

# POLICE OPERATIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

## BILLINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT BILLINGS, MONTANA



# CPSM®

CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MANAGEMENT, LLC  
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ICMA advances the knowledge of local government best practices with its website ([www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)), publications, research, professional development, and membership. The ICMA Center for Public Safety Management (ICMA/CPSM) was launched by ICMA to provide support to local governments in the areas of police, fire, and emergency medical services.

ICMA also represents local governments at the federal level and has been involved in numerous projects with the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security.

In 2014, as part of a restructuring at ICMA, the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) was spun out as a separate company. It is now the exclusive provider of public safety technical assistance for ICMA. CPSM provides training and research for the Association's members and represents ICMA in its dealings with the federal government and other public safety professional associations such as CALEA, PERF, IACP, IFCA, IPMA-HR, DOJ, BJA, COPS, NFPA, and others.

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# SECTION 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Center for Public Safety Management, LLC (CPSM) was commissioned to review the operations of the Billings Police Department. While our analysis covered all aspects of the department's operations, particular areas of focus of this study included identifying appropriate staffing of the department given the workload, community demographics, and crime levels; the effectiveness of the organizational structure; and efficiency and effectiveness of division/unit processes.

We analyzed the department workload using operations research methodology and compared that workload to staffing and deployment levels. We reviewed other performance indicators that enabled us to understand the implications of service demand on current staffing. Our study involved data collection, interviews with key operational and administrative personnel, focus groups with line-level department personnel, on-site observations of the job environment, data analysis, comparative analysis, and the development of alternatives and recommendations.

Based upon CPSM's detailed assessment of the Billings Police Department, it is our conclusion that the department, overall, provides quality law enforcement services. The staff is professional and dedicated to the mission of the department. As you review this report, you will notice three common themes that speak to operational challenges facing the department: (1) Facilities, or lack thereof, (2) insufficient staffing at both mid-level supervisory and line levels, and (3) organizational structure. Each of these has a significant and adverse impact on operational efficiency and effectiveness, and ultimately, the quality of life for the business community, residents, and visitors of the City of Billings.

Throughout this report, we will strive to allow the reader to look inside the department to understand its strengths and its challenges. We sincerely hope that all parties utilize the information and recommendations contained herein in a constructive manner to make a fine law enforcement agency even better.

As part of this Executive Summary, following are general observations that we believe identify some of the more significant issues facing the department. Many of these observations concern department-wide issues rather than operations of specific units. Additionally, we have included a master list of unit-specific recommendations for consideration. We believe these recommendations will enhance organizational effectiveness. Some of these recommendations involve the creation of new job classifications; others involve the reassignment/repurposing of job duties to other sections and units. It is important to note that in this report we will examine specific sections and units of the department. As we do so, and as appropriate, we will offer a detailed discussion of our general observations and recommendations for each.

The list of recommendations is extensive. Should the City of Billings and the Billings Police Department choose to implement any or all recommendations, it must be recognized that this process will not take just weeks or even months to complete, but perhaps years. The recommendations are intended to form the basis of a long-term improvement plan for the city and department.

We would like to emphasize that this list of recommendations, though lengthy, is a common phenomenon in our operational assessments of law enforcement agencies around the country and should in no way be interpreted as an indictment of what we consider to be a fine department. Our work, by design, focusses on potential areas for improvement. Had we listed areas in which the department excels, that list would dwarf the number of recommendations.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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- The Billings Police Department operates out of multiple facilities. As a result of this decentralization, staff must routinely travel between multiple facilities to perform essential work functions, which is inefficient. Facilities include:
  - Downtown police headquarters, which houses administration, supervisors, detectives, records, and some support personnel.
  - The “barn,” which houses personnel assigned to field deployments such as patrol and STEP.
  - The property and evidence facility, located adjacent to the “barn.”
  - Off-site offices that house multi-agency task force personnel
  - The Crime Prevention Center, which houses some volunteer services.
  - The outdoor firing range.
- Jail services are provided by the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Department. The jail is routinely overcrowded, causing a lack of space to house individuals arrested for a wide variety of crimes, both violent and nonviolent. As a result, persons who are arrested are routinely released on a citation to appear at a future date. Many do not appear when directed, so warrants for arrest are issued by the court. Still, without space to house the individual the warrants cannot be served. In some cases, individuals accrue dozens, even scores of warrants. These individuals continue to pose a threat to the safety, peace, and serenity of the community.
- As we examined staffing levels throughout the department, we found that for some assignments the need for additional staffing is immediate and urgent. This was especially true for some patrol-related functions and for detectives, as well as for midlevel supervisory positions throughout the department.
- The department greatly underutilizes civilian personnel. There are a number of functions currently performed by sworn officers that could be performed by civilian employees at a cost savings, and in some cases with improved quality of the work product. This is the case for both patrol and detectives. The utilization of civilian personnel will greatly reduce heavy workload demands on those personnel. In some cases this will require the creation of a new job classification (Police Service Officer). In other cases, it will require increasing the authorized staffing level for the position (such as for Identification Techs), and expanding their duties. As we report on individual divisions, we will more fully address this situation. Finally, we will suggest that the department create a civilian career ladder as part of a migration plan toward increased utilization of civilian personnel where appropriate. This will be addressed in Section 7 following the reporting on the individual divisions.
- Within the next four years, the department will see the retirement of most, if not all, of its upper-level command staff, down through the rank of lieutenant and including civilian command-level personnel. It is imperative that the department consider a structured succession plan, including mentoring of the next generation of department leaders. While the plan must focus on command-level positions, the development of future mid-management and first-line supervisors must be considered as well. Exposure of all potential future leaders to a variety of administrative assignments and tasks is essential to prepare them for these future responsibilities.
- CPSM suggests that there is a need to modify the organization structure to more closely align comparable work efforts and improve command and control. For instance, while the

Operations Division oversees patrol, K9, and Billings Clinic officers, each of whom serve as first responders, the Professional Standards Division oversees traffic enforcement (STEP), including one-half of the K9 officers, the downtown deployment, the parks officer, and School Resource Officers, all of whom also provide direct services as first responders. As well, the Domestic Violence Investigator is assigned to the Professional Standards Division, and the Internet Crimes Against Children Investigator is assigned to Operations Division. Both serve in detective roles, at off-site locations, and neither are adequately supervised or supported. Additionally, the Assistant Police Chief has direct command of the Animal Control Unit, a responsibility more appropriately tasked to a lower-level command officer. These are but a few examples of the existing organizational alignment that warrants consideration for revision. In Section 8, at the conclusion of the operational assessment, we will provide additional information supporting this recommendation.

- There is a significant underutilization of police-specific technologies throughout the department. These technologies include case management software programs for criminal investigations, personnel investigations, specialized unit activities, and more. Rather, the department relies heavily upon Excel spreadsheets to track much of its workflow. In some instances, the technology is readily available in existing department technologies. For example, the department's present records management system has a module to track criminal investigations, yet investigative staff indicate that it is too complicated, and therefore they use spreadsheets. When CPSM attempted to review data for dates as recent as 2017 and 2018, we were told it is no longer available. Software programs are readily available to track personnel investigations as well, including early warning systems for potential problematic behaviors of employees. These and other programs and technology are widely in use in nearly every agency that we have assessed. The department must embrace technology to maximize its effectiveness. More detail will be provided as we report on individual department functions.
- While transient- and mental health-related calls are perceived to be significant contributors to workload demands and to have an adverse impact on business interests and the quality of life for Billings' residents, the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and records management system (RMS) do not allow for isolation and collection of data related to these calls. The absence of such data limits accurate and detailed analysis of the scope of the problem and leaves only anecdotal evidence as the source from which to plan a path forward in addressing it. A simple fix will be offered.
- Our effort to identify workload for specific divisions and/or units was made difficult by how responder identification is handled. The CAD system is set up to use employee badge numbers rather than division and/or unit specific call sign identifiers. As personnel are promoted, transfer between assignments mid-year, or work on an overtime assignment in a division outside of their normal assignment (e.g., a patrol officer working overtime at the Billings Medical Clinic), the use of their badge number to identify workload distribution provides inaccurate data in some instances. Division/unit-specific call signs (e.g., BC for Billings Medical Clinic) should be used so that, for example, a patrol officer working a Billings Medical Clinic overtime could be assigned a BC call designator for that overtime assignment. Their work for that period then could be attributed accurately to the Billings Medical Clinic rather than Patrol.
- Over the past few years, agencies have hurried to deploy body cameras without the policy preparation or the resources required to store and manage the cameras' recordings. Significant increases in staff time to review, redact, and process recordings for judicial discovery and public records requests (PRA) seeking access to the camera recordings have overwhelmed agencies. The BPD Records Unit, along with other units including Property and

Evidence and Patrol, have become burdened with elements of this task and other matters requested through the "discovery" and PRA process. This trend will undoubtedly continue. This added and sometimes complex workload has negatively disrupted primary duties in each of the units identified. As well, parcelling out the responsibility for producing such records lends itself to omission errors that can compromise legal proceedings and public trust in the agency. The establishment of a "Discovery Unit" within Records, with appropriate staffing, should be considered to centralize the tasks required for completion of these responses.

- In virtually all police studies conducted by CPSM, lack of communication is cited as a major organizational impediment. That sentiment was expressed in Billings as well. In some cases, the concern raised is justifiable, and in other cases, those who express the concern have subjected themselves to selective awareness. In any event, open, constructive communication is vital to any organization. CPSM suggests an option that involves executive staff hosting a "State of the Department" briefing on a quarterly, tri-annual, or semi-annual basis. During these briefings executive staff can give a short status report on important issues, changes, new programs, etc. facing the department and encourage questions or input from all employees. Such meetings should be scheduled so as to allow all shifts to participate. No, this is not a panacea, but those who are truly interested in department activities outside of their "workspace" can get a better understanding of the department's work plan and how they may contribute to the betterment of the department. For those who have selective awareness, they have only themselves to blame should they choose not to participate. Another option involves status boards for major projects that the department is working on, and which can be displayed online, or in briefing and/or break rooms. Employees not directly involved in such projects are often unaware of the departmental work efforts, or at least the status of these projects. We often hear, in many agencies, that employees are interested in department efforts and plans, even outside of their work unit, and appreciate being included in or at least informed as to such.
- Our data analysis focused on 2019 data so that we could use pre-COVID-19 information for our assessment. It should be noted, and as will be observed in our reporting, crime, especially violent crime, has largely been increasing over the past decade in Billings. Crime data provided by the department for 2020 (see Section 3, Table 3-2) reflects an alarming increase in all categories of major crime.
- As noted previously, specific recommendations follow and are discussed in detail throughout the report. These recommendations are offered to enhance the operation of the Billings Police Department. The recommendations provided are to ensure that law enforcement resources are optimally deployed, operations are streamlined for efficiency, and services provided are cost-effective, all while maintaining a high level of service to the City of Billings.

CPSM staff would like to thank Chief Rich St. John, Assistant Chief House, Captains Korell, Harper and Lawrence, and the entire staff of the Billings Police Department for their gracious cooperation and assistance in completing this project.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Operations Division Recommendations (Section 4).

#### ***Patrol Recommendations***

1. Take targeted action to mitigate conditions that result in high call volumes at the city's five highest call volume locations and which accounted for a total of 3,941 police responses over the year-long study period: Walmart (King St.), Walmart (Main St.), Denney's (27th St.), Albertsons (27th St.), and Holiday Stationstores (6th Av. N.). Replicate successful efforts at other locations as appropriate. (See discussion on pp. 33-34.)
2. Develop an alarm ordinance designed to reduce the frequency of false alarm responses, and to recover response costs where multiple responses are required over the course of a year to a premises because of repeat false alarms. (See discussion on p. 35.)
3. The department should examine causative factors related to the extraordinarily high amount of "out-of-service" time experienced at present for patrol and patrol-related functions. (See discussion on pp. 36-37.)
4. Consideration should be given to adjusting shift schedule reporting times to align patrol deployment more closely with community-initiated workload demands. Adding a fourth reporting time would also serve to better balance staffing throughout the day. (See discussion on pp. 48-49.)
5. Consideration should be given to incorporating civilians into the patrol work force. A new employee classification of Police Service Officer (PSO) could be established for this purpose. PSOs (sometimes referred to as Community Service Officers, CSOs) are commonly utilized in agencies of Billings' size to take reports on non-emergency crimes without suspect information, handle or assist with accident investigations, direct traffic, handle parking complaints, and many other related duties. Use of CSOs is a highly cost-effective means by which to address high workload demands while freeing up sworn police officers' time for more productive purposes. CPSM recommends that four FTE PSO positions be created, and be assigned to shift reporting times covering daytime and early evening hours. (See discussion on pp. 50-51.)
6. Work with the 911/dispatch management team to identify causative factors leading to excessively lengthy response times to high-priority calls for service (11.9 minutes), and specifically, the period after receipt of a call for service and the assignment of a unit to handle such a call (7 minutes). (See discussion on pp. 51-53.)
7. Reconsider the practice of holding some high-priority calls until a zone unit becomes available to handle it. (See discussion on pp. 53-54.)
8. Modify the computer-aided dispatch system operated by the Fire Department to enable the capture of data on transient, homeless, and mental health-related calls for purposes of future analysis. While calls related to this population are perceived to be a significant contributor to workload demands, the present the CAD system is not used to isolate and collect data related to these calls. The absence of such data limits accurate and detailed analysis of the scope of the problem and leaves only anecdotal evidence as the source from which to plan a path forward in addressing it. (See discussion on pp. 54-55.)
9. To better track workload demands by division/unit, eliminate the use of employee badge numbers for radio call signs and transition to radio call signs that reflect shift, zone, beat, special assignment, etc. (See discussion on pp. 55-56.)

## **K9 Recommendation**

10. Acquire technology to more effectively track K9 information such as training, deployment, seizures, bites, etc. (See discussion on pp. 58-61.)

## **Support Services / Records Recommendations**

11. The department should take all reasonable steps to address the shortfall of successful Records candidates through assessment of current staff skill sets, applicant screening, and enhanced marketing. (See discussion on p. 63.)
12. The use of volunteers to work the counter on a regular basis is recommended, especially in the light of the chronic shortage of Records staff. (See discussion on p. 63.)
13. A department policy should be implemented directing personnel to answer voicemails in a timely manner, backed by required supervisory oversight, to help relieve the number of phone calls that Support Services has to answer. (See discussion on p. 66.)
14. Establish a "Discovery Unit" within the Support Services Section to centralize the tasks required for completion of judicial and PRA requests. Initial staffing should be not less than 1.5 FTEs. (See discussion on p. 67.)
15. Complete the development of the Support Services Section manual that is in progress and add reference policies specific to Records responsibilities in the department manual. (See discussion on p. 67.)
16. In-house and vendor-supplied training should be instituted to ensure LERMS is being fully utilized by all concerned. (See discussion on p. 67-68.)
17. To ensure compliance with UCR reporting guidelines for crimes and clearances, centralize the responsibility for this function, limit the number of staff responsible, and provide frequent re-training to appropriate staff. (See discussion on p. 68-69.)
18. Eliminate acceptance of cash at the Records public counter. (See discussion on p. 69.)

## **Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Recommendation**

19. Transfer the ICAC officer from Patrol to the Investigations Division, Detectives. (See discussion on p. 70.)

## **Investigations Division Recommendations (Section 5)**

### **Detectives**

20. Consider assigning detectives to specialized units such as crimes against persons, property crimes, or family crimes. (See discussion on p. 72.)
21. Consider developing a formal on-call agreement for detectives. (See discussion on p. 72.)
22. Evaluate the feasibility of transitioning to the use of transcription software to relieve the burden of transcriptions from the Police Support Specialists. (See discussion on p. 73.)
23. Hire one additional FTE Sergeant in Detectives and relieve the Street Crimes Sergeant and Investigations Lieutenant from excessive supervisory duties. (See discussion on p. 73-74.)

### **Case Management**

24. Develop a policy and guidelines for case threshold decisions for determining case follow-up. (See discussion on pp. 74-75.)
25. Develop a policy and guidelines on case dispositions. (See discussion on pp. 74-75.)

26. Transition to a case management software program that enables tracking of case activity from assignment to closure, including performance benchmarks. (See discussion on pp. 74-75.)

### **Workload and Staffing**

27. Consider adding two FTE police officer positions in the Detectives Section to meet workload demand. (See discussion on pp. 76-78.)
28. Consider creating one FTE Police Service Officer position to relieve detectives of rudimentary duties. (See discussion on pp. 76-78.)

### **Crime Scene Investigation**

29. If the proposed development of a Crime Scene Investigations Unit is approved, phase out the practice of detectives collecting trace and biological evidence at crime scenes. (See discussion on pp. 78-79.)

### **Augmenting Staffing**

30. Consider using salary savings from vacant positions to hire retired police investigators for temporary part-time positions. (See discussion on p. 80.)
31. Consider identifying ways that volunteers could be of help and recruit from Citizen Police Academy graduates. (See discussion on p. 80.)

### **Street Crimes Unit**

32. Develop a policy for the Street Crimes Unit, including its purpose, function, and goals. (See discussion on p. 81.)

### **Detective Training**

33. Identify essential and desirable training courses for every position in Detectives, including civilian through managers. (See discussion on pp. 81-82.)
34. Create a formal training program for detectives and supervisors. (See discussion on pp. 81-82.)
35. Develop operational/reference manuals for Police Support Specialists and detectives. (See discussion on pp. 81-82.)

### **Task Forces**

36. Conduct an annual cost-benefit assessment relative to the department's continued participation in each federal, state, and regional task force. (See discussion on pp. 82-84.)

### **Crime Analysis**

37. Ensure that data from crime reports taken online and at the CPC is promptly entered into LERMS. (See discussion on pp. 84-85.)
38. Determine if IT is able to provide streaming data to the BPD to improve crime analysis. (See discussion on pp. 84-85.)
39. Consider writing a crime analysis policy to ensure the information developed by the Crime Analyst is received by the appropriate persons, acted upon by such persons, and evaluated for its usefulness. (See discussion on pp. 84-85.)

## **Property and Evidence**

40. Identify essential, desirable, and on-going training classes for all Evidence and Property staff. (See discussion on p. 86.)
41. Create a policy for the Evidence and Property function. (See discussion on pp. 86-87.)
42. Develop an operational manual as a reference guide for Evidence Technicians. (See discussion on pp. 86-87.)
43. Include the number of items received and dispositioned or released in a monthly or quarterly report. (See discussion on pp. 87-88.)
44. Transfer responsibility for copying police video camera footage to the (proposed) Discovery Unit. (See discussion on p. 88.)
45. Develop a policy describing audits and inspections of the Evidence and Property facility in accordance with standards of the International Association for Property and Evidence. (See discussion on pp. 88-89.)
46. Ensure that audits conducted of the Evidence and Property Unit include reports on total inventory on hand to include the number of items received and disposed of during the time period of the audit. (See discussion on pp. 88-89.)
47. Consider transitioning the Evidence and Property Lieutenant's position to a civilian supervisor once the new evidence facility is in full operation. (See discussion on p. 89.)

## **Identification Technicians**

48. Consider expanding the ID Tech Unit, with the goal of responding to crime scenes for evidence collection and processing. (See discussion on pp. 90-91.)
49. Create five new FTE Identification Tech positions and train them in accordance with IAPE standards. (See discussion on pp. 90-91.)
50. Ensure that the ID Tech Supervisor in the proposed unit has extensive training and experience in crime scene evidence collection, processing, and preservation. (See discussion on pp. 90-91.)
51. Develop a procedural manual to provide guidance and direction for the Identification Tech unit. (See discussion on pp. 90-91.)

## **Professional Standards Division Recommendations (Section 6)**

### **Personnel Complaints**

52. Implement a software-based IA investigation tracking system such as IAPro or similar. (See discussion on pp. 95-96.)
53. IAPro's Blue Team module and early warning program (or similar capabilities in whatever program is chosen) should be included with the software purchase. (See discussion on pp. 95-96.)
54. Produce a detailed internal monthly management report mirroring the data published in the annual report with, enhancements provided by an IA software program. (See discussion on p. 97.)
55. Under a proposed reorganization, refocus the role of the Office of Professional Standards Captain. (See discussion on p. 97.)

56. Under a proposed reorganization, add to the Professional Standards Division, mid-level supervisory positions who would conduct complaint investigations. (See discussion on p. 97.)

### **Use of Force**

57. It is recommended that the information typically included in the annual report be incorporated into a monthly management report to provide more timely information for command staff review. (See discussion on p. 98.)
58. CPSM recommends development of a definition of minimal reportable force to provide a clear threshold as to the department's expectation of when reporting of force (verbal and written) is required. (See discussion on pp. 98-99.)
59. CPSM recommends that, in the interest of clarity, policy provisions including duty to intercede and report and de-escalation provisions be incorporated into a comprehensive revision of the department's force policy, to include related training requirements. (See discussion on p. 99.)
60. CPSM recommends that a Use of Force Review Committee be created and be made up of the Administrative Sergeant, Professional Standards Lieutenant, and a subject matter expert on the nature of force used. The committee should be tasked with the analysis of use of force incidents. (See discussion on pp. 99-100.)
61. Revise the force reporting mechanism to provide the Force Review Committee with relevant and concise information to enable the Use of Force Committee to conduct an in-depth analysis. (See discussion on pp. 99-100.)
62. A requirement for an annual review of the force policy should be contained in department training policy, along with other critical policies. (See discussion on pp. 99-100.)
63. A department review of the increases in the use of force over the past two years should be conducted to identify causal factors. (See discussion on pp. 100-101.)
64. As recommended in the Personnel Complaints section, the department should explore utilizing IA Pro software (or similar program) to track use of force incidents. (See discussion on pp. 100-101.)

### **Training**

65. Seek vendor training on the LERMS training module to better evaluate its potential use for tracking training records. (See discussion on p. 102.)
66. Develop a comprehensive training plan that identifies specific mandatory and optional training requirements. (See discussion on pp. 102-103.)
67. Develop a master training calendar as a planning tool for ensuring the goals of the training plan are accomplished. (See discussion on pp. 102-103.)
68. CPSM recommends the annual assessment of training needs occur per current policy. (See discussion on pp. 102-103.)
69. Develop a department training manual to assist in the application of the training plan. (See discussion on pp. 102-103.)
70. Implement training that addresses mental health situations and de-escalation techniques; this training should be included in the annual training cycle. (See discussion on pp. 103-104.)
71. BPD should determine a reasonable training cadre and seek additional funds to provide increased optional training opportunities. (See discussion on pp. 103-104.)

72. Require sergeants to develop relevant quarterly briefing training sessions compatible with the environment. (See discussion on p. 104.)
73. Develop a formal Sergeant training program for newly promoted Sergeants to ensure proper orientation to the position; this training should include documented benchmarks. (See discussion on p. 104.)
74. Establish a documented mandatory professional training policy for executives of the department to include programs such as the FBI Academy and regional command schools for all staff at the rank of lieutenant and above. (See discussion on p. 104.)

### **Field Training Program**

75. Contrast and compare field training program successes and failures to assist the department in strengthening its program. (See discussion on p. 106.)
76. Differences in field training policy vs. practice should be reviewed and revised as necessary. (See discussion on p. 106.)
77. Continue the goal of assigning trainees to the day shift to provide an additional level of experience and exposure to leadership. (See discussion on p. 107.)
78. Develop a training management report utilizing LERMS to track details of the field training program and trainee outcomes. (See discussion on p. 107.)
79. LERMS training should be re-initiated so as to provide personnel the proper knowledge base to utilize LERMS to its fullest. (See discussion on p. 107.)
80. Develop and publish a field training program manual. (See discussion on p. 107.)

### **Recruitment/Hiring/Background**

81. Develop an expedited lateral hiring program and allow for an open continuous application process. (See discussion on p. 109.)
82. Examine the details of the BPD/HR recruitment statistical information to assist in focusing recruitment efforts and resources. (See discussion on p. 109.)
83. The recruitment statistics should be evaluated by management as part of the department's diversity hiring efforts. (See discussion on p. 109.)
84. Applicant and new hire demographics, background failure rates and causes, successful patrol trainees, reasons for attrition, and the traits of successful applicants should be continuously evaluated to ensure department resources are properly focused on recruiting, hiring, and retaining desired personnel. (See discussion on p. 109.)

### **STEP**

85. STEP functions should be bifurcated and a department traffic unit consisting of one Sergeant and four traffic officers should be developed and be assigned to the Operations Division. (See discussion on pp. 110-114.)
86. K9 teams in STEP should be transferred to general patrol. (See discussion on pp. 110-114.)
87. Consideration should be given to establishing a citywide traffic management team that would meet quarterly to examine engineering and education opportunities to reduce the incidence of collisions and improve traffic flow at locations with a recurring high incidence of accidents and/or congestion. (See discussion on p. 115.)

