

St. Louis Park Police Department



2018 annual report on use of force

Michael Harcey, Chief of Police

3015 Raleigh Av. S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Definitions.....	4
Response to resistance statistics.....	5
Levels of force used.....	6
De-escalation.....	7
Self-initiated cases.....	8
Mental health/crisis calls.....	9
Charging data.....	10
Race data	12
Electronic control device/use of deadly force.....	13

Introduction

The St. Louis Park Police Department is committed to providing a safe community through quality service, community partnerships and professionalism. Department leadership is dedicated to providing officers with the highest standard of training to emphasize de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques along with proper use of tactics and control.

This report was completed for the purpose of reviewing the St. Louis Park Police Department's use of force for the year 2018. The data collected for this report was generated from the department's response to resistance reports and a manual review of cases involving force. This report will be used to identify trends in the use of force by agency personnel to evaluate potential training modifications, equipment needs or policy revisions.

Use of force by police officers is governed by chapter 6 of the St. Louis Park Police Department Policy, which defines force as follows:

“Intentional actions by an officer that the officer knows, or reasonably should know is likely to cause a nonconsensual, harmful, or offensive bodily contact with another, or places another in imminent fear of non-consensual, harmful, or offensive bodily contact.”

Officers are directed by policy to use the least amount of force reasonably necessary to accomplish the intended objective, without impairing the safety of others. When force is used, police officers are required to complete a response to resistance report (RRR). This report is required any time force is used beyond routine handcuffing, or if the officer was present and observed the use of force. This standard is much higher than that of many police departments across the country that require only documenting the use of force when there is an incident involving injury to the subject of the force.

The report is reviewed by the duty supervisor who is required to evaluate if the officer's actions complied with St. Louis Park Police Department Policy. As a form of checks and balances, all response to resistance reports are further reviewed by two command staff members.

The response to resistance report is located in the St. Louis Park Police Department records management system. The report is customized and includes fill-in-the-blank and pull-down options that cover the following: incident information, officer information, subject information, tactics and/or weapon use, compliance, officer injury, subject injury and supervisor review. Officers also are required to complete an official police report documenting the incident, including the type of use of force employed.

Use of force definitions

De-escalation: Taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter. De-escalation is an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force, or with reduced force. De-escalation may include the use of such techniques as command presence, verbal persuasion, dialogue, advisements, warnings and tactical repositioning.

Verbalization: Making conversation or issuing commands, orders or directions, given with the intention of informing, educating and controlling.

Soft hand techniques: Non-injury producing, weaponless control methods.

Chemical aerosol: non-lethal aerosol sprays.

Hard empty hand techniques: When an officer uses strikes to create temporary dysfunction, or a physical takedown for the purpose of gaining control of a combative individual.

Electronic control device - Taser displayed: When an officer points their Taser at an individual but does not discharge the Taser.

Electronic control device - Taser deployed: When an officer discharges their Taser at an individual to gain control of them.

Impact weapon: Less-than-lethal option, such as a projectile or baton, that is intended to create temporary dysfunction in order to gain control.

Service weapon displayed: A firearm is displayed by an officer but is not pointed at an individual.

Service weapon deployed: When an officer discharges their service weapon at an individual to protect themselves or another from death or great bodily harm.

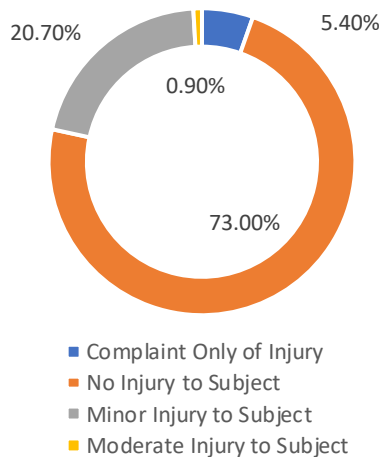
Deadly force: Any force that could potentially result in death or great bodily harm.

