

Internal Affairs Complaint Investigations 2018

The Takoma Park Police Department's policy directives require investigations of all complaints against the Department or its employees, and that annual statistical summaries of such investigations by the internal affairs function be made available to the public. The following is a summary of complaints filed for calendar year 2018:

Twelve formal complaints were recorded in 2018 with three subjected to internal affairs investigations. Seven complaints were submitted by community members and four complaints were generated internally by an employee, the Chief of Police, or the Command Staff. One of the formal complaints was submitted by another law enforcement agency. There were no complaints referred anonymously. Two of the 12 formal complaints were received for the same incident by two family members.

During 2017, the police department initiated an online option to file complaints AND compliments in an effort to make the process easier and more accessible. The online option was used for submission of five of the formal complaints to include two family members on the same incident. There were two complaints filed online that were not complaints and filed incorrectly by community members as a report of a crime. There were five compliments that were filed using the online option thanking officers for their handling of various calls for service.

Subjects of the complaints in 2018 included a total of 10 sworn officers, some of whom were involved in more than one complaint. One civilian employee was the subject of a complaint. There were two complaints that did not specify an employee.

One of the 10 complaints resulted in sustained findings of improper conduct, and disciplinary measures were warranted and taken. Four complaints are still pending investigation due to case specific circumstances. Nine complaints were referred to a supervisor for investigation/counseling sessions in lieu of an internal investigation (two were from the same incident). The disciplinary measures taken during 2018 on sustained findings were handled administratively and resulted in administrative actions to include counseling and written reprimands to address specific issues.

The 2018 statistical comparison with 2017 indicates a decrease of five complaints with 17 received in 2017 and 12 received in 2018 - or a reduction of 29.4%. Five less complaints were referred to internal affairs investigations in 2018 as compared to 2017. Sustained findings decreased from six in 2017 to one in 2018.

Of particular interest in 2018 was the use of body worn camera footage to assist in the investigation of complaints. Body worn camera footage was essential in several complaints to include two that were determined to be unfounded based upon review of body worn camera footage.

In 2018, officers had a total of 13,484 contacts with the public, which included calls for service, self-initiated calls*, and traffic stops. The complaints represent 0.09% of all contacts.

Residents are reminded that the process for making a complaint against a police employee is detailed on the City of Takoma Park web page by selecting the Government and then the Police tab. The information is also available on flyers available to the public in the Police Department lobby. Complaints and compliments can be filed online through the web page.

**Self-initiated calls: These types of calls are initiated by a police officer and given to dispatch, i.e., loiterers, suspicious subjects, parking, etc.*