### **Public Relations Officer**

88. Review the Crime Stoppers reward process to ensure appropriate funding, distribution, and accountability. (See discussion on p. 117.)

### **School Resource Officers**

89. Transfer the SRO program from Professional Standards to Investigations Division, Detectives. (See discussion on pp. 122-123.)
90. Create a new FTE Sergeant's position to supervise the SRO program. (See discussion on pp. 122-123.)

### **Domestic Violence Investigator**

91. Transfer the Domestic Violence Investigator (DVI) from Patrol to the Investigations Division, Detectives. (See discussion on p. 123.)
92. Create one FTE police officer position to assist with the DVI's caseload. (See discussion on p. 123.)
93. Consider creating a family violence unit consisting of investigators and representatives from Probation, Child Protectives Services, prosecutors, and victim advocates. This unit would focus be on domestic violence, child and elder abuse, stalking, and threats. (See discussion on pp. 123-124.)

### **Volunteers**

94. The Volunteer Program Coordinator should work with Records Supervisor to explore the deployment of volunteers at the Records counter. (See discussion on p. 124.)

## **Miscellaneous Recommendations (Section 7)**

### **Police Facility**

95. Pursue opportunities to acquire and relocate to a police facility that will better serve the needs of the community and department. (See discussion on p. 126.)

### **Jail**

96. Work collaboratively with the County of Yellowstone, the courts, prosecutors and defense attorneys, and community members to address the conditions that foster crime, including the lack of adequate jail space in situations where custody is warranted. (See discussion on p. 127.)

### **Succession Planning**

97. It is imperative that efforts be made to develop the future leaders of the department. The focus cannot be limited to ranking officers, but must transcend the hierarchy of the organization to prepare the next generation of command staff down through the future first-line supervisors, both sworn and civilian. In addition to formal educational opportunities (FBI National Academy, Senior Management Institute for Police, etc.), assignment of administrative tasks and to specialized units should be part of this plan. The recommendations offered in this assessment offer the opportunity to place administrative responsibilities on the shoulders of these first-line supervisors and mid-level management staff. Finally, this cannot be an informal process, but must be a carefully developed and written strategic plan. (See discussion on p. 128.)

## **Information Technology**

98. CPSM recommends the department create an Information Technology Committee to address the department's technology needs as well as maximize the use of existing technology. (See discussion on p. 129.)

## **Civilian Career Ladder**

99. Consider creating a civilian career ladder with lateral and upward opportunities. (See discussion on p. 129.)

## **Department Policies**

100. Strong consideration should be given to contracting with Lexipol for development and maintenance of an improved policy manual. (See discussion on p. 130.)

101. Review critical policies on an annual basis to ensure that department practices align with department policy, and that policies reflect best practices. (See discussion on p. 130.)

## **Proposed Reorganization (Section 8)**

### **Organizational Restructure**

102. Consideration should be given to revising the organizational structure to more closely align similar work efforts and improve command and control. This is fully addressed in Section 8 at the conclusion of this operational assessment. (See discussion on pp. 131-137.)

# SECTION 2. METHODOLOGY

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## Data Analysis

CPSM used numerous sources of data to support our conclusions and recommendations for the Billings Police Department. Information was obtained from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Part I offenses, along with numerous sources of internal information. UCR Part I crimes are defined as murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and larceny of a motor vehicle. Internal sources included data from the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for information on calls for service (CFS).

## Document Review

CPSM consultants were furnished with numerous reports and summary documents by the Billings Police Department. Information on strategic plans, personnel staffing and deployment, monthly and annual reports, operations manuals, intelligence bulletins, evaluations, training records, and performance statistics were reviewed by project team staff. Follow-up phone calls were used to clarify information as needed.

## Interviews

This study relied extensively on intensive interviews with personnel. On-site/in-person and telephone interviews were conducted with all division/section commanders regarding their operations.

## Focus Groups

A focus group is an unstructured group interview in which the moderator actively encourages discussion among participants. Focus groups generally consist of eight to ten participants and are used to explore issues that are difficult to define. Group discussion permits greater exploration of topics. For the purposes of this study, focus groups were held with a representative cross-section of employees within the department.

## Operational/Administrative Observations

Over the course of the evaluation period, numerous observations were made. These included observations of general patrol; investigations; support services such as records, communications, property and evidence; and administrative functions. CPSM representatives engaged all facets of department operations from a "participant observation" perspective.

## Staffing Analysis

In virtually all CPSM studies, we are asked to identify appropriate staffing levels. That is the case in this study as well. In the following subsections, we will extensively discuss workload, operational and safety conditions, and other factors to be considered in establishing appropriate staffing levels. Staffing recommendations are based upon our comprehensive evaluation of all relevant factors.

# SECTION 3. COMMUNITY AND DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

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## COMMUNITY

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The City of Billings is located in Yellowstone County, Montana, and serves as the county seat. The city has a total land area of 43.41 square miles (as of 2010). The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the city's 2019 population at approximately 109,577, a 5.1 percent increase over the 2010 population of 104,284. Billings is Montana's most populous city.

The City of Billings is a mostly homogeneous community; its population is 85.1 percent White alone, not Hispanic; 6.4 percent Hispanic/Latino; 4.7 percent American Indian /Alaskan Native; 3.1 percent two or more races; and less than 1 percent each African-American and Asian.

In the City of Billings, the owner-occupied housing rate is 63.1 percent, compared to 68.3 percent for Yellowstone County as a whole, and 67.7 percent for the State of Montana. The rate of persons per household in the city is at 2.30 compared to 2.37 county-wide and 2.39 for the state. The median household income is \$57,172 for the city, compared to \$59,117 county-wide, and \$52,559 for the state. Persons living in poverty make up 10.2 percent of the city's population, compared to 10.9 percent county-wide, and 13.0 percent throughout Montana. This comparison reflects that the city rates are not highly inconsistent with county-wide or state rates.

Owner-occupied housing and poverty rates are examined in our studies since lower home ownership and higher poverty rates are often found in communities with higher crime rates. As Billings' rates differ only marginally from state and county-wide rates, these do not appear to be factors driving variations in crime rates from regional or state averages.

However, in our examination of crime data, we note that Billings suffers from an extraordinarily high rate of crime. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that nonresident populations that frequent Billings are among the factors responsible for the phenomena. An additional contributing factor appears to be the absence of meaningful sanctions and/or treatment for violations of minor offenses. Arrest data reflect that the same individuals are commonly arrested multiple times per year, generally for minor offenses such as intoxication, drugs, and theft. This repeat recidivism appears to result from a lack of adequate jail space and/or effective mental health and substance abuse treatment options.

The city is governed through the council/administrator form of government. As such, the Chief of Police is a direct report to the City Administrator.

## DEPARTMENT

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The Billings Police Department provides a full range of law enforcement services, excluding custody operations and 911 dispatch. It is the largest local law enforcement agency in the State of Montana.

The department is guided by clear mission and core values statements as follows:

### Mission

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

### Core 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.

## Uniform Crime Report/Crime Trends

While communities differ from one another in population, demographics, geographical landscape, and social-economic distinctions, comparisons to other jurisdictions can be helpful in illustrating how crime rates in the City of Billings measure against those of other local Montana agencies, comparative cities in other states, as well as the State of Montana and the nation overall. Nevertheless, one must still be cautious in interpreting comparative crime data. Many variables unique to a community can affect crime rates.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program assembles data on crime from police departments across the United States; the reports are utilized to measure the extent, fluctuation, and distribution of crime. For reporting purposes, criminal offenses are divided into two categories: Part 1 offenses and Part 2 offenses. In Part 1 offenses, representing the most serious crimes, the UCR indexes incidents in two categories: violent crimes and property crimes. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. Crime rates are expressed (indexed) as the number of incidents per 100,000 population to allow for comparison.

This section presents information obtained from Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Montana Board of Crime Control. The tables and figures include the most recent information that is publicly available at the national level. This includes crime reports for 2010 through 2019, along with clearance rates for 2019. Crime rates are expressed as incidents per 100,000 population.

In the following table, in which we look at crime rate data for Billings, comparative cities in Montana and other states, and the nation, one can see that Billings reports extraordinarily high crime rates for both violent and property crimes compared to statewide averages and that of the national average. This is true as well for Billings' comparative cities. Again, these figures are indexed to reflect rates per 100,000 population.

**TABLE 3-1: Comparison of Reported Crime Rates by Jurisdiction, Per 100,000**

City	State	Population	Crime Rates		
			Violent	Property	Total
Fargo*	ND	127,423	450	3,122	3,572
Sioux Falls*	SD	185,628	483	3,045	3,528
Bend*	OR	100,588	154	1,908	2,062
Rochester*	MN	118,267	216	1,881	2,097
Pueblo*	CO	112,381	604	4,272	4,876
Fort Collins*	CO	170,889	217	2,173	2,390
Belgrade	MT	9,204	380	1,901	2,281
Bozeman	MT	50,152	245	1,693	1,938
Columbia Falls	MT	5,695	193	1,212	1,405
Great Falls	MT	58,637	515	5,807	6,322
Havre	MT	9,738	534	3,697	4,231
Helena	MT	32,806	579	4,268	4,847
Kalispell	MT	24,473	417	3,355	3,772
Laurel	MT	6,768	414	2,615	3,029
Miles City	MT	8,393	262	2,907	3,169
Missoula	MT	75,422	411	4,086	4,497
Polson	MT	5,075	512	3,882	4,394
Sidney	MT	6,376	471	1,192	1,663
<b>Billings</b>	<b>MT</b>	<b>110,198</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>4,083</b>	<b>4,693</b>
<b>Montana</b>		<b>1,068,778</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>2,193</b>	<b>2,598</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>328,239,523</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>2,489</b>

**Note:** Data for 2019; indexed per 100,000 population. Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report. \*Identified as Billings Comparative Cities.

The following table shows the actual number of offenses in Billings in 2019 and 2020. The data for 2020 are through November. These data were provided by the department as crime information for 2020 is not yet available from the FBI UCR. As can be seen, the actual number of incidents for 2020 has increased, in some cases substantially, for all categories of crime. December figures are still to be added.

**TABLE 3-2: Reported Actual Part 1 Offenses in Billings, 2019 and 2020\***

Crime	2019	2020*
Murder/ Manslaughter	3	12
Rape	75	97
Robbery	98	138
Aggravated Assault	499	679
Burglary	608	720
Larceny	3,266	4,148
Vehicle Theft	625	856

**Note:** FBI data for 2020 not yet available. Data for 2020 provided by BPD Crime Analysis based upon Records Management System data.

Figure 3-1 reflects the trend in Part 1 crime over the past ten years in Billings. It shows that violent crime has increased slowly yet steadily over that period, while property crime fluctuated somewhat between 2010 and 2017, then trended downward in 2018 and 2019. The highest violent crime rate of this period occurred in 2019 at 610 (indexed). The lowest rate, occurred in 2010 at 273 (indexed). The highest property crime rate occurred in 2017 at 5,458 (indexed), with the low in 2019 at 4,083 (indexed). Violent crime in Montana has steadily risen over the past 10 years, led by Billings, while the national average for violent crime has declined (see Table 3-3).

**FIGURE 3-1: Billings Reported Violent and Property Crime Rates, by Year**

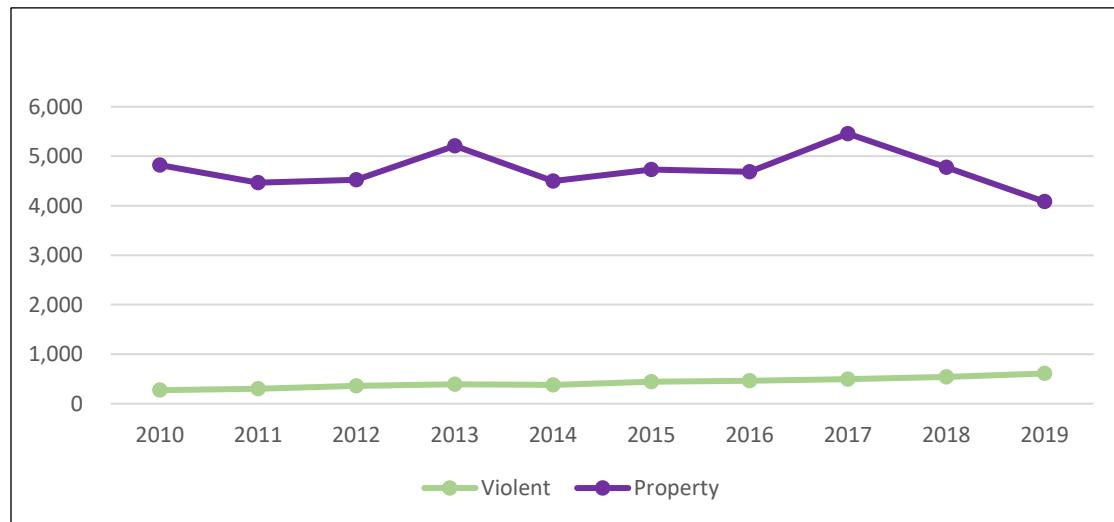


Figure 3-2 shows a comparison of combined violent and property crime rates for Billings and the State of Montana for the period of 2010 through 2019. It reflects the observations made in Figure 3-1 and in Table 3-3 (which follows), notably, that while overall crime has trended downward over the past two years, the declines are driven by property crime rates. The violent crime rate in both Billings and across the state is rising at an alarming rate.

**FIGURE 3-2: Reported Billings and Montana Overall Crime Rates, by Year**

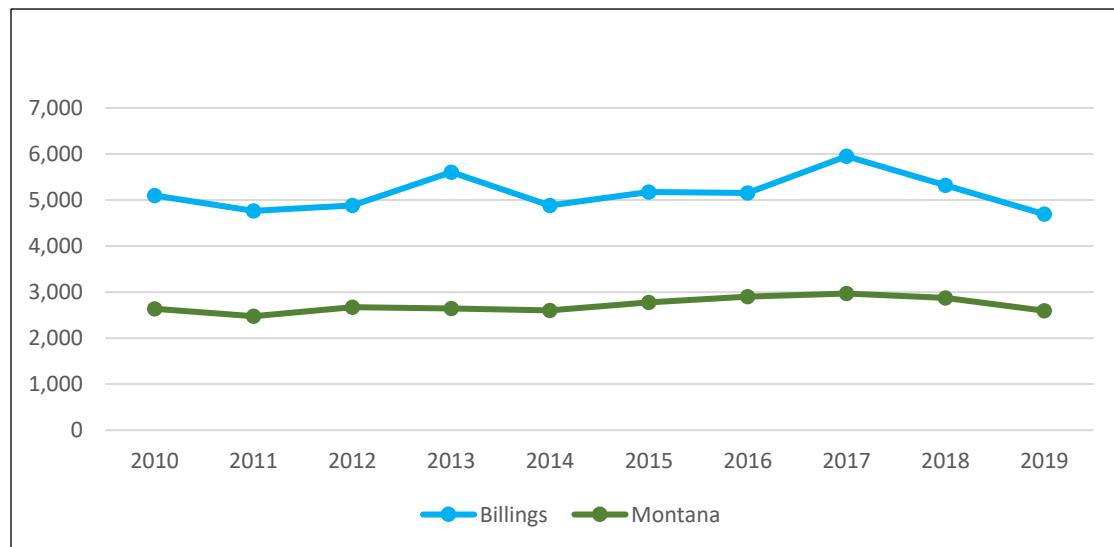


Table 3-3 compares crime rates in Billings to both the state and national rates year by year for the period 2010 through 2019. Again, these data are indexed per 100,000 population. It is provided for illustration purposes only.

**TABLE 3-3: Reported Billings, State, and National Crime Rates, by Year, 2010–2019**

Year	Billings				Montana				National			
	Population	Violent	Property	Total	Population	Violent	Property	Total	Population	Violent	Property	Total
2010	104,170	273	4,822	<b>5,095</b>	1,055,270	255	2,381	<b>2,636</b>	314,170,775	393	2,833	<b>3,225</b>
2011	105,095	299	4,467	<b>4,766</b>	1,064,639	256	2,220	<b>2,476</b>	317,186,963	376	2,800	<b>3,176</b>
2012	106,371	358	4,527	<b>4,885</b>	1,071,788	259	2,411	<b>2,670</b>	319,697,368	377	2,758	<b>3,135</b>
2013	107,802	395	5,208	<b>5,603</b>	1,078,577	264	2,379	<b>2,642</b>	321,947,240	362	2,627	<b>2,989</b>
2014	110,245	381	4,500	<b>4,881</b>	1,087,522	298	2,302	<b>2,601</b>	324,699,246	357	2,464	<b>2,821</b>
2015	109,997	442	4,730	<b>5,172</b>	1,099,717	327	2,452	<b>2,779</b>	327,455,769	368	2,376	<b>2,744</b>
2016	111,447	463	4,689	<b>5,152</b>	1,101,927	352	2,547	<b>2,899</b>	329,308,297	383	2,353	<b>2,736</b>
2017	111,317	493	5,458	<b>5,951</b>	1,050,493	377	2,592	<b>2,969</b>	325,719,178	383	2,362	<b>2,745</b>
2018	110,397	542	4,779	<b>5,321</b>	1,062,305	374	2,496	<b>2,870</b>	327,167,434	369	2,200	<b>2,568</b>
2019	110,198	610	4,083	<b>4,693</b>	1,068,778	405	2,193	<b>2,598</b>	328,239,523	379	2,010	<b>2,489</b>

Table 3-4 reflects actual rates of crime occurrences rather than indexed rates. As well, this table reflects cases cleared by arrest and prosecution, both as actual numbers and as a percentage of crimes committed. Crime clearance rates are defined by standards established in the FBI Uniform Crime Report guidelines; these guidelines follow complex criteria that will be further addressed in reporting on the Detective function later in this report.

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**TABLE 3-4: Reported Billings, State, and National Crime Clearance Rates, 2019\***

Crime	Billings			Montana			National		
	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances*	Rate
Murder Manslaughter	3	2	67%	35	20	57%	14,325	8,796	61%
Rape	75	10	13%	614	72	12%	124,817	41,065	33%
Robbery	98	38	39%	210	82	39%	239,643	73,091	31%
Aggravated Assault	499	285	57%	2,601	1,486	57%	726,778	380,105	52%
Burglary	608	58	10%	2,688	357	13%	981,264	138,358	14%
Larceny	3,266	835	26%	19,152	3,923	20%	4,533,178	834,105	18%
Vehicle Theft	625	76	12%	2,234	400	18%	655,778	90,497	14%

**Note:** \*National clearance counts were calculated from crimes and clearance rates, as these numbers are not directly available from the FBI.

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## Department Authorized Staffing Levels

The following table reflects the authorized staffing levels for the department for FY 2019 through 2021. Staffing levels will be addressed throughout the report as we discuss specific operating sections. This table is simply intended to provide a broad overview of staffing levels for the past three years.

**TABLE 3-5: Authorized BPD Staffing Levels for Fiscal Years 2019–2021**

Position	2018/2019 Budgeted	2019/2020 Budgeted	2020/2021 Budgeted	2020/2021 Actual	Vacant
<b>Sworn Personnel</b>					
Chief	1	1	1	1	
Assistant Chief	1	1	1	1	
Captain	3	3	3	3	
Lieutenant	5	6	6	6	
Sergeant	16	16	16	16	
Officer	120	120	126	128	
<b>Sworn Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>155</b>	
<b>Civilian Personnel</b>					
Administrative Coordinator	1	1	1	1	
Administrative Support Specialist	1	1	1	1	
Senior Office Assistant	1	1	1	1	
Identification Supervisor	1	1	1	1	
Identification Tech	1	1	1	1	
Evidence Tech	3	3	3	3	
Records Supervisor	1	1	1	1	
Police Support Specialist	13	13	13	11	2
Animal Control Supervisor	1	1	1	1	
Animal Control Officer	4	4	4	4	
Public Safety Tech	.3	.3	.3	.3	
Crime Analyst	1	1	1	1	
Training Coordinator	1	1	1	1	
Quartermaster	1	1	1	1	
Volunteer Coordinator	1	1	1	1	
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>177.3</b>	<b>178.3</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>2</b>

The city and department are to be commended for efforts to limit the number of vacancies. Very rarely are police agencies at or near full staffing, and can often be down by 5 to 15 percent of authorized staffing, both sworn and civilian.

# SECTION 4. OPERATIONS DIVISION

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The Billings Police Department Operations Division provides the community with a full range of police services, including responding to emergencies and calls for service (CFS), performing directed patrol activities, engaging in neighborhood problem solving, traffic enforcement, and investigative follow-up. The division is comprised of two major sections: Patrol and Records. Subunits of Patrol include K9, officers assigned to the Billings Clinic, and the Court Officer. We will address each separately, which will enable the reader to better comprehend each function and its independent as well as collective value in providing policing services to the City of Billings.

The Operations Division serves under the direction of a Captain. Three Lieutenants are assigned to the Operations Division, each as a patrol shift commander. A civilian Records Supervisor oversees day-to-day operations of the Records Division. The following table shows current authorized (budgeted) and actual staffing levels.

**TABLE 4-1: Operations Division Authorized Staffing Levels for FY 2020/2021**

<b>Position</b>	<b>2020/2021 Authorized</b>	<b>2020/2021 Actual</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>Sworn Personnel</b>			
Captain	1	1	
Lieutenant	3	3	
Sergeant	12	12	
Patrol Officer	78	80	2 Over
K9	6	6	
Billings Clinic	2	2	
ICAC*	1	1	
Court Officer	1	1	
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>2 Over</b>
<b>Civilian Personnel</b>			
Records Supervisor	1	1	
Police Support Specialist	13	11	2
Quartermaster	1	1	
Radio Technician	1	1	
Public Safety Tech	.3	.3	
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>120.3</b>	<b>120.3</b>	

\*This position is budgeted to the Operations Division, but works under the direction of the Investigations Division. CPSM recommends correctly aligning this budgeted position in the next budget cycle.

## PATROL SECTION

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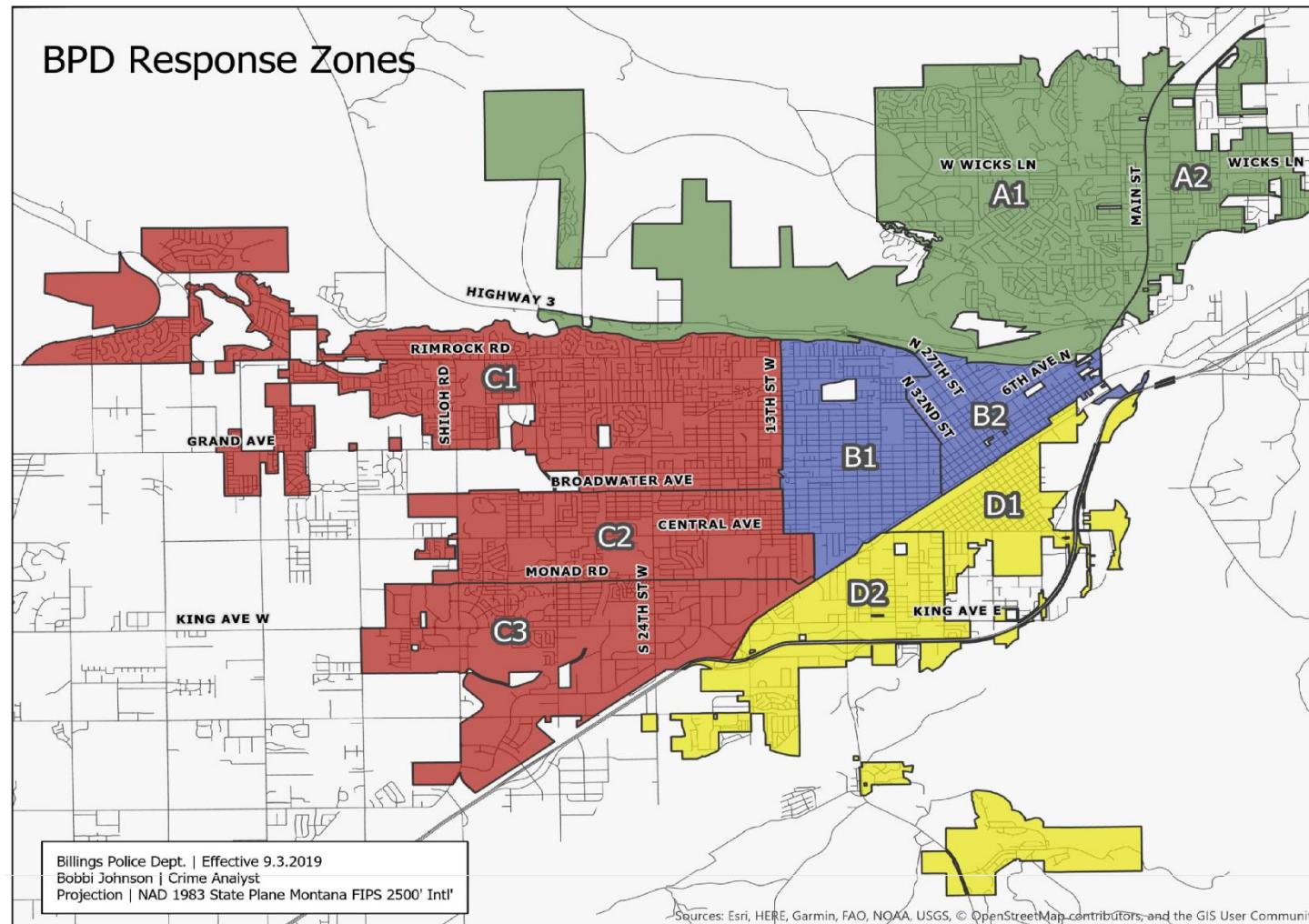
Uniformed patrol is considered the “backbone” of American policing. Officers assigned to this important function are the most visible members of the department and command the largest share of resources committed by the department. Proper allocation of these resources is critical to the department’s capability to respond to emergency calls for service and provide general law enforcement services to the public.