Response to resistance statistics for 2018

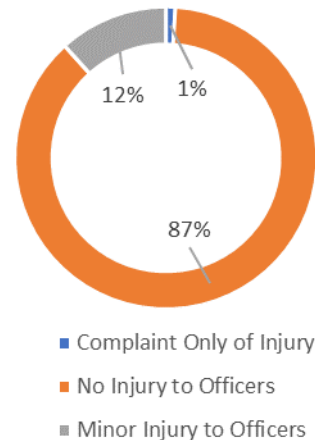
In 2018, the St. Louis Park Police Department responded to 42,967 calls for service. This number does not include voided or test calls. Of those calls for service, 111 cases resulted in response to resistance reports. This means that in 2018, 0.26 percent of the total calls for service resulted in some level of force being used. St. Louis Park Police Department Policy requires that every officer involved in the use of force incident, whether they used or observed force, is required to complete a response to resistance report. Therefore, some incidents in which multiple officers responded there may be multiple response to resistance reports. In 2018 293 response to resistance reports were completed for the 111 cases in which use of force was documented.

When evaluating use of force incidents, it's important to track injuries sustained by both the subject and the officer to gauge effectiveness and identify possible training or policy issues. Of the 111 cases where force was documented, 81 of the subjects involved reported no injury; 6 reported possible injuries (no visible injuries); 21 sustained minor injuries (abrasions, scrapes, bruises); 3 sustained moderate injury (lacerations, puncture wound, K9 bite). Officers were injured 14 times, all of which were reported as minor injuries.

Incidents of Force Where Subject Sustained Injury

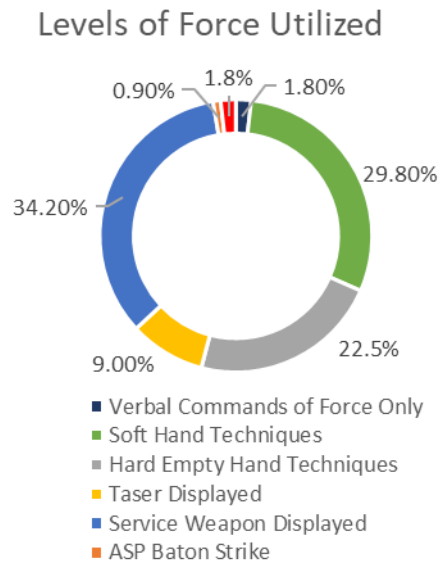


Incidents of Force Where Officer Sustained Injury



Levels of force used

The St. Louis Park Police Department's response to resistance report is designed to provide data on the level of force used on a subject. The report tracks the force option used based on a use of force continuum that includes verbal commands, soft empty hand techniques, hard empty hand techniques, Taser displayed, service weapon displayed, Taser deployed, and service weapon deployed. For purposes of this analysis, the highest level of force used during the incident is reported.



De-escalation

A check box in the case information section of the police report allows tracking of incidents when officers use de-escalation strategies. Officers are instructed to check this box each time they use de-escalation strategies and to further document their de-escalation efforts in their report. Officers are also required to document de-escalation strategies in their response to resistance report. Of the 111 response to resistance cases in 2018, de-escalation strategies were attempted and documented 70 times, which amounts to 63 percent of use-of-force incidents. It should also be noted that, of the remaining 41 cases, eight were high-risk traffic stops requiring immediate commands with little or no time for the use of de-escalation strategies. Read more about high-risk traffic stops in the next section.

About high-risk traffic stops

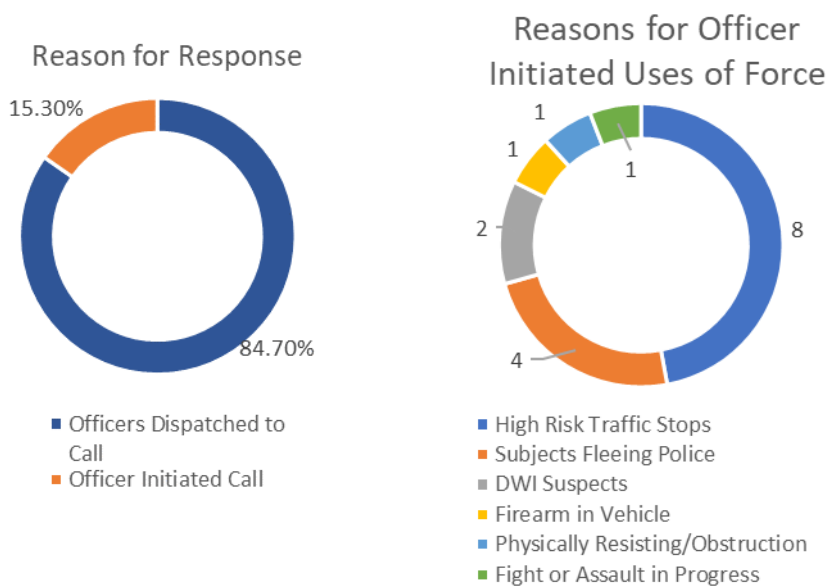
High-risk traffic stops are defined as posing a significant risk to the officer when dealing with the occupants of a motor vehicle. Situations that may fall into this category are known or suspected felons, stolen vehicles, an armed individual, or any potentially dangerous person.

