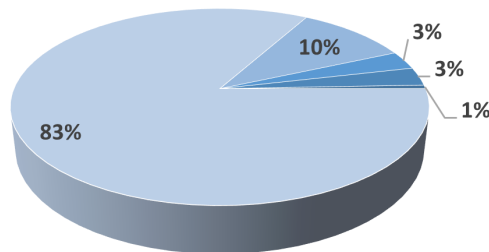
- K9
- Empty Hand Techniques
- Verbal Commands, CS, Automatic Weapon, Duty Gun, Vehicle, Beanbag
- Verbal Commands, Empty Hand Techniques, Beanbag
- Verbal Commands, Empty Hand Techniques, CS
- Verbal Commands, Empty Hand Techniques, K9
- Verbal Commands, Empty Hand Techniques, OC Spray
- Verbal Commands, Empty Hand Techniques, OC Spray
- Verbal Commands, Pepperball

Suspect Level of Injury



- No visible injury, No complaint of pain, 88
- Minor visible injury (redness, swelling, abrasion), no medical attention required, 42
- Injury requiring 1st Aid or outpatient treatment (doctor's exam, stitches, x-rays), 3
- No visible injury, Complaint of minor pain, No medical attention required, 12
- Injury requiring overnight hospitalization, 1

Officer Level of Injury



- No visible injury, No complaint of pain, 138
- Minor visible injury (redness, swelling, abrasion), no medical attention required, 17
- Injury requiring 1st Aid or outpatient treatment (doctor's exam, stitches, x-rays), 5
- No visible injury, Complaint of minor pain, No medical attention required, 5
- Injury requiring overnight hospitalization, 1

Did you know?

Billings Police Department has the service of a corps of Chaplains, representing several faiths, who donate their time to support officers and community members who are touched by crime and death.

The Chaplains are on call every day. They average about 50 calls a month.

“The Billings Police Department is fortunate to have had a Chaplain Program for over forty years. Chaplains are appointed by the Chief of Police on a volunteer basis and provide emotional, moral, and spiritual aid to officers, staff, their families, and the public in times of crises,” Chief St. John explains. “Chaplains provide confidential support in several key areas of law enforcement and the Billings community. These include, but are not limited to officer wellness and support, spiritual support, and community-police engagement. Our chaplains are an important part of our department’s culture and help us provide excellent service.”



2023 Patrol Shifts



The 2023 Day Shift included: (from left) Officers Fjetland, Figg, Sgt. Milam, Lt. Wooley, Officers Funk, Ratzlaff, Larson, Kuntz, Snider, Sgt. Conrad, Officers Foster, Shreeve Carney, Frank and Beechie.



The 2023 Noon Shift included: (from left) Lt. Becker, Sgt. Schnellbach, Officers Longabaugh, Reid, Q. Johnson, Sgt. Reid, Officers Foltz, Ream, Lane, Shaffer, Brown, Chaffin, Gallagher, Hill, Pearson, Kammerzell, Nelson, Busta, Sgt. Beck, Officer Weber and Sgt. Cagle.



The 2023 Night Shift included: (from left) Officer Campana, Sgt. Peterson, Officers Klewin, Gullett, Woody, Yeager, Asher, Zevotek, Sgt. Mansur, Officers Combs, Hood, Sparrow, Bishop, Weekes, Proudfit, Cofield, Walker, Lt. Shelden, Officer Dahlberg and Sgt. Kaiser.