Patrol functions of the Operations Division include patrol, K9, and deployments at the Billings Medical Clinic. It should be noted here that there are a number of special assignments such as traffic (STEP), downtown foot-beat, school resource officers, parks officer, and crime suppression officers that provide policing services in the field; however, they are assigned to other department divisions and will be discussed in the report sections that will follow.

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The following figure depicts the department's current patrol areas, defined as zones and beats.

**FIGURE 4-1: BPD Response Zones and Beats**



## **Patrol Section Staffing and Deployment**

Patrol is comprised of an authorized complement of 3 lieutenants, 12 sergeants, and 78 police officers. At present, there are two more officer positions than authorized in the budget, although these positions are reportedly authorized by the City Administrator. This complement of personnel is responsible for 24/7 policing services in the City of Billings.

While Table 4-1 shows that the patrol force is overstaffed, this includes officers in training status who cannot be counted as providing full services. At present, there are five officers in the state police training academy and one in the department's field training program. As such, the department has 74 full-service police officers.

Additionally, three K9 officers (three additional in STEP), two Billings Medical Clinic officers, and one Court officer are assigned under the patrol umbrella. We will address these in separate reporting later in this section.

### **Work Schedules /Deployments**

All Patrol Section personnel work a 4/10 schedule, that is to say, four days per week at ten hours per day. Personnel are to a large extent evenly spread between three primary patrol shifts. Each patrol shift is headed by a Lieutenant, supported by four Sergeants, and served by approximately 25 police officers.

The following schedule represents the current shift configuration for patrol officers at the BPD:

- Day shift                    6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Afternoon shift            2:00 p.m. to midnight.
- Night shift                9:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.

This schedule results in shift overlaps from 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 9:30 to midnight daily. Overlapping shifts on a 4/10 schedule are inevitable. What must be considered is whether the reporting times and overlap periods match peak workload demand periods, and whether the additional resources available during those overlap periods are utilized appropriately. As we examine deployment and workload demand later in this section, we will strive to answer those questions.

The number of patrol officers available for any given shift is affected by both the number of officers assigned as well as the impact of time off associated with vacations, training, court appearances, FMLA, illness/injury, military leave, etc. The combination of these leave factors generally results in officers being unavailable for a shift at a rate of 20 to 25 percent of the time. In Billings for instance, based upon present available staffing, while a daily shift generally calls for 14 patrol officers to be deployed, only 11 may report to work due to the various leave factors.

Additional field staffing includes shift sergeants, averaging two per shift. And while their primary role is to provide direct field supervision, at times of heavy workload, they may be called upon to assist in meeting call workload demand.

As noted, a variety of special assignments such as K9 officers, Billings Clinic officers, downtown business officers, traffic officers (STEP), a street crime unit, school resource officers, and a Parks officer are available to support patrol in emergencies. Each will be examined in this report.

## Minimum Patrol Staffing

The department has established a minimum staffing level at nine police officers at all times. The minimum staffing level is addressed in Policy 12-3, last updated in 2015. This staffing enables a minimum of one officer to be deployed to each of the nine patrol beats as reflected in Figure 4-1. Given the present staffing level, minimum staffing is generally met without the need for overtime deployments. When additional staffing is available, those officers are assigned to the busier beats, such as B-2. It is important to note that minimal staffing does not represent optimal, or even adequate staffing, it simply reflects that there are enough personnel available to cover each beat and respond on emergency calls, though not necessarily in a timely fashion. We will address response times to both emergency and non-emergency calls later in this section.

In virtually all CPSM studies we are asked to identify appropriate staffing levels. That is the case in this study as well. In the following subsections, we will have an extensive discussion on deployment, workload, and other factors to be considered in establishing staffing levels. Upon thorough evaluation of all contributing factors, we will make staffing recommendations.

## Supervision

It is common policing practice at agencies of Billings size and staffing alignment that a Lieutenant serves as the patrol “watch commander.” In doing so, Lieutenants spend much of their time in the station handling various administrative and supervisory duties related to patrol shift operations. In Billings, each of three shifts are led by a Lieutenant. And while they have extensive administrative responsibilities, they often spend time in the field overseeing shift operations. Given the department’s call for service demands, they often find themselves assisting with the call load. For that matter, this is true of the patrol Captain, and Assistant Chief and Chief as well on occasion.

The Lieutenants work a 4/10 schedule. As such they are generally available four days per week. On their days off, a patrol Sergeant serves as the “watch commander.”

Sergeants, on the other hand, are generally responsible for field supervision and serve as additional staffing in support of patrol officers during especially busy periods. They meet a critical need in directing and supervising field operations on a 24/7 basis. Absence of proactive field supervision in policing creates significant liability for an agency. As is the case with lieutenants, sergeants work a 4/10 schedule.

While one-half of the department’s Lieutenants and three-quarters of the Sergeants are assigned to Patrol, this staffing level is barely minimal given a 24/7 deployment. In effect, at most periods during the work week, a shift is deployed with one Lieutenant, and two field Sergeants. On the Lieutenants’ days off, shifts are often deployed with just two Sergeants. Additional supervision is available during overlap periods, which only allows supervisors to “catch up” on their various duties, including those of collateral assignments.

As we discuss supervisory staffing in other divisions, or the lack thereof, we will make recommendations for staffing enhancements in those divisions. If those recommendations are accepted, and additional staffing is allocated, the department should examine the opportunity to reduce the number of collateral duty assignments that burden patrol supervisors.

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## Call / Workload Demand

As noted in the Executive Summary, our work followed two tracks: (1) the operational assessment, and (2) a data analysis of workload, primarily related to patrol and patrol-related functions. In the following pages, which are focused on the Patrol Section, we draw upon the data analysis report to assist in our operational assessment. The data analysis report, in full, can be found following the operational assessment and readers are encouraged to thoroughly review it. The data analysis is rich with information, only a portion of which is included in this segment of the report.

For purposes of our analysis, we use computer-aided dispatch (CAD) records supplied by the city's 911/dispatch center, which is operated under the direction of the Fire Department. These records pertain to identifiable workload associated with specific units and are the most accurate, verifiable, and comprehensive records available.

It is important to note that in reporting on deployment and workload in this section, the department requested that we analyze the workload of patrol-related functions to include basic patrol, K9, downtown business district officers, the Strategic Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) officers, Billings Clinic officers, and the Parks officer. Their collective workload is included in the analysis that will follow beginning with Table 4-2. As previously noted, while these units and officers represent the core of the field deployment that respond to general calls for service, neither STEP, the downtown business association officers, or the Parks officer are assigned to the Operations Division. As such, while their workload will be reflected here, additional information on these units will be reported on in Section 6.

Crime statistics for the City of Billings indicate a relatively high level of both violent and property crime in comparison to the State of Montana and national levels. These figures were discussed in Section 3 and depicted in Table 3-1.

Prevention of crime and the apprehension of criminals are at the forefront of responsibilities for police departments, but demands on police resources involve much more than crime. Traffic enforcement, the efficient flow of traffic through the community, and maintaining peace and order are but a few of the many such noncrime activities that fall into the scope of work of a police department. As we examine workload demands we will explore all activities.

Table 4-2 presents information on the main categories of calls for service the department handled during the study period of January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

The 911/dispatch center recorded approximately 79,694 calls that were assigned call numbers and which include an adequate record of a responding unit. Again, this does not reflect all calls handled by the department, but those of the patrol-related units as described above. When measured daily, the department reported an average of 218 patrol-related calls per day. The table does not include events for directed patrol, calls in which fewer than 30 seconds were spent on the call (indicating the call had been cancelled), and out-of-service activities. As we examine workload demands in detail, we will include all activities. Also, the number of calls shown includes both officer-initiated activity and community-initiated activity, that is, calls from residents, alarm companies, transfers from other law enforcement agencies, etc.

The table examines call volume by the category of the call, the total number of calls responded to in 2019, and the average number of calls per day.

**TABLE 4-2: Calls per Day, by Category**

Category	No. of Calls	Calls per Day
Accident	3,541	9.7
Alarm	4,600	12.6
Animal	320	0.9
Assist other agency	3,686	10.1
Check	3,144	8.6
Crime—person	3,413	9.4
Crime—property	6,364	17.4
Crime—society	3,839	10.5
Disturbance	9,197	25.2
Follow-up	1,503	4.1
Investigation	11,414	31.3
Miscellaneous	880	2.4
Suspicious incident	11,958	32.8
Traffic enforcement	3,292	9.0
Traffic stop	11,929	32.7
Warrant/prisoner	614	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,694</b>	<b>218.3</b>

The hourly average is calls per hour. The top four categories accounted for 70 percent of calls:

- 24 percent of calls were traffic-related.
- 17 percent of calls were crimes.
- 15 percent of calls were suspicious incidents.
- 14 percent of calls were investigations.

In the following table we examine call volumes by month and source (community-initiated vs. police-initiated). Community-initiated calls include calls from citizens, businesses, alarm companies, transfers from other law enforcement agencies, etc. Police-initiated refers to calls generated by an officer or other Billings police employee.

**TABLE 4-3: Calls per Day, by Initiator and Month**

Initiator	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Community	133.1	129.9	140.0	152.5	160.9	170.7	185.5	170.9	163.7	156.1	141.9	140.8
Police	66.6	58.0	67.4	64.0	74.4	60.6	64.8	65.7	69.4	62.2	56.9	61.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>199.6</b>	<b>187.9</b>	<b>207.4</b>	<b>216.5</b>	<b>235.3</b>	<b>231.2</b>	<b>250.4</b>	<b>236.6</b>	<b>233.2</b>	<b>218.3</b>	<b>198.8</b>	<b>202.1</b>

In the next table we examine both the origin of the call and the average time spent on a call by the primary unit.

**TABLE 4-4: Primary Unit's Average Occupied Times, by Category and Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated		Police-Initiated	
	Minutes	Calls	Minutes	Calls
Accident	47.9	3,351	38.5	190
Alarm	11.2	4,567	7.9	33
Animal	19.4	274	11.5	46
Assist other agency	40.6	3,165	29.7	521
Check	24.7	61	20.2	3,075
Crime–person	45.8	3,302	60.9	110
Crime–property	40.7	6,126	36.8	237
Crime–society	22.9	3,360	14.1	479
Disturbance	23.4	8,857	16.9	340
Follow-up	19.7	48	19.1	1,455
Investigation	25.6	9,659	26.6	1,755
Miscellaneous	20.8	803	18.4	77
Suspicious incident	20.4	9,713	12.9	2,245
Traffic enforcement	23.6	2,514	26.6	777
Traffic stop	23.9	9	11.3	11,920
Warrant/prisoner	33.1	396	32.7	218
<b>Weighted Average/Total Calls</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>56,205</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>23,478</b>

**Note:** A unit's occupied time is measured as the time from when the unit was dispatched until the unit becomes available again. The times shown are the average occupied minutes per call for the primary unit, rather than the total occupied minutes for all units assigned to a call.

The longer weighted average times spent on calls were for community-initiated calls, at 27.9 minutes; the average weighted time for police-initiated calls was 16.2 minutes.

In Tables 4-5 and 4-6 that follow we look at the average number of police units that responded to a call activity. Generally, as BPD deploys one-officer units, that translates to the average number of officers that responded.

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**TABLE 4-5: Average Number of Responding Units, by Initiator and Category**

Category	Community-Initiated		Police-Initiated	
	No. of Units	Calls	No. of Units	Calls
Accident	1.8	3,351	1.8	190
Alarm	2.1	4,567	1.8	33
Animal	1.3	274	1.2	46
Assist other agency	2.6	3,165	1.6	521
Check	1.8	61	1.3	3,083
Crime—person	2.4	3,303	2.1	110
Crime—property	1.8	6,126	1.6	238
Crime—society	2.1	3,360	1.6	479
Disturbance	2.4	8,857	2.2	340
Follow-up	1.2	48	1.1	1,455
Investigation	2.1	9,659	1.7	1,755
Miscellaneous	1.3	803	1.2	77
Suspicious incident	2.1	9,713	1.8	2,245
Traffic enforcement	1.7	2,515	1.5	777
Traffic stop	1.9	9	1.3	11,920
Warrant/prisoner	1.7	396	1.8	218
<b>Weighted Average/Total Calls</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>56,207</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>23,487</b>

**TABLE 4-6: Number of Responding Units, by Category, Community-Initiated Calls**

Category	Responding Units		
	One	Two	Three or More
Accident	1,813	861	677
Alarm	652	2,976	939
Animal	204	50	20
Assist other agency	531	1,390	1,244
Check	33	21	7
Crime—person	1,246	1,014	1,043
Crime—property	3,244	1,794	1,088
Crime—society	727	1,780	853
Disturbance	1,174	4,583	3,100
Follow-up	39	9	0
Investigation	2,436	5,007	2,216
Miscellaneous	621	143	39
Suspicious incident	2,513	4,836	2,364
Traffic enforcement	1,406	731	378
Traffic stop	3	4	2
Warrant/prisoner	217	121	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,859</b>	<b>25,320</b>	<b>14,028</b>

In summary, the overall mean number of responding units was 2.1 for community-initiated calls and 1.4 for police-initiated calls. Thirty percent of community-initiated calls involved one responding unit, 45 percent of community-initiated calls involved two responding units, and 25 percent of community-initiated calls involved three or more responding units. The largest group of calls with three or more responding units involved disturbances.

## Calls for Service Efficiency Measures

Further examination of various elements of the calls for service and patrol response data also warrants discussion. Data from Tables 4-2 through 4-6 provide a wealth of information about demand, workload, and deployment per call in Billings. Taken together these statistics provide an excellent lens through which to view the efficiency of patrol operations.

The following table provides a comparison of calls for service and workload data for the Billings Police Department in relation to those of other agencies for which CPSM has conducted similar studies. As was earlier cautioned with FBI UCR crime report data, this is a broad comparison, and should be viewed in that framework. Factors such as demographics, service expectations, availability to fund services, and the ability to provide for community and officer safety needs must all be considered.

In comparing Billings' data to that from other studies conducted by CPSM, we look for significant statistical anomalies. The most significant anomalies found in Billings are:

- Higher than average rates of crime.
- Workload percentages.
- Longer response times to both routine and high-priority calls.

As we examine staffing needs later in this report, these will be significant considerations.

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**TABLE 4-7: CFS Comparisons to Other CPSM Study Cities**

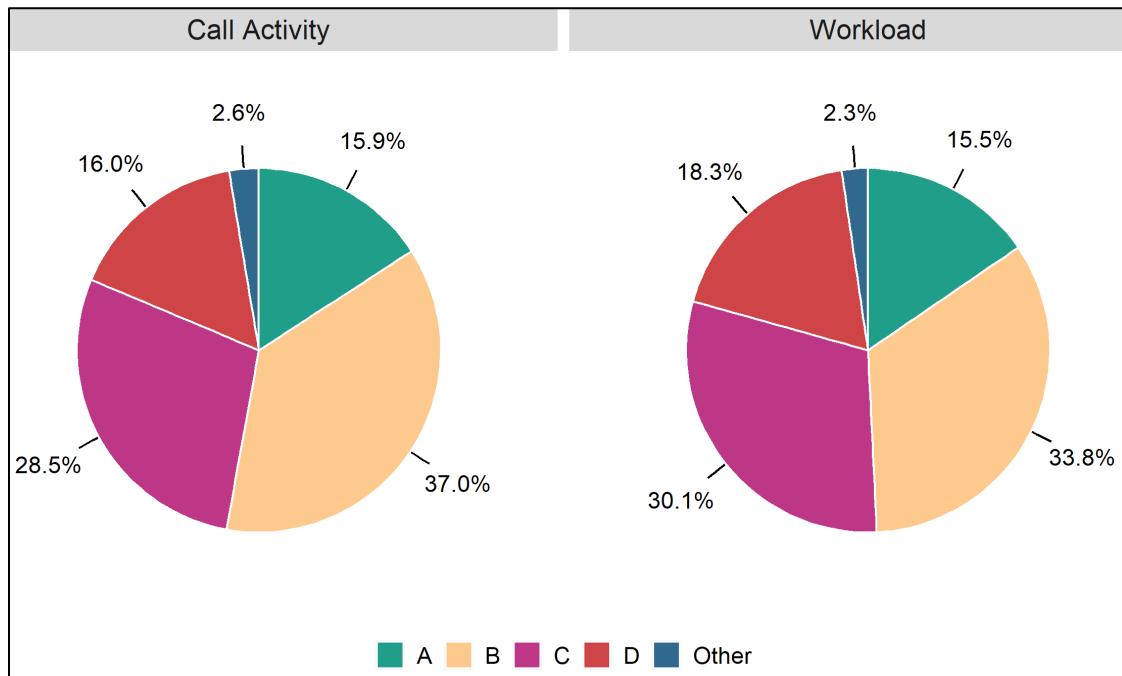
Variable Description	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Billings	BPD vs. CPSM Comps
Population	67,745.7	5,417.0	833,024.0	116,266	
Officers per 100,000 Population	201.2	35.3	465.1	131.6	LOWER
Patrol, Percent of Total Sworn	66.1	32.4	96.8	68.7	HIGHER
Index Crime Rate, per 100,000	3,235.1	405.0	9,418.8	4,693	HIGHER
VCR (Violent crime rate, per 100,000)	349.3	12.5	1,415.4	610	HIGHER
PCR (Property crime rate, per 100,000)	2,885.9	379.7	8,111.6	4,083	HIGHER
Avg. Service Time, Police CFS	17.7	8.1	47.3	16.2	LOWER
Avg. Service Time, Community CFS	28.7	16.0	42.9	27.9	LOWER
Avg. # of Responding Units, Police CFS	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.4	HIGHER
Avg. # of Responding Units, Public CFS	1.6	1.2	2.2	2.1	HIGHER
Workload Percent, Weekdays in Winter	26.6	5.0	65.0	67.0	HIGHER
Workload Percent, Weekends in Winter	28.4	4.0	68.0	67.0	HIGHER
Workload Percent, Weekdays in Summer	28.7	6.0	67.0	70.0	HIGHER
Workload Percent, Weekends in Summer	31.8	5.0	69.0	73.0	HIGHER
Average Response Time, Winter (min.)	11.0	3.1	26.9	15.7	HIGHER
Average Response Time, Summer (min.)	11.2	2.4	26.0	17.1	HIGHER
High-priority Response Time (min)	5.0	3.2	13.1	11.9	HIGHER

## Geographic Call Distribution

Here, we examine call demand by the zones and beats as established by the department (see Figure 4-1 for zones). We include daily call volume, workload demand in hours, area in square miles, and population, by beat. As can be seen in the figure and table that follow, Zones B and C have the highest percentage of calls per day and the highest workload. This information is provided for department review in determining appropriate service area configurations. CPSM makes no recommendation as to such boundaries.

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**FIGURE 4-2: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Zone**



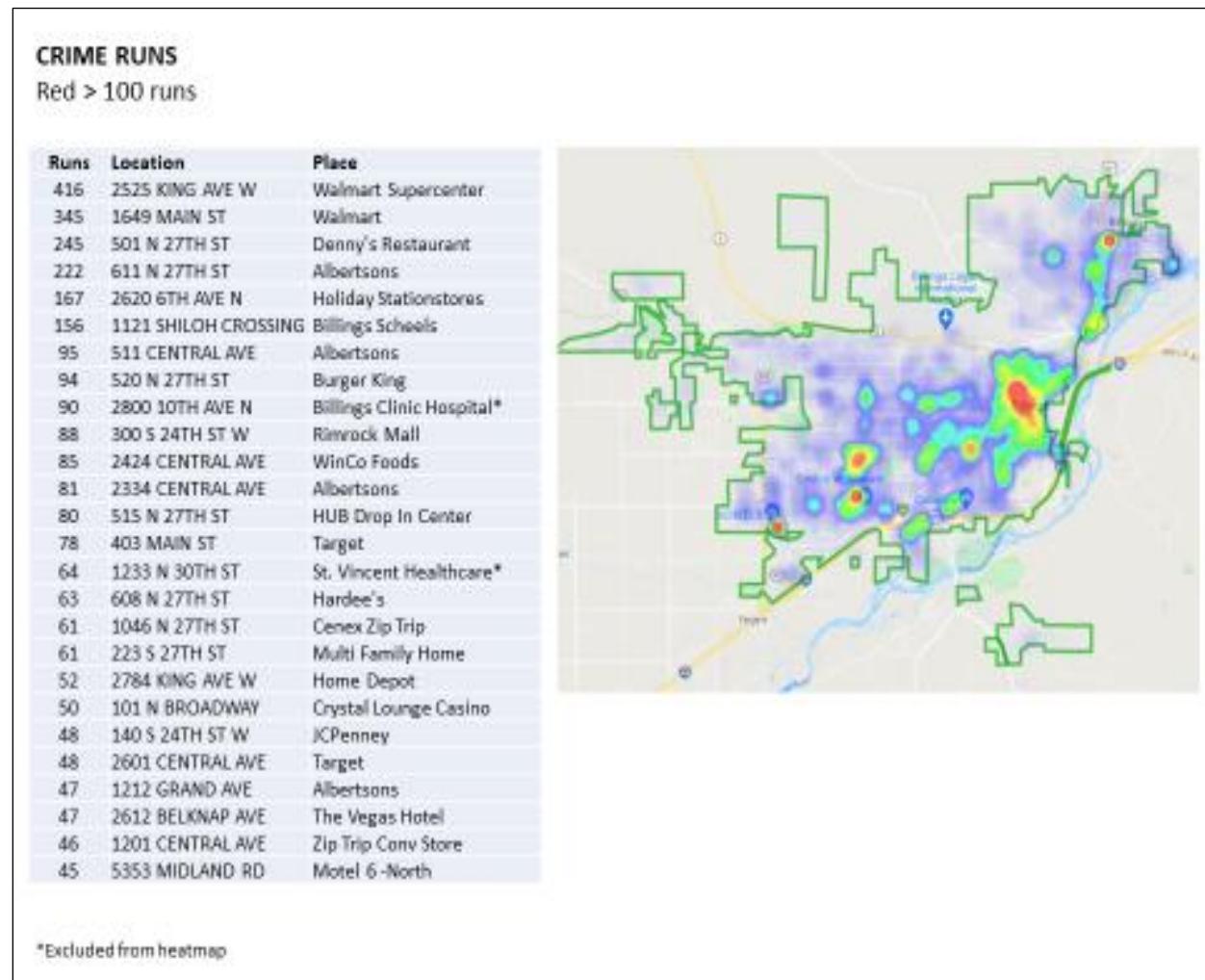
**Note:** The “other” category includes 108 calls located at police headquarters, 1,095 calls assigned to miscellaneous YCSO regions, and 901 calls without a zone record.

**TABLE 4-8: Calls and Work Hours by Zone, per Day**

Zone	Per Day		Area (Sq. Miles)	Population (2019 Est.)
	Calls	Work Hours		
A1	20.6	13.6	12.2	20,147
A2	14.0	9.1	2.3	8,500
B1	27.1	18.4	3.2	16,665
B2	53.7	31.0	1.7	5,922
C1	22.5	16.0	9.6	30,192
C2	18.5	13.1	3.8	12,989
C3	21.1	15.0	5.3	9,117
D1	18.0	13.8	2.0	5,996
D2	17.0	13.1	4.6	7,777
HQ	0.3	0.1	NA	NA
Miscellaneous	3.0	1.8	NA	NA
Unknown	2.5	1.5	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>218.3</b>	<b>146.3</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>117,305</b>

In the following figure, we examine locations with a high volume of calls involving reports of criminal activity. This may include assaults, robberies, burglaries, larceny including shoplifting, auto crimes, etc. The red clusters represent multiples of 100 responses.

