



Information about Pacifica Police Department Staffing, Functions, Policies, & Practices

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The following information is provided to summarize for the Pacifica Community information about policing functions, policies, practices, and staffing levels.

Introduction

The tragic homicide of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, and cases involving other black Americans in recent history, are clear and tragic examples of racial inequities in policing across the country. These examples also illuminate the deeper systemic racial inequity and social justice problems that continue to plague American society, and are not specific to policing, such as in healthcare, education, voting, and the justice system. We must *all* do our part personally and professionally to confront these inequities. In doing so, we must question and challenge these systems, as well as be able to answer those questions honestly and be open to new ideas for improving these systems. As we *all* do this work, it is important to understand and acknowledge the facts about policing in Pacifica. The following information is intended to provide some general information to help the community understand policing in Pacifica, as compared to what system improvements may or may not be appropriate region-, state-, or country-wide.

Police Department Policies & Practices

- ***Transparency and Communication of Police Department Policies and Practices***

Pacifica Police Department (PPD) policies, including use of force and training policies, are publicly available through the PPD's webpage at: <https://powerdms.com/public/PacificaPD/tree>. In addition, Chief of Police Daniel Steidle has in the past, and continues to, make himself available to sit down and discuss these policies and the PPD with whomever would like to do so. This transparency and accessibility is a core value of the department. The City encourages engagement with the community to explain why the PPD operates in a certain manner and how public safety and trust is of paramount importance.

- ***Use of Force Statistics in Pacifica***

A review of the last 5 years shows the Pacifica Police Department averaged approximately 3.5 uses of force per year. With an average of 19,215 calls for service (which includes officer-initiated activity such as traffic stops, etc.) per year during that same time frame, this equates to Pacifica Police Officers using force only on .02% of calls. There were no serious injuries in any of these use of force cases over the last five years.

- ***Pacifica Police Department Training and Culture***

Another core value to the PPD is recognizing and respecting the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Maintaining this culture and ensuring it in practice, especially for the use of force authority with which police officers are vested, requires recurring training and departmental management best practices, such as:

- Rigorous hiring standards including comprehensive background investigation and psychological examination;
- Continual training on use of force policies and tactics
- Documentation and supervisory review of all use of force incidents;
- Implementation of lawful, best practice use of force policy

Recurring training is provided to every Pacifica Police Officer in a number of areas such as:

- Use of Force policy review/knowledge testing
- De-escalation strategies (incorporated in all use of force training)
- Training in proficiency of the use of all types of weapons carried by officers, including de-escalation tactics and policy knowledge
- Bias-free policing training (avoidance of bias to assure fair, impartial treatment of all community members)
- Defensive Tactics training, emphasizing tactics for control of combative subjects that require minimal use of force and/or no use of weapons
- Crisis Intervention Training, including tactics to deal with those in crisis, especially mental health crisis, and de-escalation tactics

- ***Pacifica's Use of Force Policies & Practices***

The Police Department's Use of Force Policy, which is posted online, is in conformance with California's AB 392 (2019), known as the California Act to Save Lives—the most stringent use of deadly force law in the nation. Pacifica's Use of Force Policy was updated in December 2019, in compliance with state law. To read the Use of Force Policy

visit: <https://powerdms.com/public/PacificaPD/tree/documents/1715570>.

The following best practices are part of the PPD's training and culture:

- *De-escalation:* This practice is engrained in the policing culture of the Pacifica Police Department and has been for decades. It begins in academy training and continues throughout each officer's career and is used daily. In Pacifica Police policy, de-escalation techniques are part of policy in (5) areas, including uses of force (weapons), dealing with mentally ill individuals, crisis intervention incidents and handling civil disputes. De-escalation is a component of all of our weapons/use of force/defensive tactics training.
- *Duty to intercede:* An officer's duty to intercede if they witness excessive force is a component of our use of force policy. An officer witnessing excessive force is also required to report the incident to their supervisor.
- *Use of other resources/techniques before shooting:* PPD adheres to the recent changes to California's use of force law, including but not limited to, Penal Code section 835(a)(2), which reads: "As set forth below, it is the intent of the Legislature that peace officers use deadly force only when necessary in defense of human life. In determining whether deadly force is necessary, officers shall evaluate each situation in light of the particular circumstances of each case, and shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to an

objectively reasonable officer.”