When a police officer has a reasonable belief that a motor vehicle to be stopped contains an individual(s) falling into one of the above-listed categories, the officer must employ a set of tactics substantially different from those used in a routine traffic stop. The officer's reasonable belief can be based on the officer's observations, official communications and other sources of reliable information. Due to the dangerous nature of high-risk stops, it is a nationally recognized training standard to have a firearm at a ready position or pointed in the direction of the suspect vehicle. The goal of a high-risk traffic stop is to detain or arrest dangerous or potentially dangerous individuals in the safest manner possible for everyone involved. All high-risk traffic stops require a response to resistance report to document why the firearm was pointed in the direction of the suspect vehicle.

Self-initiated cases involving force

During an analysis of the 111 cases that involved some level of force, it's valuable to review if those cases were initiated by officers or if they were a response to a call for service. Out of the 111 cases involving force, 17 were self-initiated. Eight of those were a result of a high-risk traffic stop. None of the officer-initiated cases in 2018 resulted in an injury to the subjects or to officers. Below is a breakdown of the officer self-initiated traffic stops/contacts where force was used:

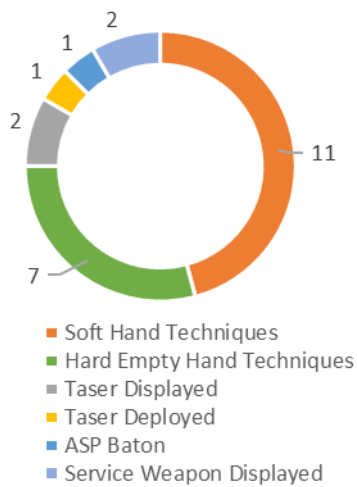
- High-risk traffic stops 8
- Subjects with felony warrants 4
- DWI suspect 2
- Firearm in Vehicle 1
- Subject physically resisting/obstruction 1
- Fight or assault in progress 1



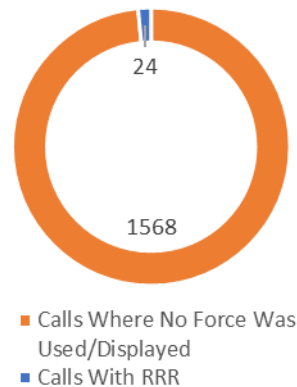
Mental health/crisis calls

In 2018, St. Louis Park police officers responded to 1,592 calls related to mental health, of which 389 were crisis/mental health/suicide calls, and 1,203 were welfare checks. Of those 1,592 calls, 24 (1.5 percent) resulted in response to resistance reports. Of the 24 cases, 23 resulted in a health and welfare hold on the subject. A health and welfare hold enables an officer to require a subject to be evaluated by a mental health professional when they are a danger to themselves or others. It is important to note in 14 of those cases, the subject was not injured; nine had minor injuries (abrasions, scrapes, bruises); and one received puncture wounds from Taser use. In the remaining case, an individual had a diabetic reaction where officers had to use force to control the individual in order to administer medical aid.