**FIGURE 4-3: High-volume Locations for Crime Calls, 2019**

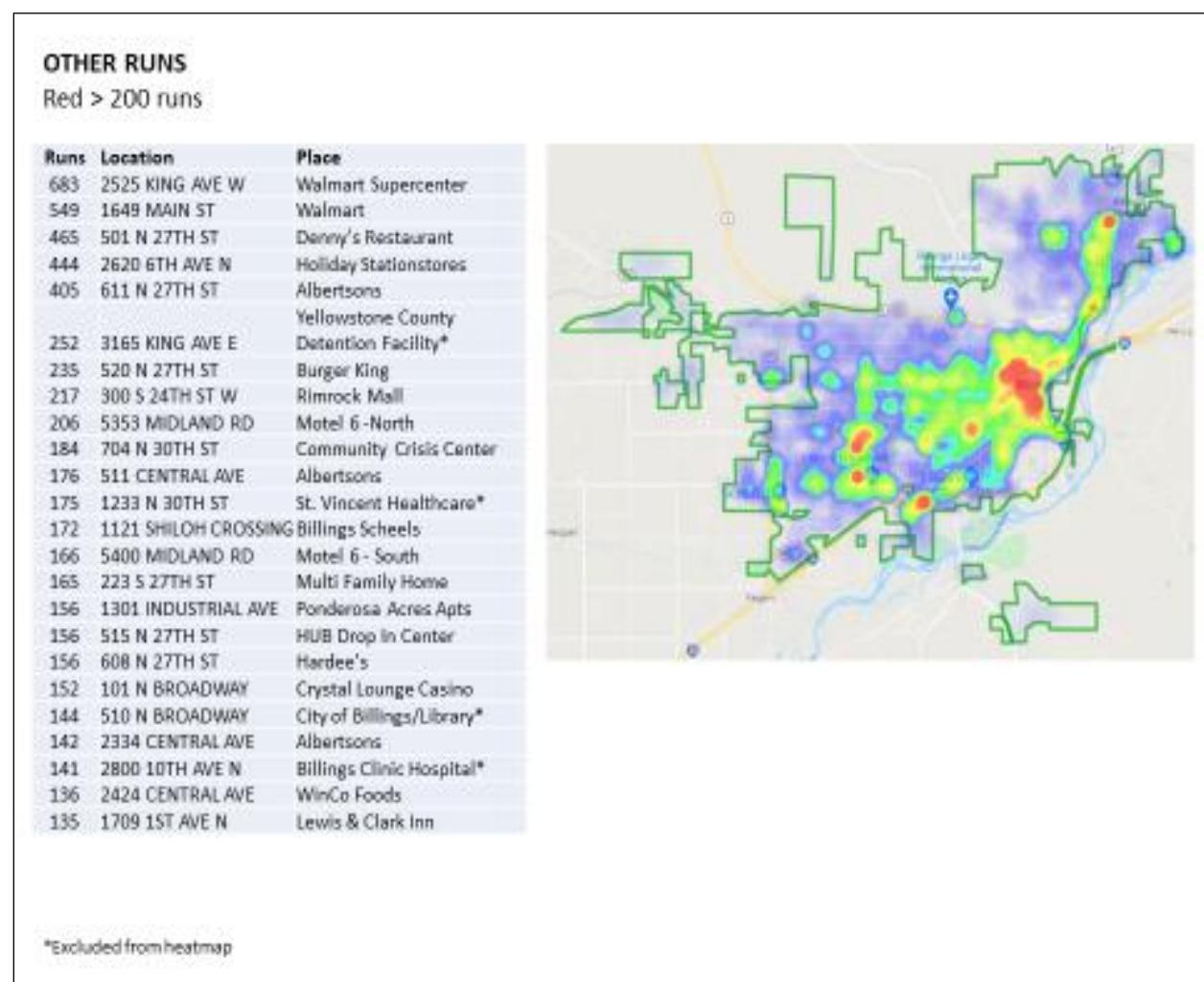


The top five locations for crime calls account for 1,395 crime-related calls for service. These high-profile “hot spots” should be the focus of a specific and targeted strategy that aims to drastically reduce contributing factors. Coincidentally, these five locations also top the list in our next figure, which examines police responses to noncrime calls.

In the following figure, we examine locations with a high volume of calls involving noncriminal activity. This may include a family dispute, traffic accident, a suspicious person, a disturbance involving a customer, a parking complaint, or any number of other calls that do not result a criminal investigative report. Once again, the red clusters represent multiples of 100 responses.

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**FIGURE 4-4: High-volume Locations for Calls for Service Stemming from Noncriminal Activity, 2019**



Once again, the top five locations for crime-related calls makes the top five on this list of noncriminal activity calls. The top five locations accounted for 2,546 responses to noncrime calls. Together with the crime-related calls, this is a response total of 3,941, or nearly 11 calls per day. This localized workload demand should be addressed by the department.

The department should examine calls for service at these and other high-volume call locations in an effort to identify opportunities to mitigate the need for such frequent police response. This is commonly a role for crime prevention and crime analysis personnel.

Staff could work collaboratively with interested parties, and crime reduction strategies could be put into place to accomplish mitigation and call reduction. This may include security assessments for target hardening, use of security cameras, additional private security, and providing targeted crime prevention tips for these more highly impacted locations.

## Call Mitigation

In all of our studies CPSM examines call mitigation as a tool to reduce workload demand. In evaluating workload, we always look at responses to alarm calls, because alarm response numbers as a percentage of calls for service are generally high, and the ratio of legitimate to false alarms is extremely low. In general, the rate of false alarms is about 97 to 98 percent of all activations.

During the one-year study period, the BPD responded to 4,600 alarm calls, or 12.6 calls per day. The average time spent on one of these calls by the responding officer was 11 minutes (not including call receipt and dispatch-related time). This equates to approximately 844 hours per year. While any number of false alarms has a negative impact on police operations, for a city of this size, this call volume is not unusual.

Though not the case in Billings, most cities studied by CPSM have enacted alarm ordinances in an effort to manage workload demands and/or create a recovery mechanism for the cost of delivering service. Typically, these ordinances include both the requirement for a permit for an alarm, and a fine structure for multiple false alarm activations within a defined period, usually 12 months. Cities generally waive any fine for the first one to three false alarms. In this way, the ordinance is not designed to be punitive, but rather it incentivizes owners to manage their alarm systems more effectively to reduce the number of false alarms.

Due to the burden associated with false alarm responses, some police departments have found it necessary to discontinue the response to alarms in certain circumstances, although this is not popular with residents and the business community. Given the rate of alarms per day, this does not appear warranted in the case of Billings, absent any egregious violators that could be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Along with reducing responses to alarms, another option commonly considered by police departments in an effort to reduce workload is discontinuing responses to non-injury traffic accidents where the involved vehicles do not pose a traffic hazard. Many agencies have adopted this policy, or one that limits the response and investigation to an exchange of driver information.

CPSM considered this option for Billings as well. However, an average of 9.7 accidents per day does not significantly impact workload on a regular basis. And on days where the accident rate is extraordinarily high, department policy (5-4) allows the Watch Commander to suspend responses to these types of minor collisions. CPSM does not advocate any changes in protocol in this area. However, later in this section, we will address the potential utilization of civilians (Police Service Officers) in responding to these non-injury collisions, among other duties.

Steps that BPD has taken to reduce demands on officers' time include instituting online reporting for non-emergency incidents where no suspects are known, such as petty theft, malicious mischief, and lost property, as well as delayed traffic accident reporting. With online reporting, victims can immediately receive a case number by which they can track the status of their investigation. In just the second year of having this capability online, the department received approximately 600 reports (as of mid-November). This system also serves as a conduit to report suspicious activity and request extra service; through the same time period, approximately 140 such requests have been received.

Additionally, the department utilizes volunteers to complete some crime reports. These generally involve cases that could be reported online but for which the citizen chooses not to do so. For 2019, 1,187 reports were completed by volunteers. These options serve as both a convenience

to the public and help to mitigate non-essential police responses. These numbers are not reflected in the call data within Tables 4-2 through 4-7.

## Out of Service / Noncall Activities

By necessity, officers engage in a variety of activities that are referred to as “out of service” or “noncall” activities. These include roll-call briefings, court appearances, administrative matters, training, report writing, and any number of other activities.

In the period from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded activities that were not assigned a call number. We focused on those activities that involved a patrol-related unit. We also limited our analysis to noncall activities that occurred during shifts where the same patrol unit was also responding to calls for service. Each record only indicates one unit per activity. There were a few problems with the data provided and we made assumptions and decisions to address these issues:

- We excluded activities that lasted less than 30 seconds. These are irrelevant and contribute little to the overall workload.
- Another portion of the recorded activities lasted more than eight hours. As an activity is unlikely to last more than eight hours, we assumed that these records were inaccurate.
- After these exclusions, 67,475 activities remained. These activities had an average duration of 43.1 minutes.

The following table reports noncall or out-of-service activity by the nature of the activity, the amount of time committed to the activity (per occurrence), and frequency of occurrence as recorded in the city's CAD system.

The most common out-of-service descriptions were “at BPD” and report writing. The recorded personal activities were for meals and breaks. The descriptions with the longest average time were for training, city hall/court, and detail.

Collectively, these activities represent a significant and unusually high amount of committed time, and substantially more time than that committed to self-initiated activities. If one excludes the personal time associated with breaks and meals and focuses only on the remaining categories, the time committed to these activities totals the equivalent of approximately 18 full-time officers ( $52,778 \times 43.3 \text{ min.} = 38,088 \text{ hours or } 18.3 \text{ FTE } @ 2080 \text{ hours.}$ ).

It is not possible — and is beyond the scope of our work — for CPSM to determine the appropriateness of frequency for any of these activities or the time committed thereto. However, as the time commitment is extraordinarily high in comparison to other studies conducted by CPSM, we point this out to enable the department to evaluate the appropriateness of these activities going forward, both in terms of the frequency and time encumbered. If deemed excessive, as it would appear to be, the department must address this, and hold first-line supervisors responsible to ensure that it does not continue.

**TABLE 4-9: Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

Unit Status Code	Description	Occupied Time	Count
Out of Service	10-100	8.8	2,889
Out of Service	10-19	56.2	3,262
Out of Service	10-21	14.0	891
Out of Service	10-42	13.4	1,550
Out of Service	10-6	19.1	350
Out of Service	Barn	31.8	1,841
Out of Service	Billings clinic	99.6	212
Out of Service	BPD	64.0	15,566
Out of Service	Briefing	49.8	111
Out of Service	City hall/court	88.7	485
Out of Service	Detail	88.5	352
Out of Service	Evidence	25.7	1,210
Out of Service	Home	16.6	142
Out of Service	Jail	22.8	51
Out of Service	Meeting	85.5	422
Out of Service	Miscellaneous*	28.7	5,437
Out of Service	Out of service	54.0	766
Out of Service	Report	64.7	33
Out of Service	Training	95.2	108
Follow Up	Follow-up	16.2	2,027
Reports	Reports	37.6	15,073
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.3</b>	<b>52,778</b>
Out of Service	Break	10.7	96
Break	Break	45.0	11,362
Lunch	Lunch	35.0	3,239
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.6</b>	<b>14,697</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.1</b>	<b>67,475</b>

**Note:** \*The miscellaneous category includes activities without descriptions or at a variety of low-frequency locations.

In the Workload Demand Analysis subsection that will follow, this work is accounted for in the magenta-colored section of Figures 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, and 4-15. You will note that this out-of-service time dwarfs the time devoted to self-initiated activities. Again, the department is encouraged to evaluate the level and appropriateness of out-of-service activities.

To this point, we have focused largely upon the number of calls and other patrol workload activities for the one-year study period. In the workload demand analysis that follows we will examine how the patrol force allocates time and resources to this workload and other activities. This analysis will assist CPSM in making our staffing recommendations, and better allow for the city and department to ultimately determine appropriate staffing for the patrol-related functions.

## Workload Demand Analysis

Uniformed patrol is considered the “backbone” of American policing. Officers assigned to this important function are the most visible members of the department and command the largest share of resources committed by the department. Proper allocation of these resources is critical to have officers available to respond to calls for service and provide law enforcement services to the public.

Although some police administrators suggest that there are national standards for the number of officers per thousand residents that a department should employ, that is not the case. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) states that ready-made, universally applicable patrol staffing standards do not exist. Furthermore, ratios such as officers-per-thousand population are inappropriate to use as the basis for staffing decisions.

According to *Public Management* magazine, “A key resource is discretionary patrol time, or the time available for officers to make self-initiated stops, advise a victim in how to prevent the next crime, or call property owners, neighbors, or local agencies to report problems or request assistance. Understanding discretionary time, and how it is used, is vital. Yet most police departments do not compile such data effectively. To be sure, this is not easy to do and, in some departments may require improvements in management information systems.”<sup>1</sup>

Essentially, “discretionary time” on patrol is the amount of time available each day where officers are not committed to handling CFS and workload demands from the public. It is “discretionary” and intended to be used at the discretion of the officers to address problems in the community and be available in the event of emergencies. When there is no discretionary time, officers are entirely committed to service demands, do not get the chance to address other community problems that do not arise through 911, and are not available in times of serious emergency. The lack of discretionary time indicates a department is understaffed. Conversely, when there is too much discretionary time, officers are idle. This may be an indication that the department is overstaffed.

Staffing decisions, particularly for patrol, must be based on actual workload as well as ensuring that sufficient staffing exists to respond to emergency situations involving the safety of the public and officers alike. Once the actual workload is determined, and the amount of discretionary time is determined, then staffing decisions can be made consistent with the department’s policing philosophy and the community’s ability to fund services. The Billings Police Department is a full-service police department, and its philosophy is to address essentially all requests for service in a community policing style. With this in mind it is necessary to look at workload to understand the impact of this style of policing in the context of community demand.

To understand actual workload (the time required to complete certain activities), it is critical to review total reported events within the context of how the events originated, such as through directed patrol, administrative tasks, officer-initiated activities, and citizen-initiated activities. Analysis of this type enables identification of activities that are really “calls” from those activities that are some other type of event.

In general, a “Rule of 60” can be applied to evaluate patrol staffing. This rule has two parts. The first part states that 60 percent of the sworn officers in a department should be dedicated to the patrol function (patrol staffing) and the second part states that no more than 60 percent of their

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1. John Campbell, Joseph Brann, and David Williams, “Officer-per-Thousand Formulas and Other Policy Myths,” *Public Management* 86 (March 2004): 22–27.

time should be committed to calls for service. This commitment of 60 percent of their time is referred to as the *Patrol Saturation Index*.

The Rule of 60 is not a hard-and-fast rule, but rather a starting point for discussion on patrol deployment. Resource allocation decisions must be made from a policy and/or managerial perspective through which costs and benefits of competing demands are considered. The patrol saturation index indicates the percentage of time dedicated by police officers to public demands for service and administrative duties related to their jobs. Effective patrol deployment would exist at amounts where the saturation index was less than 60.

This Rule of 60 for patrol deployment does not mean the remaining 40 percent of time is downtime or break time. It reflects the extent to which patrol officer time is saturated by calls for service. The time when police personnel are not responding to calls should be committed to management-directed operations. This is a more focused use of time and can include supervised allocation of patrol officer activities toward proactive enforcement, crime prevention, community policing, and citizen safety initiatives. It will also provide ready and available resources in the event of a large-scale emergency.

From an organizational standpoint, it is important to have uniformed patrol resources available at all times of the day to deal with issues such as proactive enforcement, community policing, and emergency response. Patrol is generally the most visible and available resource in policing, and the ability to harness this resource is critical for successful operations.

Understanding the difference between the various types of police department events and the resulting staffing implications is critical to determining deployment needs. This portion of the study looks at the total deployed hours of the police department with a comparison to current time spent to provide services.

From an officer's standpoint, once a certain level of CFS activity is reached, the officer's focus shifts to a CFS-based reactionary mode. Once that threshold is reached, the patrol officer's mindset begins to shift from one that looks for ways to deal with crime and quality-of-life conditions in the community to one that continually prepares for the next call. After saturation, officers cease proactive policing and engage in a reactionary style of policing. The outlook becomes, "Why act proactively when my actions are only going to be interrupted by a call?" Any uncommitted time is spent waiting for the next call. Sixty percent of time spent responding to calls for service is believed to be the saturation threshold.

### **Rule of 60 – Part 1**

According to the department personnel data available at the time of the site visit (December 2020), the department is authorized for 153 full-time sworn officers. When fully staffed, 102 of those personnel are assigned to patrol functions (includes sergeants, officers, K9 officers, downtown business officers, STEP, Billings Clinic officers, and the Parks officer). When fully staffed, patrol staffing would thus represent approximately 66 percent of total sworn staffing, or somewhat higher than CPSM's Rule of 60 recommendation. Given that five of those officers work under a special agreement (downtown, and Billings Clinic, Parks), the percentage of staffing is within an expected range as recommended by CPSM.

### **Rule of 60 – Part 2**

The second part of the "Rule of 60" examines workload and discretionary time and suggests that no more than 60 percent of time should be committed to calls for service and self-initiated arrests, etc. In other words, CPSM suggests that no more than 60 percent of available patrol officer time be spent responding to the service demands in the community. The remaining 40

percent of the time is the “discretionary time” for officers to be available to address community problems and be available for serious emergencies. This Rule of 60 for patrol deployment does not mean the remaining 40 percent of time is downtime or break time. It is simply a reflection of the point at which patrol officer time is “saturated” by CFS.

It is CPSM’s contention that patrol staffing is optimally deployed when the SI is below the 60 percent range. An SI greater than 60 percent indicates that the patrol manpower is largely reactive and overburdened with CFS and workload demands. An SI of somewhat less than 60 percent indicates that patrol manpower is optimally staffed. SI levels significantly lower than 60 percent, however, indicate patrol resources may be underutilized, and may signal an opportunity for a reduction in patrol resources or reallocation of police personnel.

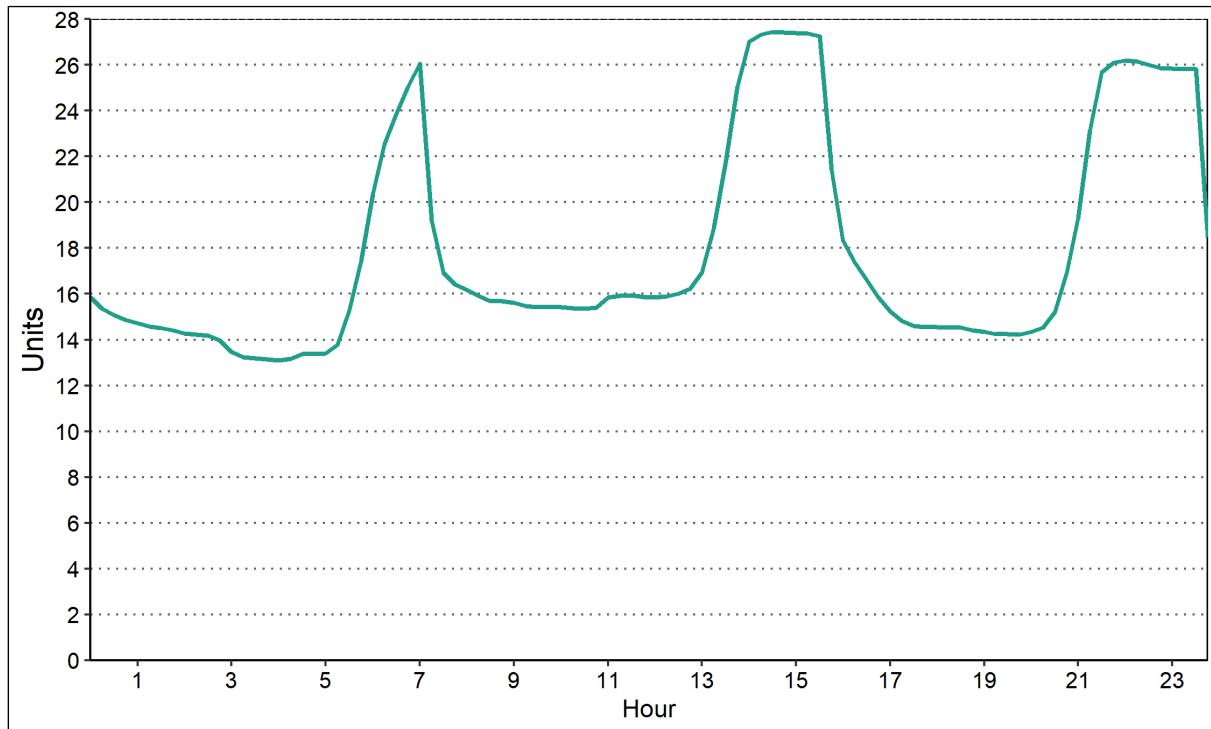
Departments must be cautious in interpreting the SI too narrowly. For example, one should not conclude that SI can never exceed 60 percent at any time during the day, or that in any given hour no more than 60 percent of any officer’s time be committed to CFS. The SI at 60 percent is intended to be a benchmark to evaluate overall service demands on patrol staffing. When SI levels exceed 60 percent for substantial periods of a given shift, or at isolated but consistent and specific times during the day, then decisions should be made to reallocate or realign personnel to reduce the SI to levels below 60. Lastly, this is not a hard-and-fast rule, but a benchmark to be used in evaluating staffing decisions. Other factors must be considered, such as the availability of sufficient resources to safely, efficiently, and effectively respond to emergency calls for service.

While the call data referenced in Tables 4-2 to 4-9 reflected call activity for the entire one-year study period, for this portion of the study we examine not just the total number of calls, but the actual time spent on these calls as well as other duties. Here, we compare “all” workload, which includes other-initiated calls, police-initiated calls, directed patrol work, and out-of-service activities. We examined deployment and workload for eight weeks in winter (January 4 to February 28, 2019) and eight weeks in summer (July 7 to August 28, 2019).

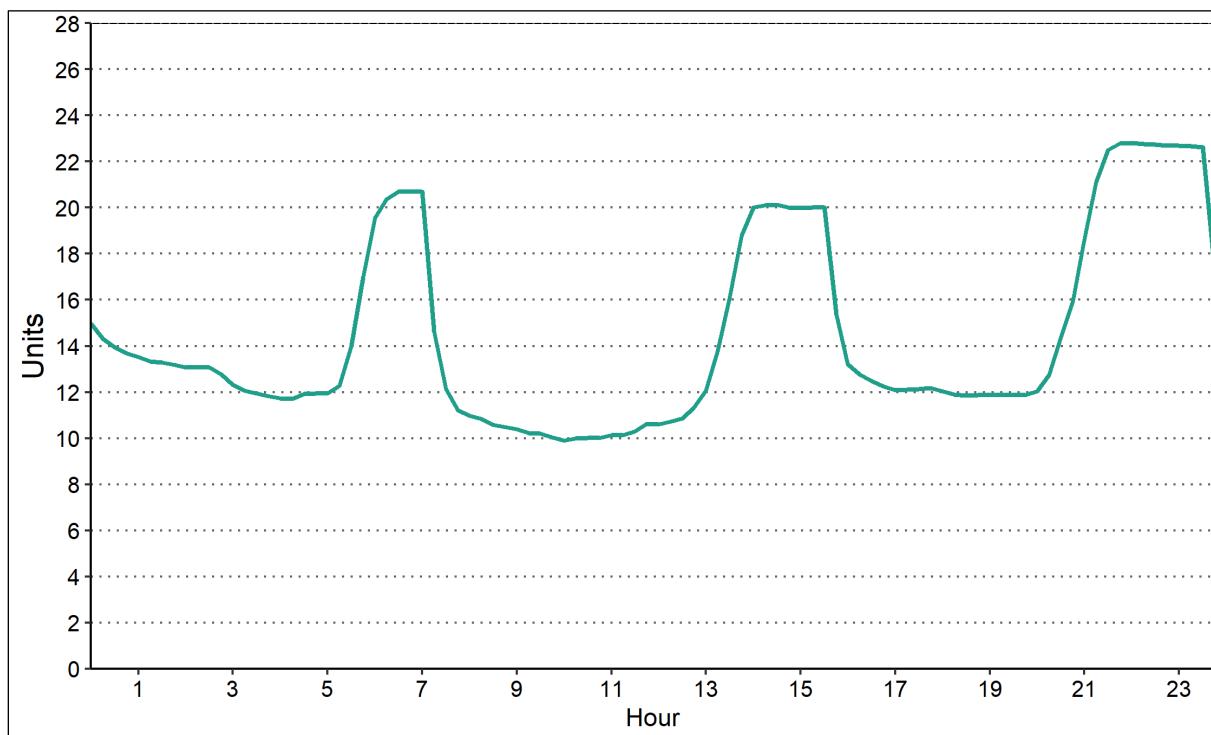
The department’s main patrol force consists of lieutenants, sergeants, patrol officers, K9 officers, downtown business officers, STEP, Billings Clinic officers, and the Parks officer, although not all are assigned to the Operations Division. As we examine workload and staffing in this section, we include all of the above personnel. Basic patrol officers work 10-hour shifts starting at 6:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 9:30 p.m. Patrol sergeants work this schedule as well, but flex their schedule, coming in early to prepare for roll call briefings. This schedule results in shift overlaps during the periods of 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 9:30 p.m. to midnight. Additionally, some of the support units, such as STEP and K9, flex their schedules to meet workload demands for their unique assignments.