- *Warning Before Use of Deadly Force:* PPD policy states where feasible, the officer shall, prior to the use of force, make reasonable efforts to identify themselves as a peace officer and to warn that deadly force may be used, unless the officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of those facts.
- *Comprehensive reporting:* The PPD requires use of force incidents to be documented in a report and reported to a supervisor. A supervisor is required to prepare a summary to the Division Commander and Chief of Police. All use of force incidents are reviewed at every supervisory level, up to the Chief of Police to determine if the force was in compliance with policy. If a use of force results in serious injury or death, a Department Use of Force Review Board consisting of a cross-section of department personnel led by a command staff member will investigate and review the circumstances surrounding the use of force. The Board will also investigate every discharge of a firearm, whether the employee was on- or off-duty, excluding training, the controlled dispatch of a dangerous or injured animal, or recreational use. The Chief of Police may request the Use of Force Review Board to investigate the circumstances surrounding any use of force incident. The Board investigates the incident and presents recommended findings to the Chief of Police regarding whether or not the officer’s use of force was within policy. The PPD reports statistical data regarding all officer-involved shootings and incidents involving use of force resulting in serious bodily injury to the California Department of Justice as required by Government Code § 12525.2.

The practices engrained in PPD’s training and culture related to the use of force and crisis intervention have resulted in the following recent outcomes:

- A subject that had brandished a knife at another person refused to exit his vehicle when contacted by PPD officers. The subject made movements as if he were going to run over the officers. Officers took positions a safe distance from the vehicle and convinced the subject to surrender peacefully without the use of force. The subject was still armed with the knife when arrested.
- A felony assault suspect was contacted by PPD officers in his vehicle. The subject claimed to have a knife and stated he wanted PPD officers to shoot him. Officers persuaded the subject to surrender without the use of force. The subject later stated he wanted to die and force the police to shoot him.
- Officers responded to a domestic violence call where the victim reported the subject may be armed. Officers made telephone contact with the subject and convinced him to surrender peacefully. The subject was arrested without the use of force. The arrest resulted in the recovery of assault weapons, ammunition and a gun silencer.
- Officers responded to a call involving a violent subject that had committed a felony assault on an elderly person and was likely suffering from a mental health crisis. The subject was inside a residence and was reportedly destroying the interior. Officers spoke with the subject for approximately 30 minutes without entering the residence, resulting in his peaceful surrender without the use of force.
- A PPD officer received an award from CORA, the City’s collaboration partner for domestic violence incidents, for her skill at de-escalating an incident.

- Officers responded to a residence to contact a person who was becoming violent and was suffering from a mental health crisis. Officers were told the subject had access to an assault rifle, and was carrying a large case when contacted. The subject was initially agitated and non-compliant, but officers were able to calm him and gain his cooperation. The subject was taken into custody peacefully on felony charges. Officers later worked with mental health professionals and the District Attorney to assure he received the care he needed.

In effort to address issues related to persons with mental health issues that can lead to law enforcement contacts in crisis situations, PPD has proactively worked to find ways to assist those in crisis before an incident occurs that could result in the use of force. PPD is an original member of the San Mateo County Mental Health Collaborative, a collaborative of many disciplines include law enforcement, social workers, medical professionals and mental health clinicians. This collaborative works to share information and resources to better serve those with mental illness with the goal of intervening before a major crisis occurs. PPD has also implemented the Special Needs Registry, a voluntary program that provides PPD officers information on those with mental health conditions and other special needs. This information allows PPD to better serve those with special needs.

In describing PPD's policies and practices, it is important also to acknowledge that there continues to be active policy debate throughout the state and nationwide amongst social justice groups, law enforcement organizations, legal experts, and communities about many facets of use of force practices. The debates and case analysis are complex. It is essential that work on all of these topics continue on a national scale. It is also essential that police officers, who are sworn to serve and protect the public, are trained to utilize tools and techniques that are *reasonable* and *in compliance with* state law and department policy when using force. The PPD has an exceptional record in this regard, and its leadership, culture, and training continue to help maintain the low statistics reported above about use of force in Pacifica.

- ***Bias-free Policing Training***

The Police Department's Bias Policy, which is also available for viewing at the above link, is designed to assure the Department will provide law enforcement services and enforce the law equally, fairly, objectively and without discrimination toward any individual or group. Officers receive recurring training on bias-free policing which provide officers with an understanding of what racial profiling is and the negative impact it can have.

Police Department Functions and Staffing

- ***Police Department Staffing***

Based on a survey conducted in 2018, the Pacifica Police Department operates at a staffing level of 29% below the average of five other similarly sized San Mateo County cities. With 33 authorized sworn positions, 3 support staff and 2 part time staff, this is 38% lower than the department's staffing in 1989. The current breakdown of personnel is as follows:

- (3) Command Staff (1) Chief, (2) Captains
- (4) Detectives
- (1) Administrative Sergeant
- (23) Patrol Officers / Sergeants
- (2) Records Clerks
- (1) Evidence Technician
- (.5) Property Clerk
- (.5) Administrative Assistant

(2 part-time) Community Service Officers (Grant funded)

With this limited level of patrol officer/sergeant staffing, the department has a complex staffing plan to provide the best coverage during the historically busiest hours. The following is an average numbers of officers on duty during the given time frames over a typical 7 day period:

- 7 am - 5 pm: 1 sergeant, 3 officers
- 5 pm - 9 pm 1 sergeant, 6 officers
- 9 pm - 2 am: 1 sergeant, 5 officers
- 2 am - 4 am: 1 sergeant, 3 officers
- 4 am - 7 am: 1 sergeant, 2 officers

Staffing challenges given the number of sworn positions occur when more than one significant incident is occurring in Pacifica at the same time, which quickly depletes staff available for other priority calls. During the times where staffing is extremely low, one officer leaving the city to transport an arrestee to jail or interview a crime victim at a hospital places available staff in a reactive mode rather than the normal proactive mode of a patrol officer.