Levels of Force Utilized on Mental Health/Crisis Calls

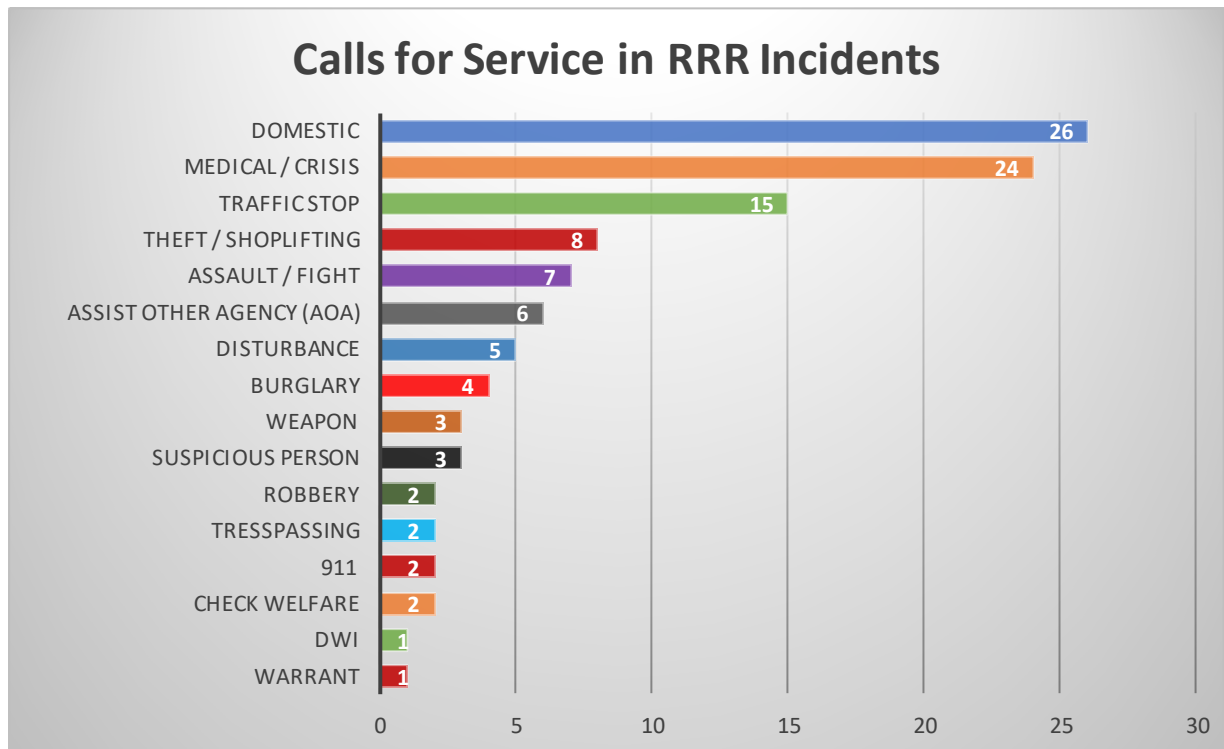


Crisis/Mental Health Calls

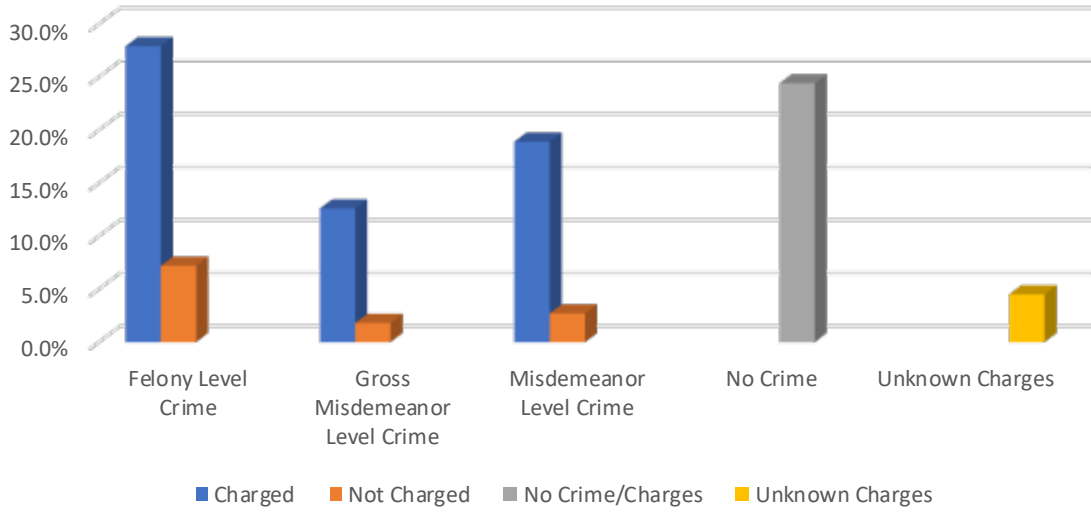


Charging data

In 2018, 111 cases resulted in completion of response to resistance reports. The graph below provides a breakdown in the types of calls for service for these 111 cases. Of those 111 cases, subjects were charged with crimes in 66 cases – 59 percent of the number of cases involving response to resistance reports. Thirty-one cases resulted in felony level charges, fourteen cases resulted in gross misdemeanor charges and 21 cases resulted in misdemeanor charges. Of the 111 cases, 27 were for mental health related calls for service, with no criminal charges. Additionally, 5 of the 111 cases involved officers assisting other agencies and the department was not able to obtain data on criminal charges for these cases.



Level of Crimes and Convictions in RRR Incidents

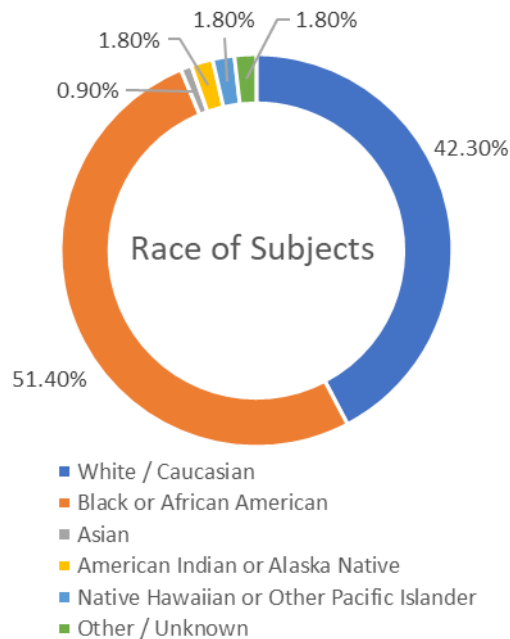


Race data

The St. Louis Park Police Department does not collect race data on all calls for service or on all police reports. However, race is recorded on a booking record during the arrest process and is required on the response to resistance report. Of the 111 cases, the following race data was collected:

- Black or African American 57
- White/Caucasian 47
- American Indian 2
- Asian 1
- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 2
- Unknown 2

In two cases where race is reported as unknown, St. Louis Park police officers were dispatched to assist other agencies and race data wasn't available for the response to resistance report.