The spikes and troughs in available personnel shown in Figures 4-5 through 4-8 reflect these overlaps. The police department’s total patrol force deployed an average of 17.9 police officers per hour on weekdays, and 14.5 officers per hour on weekends during the 24-hour day in winter 2019. For the summer period, average deployment was 17.7 officers per hour on weekdays and 14.8 officers per hour on weekends during the 24-hour day.

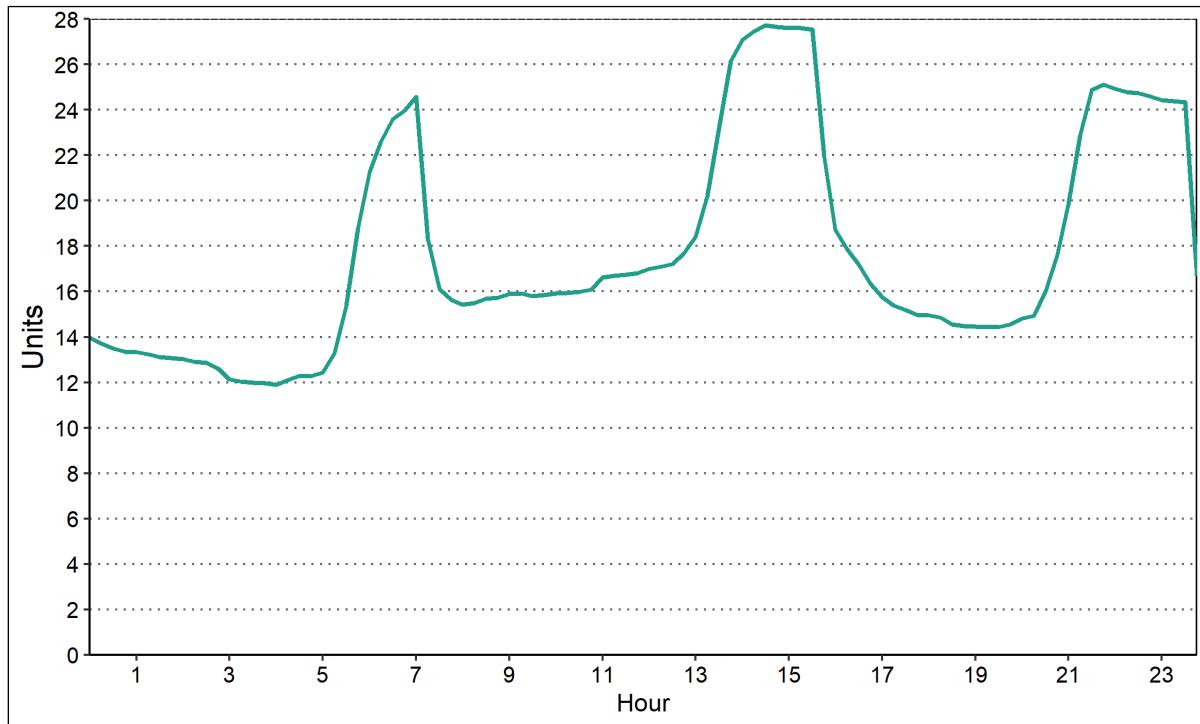
**FIGURE 4-5: Deployed Units, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



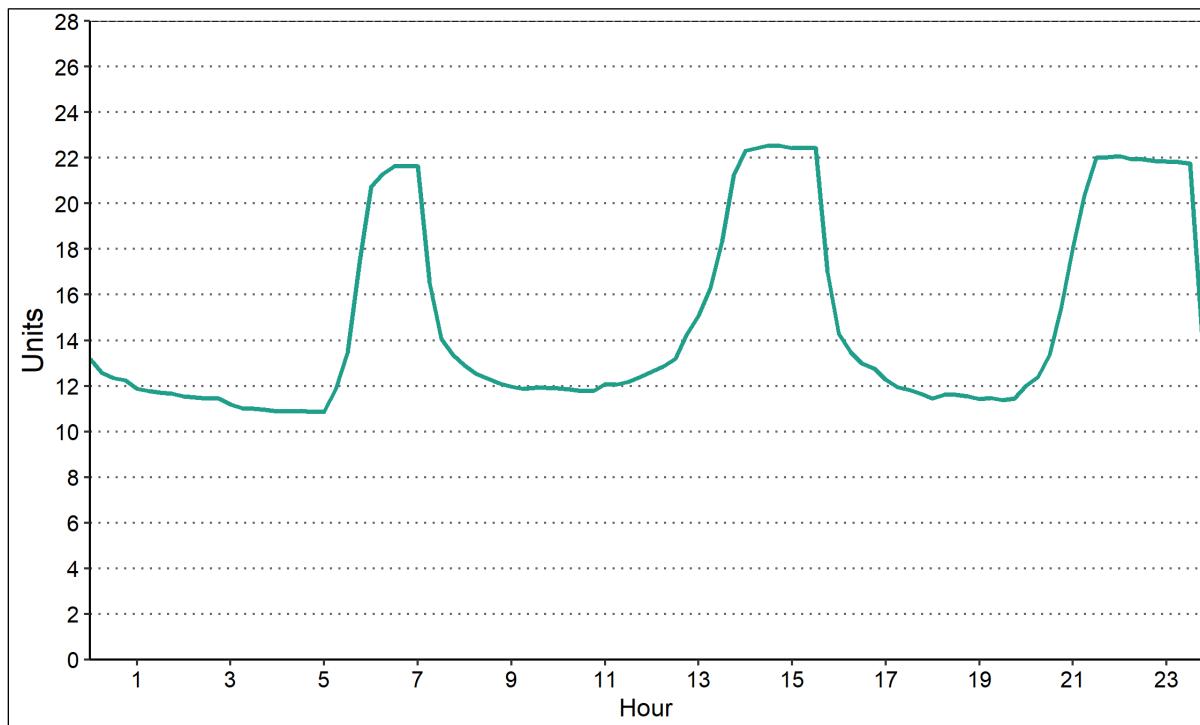
**FIGURE 4-6: Deployed Units, Weekends, Winter 2019**



**FIGURE 4-7: Deployed Units, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



**FIGURE 4-8: Deployed Units, Weekends, Summer 2019**



In Figures 4-9 through 4-16, which follow pages, we examine workload by source and activity. This enables an assessment of how the department and its patrol force is positioned to meet the demands of calls for service while also engaging in proactive policing to combat crime, disorder, and address traffic issues in the community. We considered only those personnel who reported for duty rather than authorized staffing levels and distinguish the deployment and workload between winter and summer and between weekdays (Monday through Friday) and weekends (Saturday and Sunday). As with the prior figures, the spikes in deployment represent shift overlaps.

Specifically, Figures 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, and 4-15 focus on deployment and workload. The numerical column on the left side of each figure represents the number of units; the numbers across the bottom of each figure represent the 24 hours of the day; and the colored sections within each diagram represent time committed by personnel to one of four activities: Community-Initiated Activity (orange); Officer-Initiated Activity (blue); Out-of-Service Activity (magenta); and Uncommitted Patrol Activity (lime). For example, in Figure 4-9, on the left side of the figure, at midnight, one can see there were approximately 16 units deployed. Of those, approximately five were committed to a community-initiated call for service, two were committed to a self-initiated activity, two were out of service, and seven were on routine patrol.

In Figures 4-10, 4-12, 4-14, and 4-16, we graph the saturation index. Patrol resources available are denoted by the dashed black line at the top. The 100 percent value indicates the total police officer hours available during the 24-hour period. This amount varies during the day consistent with the staffing of the shifts, but at any given hour the total amount of available manpower will equal 100. The red dashed line fixed at the 60 percent level represents the saturation index (SI). As discussed above in the *Rule of 60, Part 2*, this is the point at which patrol resources become largely reactive as CFS and workload demands consume a larger and larger portion of available time.

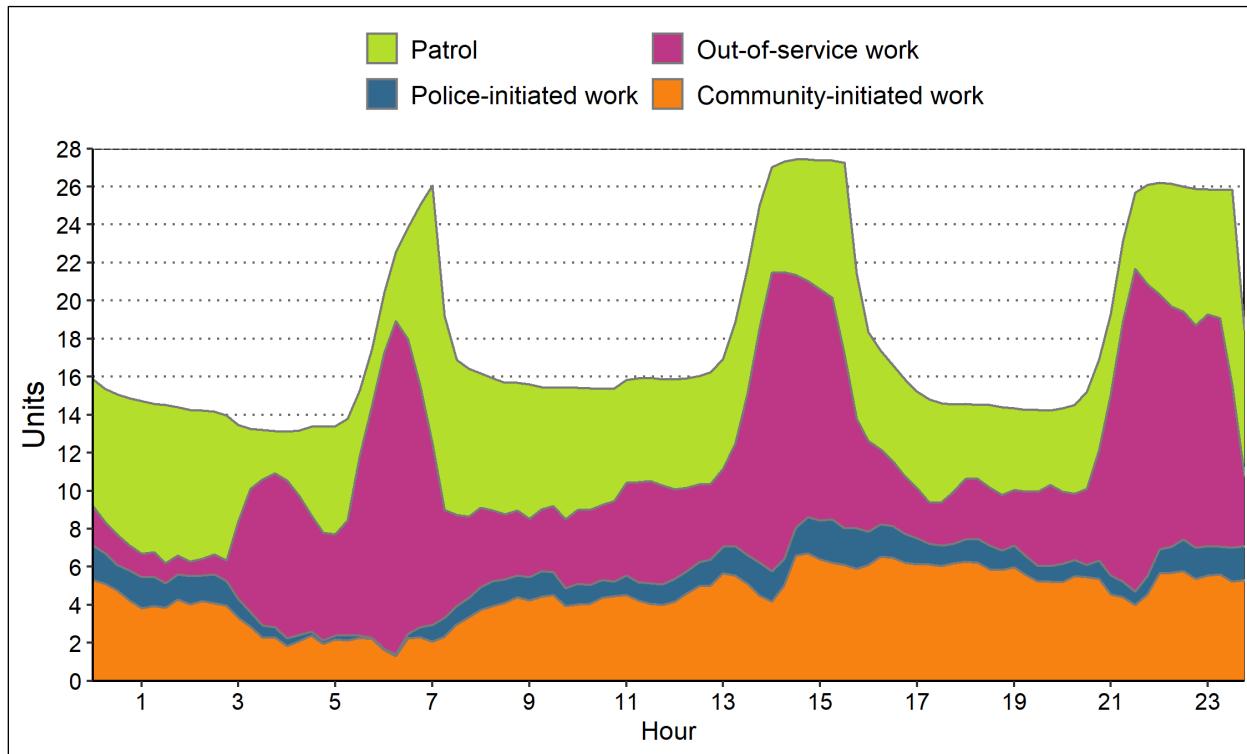
The data reveal that the BPD patrol function is under stress numerous times throughout the day in both winter and summer, both weekdays and weekends. It routinely operates well above the 60 percent threshold, reaching a high of 92 percent at one point on winter weekends. However, as previously noted, significant amounts of out-of-service time exist are committed throughout the day; this is an area that must be examined by the department. Regardless, if we consider only community-initiated activity, which peaks at 63 percent on summer evenings, it can be seen that workload for the patrol function is significant.

In summary, a review of the workload figures that follow shows that workload averages are consistently well above the saturation index. As we summarize the patrol function, we will make staffing and deployment recommendations that, in combination, would lead to reducing this number and making workload more manageable.

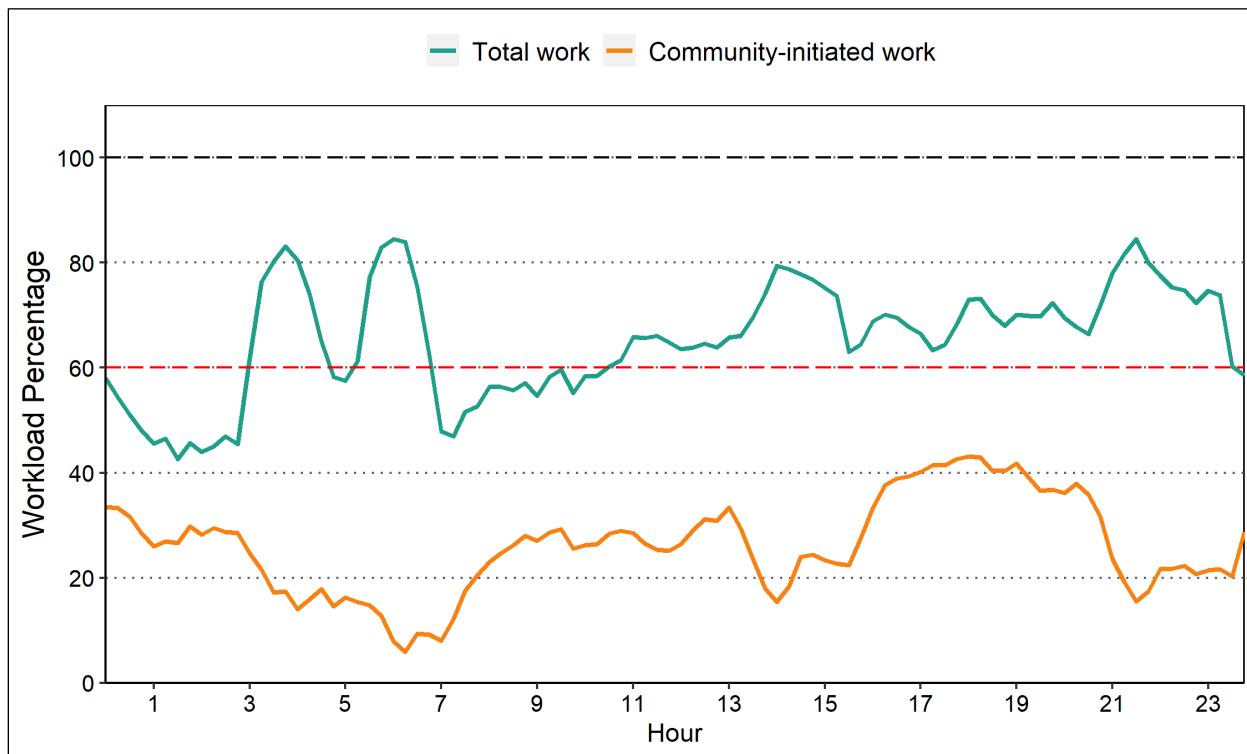
The following are average workload percentages reflected in the figures to follow, again, each being above the Rule of 60 threshold:

- Winter weekdays: 66.6 percent.
- Winter weekends: 66.9 percent.
- Summer weekdays: 70.5 percent.
- Summer weekends: 72.6 percent.

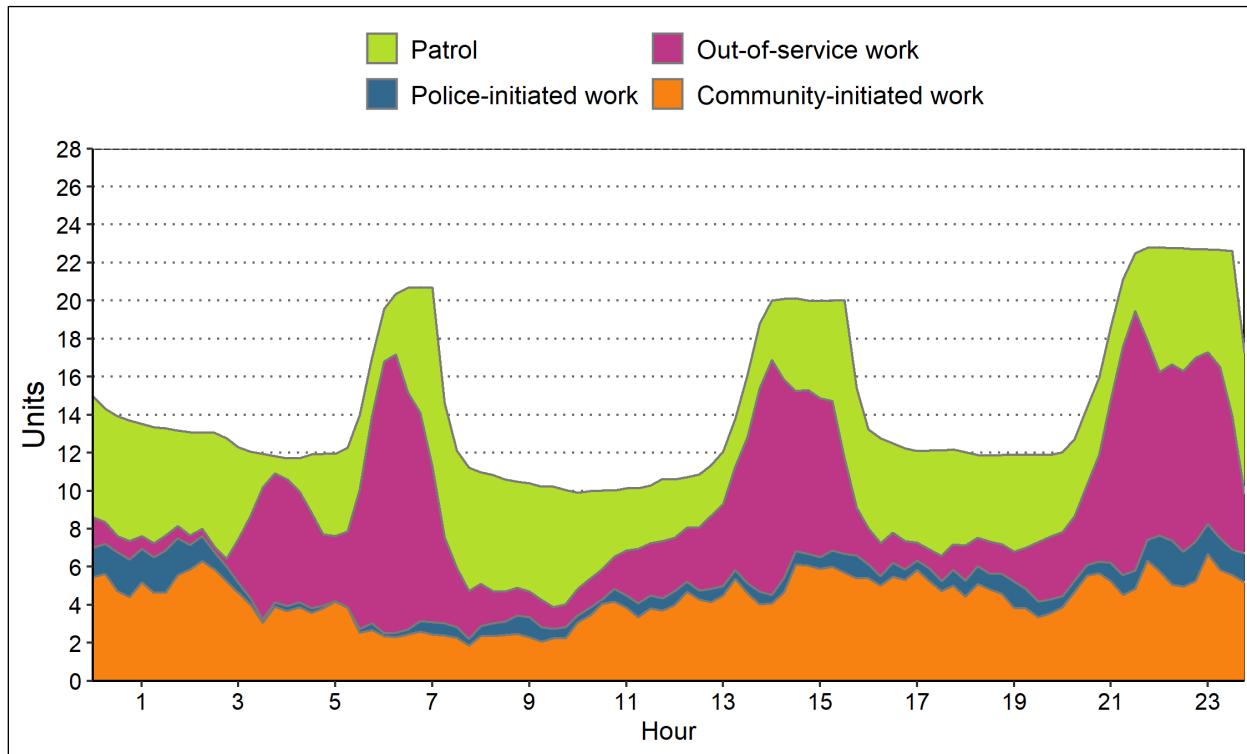
**FIGURE 4-9: Deployment and All Workload, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



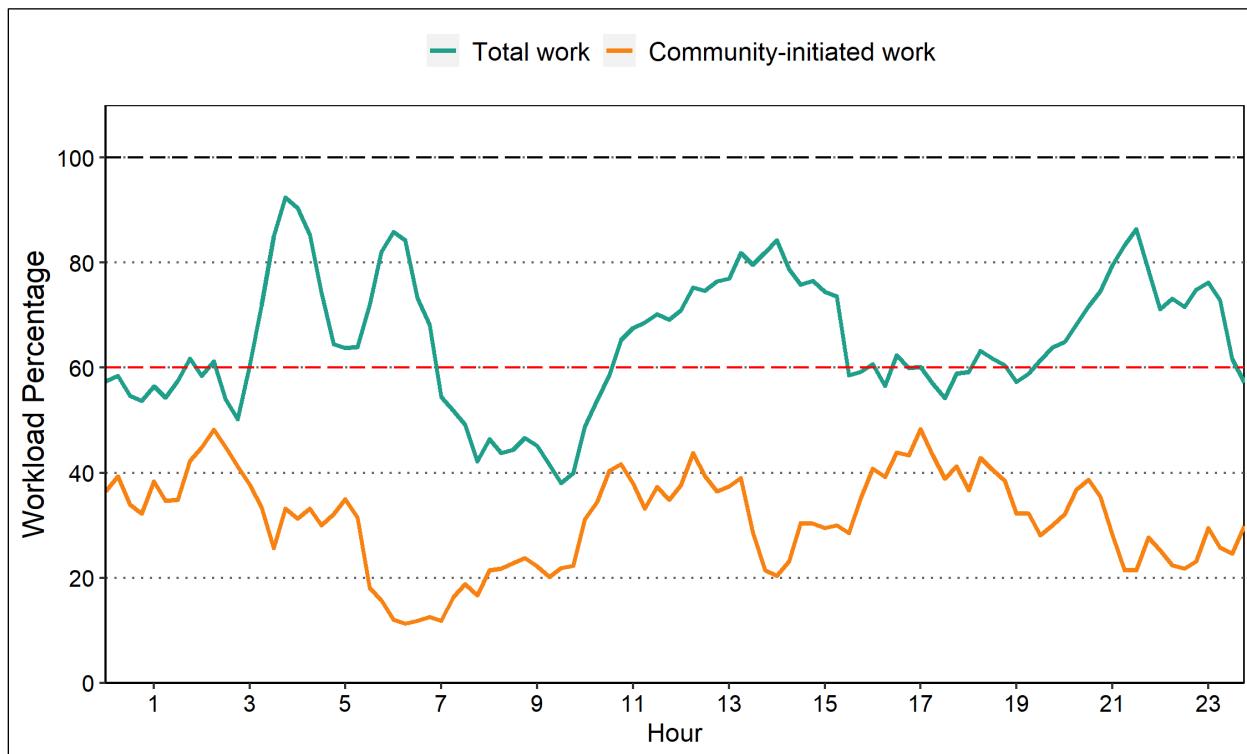
**FIGURE 4-10: Percentage of Workload, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



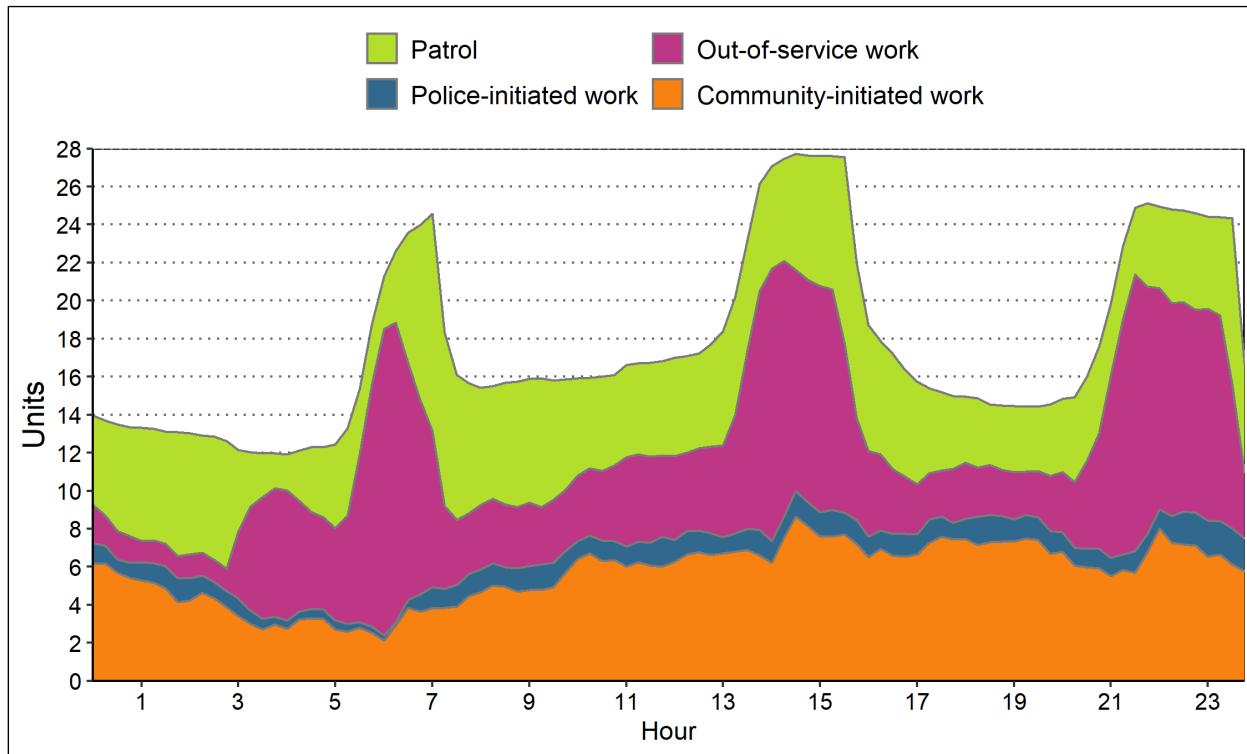
**FIGURE 4-11: Deployment and All Workload, Weekends, Winter 2019**