- ***Collateral Assignments***

In such a leanly staffed operation, collateral assignments necessarily are handled by existing sworn staff in addition to their normal duties. These assignments are typically handled by specialty units or dedicated positions within departments in other cities. Examples of these collateral duties that are normally handled by specialty units or positions are as follows:

- Crime Prevention / Neighborhood Problem Solving
- Traffic Enforcement / Major Collision Investigation
- School Resource Officer
- CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)
- Emergency Management
- Crisis Negotiations
- Regulatory Services (Cannabis program, alcohol enforcement, massage therapy permitting, tow company compliance)
- Volunteer Coordination (CERT, Records Department volunteers, Explorer program, Reserve Police Officer program)
- Homeless Outreach Team
- Domestic Violence Services (CORA) Liaison

- ***Collaborative Programs***

In addition to normal duties and collateral assignments, the Police Department works collaboratively with other law enforcement agencies and stakeholders in San Mateo County to increase the level of services to Pacifica.

The following programs pool multiple law enforcement agency resources to provide specialized services/enforcement, resulting in cost savings:

- Narcotics Task Force:
- Gang Task Force/Intelligence
- Traffic Enforcement (Grant funded enforcement/education efforts)
- Alcohol Education/Enforcement (Via multi-agency grant funded program)

The following programs enhance services to law enforcement and the community through collaborative, multi-disciplinary efforts:

- Critical Incident Response Team (Multi-Agency team /responds to critical incidents for support/investigation collaboration)
- Terrorism Liaison (Collaborative of local, State and Federal agencies to address foreign and domestic terrorism)
- Domestic Violence (CORA) (Connecting officers and victims to domestic violence counselors while officers are on scene of domestic disturbance calls)
- Mental Health Collaborative (Multi-disciple mental health response coordination/services)

• **Support Functions**

The Department functions with (3) full time support personnel, (2) part-time personnel, and (2) part-time staff that are funded via grant funding. In a police agency for the size of Pacifica, a support staff of 12-15 would be normal. Pacifica support staff are non-sworn staff performing duties as follows:

- Police Records Staff (2) full-time positions: Police Records staff perform a myriad of complex, legal related functions. Police Records Staff also answer the non-emergency lines Monday through Friday during daytime hours. After hours calls are taken by the South San Francisco Police Department through our communications/911 services contract. Police Records staff handles all duties related to records management, retention, and release, report and citation processing, and alarm permit processing/management. The complexity of some of these duties requires special training with continual updates. A recent analysis of the Records Department showed that there are 300 personnel hours available per month to conduct business in this section. The duties that are performed by Records staff require an average of 383-413 hours per month. This deficit is mitigated by (2) part-time volunteers that generously donate their time weekly to assist.
- Evidence Technician (1) full-time, Property Clerk (1) (part-time): The evidence and property function of the police department are staffed by non-sworn support personnel. The evidence technician assists with crime scene processing, latent fingerprint examination and evidence collection and preservation. This position is also responsible for the police vehicle camera and body worn camera processing management. This duty alone, in some police departments, is a full-time position. The property clerk is responsible for the day to day management of the secure property room. This position is responsible for assuring the integrity of evidence and safe storage of firearms and narcotics.
- Administrative Assistant (1) part-time: The administrative assistant supports the Chief and both Captains with administrative functions including administrative record keeping, human resources documentation, and payroll processing and assisting in the Records Department as needed. This position in most police agencies is a full-time position.
- Community Service Officer (CSO) (2) (part-time, grant funded): The CSO position is a non-sworn support position that is funded via monies from the State of California Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Account (SLESA / Fund 07). CSOs are responsible for parking enforcement, abandoned vehicle abatement and enforcing the 72-hour parking limit. They are also used for traffic control and other low risk duties to assist sworn officers.

• **Investigative Functions**

The Investigative Division of the Police Department is the only specialty assignment available that performs law enforcement functions. The team of detectives serve to support the patrol function of the

Department by providing investigative and evidence related services. Detectives are assigned cases that are beyond the scope of normal patrol officer duties and require extensive follow-up and often specialty training to complete. These include serious felony crimes, property crimes, sex crimes, elder abuse crimes, and fiscal/cybercrimes. At any given time, a detective will have an average of a dozen cases they are working. These positions require additional training above that of the patrol officer.