In 94 of the 111 cases, officers were dispatched to the incident and responded based on a citizen complaint. Seventeen officer self-initiated calls in 2018 resulted in the use of force. Of those 17 cases, 8 subjects were Black or African American, seven subjects were white, one subject was Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and one subject's race was not specified. In the 17 cases, there were three reported injuries to the subject.

Electronic control device (Taser)

In 2018, a Taser was displayed by officers 34 times and a Taser was deployed two times. Of 42,967 calls for service, a Taser was displayed 0.08 percent of the time and a Taser was deployed 0.005 percent of the time.

Use of deadly force

The St. Louis Park Police Department Use of Deadly Force Policy is as follows:

1) It shall be the policy of the department, unless expressly negated elsewhere, to accord officers discretion in the use of deadly force to the extent permitted by Minnesota State Statute § 609.066, Subdivision 2, which authorizes peace officers acting in the line of duty to use deadly force only when necessary:

a) To protect the peace officer or another from apparent death or great bodily harm.

b) To effect the arrest or capture, or prevent the escape, of a person who the peace officer knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe, has committed or attempted to commit a felony involving the use or threatened use of deadly force.

c) To effect the arrest or capture, or prevent the escape, of a person who the officer knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe, has committed or attempted to commit a felony, if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or great bodily harm if the person's apprehension is delayed.

2) If feasible, an officer should give warning before using or attempting to use deadly force.

In 2018 there no cases involving he use of deadly force.