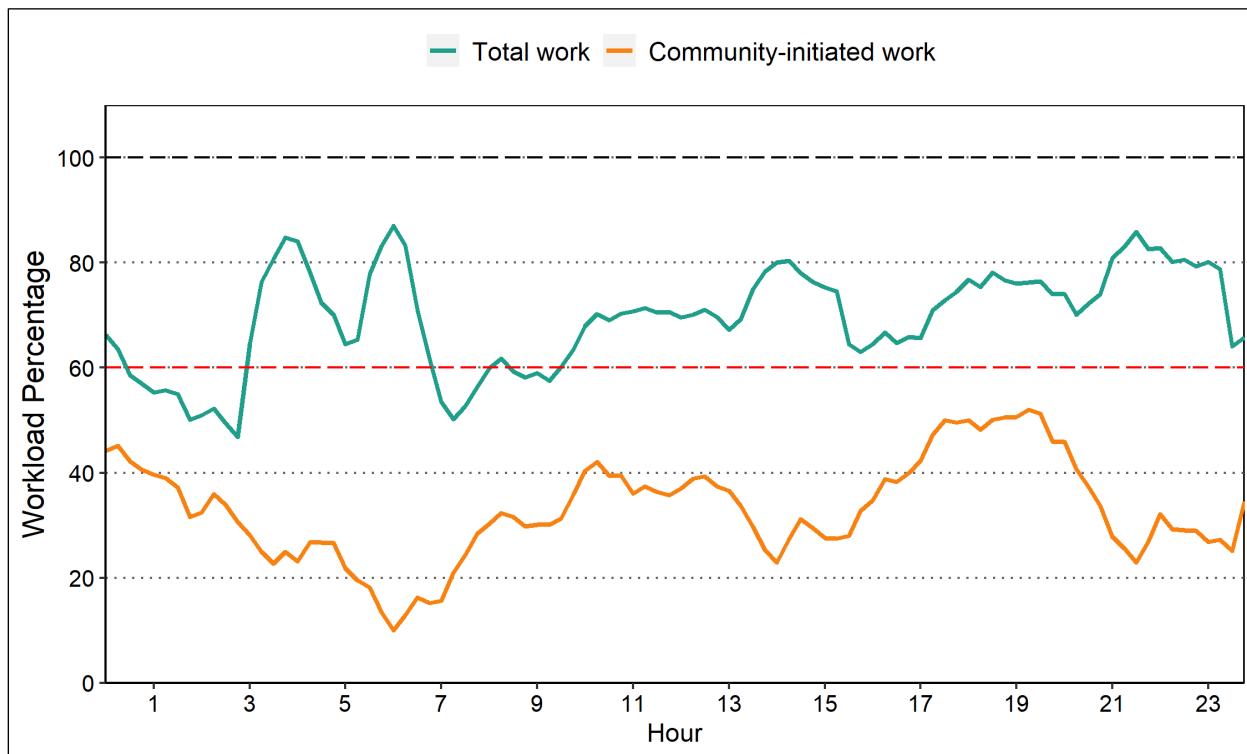
**FIGURE 4-12: Percentage of Workload, Weekends, Winter 2019**



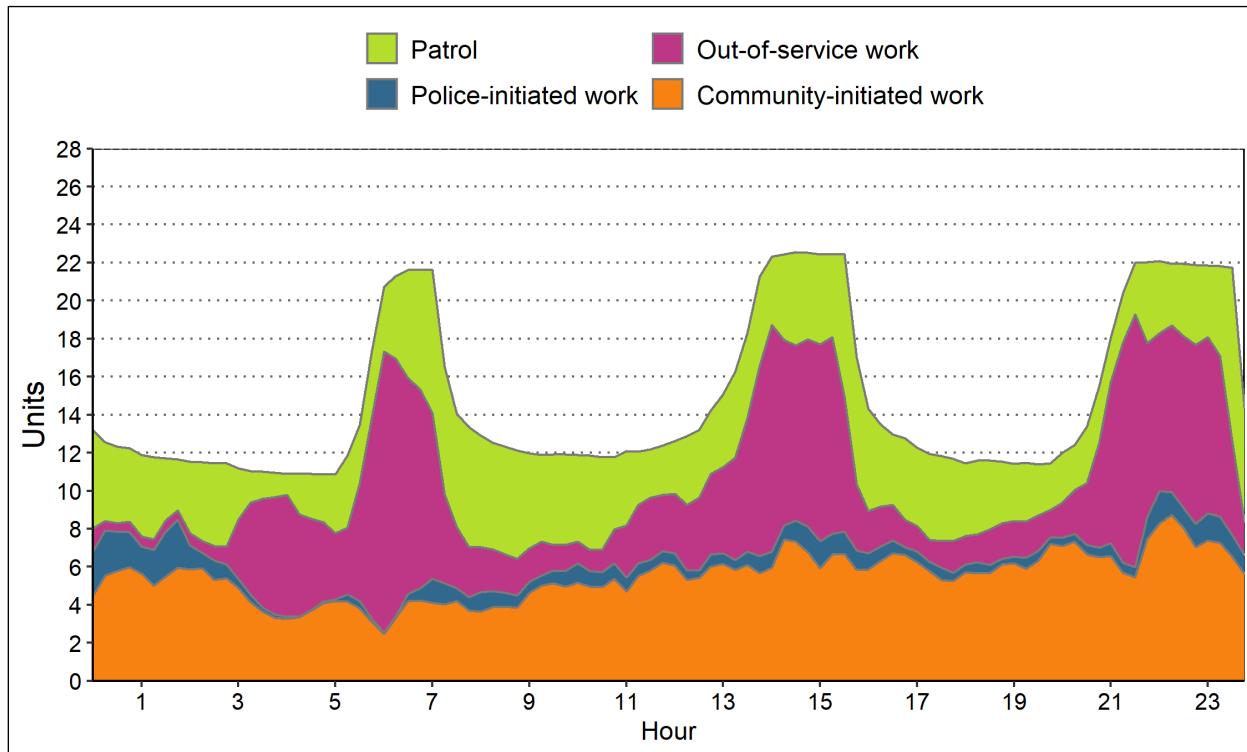
**FIGURE 4-13: Deployment and All Workload, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



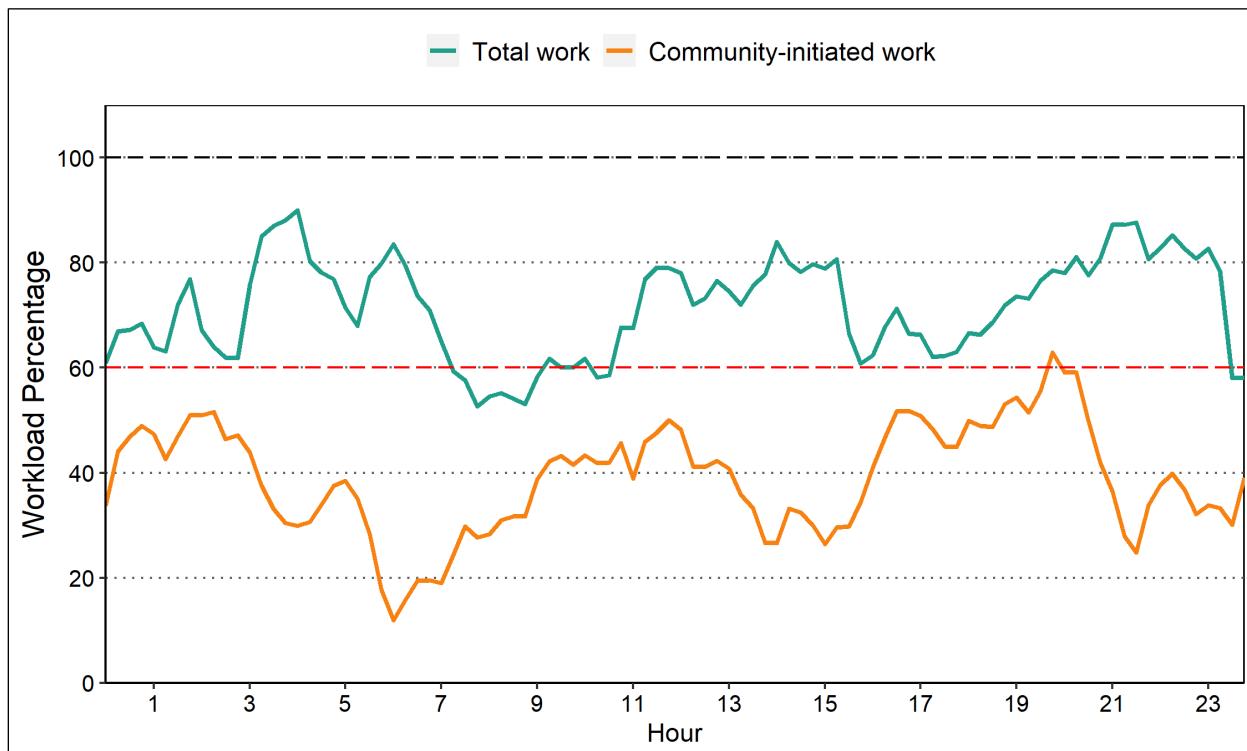
**FIGURE 4-14: Percentage of Workload, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



**FIGURE 4-15: Deployment and All Workload, Weekends, Summer 2019**



**FIGURE 4-16: Percentage of Workload, Weekends, Summer 2019**



## PATROL DEPLOYMENT AND WORKLOAD DEMAND ALIGNMENT

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Data provided in Figures 4-9 through 4-16 clearly establish that workload demands exceed the standards established in the “Rule of 60” discussion. Therefore, we must consider methods that will help the department manage workload more effectively. Our focus will be on staffing and deployment, and will consider these questions:

- Are shift schedules appropriate to meet/match workload demands?
- Are staffing levels appropriate to meet workload demands?
- Are there alternative service delivery options available to the department?

We will examine and address each of these individually. In so doing, we can be better positioned to make recommendations regarding the Patrol Section staffing.

### Deployment Schedule Considerations

As noted previously, the department’s primary patrol deployment operates under a three-shift configuration with reporting times of 6:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 9:30 p.m., each the beginning of a 10-hour shift. As such, there are overlaps from 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 9:30 p.m. to midnight. These overlaps are reflected in the spikes in staffing numbers in the above figures. However, consistent with virtually all studies conducted by CPSM, and here in Billings as well, the deployment schedule does not align with workload demands.

An examination of Figures 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, and 4-15 provides the clearest evidence of this. In those figures, community-initiated workload is reflected in orange. While community-initiated workload demand is not wholly predictable on any given day, these figures show the averages over a four-month period, and again, are consistent with most agencies CPSM has studied.

Generally, the figures suggest that on weekdays, community-initiated workload begins to pick up at about 7:00 a.m. and tapers off around midnight or 1:00 a.m. On weekends, the community-initiated workload begins to pick up at about 9:00 a.m. and tapers off around 3:00 a.m. It is during these time periods that available staffing should be maximized, something that the present deployment schedule does not allow for.

There are a variety of work schedules in use by law enforcement agencies across the country, such as 5/8, 4/10, and 3/12, and hybrids of each. Billings has utilized the 4/10 schedule for decades, and as such, it may be the best choice. However, the 4/10 plan would still allow for a modification of reporting times. While such a change may not “neatly” fit into the team schedule as presently configured, deployment schedules should be designed to meet community needs.

One simple schedule modification would involve staggering reporting times for both weekday and weekend periods. For weekday periods, shifts could begin at 6:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. On weekends (Friday and Saturday for deployment purposes), deployments could begin at 6:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. On weekends, the only difference from the weekday would be to bring the late afternoon shift in an hour later to be able to provide coverage well into the early morning. With a schedule with four reporting times, the staffing is better balanced to manage workload throughout the day, and would minimize the deployment peaks that are present during overlaps under the existing schedule.

Again, this is but one example of a work schedule that the department could consider. CPSM would simply suggest that the existing schedule is not operationally beneficial and should be

modified to better align staffing to workload demands. Utilizing the data contained in this report, the department is well-positioned to adjust to a work schedule that best meets the community's and department's needs.

## Present Staffing Considerations

Establishing the appropriate staffing levels is generally the most complex task in our evaluation of patrol operations. As we examined workload and out-of-service activities relative to available staffing (Figures 4-9 through 4-16), it is clear that present staffing consistently struggles to manage existing demands. Subsequently, there are three areas that we will consider in this discussion:

- Average officer performance data,
- Staffing added subsequent to the data collection/analysis and how it will affect officer performance data.
- Out of service time.

First, examining individual officer productivity related to specific tasks can be illuminating. Based upon data provided by the department for 2019, officers (patrol, K9s, Billings Clinic, STEP, Downtown Business Association, Parks officer) responded to 56,205 calls for service from the public and conducted 23,478 self-initiated activities. The department further reported that a total of 84 personnel were assigned to patrol-related functions (does not include six positions added in FY 20/21 who are presently in training).

If one assumes every activity was handled equally and each patrol-related officer worked the equivalent of 188 ten-hour shifts per year (assumes five weeks leave average), each of the 84 patrol-related officers:

- Served as the primary handling unit on about 669 calls for service from the public (3.6 calls per shift).
- Assisted on 736 calls for service from the public (3.9 per shift).
- Conducted 279 self-initiated activities, of which 54 percent were traffic enforcement related, (1.5 per shift).
- Assisted on 112 self-initiated activities (0.6 per shift).

Additionally, while the above numbers isolate the work of only the patrol-related officers, as is allowed for in the CAD data analysis, next we will look at the total number of arrests made, the number of traffic citations issued, and the number of police reports written by the department in its entirety. These numbers are obtained from the department's Records Division and/or the department annual report and represent the workload of the entire department, not just patrol-related officers. As such the numbers are skewed on the high side.

In 2019, department personnel made 12,583 arrests, issued 7,135 traffic citations, issued 17,122 warning citations, and wrote 19,308 formal police reports. Again, if one assumes that every activity was handled equally and each patrol-related officer worked the equivalent of 188 shifts, each officer would have:

- Made 149 arrests (0.8 per shift).
- Issued 85 traffic citations (0.45 per shift).
- Issued 203 warning citations (1.08 per shift).

- Written 230 police reports (1.22 per shift).

These numbers are skewed on the high side, as not all activities were handled by patrol-related officers alone, but the numbers provide a point of reference as to activity level. For instance, patrol sergeants occasionally handle limited calls for service and engage in enforcement activities. And SROs as well as detectives write reports and make arrests. If these numbers were to be extracted, the per-officer numbers would be adjusted (reduced) accordingly.

If we exclude the community-initiated calls for service and related assists (back-up), we find that these performance indicator numbers are not extraordinarily high. It is understood that some officers are more active than others, and their individual data will vary from the averages, up or down.

Second, we must consider that the workload data utilized for this assessment was from calendar year 2019. In FY 20/21, the department was authorized six additional police officer positions, and as previously noted, there are five officers in the police academy and one in the field training program. As these officers complete their training and join patrol, and assuming that future workload demands do not deviate significantly from 2019 levels, they will serve to reduce the per-officer workload demands (Rule of 60, Part 2) by four to five percent. Even so, with the addition of six additional officers, CPSM calculates that workload demands will remain high, in the 62.2 to 67.8 percent range, depending upon the season and whether a weekday or weekend. Thus, there will be about a five-point drop from 2019 data.

Third, we have previously discussed out-of-service activities in detail. As stated, some out-of-service activities such as roll call briefings, report writing, court appearances, follow-up, etc. are necessary and appropriate.

However, Figures 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, and 4-15 provide a graphic illustration of the anomaly that exists in Billings. At several periods, especially during shift overlaps, as high as approximately 60 percent of available staffing is out of service. And while the peak periods align with shift reporting times when on-coming officers would normally be in briefings, the extraordinarily high rate of out-of-service time spans nearly the entire workday. As well, it significantly cuts into uncommitted patrol time and dwarfs self-initiated activity.

This would appear to be a practice that is tolerated but which should be assessed and addressed by the department, and specifically, patrol supervision. The recommended modification to the deployment schedule should aid in addressing this phenomena, at least as it relates to shift overlaps. If the department can reduce the amount of out-of-service time, this will further reduce workload percentages.

## Alternative Service Delivery

Another opportunity for reducing patrol officer workload, and one that CPSM strongly supports, is the incorporation of Police Service Officers into the basic patrol force. The department does not utilize a civilian employee classification of workers referred to as Police Service Officers (PSOs), or in some agencies, Community Service Officers (CSOs). PSOs are commonly utilized in departments of Billings' size and complexity to perform duties that do not require a sworn police officer. These duties parking enforcement, traffic control, handling abandoned autos, evidence collection, report writing on cold-calls without suspect information, and in some agencies, prisoner transportation and booking for non-combative prisoners.

The value of PSOs cannot be overstated. Discretionary or proactive patrol time (Rule of 60) is not required for this classification of employee. As such, PSOs can relieve officers of a significant

workload that would otherwise encumber officers' time. Given that it is less costly and easier to recruit, train, and staff PSO positions compared to those of police officers, serious consideration should be given to incorporating this classification of employee into the department's workforce. While it may be a novel concept in Billings, or Montana, PSOs are commonly utilized and valued in agencies the size of Billings all across the country.

As an additional benefit, PSOs who perform well in this role and are interested in serving as police officers can become a source of hiring to fill vacant positions. They will have the experience and skill sets that will enable them to complete rigorous training demands.

To this point, we have discussed call demand, staffing, and workload. Next, we will address response time, or that time required to arrive on scene once the city's 911 dispatch center receives a call for service demand. This too is a factor in considering staffing and deployment requirements.

## **911 DISPATCH / RESPONSE TIME**

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The dispatch/communications function is a vital component of an effective public safety/law enforcement agency. Often the first point of contact for a citizen seeking assistance, 911 dispatchers play a significant role in setting the tone for the community's attitude toward the agency. The efficiency with which they collect information from callers and relay that information to responding personnel significantly impacts the safety of citizens, officers, and fire/EMS personnel alike. And for crimes in progress, their work may substantially affect the chances of apprehending criminals.

Emergency 911/dispatch services provided within the City of Billings and surrounding area are a function of the Billings Fire Department. As part of a parallel study of the Billings Fire Department performed by CPSM, an assessment was conducted of the dispatch function and is available in the report on the BFD. Readers are also encouraged to review the data analysis in this report, which can be found in Section 9, where additional information regarding police response time is available.

While we will not conduct a redundant study, there are significant 911/dispatch issues relative to the police department that warrant our attention. They include:

- Response time, and specifically, time in processing call information prior to dispatch for high-priority calls.
- Police unit identifiers.
- Call identifiers for transient/homeless and mental health crisis calls.

We will address each of these factors individually.

### **Response Time to High-Priority Calls for Service**

Our focus here will be on high-priority calls for service, which are those calls that involve life-safety incidents and/or in-progress crimes. As noted, timely dispatch of call information, especially relative to high-priority calls, is critical to an effective response. The data report found in Section 9 will provide substantial additional information concerning all priorities of calls for service and readers are encouraged to review that reporting in its entirety.

The computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system has been programmed to assign priorities to calls based upon the nature of the call. The department assigns calls as priority 1 through priority 4, with priority 1 as the highest priority. In Billings, priority 1 calls are classified as critical, and priority 2 calls classified as high-priority. The CAD system identifies 387 separate classifications of calls (including for fire / EMS) which are assigned priority within this range. Of those call classifications, 170, or 44 percent, are classified as a priority 1 call, the majority of which are related to fire and medical responses.

Police calls set as critical or high-priority should be limited to life-safety and in-progress crimes. In CPSM's review of the police-specific high-priority calls, we found the department's practice largely meets that criteria. Overall, the department has done a good job of assigning call priorities. Only a handful were identified that could be considered for a change in priority. These include:

- In-progress crimes such as 415 Fight, which at present is a priority 2 call (though a battery in progress is a priority 1 call).
- Petty Theft Now, at present a priority 2 call.
- Vandalism Now, again a priority 2 call.
- Defrauding an Innkeeper Now, a priority 2 call as well.

Each of these involve in-progress crimes and could be considered for upgrades to priority 1. Truancy is listed as a priority 1 call, and may be considered for reduction to priority 2 status.

In the reporting and tables and figures that follow, we will examine data provided by the city's 911/dispatch center. Data calculations are based on what is commonly practiced at law enforcement agencies. That is, a call taker receiving a call types the information into a call screen, electronically sends it to the dispatcher, and the call is broadcast and assigned to an officer to handle. The dispatch period is measured from the time of call receipt, ending when the dispatcher assigns an officer to that call. The travel period begins at the conclusion of the dispatch period and ends when the officer arrives at the scene of the call. The response time represents the combination of the dispatch and travel periods. This is the amount of time it takes from the initial call to an officer arriving on scene.

The following table reflects average police response times by priority for 2019. Additionally, we identified the majority of injury accidents based upon their call description, "Accident - W/Injuries." As both police and fire/EMS generally respond to injury accidents, it may be that a fire unit is more readily available than a police unit, thereby reducing the dispatch delay.

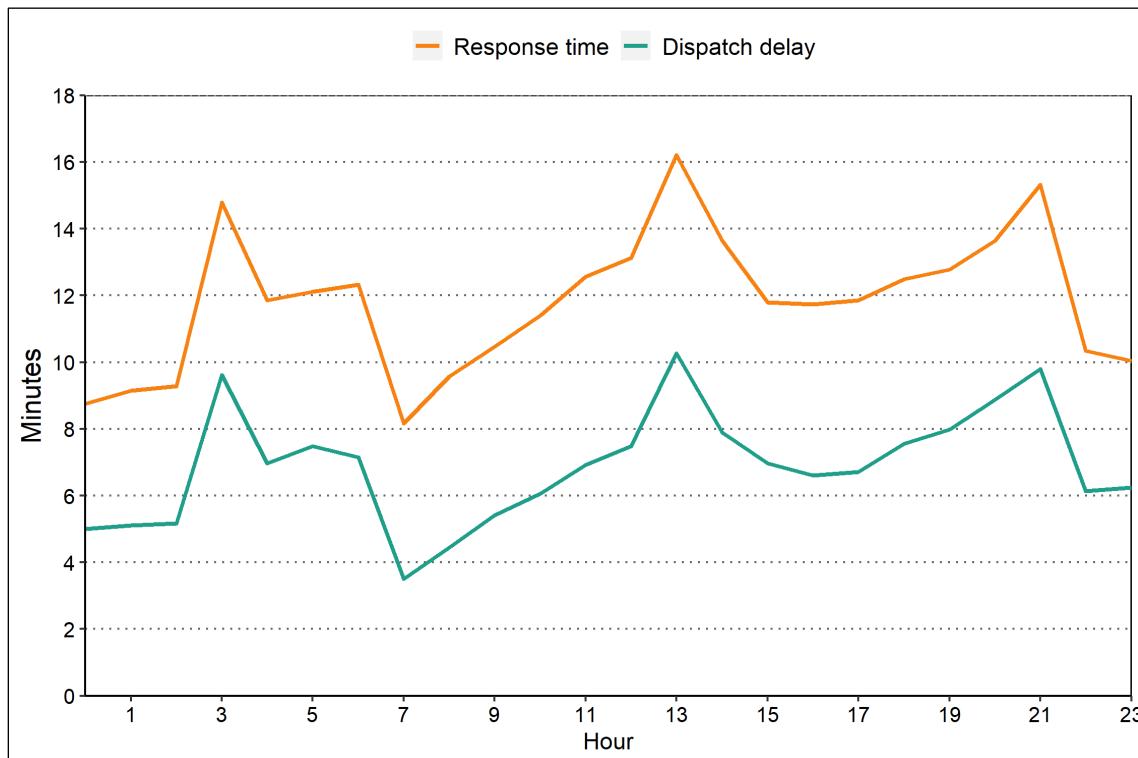
**TABLE 4-10: Average Response Times, by Priority**

Priority	Dispatch Delay	Travel Time	Response Time	Calls
1-Critical	6.7	4.5	11.3	61
2-High	7.0	4.9	11.9	27,163
3-Medium	10.8	6.1	16.9	15,742
4-Low	18.7	8.8	27.5	9,247
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>52,213</b>
Injury Accident	3.1	4.8	7.9	487

**Note:** The total average is weighted according to the number of calls within each priority level.

In the following figure, we examine response times, by hour of day, for priority 1 and 2 calls only.

**FIGURE 4-17: Average Response Times and Dispatch Delays for High-priority Calls, by Hour**



The dispatch delay of approximately seven minutes in dispatching life-safety and in-progress crime calls is excessive. In life-safety (e.g., baby not breathing) and in-progress crime calls (e.g., active shooter), every second counts. As well, with such a delay, police officers in the field remain unaware of an impending emergency response for seven minutes, clearly contributing to the overall response time of nearly 12 minutes.

In studies conducted by this CPSM team, the dispatch delay in assigning high-priority calls is generally in the two- to three-minute range, although that is still not optimal for these types of calls. One similarly sized agency recently assessed by CPSM assigned high-priority calls in an average of 1.2 minutes, although the agency has fewer calls.

Another significant and noteworthy anomaly exists in these data. We indicated previously that Billings does a good job of assigning priorities to calls for service. In Billings, high-priority calls account for more than 50 percent of all calls, which is the highest percentage recorded in agencies studied by CPSM. In our studies, high-priority incidents generally make up only about 20 percent of all calls for service, although many agencies fail to appropriately classify in-progress minor crimes as high-priority calls. As such, we recommend that those agencies upgrade in-progress crimes in their call-priority ranking. Again, kudos to BPD for this practice.

CPSM suspects that workload demand and excessive out-of-service time are significant factors contributing to dispatch delays. Additionally, dispatch staff indicated that, at the direction of the police command staff, calls are often held for a zone unit. As such, even high-priority calls that are not deemed emergency will be held, even though other units in adjacent zones may

be and often are available for assignment. CPSM suggests that holding calls for zone units for priority 3 and 4 categories of calls is appropriate, but not for high-priority calls.

CPSM believes that recommendations of shift schedule modifications, additional staffing, reduction of out-of-service time, and a change in the practice of holding many high-priority calls for the zone unit to come available, in combination, will result in a significant reduction in response times to high-priority calls.

### **Response Time by Beat – All Community Initiated Calls for Service**

In the following table, we examine response times by beat. Here, we look at all community-initiated calls for service for 2019, regardless of priority. The miscellaneous/ unknown categories represent calls assigned to YCSO regions and calls without a zone record.

**TABLE 4-11: Average Response Time Components, by Beat, Community-Initiated Calls**

Zone	Dispatch	Travel	Response	Calls	Area (Sq. Miles)	Population
A1	10.7	7.0	17.8	4,879	12.2	20,147
A2	9.9	6.7	16.6	3,425	2.3	8,500
B1	10.6	5.4	16.0	6,597	3.2	16,665
B2	8.5	4.3	12.9	11,707	1.7	5,922
C1	11.7	7.6	19.3	5,704	9.6	30,192
C2	10.5	6.3	16.9	4,684	3.8	12,989
C3	10.8	6.8	17.6	5,441	5.3	9,117
D1	10.2	5.4	15.6	4,874	2.0	5,996
D2	10.7	5.9	16.7	4,313	4.6	7,777
Miscellaneous	12.1	9.4	21.5	314	NA	NA
Unknown	17.9	10.0	27.9	275	NA	NA
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>52,213</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>117,305</b>

As CPSM conducted our work on this project, a couple of issues were raised relative to measuring call volume and workload. First, there was a question relative to call demand generated by the city's homeless/transient populations and also by persons suffering a mental health crisis, and how these populations impact workload demands of the police department. Secondly, and a separate issue, the use of badge numbers in the assignment of calls for service had some impact on the accuracy of our data collection and analysis, and though we suspect the impact is limited, there is an impact, nonetheless.

Though both issues presented us with a challenge, and we were not able to address the first, there are simple solutions to address these issues going forward. The solutions are found by making a simple modification to the city's CAD programing. We will address each below.

### **Police Call Identifiers: Homeless / Transient / Mental Health**

As was reported in discussions on patrol beats, the city is divided into four patrol zones broken down into nine patrol beats. As calls are dispatched to field units, they are assigned based upon both the nature of the call and its location. For instance, a traffic accident may be assigned to a STEP officer, a disturbance may be assigned to a Downtown Business Association officer, a robbery may be assigned to a patrol officer, and a medical clinic call may be assigned to a

Billings Clinic officer. In any event, the call history records the location (beat/address) of the call, the nature of the call, and the officer(s) assigned. This is helpful in tracking the nature of call responses, something that Billings PD generally does well. In so doing, it can readily develop activity reports broken down by the nature of the call.

An area that warrants attention is the tracking of calls related to the homeless, transients, and persons suffering a mental health crisis. At present, there is no viable means to identify if this population was involved in generating a call for service. For instance, a downtown disturbance may or may not involve this population. And the call type will identify only that a disturbance is involved. A police report or call history may identify this population as being involved, but this information cannot be queried easily for reports. While there is anecdotal evidence that suggest this population is a significant driver of workload, negatively impacts business, and lessens the quality of life in the city, no quantitative analysis of workload demands associated with this population can be conducted readily at this point in time.

A solution is available within the city's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. For example, if a member of this population is involved in generating a police response such as a disturbance (or fire/EMS call for that matter), the responding unit can simply modify the call classification to reflect a disturbance (MH), or a disturbance (H). Whether this is done on the officer's mobile data terminal, or through a request of dispatch at the conclusion of the call, this requires just a simple modification of the city's CAD system to add such a call type to the 387 that exist at present.

In so doing, reports similar to those now readily available for broader call types (e.g., numbers of robberies, burglaries, disturbances, etc.) could be generated for all calls involving the homeless, transient, and persons in a mental health crisis. This could include the location, frequency of response, disposition, and resources necessary to handle the call. Detailed call histories could then be queried as necessary if more information is desired.

## Assigned Unit Identifiers for Police Calls

For the vast majority of police departments, and certainly agencies the size of the Billings Police Department, officers are assigned call designations based upon their assignment. For instance, a foot-beat officer may be assigned as FB1 or FB2, a traffic officer may be assigned as T1 or T2, and a Billings Clinic officer may be assigned as BC1.

Patrol officers are generally assigned by zone and/or beat. For instance, an officer assigned to patrol Zone B may be designated as 2B11 or 2B12. In this case, the initial 2 would represent the shift (day shift), B would represent the patrol area or zone, and 1 or 2 would represent the beat within that area. Therefore, the first (if multiple officers were assigned to a beat) dayshift officer assigned to patrol zone/beat B2 would therefore be designated 2B21. If there were the second car in that beat, it would be designated 2B22.

In Billings, however, rather than assign unit identifiers by this model, units are assigned by their badge numbers. As such, while one can easily identify the officer(s) involved in a call, it cannot be easily and reliably determined which operating unit of the department was involved in the call response.

This was borne out in our efforts to utilize CAD data to identify the workload of individual units. For instance, we could identify which officer(s) responded to a call for service, but nothing in the CAD entry tells us if this involved a patrol officer, a STEP officer, an SRO, a detective, or any other classification. We were provided with a list of badge numbers for patrol-related officers to include in the data analysis. However, since officers may change assignments in midyear, or

work an overtime assignment in a division outside of their regular division, it is impractical — with the available data — to accurately measure workload by assignment. It is critical in our assignment to be able to measure workload by assignment.

As is the case with call identifiers as described above, this can be readily changed in the CAD system. Absent doing so, attempts at measuring workload by assignment will not be entirely accurate. That is not to say that the data presented in this report are unreliable, but rather, there may be instances where nonpatrol-related personnel (e.g., SRO or detective) worked an overtime assignment in a patrol-related function, and because we did not include his/her badge number in our analysis, their workload was not captured.

## PATROL DIVISION SUMMARY

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There is no question that at this time the BPD's patrol staffing is inadequate to effectively manage workload demand. The average workload demands in the 62 percent to 72 percent range, depending on the season and weekday vs. weekend deployments, are clear evidence of this. Action should be taken to address this excessive workload demand.

To address this situation, there are four significant factors that warrant consideration. While we have discussed each, we revisit those here.

**First**, the city added six additional officer positions to the department in FY20/21. At present, all of those personnel are in training, none having yet been deployed in a full service capacity. As these personnel become available for full service deployment, and presuming that future vacancies can be anticipated and filled in a timely fashion, this additional staffing will help to reduce the workload demand shared by patrol officers. However, the addition of these personnel alone will not reduce workload demand sufficiently to fully and adequately address the excessively high demand.

**Second**, the department must look at the use of out-of-service time. Much of this time is spent in the station, and while it is beyond our ability to fully assess the reasons for the out-of-service time situation, we suggest that supervision must take a greater role in ensuring that the use of out-of-service time is necessary and appropriate. Fatigue and low productivity all develop when workload demands are excessive. It is not clear if these are factors in the amount of out-of-service time that is recorded; however, it is alarming that the workload figures show a significant disparity in out-of-service time compared to time spent in self-initiated activity. CPSM believes that reducing administrative out-of-service time by 20 percent is a reasonable target. This would be the equivalent of adding three full-time police officers to field deployment.

**Third**, we strongly encourage the city and department to consider incorporating civilians into the patrol workforce to handle and/or assist officers with nonviolent and calls without suspects, such as "cold" reports, accidents, etc. As the Rule of 60 does not apply to these personnel, a single Police Service Officer can handle the call load of approximately 1.25 officers, thus freeing up the sworn officers' time for proactive crime prevention and enforcement activities.

**Fourth**, a modification of the shift schedules will better balance staffing to match workload demands.

Let us be clear/ Even with these considerations and modifications, workload demand will be significant. However, based upon our calculations, we believe that following CPSM's recommendations will reduce workload levels (saturation index) to a range in the mid-fifties percent to high-fifties percent.

In the patrol recommendations that follow, we incorporate these suggestions as well as others that we believe will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of patrol. Some of these will serve to further reduce the workload saturation that is now experienced. Recommendations regarding the STEP program, which are found in reporting on the Professional Standards Division, will complement this effort more effectively and efficiently manage workload demands.

## **Patrol Recommendations**

- Take targeted action to mitigate conditions that result in high call volumes at the city's five highest call volume locations and which accounted for a total of 3,941 police responses over the year-long study period: Walmart (King St.), Walmart (Main St.), Denney's (27th St.), Albertsons (27th St.), and Holiday Stationstores (6th Av. N.). Replicate successful efforts at other locations as appropriate. (Recommendation No. 1)
- Develop an alarm ordinance designed to reduce the frequency of false alarm responses, and to recover response costs where multiple responses are required over the course of a year to a premises because of repeat false alarms. (Recommendation No. 2.)
- The department should examine causative factors related to the extraordinarily high amount of "out-of-service" time experienced at present for patrol and patrol-related functions. (Recommendation No. 3.)
- Consideration should be given to adjusting shift schedule reporting times to align patrol deployment more closely with community-initiated workload demands. Adding a fourth reporting time would also serve to better balance staffing throughout the day. (Recommendation No. 4.)
- Consideration should be given to incorporating civilians into the patrol work force. A new employee classification of Police Service Officer (PSO) could be established for this purpose. PSOs (sometimes referred to as Community Service Officers, CSOs) are commonly utilized in agencies of Billings' size to take reports on non-emergency crimes without suspect information, handle or assist with accident investigations, direct traffic, handle parking complaints, and many other related duties. Use of CSOs is a highly cost-effective means by which to address high workload demands while freeing up sworn police officers' time for more productive purposes. CPSM recommends that four FTE PSO positions be created, and be assigned to shift reporting times covering daytime and early evening hours. (Recommendation No. 5.)
- Work with the 911/dispatch management team to identify causative factors leading to excessively lengthy response times to high-priority calls for service (11.9 minutes), and specifically, the period after receipt of a call for service and the assignment of a unit to handle such a call (7 minutes). (Recommendation No. 6.)
- Reconsider the practice of holding some high-priority calls until a zone unit becomes available to handle it. (Recommendation No. 7.)
- Modify the computer-aided dispatch system operated by the Fire Department to enable the capture of data on transient, homeless, and mental health-related calls for purposes of future analysis. While calls related to this population are perceived to be a significant contributor to workload demands, the present the CAD system is not used to isolate and collect data related to these calls. The absence of such data limits accurate and detailed analysis of the scope of the problem and leaves only anecdotal evidence as the source from which to plan a path forward in addressing it. (Recommendation No. 8.)

- To better track workload demands by division/unit, eliminate the use of employee badge numbers for radio call signs and transition to radio call signs that reflect shift, zone, beat, special assignment, etc. (Recommendation No. 9.)

## OPERATIONS DIVISION SUPPORT UNITS

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In addition to the basic patrol force, three additional units are assigned to the Operations Division in support of field operations: Canine (K9), Billings Medical Clinic, and Court Services (Municipal Court). We will address each of these separately in the reporting that follows. While the department requested that all patrol function officers be factored into the workload assessment that we have discussed thus far, we will also provide workload information specific to each of these three units here.

### Canine (K9)

Billings PD dedicates significant resources to its K9 program. At present, the department has six K9s, each assigned to a dedicated K9 officer. While all six dogs are trained in drug detection, only three are trained as general search dogs, meaning that in addition to drug detection, they can perform building searches and searches for fleeing suspects. These are referred to as "dual-trained" dogs.

Command and control of the K9 function is somewhat convoluted. The K9 sergeant is assigned to the Operations Division, patrol function. In addition to general shift supervision, this sergeant has the collateral duty of K9 sergeant and is responsible for training and general management of the K9 program. However, he has direct supervisory oversight of only three of the K9 units, that of the dual-trained dog handlers. The remaining three K9 handlers are assigned to the Professional Standards Division, Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP). Those officers work under the supervision of the STEP sergeant. The reasoning for this is that traffic enforcement stops often result in the detection of drugs, and the immediate access to a drug-sniffing dog is a significant asset for STEP officers. Reporting on the STEP program, and its K9 element, can be found in Section 6 of this report.

While the deployment hours vary, the three dual-trained K9 units assigned to patrol are generally deployed Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m., and nightly from 6:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. The K9 units assigned to STEP work Sunday through Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.; Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Each unit works for nine hours in the field, giving the officers an additional hour for training and care of their dogs.

Training time demands are significant for canine units. Every other Wednesday is dedicated to training (full day), and again, each officer works a nine-hour shift in the field rather than a ten-hour shift to allow for a combination of one hour of daily training and care for the dog.

In many agencies, K9 units have limited responsibilities and are often held in "reserve" to respond to calls requiring a K9 or to provide back-up support, which limits their involvement in a case. They rarely handle calls for service, write few crime reports, issue few traffic citations, and make few arrests. CPSM asserts that in all but the largest of agencies, and where K9 calls are common, this practice would lead to underutilization of a costly resource.

As noted, Billings PD has split the K9 unit into two functions, Patrol and STEP. While patrol K9 units do patrol, they reportedly are not assigned as a primary handling unit for a call for service. Our collected data also suggest that they have a much broader role than just as a resource held in

reserve for requests. This results in a much more productive use of this valuable resource. And while STEP is a traffic-focused assignment, data suggest that they have a much broader scope of work as well. This will be addressed in reporting on STEP in Section 6.

CPSM requested department workload data for the K9 units. Data on workload and productivity are recorded on an Excel spreadsheet prepared by the individual handler. CPSM reviewed some provided data, and found that it varied in format from officer to officer. Detailed summary data was not available. As well, staff was unable to locate reports prior to 2018. It should be noted that K9-focused software programs such as PackTrack are available to record deployments, training, bites, and all activities associated with operations. The use of such technology to track and manage such a high-profile/high-liability function is highly recommended.

To this point, we have discussed the K9 program largely as it relates to administrative functions, that is to say both patrol and STEP K9s. As we discuss operational functions we will separate the reporting between the two. The following information pertains solely to the Patrol K9s.

### **Patrol K-9 Workload**

The information contained in the following tables was captured from CAD data, and prepared by CPSM's data analysis team. In 2019, the dispatch center recorded 3,146 calls that involved Patrol K9 units. And though not generally assigned as the primary handling unit, officers are engaged in a wide range of activities, as depicted in Table 4-12. Table 4-13 reflects activities by call initiator, community-initiated vs. police-initiated. Police-initiated does not distinguish between calls initiated by a K9 officer, or those in which the K9 officer is summoned to assist a patrol officer who himself/herself initiated the call.

It is clear from the data in these two tables that the Patrol K-9 units are utilized extensively and for a wide range of purposes. Their activity generally matches that of the broader range of patrol functions carried out by patrol officers. Unfortunately, these data do not distinguish between calls that were handled by a K9 officer but which did not require the use of the K9, and those that required the K9. The use of K9 software such as PackTrack would enable tracking of this kind of information. Nonetheless, the department and Patrol K9 units are to be commended for utilizing this costly resource at an appropriate level.

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**TABLE 4-12: Calls and Workload by Category, Patrol K9 Units**

Category	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	61	24.5
Alarm	260	44.5
Animal	5	3.9
Assist other agency	177	125.4
Check	135	79.9
Crime—person	138	56.6
Crime—property	97	43.5
Crime—society	64	14.5
Disturbance	328	75.0
Follow-up	5	3.7
Investigation	335	191.2
Miscellaneous	7	1.8
Suspicious incident	431	114.4
Traffic enforcement	91	26.0
Traffic stop	987	162.8
Warrant/prisoner	25	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>976.9</b>

**TABLE 4-13: Calls by Initiator, Patrol K9 Units**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	57	4
Alarm	259	1
Animal	4	1
Assist other agency	127	50
Check	1	134
Crime—person	133	5
Crime—property	94	3
Crime—society	59	5
Disturbance	318	10
Follow-up	0	5
Investigation	229	106
Miscellaneous	7	0
Suspicious incident	340	91
Traffic enforcement	61	30
Traffic stop	1	986
Warrant/prisoner	9	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,447</b>

During our study period, the dispatch center also recorded 1,526 "out-of-service" activities assigned to K9 units that were not assigned a call number. The following table reflects that activity.

**TABLE 4-14: Noncall Activities and Occupied Times by Description, Patrol K9 Units**

Unit Status Code	Description	Occupied Time	Count
Out of Service	10-100	8.7	15
Out of Service	10-19	49.3	82
Out of Service	10-21	22.2	27
Out of Service	10-42	19.0	26
Out of Service	10-6	35.3	41
Out of Service	Barn	41.2	111
Out of Service	Bpd	33.8	220
Out of Service	Briefing	58.2	1
Out of Service	City hall/court	125.3	14
Out of Service	Detail	60.7	36
Out of Service	Evidence	39.5	42
Out of Service	Home	11.4	1
Out of Service	Jail	35.5	2
Out of Service	Meeting	80.6	3
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	36.5	308
Out of Service	Out of service	40.3	18
Out of Service	Report	63.6	20
Out of Service	Training	108.8	48
Follow Up	Follow up	41.1	3
Reports	Reports	30.1	172
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>40.7</b>	<b>1,190</b>
Break	Break	41.7	224
Out of Service	Break	10.8	95
Lunch	Lunch	41.0	17
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>32.9</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>39.0</b>	<b>1,526</b>

Though not insignificant, the "out-of-service" time for the Patrol K-9 units is about one-third less than that of the larger group of patrol-related personnel and functions, which we previously reported upon (and in which the K-9 units are included). The suggestion previously made to examine "out-of-service" time was for all patrol-related functions, and applies here as well.

### K9 Recommendation:

- Acquire technology to more effectively track K9 information such as training, deployment, seizures, bites, etc. (Recommendation No. 10.)

## **Billings Medical Clinic**

In studies conducted by CPSM, we nearly always note that hospitals that provide emergency medical services are frequently the site of police service demands, both to address crime reports and to handle disturbances related to unruly patients and/or their family and friends. The responses to a hospital are generally necessitated by an action that took place elsewhere in the city, but for which treatment is sought at the hospital. And for noncrime call responses, again, these often stem from a disturbance relating to a patient.

In 2019, the BPD responded to 90 crime calls and 141 noncrime calls (generally, a disturbance) at Billings Clinic. Given this high level of demand, the Billings Clinic and the city entered into an agreement to assign police officers to the Clinic to handle this workload, and to assist the clinic security staff with general security issues on the hospital campus. Unquestionably, police presence on the Billings Clinic campus serves to mitigate potential disturbances. Absent their presence, call numbers for noncrime incidents would undoubtedly grow.

CPSM reviewed the most current contract, a three-year operating agreement signed in February 2020. Under the terms of the agreement, the department assigns two police officers to the Billings Medical Clinic. The agreement largely covers salary and benefits, plus equipment (vehicle). This agreement serves to benefit both the Billings Clinic medical facility and the police department, and we commend both organizations for their cooperation.

Similarly, we noted that in 2019, the department responded to 64 crime calls and 175 noncrime call at St. Vincent Healthcare. This total exceeds that of responses to Billings Clinic. The department may want to explore the opportunity to establish a contract with St. Vincent that mirrors that of Billings Clinic.

## **Court Services Officer (Municipal)**

The City of Billings operates a Municipal Court, located on the second floor of the City Hall complex, and sandwiched between the first and third floors of the police department. This court hears misdemeanor crimes and city ordinance violations emanating from cases generated within the City of Billings.

The Court Services Officer, a Billings police officer, is responsible for facilitating prisoner transportation as necessary, court security, and arranging for processing of subpoenas generated through the Court. As the court is open Monday through Friday (Friday until noon), the officer has adjusted his work schedule to match the hours of the court.

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## SUPPORT SERVICES (RECORDS)

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### Records Staffing

Under the direction of the Operations Division Captain, day-to-day operational supervision of the Support Services Section is the responsibility of the Records Supervisor. The following table reflects authorized and actual staffing levels at the time of the site visit (December 2020).

**TABLE 4-15: Records Unit Staffing**

Rank	Authorized	Actual	Vacant
Records Supervisor	1	1	0
Support Services Specialist	13	11*	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>

**Note:** \*Two Specialists work detectives and primarily handle transcription duties.

When CPSM inquired about the timeline for filling vacancies, staff indicated that the process moves fairly quickly, with background completion averaging about one month. Staff identified a lengthy and arduous training period of four to five months, coupled with the hiring demographic (persons in their 20s and 60s), and low starting pay as cause of Records trainee failures.

It was reported BPD historically operates Records with two vacancies. Training failures result in expenditure of overtime funds and backlogging of work. The department should take all reasonable steps to address the shortfall of successful candidates.

### Work Schedules/Public Access Hours

Records is staffed 24/7/365 with limited after-hours staffing. Staff work a 4/10 schedule with reporting times (6:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 8:30 p.m.) that ensure adequate staffing at peak workload demand times. As noted in the staffing chart above, two specialists work in investigations and primarily provide transcription services along with other investigations-related collateral duties. They also work a 4/10 schedule with starting times of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

The public counter is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The use of volunteers to work the counter on a regular basis is recommended, especially in the light of the chronic shortage of Records staff. Experienced report writing volunteers from the Crime Prevention Center would be a likely source of capable and knowledgeable volunteers.

### Minimum Staffing

To ensure adequate coverage during peak demand times, minimum staffing is established at one specialist in Records for each shift.

### Workload Demand

Contrary to the common perception that functions performed in law enforcement records divisions are simple tasks such as filing reports and providing copies as needed, there is an exhaustive list of duties performed. Many of these duties are closely regulated by federal and state laws to protect the privacy of individuals and to ensure compliance with mandated functions. The following is a list of many of the general duties performed by Records staff, most of which are daily tasks:

- Greet and assist the public at the window & answer telephones.
- Provide (sell) documents as requested following Montana public records laws.
  - Provide information regarding where the citizen can obtain help as needed (location or information on other agencies or city departments, crash reports from the vendor on-line).
  - Direct people to other city officers, most frequently for court.
  - Provide or deny information regarding people and cases, following protocol and Montana laws.
- Update and send the shift briefing document.
  - Add/remove information as appropriate or requested.
- Electronically process case and accident reports.
  - Merge from field reporting into the records system.
  - All accident reports require a check and 28/31 before merge.
  - Adjust for crime reporting.
  - Ensure required and needed additional paperwork is available and merged together.
  - Prepare for and route to prosecutors' offices.
  - Run criminal history.
  - Assign for follow-up.
  - Reject to commander or officer for corrections.
- Hand-enter traffic citations
  - Run DL/plate.
  - Possibly attach to case and route to court and/or prosecutors' offices.
  - Process E-Cites.
  - Prioritize by court date and citations before warnings.
- Enter and remove warrants, protection orders, stolen items, identity theft and missing persons into CJIN/NCIC and locally; locally enter summons.
  - Ensure there is the correct documentation for entry and removal or obtain said documentation.
  - Second check Municipal Court warrant entries.
  - Complete the quash list for Municipal Court and individual warrants for Justice and District Courts.
  - Run criminal histories for officers, detectives, and prosecutors.
  - Hand-enter arrests when warrants are served by other agencies.
- Online citizen reports.
  - Review and approve.
  - Start incident.

- Hand-enter case and scan paperwork.
- Abandoned vehicle reports.
- Update incident and scan paperwork.
- Return seized driver's licenses to the state (about once a month).
- Respond to written records and background requests.
- File or scan paperwork returned from prosecutors after it has been routed through evidence and also older cases that were held electronically.

In addition, Records clerks assigned to Investigations are assigned the following duties:

- Transcribe statements for homicides, officer-involved shootings, and telephonic search warrants.
- Enter mandatory reporting cases from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.
- Update detectives' cases.
- Complete Montana Victim Compensation reports.
- Run criminal histories, information queries for detectives.
- Respond to requests for Sexual Assault Kit Investigations (SAKI) when a DNA hit occurs.
- Answer phones and staff public window (0800-1700 M-F).
- Handle attorney discovery pick-ups.

The Records Supervisor's duties beyond overall management of the section include:

- Write performance evaluations.
- Point of contact for IT department and dispatch.
- Trouble-shoot for RMS and field reporting.
- Address Public Records Requests.
- Terminal Agency Coordinator for CJIN/NCIC.
- Oversee payroll audits.
- Approve online reports.
- Approve and complete online report requests.
- Oversee department (desktop) computer updates.
- Prepare Reports: Monthly: MTIBR/NIBRS, violent crimes to the U.S. Attorney for Project Safe Neighborhood; Quarterly: CFS, violent and property crimes, and arrest and citations overview to City Council; Annual: Annual Report; criminal background on sworn officers (based on DOB).

As an example of the numbers associated with just a few of these workload demands, during the three-year period of 2017–2019, the Records staff on an annual average processed 19,537 police reports, 10,343 citations, 12,160 written warnings, 10,942 arrests, 11,516 warrants, and provided assistance to an estimated 9,100 members of the public at the Records counter. While

some of that counter traffic is for records-related functions, many times people must be directed by Records staff to other points in the building. Recently implemented online reporting has added 600 reports for processing as of November 2020. This is only a portion of the workload demands on the Records staff.

In addition, Records answered 32,296 calls (based on a 2020 90-day projection) which were registered at the primary Records number. For perspective, that is 88 calls per day. Each of those calls must be answered by the on-duty staff. Clearly, this volume can be disruptive to the work effort of that staff. Many of the calls need to be transferred to other department functions/personnel.

It is common for crime victims to attempt to contact the officer who handled the initial call or the follow-up investigator to provide additional information or get an update on the status of the case. Records staff field many of these calls seeking contact with an officer. BPD officers' business cards provide the department's voice mail line at which they can be contacted. Although officers are encouraged to answer their voice mails promptly, there is no policy or supervisory oversight that directs this. A policy directing personnel to answer voicemails in a timely manner with required supervisory oversight may relieve some of the phone call burden from Records and as well improve public satisfaction.

As noted, there is a vast array of duties performed in police records units. While some agencies choose to assign specific duties one employee who then serves as a specialist in performing that duty, BPD has opted to have all personnel cross-trained in virtually all duties, rank commensurate, and in effect has created generalists capable of working throughout the section. And while there are some collateral duties generally performed by a specific employee, even those functions have been cross-trained. CPSM strongly supports this approach as it ensures a continuity of workflow during unanticipated absences.

As is clearly evident, the responsibilities in total result in a substantial workload. Failure to meet federal and state mandates may result in sanctions against the city to include loss of access to critical databases and potential civil liability.

As was indicated in the discussion on staffing, at present, two Support Services Specialist vacancies exist (about 15 percent of the authorized workforce). Additionally, one Specialist was recently hired and is in training status, further reducing the available workforce. Together, this amounts to about 23 percent of the authorized workforce. As a result of these staffing shortages, the Support Services Section is routinely backlogged on several of the aforementioned tasks, including warning citation processing, vehicle reports, and sealing of records, record purging, record preparation, scanning, quality control checks, and detention certificates, among others. Maintaining the full complement of Records staff will help to address this backlog.

## Online Access to Police Reports

Previously, we noted the days/hours of public access to the Records. There are a host of reasons that the public may visit the Support Services unit. These include obtaining copies of police reports, mandated offender registrations, vehicle release authorizations, oversize vehicle permits, animal licensing, subpoena service (police-related), etc. While the desired police reports may stem from a variety of police-involved actions, most frequently they involve traffic collisions, especially as it relates to insurance adjusters who routinely need to obtain such reports as a result of a claim.

As both a convenience to the public, and to reduce service demands on Records staff, BPD has entered into an agreement with LexisNexis to provide online access to traffic collision reports.

Complainants and victims can also obtain certain reports with proof of identification. Documents are uploaded to a LexisNexis server by Records staff, and public access is immediately available for a nominal fee. There is no cost to the city, and 24/7 online access to the community is a convenient benefit.

### **Public Records Act (PRA)**

Here we address a more complex demand for police records. Never has the demand for police records been greater than today. BPD's pending department-wide addition of body-worn cameras (BWCs) will generate an unprecedented demand for public records. These demands, often complex, result in significant increases in staff time to review, redact, and process demands for information and recordings for judicial discovery and Public Records Act (PRA) requests.

Such demands, absent adequate staffing and planning, have overwhelmed some police department units charged with meeting these demands. BPD is already feeling these effects in Investigations and Property and Evidence where staff are tasked with preparing video for release. Though BPD staff indicate there is no editing or redaction of BWC footage required by the department currently, this may change. City and county prosecutors currently tasked with the ultimate release of footage may also be overwhelmed.

Given the workload currently spread throughout the department, CPSM suggests the establishment of a "Discovery Unit" to respond to PRA and court-ordered records demands. Housed within the Support Services Section, with appropriate staffing and access to applicable systems (i.e., radio and telephone recordings, body-worn camera recordings, etc.), response to discovery and PRA demands could be centralized. PRAs and court orders can be responded to in a timelier and accurate manner, and other divisions will be relieved of this workload.

While it is not possible to accurately project the personnel needed to meet this growing demand, staffing of such a unit could begin at 1.5 civilian FTEs, with the option to grow based upon demand. On occasion, some PRAs fall outside of the legal mandate for response. As necessary, legal counsel should be readily accessible to this unit to review PRA requests in order to ensure that responses are appropriate and necessary.

### **Policies/Operational Guidelines**

The Support Services Section does not maintain a records-specific manual. CPSM was advised the development of a procedural manual is in progress, but in the early stages.

A manual that outlines, in detail, all aspects of the unit from function and organizational structure to step-by-step responsibilities for meeting workload/work-product responsibilities can serve as an excellent training aide, both for new employees and for staff who want to ensure that they are thoroughly and appropriately performing an assigned duty. BPD's department manual also does not reference policies specific to Records' responsibilities. The completion of the Records manual that is in progress and revisions to the department manual are recommended.

### **Records Management System**

The records management system (RMS) used by BPD is Tyler Technologies' New World Law Enforcement Records Management (LERMS) system. BPD also uses the New World platform for its CAD and case management function. Records staff report no interface issues within Support Services and among the few department operations utilizing this platform.

It was learned through discussions throughout the department that LERMS is not being utilized fully by units that would benefit from its capabilities. This should be addressed through in-house and vendor supplied training.

## FBI UCR Reporting and Clearance Rates

Annually, the Federal Bureau of Investigation produces a Uniform Crime Report (UCR) that provides comprehensive crime and other law enforcement data for agencies across the country. Data are provided by states after each state collects and processes the data received from local agencies.

At this time, the FBI is transitioning its UCR reporting to a more comprehensive model, the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The UCR model calls for the reporting of the most serious of crime recorded when multiple crimes occur during a specific incident. For instance, in a home invasion robbery, where an assault occurs during the course of the robbery, at present the robbery would be reported rather than the assault. Under the NIBRS reporting format, both crimes will be reported. This system is to be fully implemented in 2021. BPD has been utilizing the NIBRS reporting system for some time.

Monthly, the Support Services Section is charged with the responsibility of reporting crime data and clearance rates to the State of Montana, Department of Justice, for inclusion in NIBRS. The report is prepared based upon report data entered into the records management system (RMS). The entered data requires careful review by Records staff.

CPSM maintains that while preventing a crime is of utmost importance to any law enforcement agency, solving crime should have parity. The solving of crimes which results in the prosecution of offenders not only prevents future crime, it provides much-needed closure to crime victims. Clearance rates, as defined and measured by the FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR), are the benchmark for a department's effectiveness in solving crimes.

**TABLE 4-16: Reported Billings, Montana, and National Crime Clearance Rates, 2019**

Crime	Billings			Montana			National		
	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances*	Rate
Murder	3	2	67%	35	20	57%	14,325	8,796	61%
Manslaughter									
Rape	75	10	13%	614	72	12%	124,817	41,065	33%
Robbery	98	38	39%	210	82	39%	239,643	73,091	31%
Aggravated Assault	499	285	57%	2,601	1,486	57%	726,778	380,105	52%
Burglary	608	58	10%	2,688	357	13%	981,264	138,358	14%
Larceny	3,266	835	26%	19,152	3,923	20%	4,533,178	834,105	18%
Vehicle Theft	625	76	12%	2,234	400	18%	655,778	90,497	14%

**Note:** \*Counts were calculated from crimes and clearance rates, as these numbers are not directly available from the FBI.

The UCR establishes a strict three-prong criteria for clearing of a case. For UCR reporting purposes, a crime is considered cleared when: (1) a law enforcement agency has arrested the offender; (2) the offender has been charged with the offense; AND (3) the offender is turned over to the court for prosecution (whether following arrest, court summons, or police notice). The

arrest of one person may clear several crimes or the arrest of several persons may clear only one crime. Convictions or acquittals are not factored into clearance rates.

There are clearances via exceptional means as well, but the exceptions are extremely limited and result in numbers that are not statistically sufficient to warrant consideration for our purposes here. Examples include the death of an offender or the lack of an extradition treaty with a foreign government in a nation to which the offender has fled.

CPSM inquired of Records staff as to the department's crime and clearance reporting practices and procedures. We found there was not a clear understanding of the FBI UCR criteria for case clearances. Staff suggested that an arrest is sufficient to clear a case, but this meets only one prong of the three-prong test for case clearance. To clear the case, all three prongs must be met. This requires additional review of the case status to determine if the case is cleared. This is an inadvertent error, one that has been noted in many other agencies. Those agencies that correctly reported UCR data indicated that each report must be reviewed in detail to correctly classify the case, a task generally assigned to one primary and one or two backup employees. CPSM recommends frequent training be provided to appropriate department staff to ensure that the correct criteria is adhered to in reporting of crime and clearance rates.

## Payment Options

One concern noted was Records staff handling cash at the front counter. Depending upon the service sought, whether for the collection of fees, vehicle release payments, purchase of report copies, etc., the public may pay with a credit card or cash. The public transactions are conducted by the records staff at the BPD Records counter. Staff places cash into an unsecured envelope and stores it in an unsecured drawer, accessible to all Records staff. The department administrative assistant audits the envelope and submits the cash to the Finance Department. Records were not available to determine how much cash is accepted annually.

Cash transactions present an unnecessary risk to the city and the department. A few years ago, a records manager at a municipal police department in suburban Los Angeles pled guilty to grand theft after stealing money she collected in the course of her duties over many years. Though she agreed to reimburse the city \$140,000, department estimates placed the loss at more than \$340,000. These were cash transactions for those of the same nature that take place in Billings.

CPSM is not suggesting that suspicious activity has occurred in Records; however, CPSM maintains that the present system presents an unnecessary risk to the city, BPD, and its staff, and should be revised to eliminate the acceptance of cash.

## Support Services / Records Recommendations:

- The department should take all reasonable steps to address the shortfall of successful Records candidates through assessment of current staff skill sets, applicant screening, and enhanced marketing. (Recommendation No 11.)
- The use of volunteers to work the counter on a regular basis is recommended, especially in the light of the chronic shortage of Records staff. (Recommendation No. 12.)
- A department policy should be implemented directing personnel to answer voicemails in a timely manner, backed by required supervisory oversight, to help relieve the number of phone calls that Support Services has to answer. (Recommendation No. 13.)

- Establish a “Discovery Unit” within the Support Services Section to centralize the tasks required for completion of judicial and PRA requests. Initial staffing should be not less than 1.5 FTEs. (Recommendation No. 14.)
- Complete the development of the Support Services Section manual that is in progress and add reference policies specific to Records responsibilities in the department manual. (Recommendation No. 15.)
- In-house and vendor-supplied training should be instituted to ensure LERMS is being fully utilized by all concerned. (Recommendation No. 16.)
- To ensure compliance with UCR reporting guidelines for crimes and clearances, centralize the responsibility for this function, limit the number of staff responsible, and provide frequent re-training to appropriate staff. (Recommendation No. 17.)
- Eliminate acceptance of cash at the Records public counter. (Recommendation No. 18.)

## Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)

In the Operations Division, one police officer is assigned to ICAC, an FBI-initiated program (task force) to combat online-related crimes against children. This includes kidnappings, violent attacks, sex trafficking, sexual abuse, or online predation. The position was created originally created in the Patrol Section, where the officer is currently assigned, at least for payroll purposes. This position is critical to identifying child predators, sexual offenses, and other felonies.

The ICAC officer is not assigned a caseload; rather, he generates his own cases and assists other ICAC Task Force members. The ICAC officer works at an off-site location and rarely sees the Patrol Captain, who is his nominal supervisor. CPSM recommends that the ICAC position be transferred to the Investigations Division, Detectives, where these investigative duties are better aligned.

### ICAC Recommendation:

- Transfer the ICAC officer from Patrol to the Investigations Division, Detectives. (Recommendation No. 19.)

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# SECTION 5. INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Investigations Division operates under the command of a Captain. The division's units include Detectives, Street Crimes, Narcotics, Property and Evidence, ID Technicians, and Crime Analysis. In reporting that will follow, we will separately address each of these functions of the Investigations Division.

The Captain is assisted by two Lieutenants, one of whom oversees Detectives, the Street Crimes Unit (SCU), and task force-related officers. The second Lieutenant is in charge of Property and Evidence and the Identification Technicians.

CPSM identified significant staffing concerns in the Division, both at the supervisor and line levels. These concerns will be addressed in the reporting to follow.

The following table shows the Division's authorized staffing and vacancies, by unit of assignment.

**TABLE 5-1. Investigations Authorized Staffing and Vacancies**

	<b>Captain</b>	<b>Lieutenant</b>	<b>Sergeant</b>	<b>Det/Off.</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
Administration	1					
Police Support Specialist*					2	1
Detectives		1	1	13		
Domestic Violence Investigator**				1		
ICAC Officer***				1		
ATF				1		1****
DEA				1		1****
Street Crimes Unit			1	4		
Federal Task Forces			1	5		
Evidence & Property		1				
Identification Tech Supervisor					1	
Identification Tech					1	
Evidence Tech					3	
Crime Analyst					1	

**Notes:** \*Police Support Specialists are Records employees on assignment to Detectives. \*\*The DVI is presently listed as assigned to the Professional Standards Division. \*\*\*The ICAC officer is presently listed as assigned to the Operations Division. \*\*\*\*The two Investigations vacancies are due to retirements and awaiting appointments to fill ATF and DEA positions, not task forces.

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## DETECTIVES

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The Detectives Section investigates general crimes emanating from within the City of Billings. These are generally cases that are initially handled by a patrol officer, then referred to Detectives for further investigation where needed. Cases in which the patrol officer completes the investigation and the case can be submitted for prosecution without detective follow-up are submitted for filing directly to prosecutors.

Detectives work a 4/10-hour work schedule with overlapping shifts to provide coverage Monday through Friday. The day shift works from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the “noon” shift from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. As a general rule, in this unit and other special assignments throughout the department, assignment to the Detectives Section is for a three-year period. If officers or detectives wish to continue working in their assignment after their rotation period ends, they must reapply for the assignment and compete against officers who are seeking to transfer to a detective assignment.

### **Specialized Assignments**

It is common practice in police agencies across the country of similar size to the Billings PD that detective assignment is broken down into two or three categories, such as crimes against persons (homicide, sex offenses, aggravated assaults, etc.); property crimes (burglary, theft, auto theft, etc.); and family crimes (juvenile crime, family-related crime against the elderly, domestic violence, etc.). That is not the case in Billings where detectives perform as generalists, meaning that they are not divided into specialized assignments and may be called upon to lead the investigation of any type of crime.

Based upon an individual detective's workload, they may be assigned a homicide, or a simple petty theft. While this approach may seem practical on some level, it takes extensive training and experience to develop skills to competently investigate homicides, sex offenses, and computer crimes, among other complicated crimes. These are often crimes that result in complex, high-stakes prosecutions where a robust defense, at times involving highly paid expert defense witnesses, can be expected. As such, it is imperative that investigations be thorough. Imagine being scheduled for brain surgery, and the doctor selected to perform the surgery is a general practitioner rather than a neurosurgeon. More routine crimes such as burglaries and thefts generally do not require the same expertise as more serious and/or complex crimes. When CPSM visited BPD, each detective had been assigned at least one homicide investigation in an effort to share the workload.

Though supervisors refer to detectives as generalists, in fact, several perform as specialists. As well, based on their experience and longevity, these detectives well exceed the three-year assignment standard. In accordance with this philosophy, CPSM submits that the department is better served by assigning detectives to specialized crime units to foster greater expertise, which will result in more investigative precision and better-prepared cases for prosecution. Detectives who handle one homicide or other complex investigation on an infrequent basis do not gain the high level of expertise that is required.

### **On-Call Policy**

Detectives do not have a formal on-call policy for after-hours call-outs. Supervisors rely on detectives answering their phones to respond to night and weekend call-outs. Some detectives are more apt to do so than others, which is a common occurrence absent an on-call policy. This is an MOU (labor) issue that should be addressed. Most detective units have formal call-out schedules and pay on-call detectives accordingly. CPSM recommends that this issue be discussed during the next MOU negotiations.

## **Transcription Workload**

CPSM learned that Police Support Specialists (PSS) assigned to detectives spend most of their time doing case transcriptions for homicide cases and officer-involved shootings. The County Prosecutor requires transcriptions of all recorded interviews of victims, witnesses, and suspects in filed cases. This poses a tremendous burden on the Specialists. One PSS estimated that transcriptions take about 80 percent of her workday. Currently, one PSS position is vacant and is filled with a part-time PSS until the full-time position is filled. One alternative CPSM sometimes offers is to consider using a transcription service. The BPD tried such a service, but found it to be inadequate, so it resumed use of PSSs for transcription.

CPSM recommends that the department explore the use of transcription software, which has improved over the past few years. This may be an alternative that would relieve the backlog of transcriptions the Specialists handle, and would enable them to provide more direct support to Detectives.

## **Detectives Recommendations:**

- Consider assigning detectives to specialized units such as crimes against persons, property crimes, or family crimes. (Recommendation No. 20.)
- Consider developing a formal on-call agreement for detectives. (Recommendation No. 21.)
- Evaluate the feasibility of transitioning to the use of transcription software to relieve the burden of transcription duties from Police Support Specialists. (Recommendation No. 22.)

## **Supervision**

The supervisory staffing level in the Investigations Division, and specifically the Detectives Section, is inadequate. The sole Detectives Sergeant has an excessive span of control, with 14 detectives to oversee. In accordance with best practice, six to eight detectives should be the maximum a sergeant should supervise. To provide relief, the SCU Sergeant has taken on supervision of three detectives in addition to his Street Crimes team, and as well, the Lieutenant directly supervises five detectives.

Additionally, due to excessive caseload demands on detectives, detective supervisors are assigning cases to themselves to provide some relief to overburdened detectives. For example, when CPSM viewed a November 2020 copy of an Excel case management spreadsheet, the two employees with the highest caseload (weighted by the most serious crimes) were a detective and the Detectives Sergeant. CPSM learned that the Lieutenant, Sergeant, and SCU Sergeant all carry a caseload. This detracts from their primary responsibilities to manage the Investigations Division and the supervision of personnel under their command. The Investigations Division Captain and Lieutenant, and the Detectives Sergeant each rotate the task of taking cases daily to the County Prosecutor's office for filing of charges. This duty belongs with detectives and is another indicator of misuse of managerial and supervisory time due to staffing shortages.

A second full-time Detectives Sergeant is needed to provide adequate supervision and relieve the SCU Sergeant and Lieutenant so they may handle their primary duties. CPSM recommends that the department create an additional FTE position for a second Detectives Sergeant so the Section has an appropriate span of control.

In an upcoming section we will address the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. The recommendation will be to transfer the SRO program from the Professional Standards Division to

the Investigations Division and to create one FTE Sergeant to supervise the SROs as well as other collateral duties.

## Supervision Recommendation:

- Hire one additional FTE Sergeant in Detectives and relieve the Street Crimes Sergeant and Investigations Lieutenant from excessive supervisory duties. (Recommendation No. 23.)

## Case Management

Effectively managing criminal investigations, or case management, is an essential function of a Detectives Section. There are many software programs available which enable effective management of this function. Such a program is often linked to a department's records management system (RMS). Features of a robust case management system include information as to case status, including which detective is assigned, what follow-up the detective has conducted (case notes), due dates for follow-up reports that automatically alert supervisors to overdue investigations, and case status such as closed, suspended, cleared by arrest and prosecution, etc. Such systems can easily track not only the case status, but workload of detectives as well.

Absent such a robust system, departments sometimes rely upon Excel spreadsheets or other makeshift case management reports that are more labor intensive and generally less comprehensive. Neither of these two methods, both of which are in use in Billings, is efficient, and the use certainly is not consistent with best practices.

A discussion of the case management process for Billings follows.

Patrol officers complete their reports online into LERMS, the records management system (RMS). When time permits, patrol officers are encouraged to pursue preliminary investigations as far as possible before submitting them to detectives for follow-up or filing at the county prosecutor's office. This provides an excellent opportunity for officers to hone their investigative skills while providing relief for detectives.

Once a report is approved by a patrol supervisor, the Records staff retrieves, enters, and updates the reports in RMS so detective supervisors can access them. The Detectives and SCU Sergeants and the Lieutenant read the reports and assign to a detective those cases they deem suitable for investigative follow-up.

In nearly all law enforcement agencies, and certainly those with high rates of crime such as in Billings, departments are not adequately staffed to conduct follow-up investigations on every crime reported. Rather, detective supervisors screen cases for solvability factors, and only assign cases to detectives where leads exist which would enable an opportunity for a successful investigation, the exceptions being homicides or very serious crimes. Other cases, generally relatively minor property crimes, are suspended and no action is taken absent additional investigative leads materializing. This is the practice in Billings.

In the BPD, there are no formal/documentated criteria to follow to determine case screening thresholds. Instead, the Lieutenant and Sergeants rely on their individual experience to determine whether sufficient solvability factors exist to warrant assigning a case to a detective. Other factors that they may consider include the current caseload in Investigations. As such, inconsistency in this decision-making process is inevitable.

The lack of defined case screening standards forces supervisors to apply their own standards as they see fit, though their individual standards may or may not meet department expectations, or

as noted, even be consistent within the Division. A policy that outlines department case screening criteria for the detective supervisors who are accountable for such screening, as well as case disposition criteria, should be developed and approved by department command staff.

Based on the current screening process, cases are either assigned to an investigator, referred back to patrol for follow-up, or suspended pending further investigative information. Cases suspended or otherwise disposed through the screening process are not actively tracked by individual case or statistically evaluated.

For cases identified as requiring investigation by the Detectives Section, the seriousness or complexity of the crime is assigned a weight. This weighting ranges from a high of 25 for the crime of deliberate homicide with no suspects to a low of 1 for a theft. The collective weight for each detective's caseload is carried as a running total and is a consideration for supervisors in determining which cases to assign to which detective.

Detective supervisors use three systems for case management. While LERMS is the case management portal for the RMS, it is deemed not to be user-friendly as it requires multiple functions to access data; therefore, detective supervisors have created two other systems to more easily manage cases. Nonetheless, LERMS is required to be populated because it is the system that captures crime data to report for the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. Since LERMS is too cumbersome to use exclusively for case management, detective supervisors use an Excel spreadsheet, and a separate case assignment worksheet for every investigation that detectives handle. Information in the Excel spreadsheet is easily retrievable, and the case assignment logs are hard copies. Using three overlapping systems is an inefficient means to manage caseload.

Effective case management software programs track all investigative case information, which would eliminate the current duplication of effort in Billings. As well, some detectives are more likely than others to enter their investigative activity in LERMS, such as interviewing witnesses, obtaining and serving search warrants, arresting suspects, etc. This results in inconsistent data tracking, another shortfall of the case management process now used. Detective supervisors use a six-month benchmark for detectives to complete investigations, except in complex cases. Sometimes cases exceed the six-month deadline and remain active without a disposition.

LERMS does not meet the needs of the Investigations Division, as it does not capture all case information that supervisors need to manage cases effectively. For instance, LERMS does not reflect the number or type of cases generated from Child Protective Services (CPS). In the past two years CPS-generated cases exceeded 500. As of December 8, 2020, 521 CPS cases were assigned to BPD detectives.

CPSM recommends the department upgrade to a more robust case management system that will bring efficiency to the work of supervisors and detectives, and as well will provide more accurate and comprehensive data.

## Case Management Recommendations:

- Develop a policy and guidelines for case threshold decisions for determining case follow-up. (Recommendation No. 24.)
- Develop a policy and guidelines on case dispositions. (Recommendation No. 25.)
- Upgrade to a case management software program that enables tracking of case activity from assignment to closure, including performance benchmarks. (Recommendation No. 26.)

## Detective Workload

There are no universally accepted standards for acceptable caseload (workload) numbers for police detectives. There are simply too many variables for such standards.

The variables include crime rates, the complexity of crimes to be investigated, staffing availability, case screening criteria established by a department, which division is responsible for investigation of minor crimes (i.e., patrol vs. detectives), and any number of additional considerations as established by the agency. For instance, a single murder investigation could consume the work of several detectives for weeks, even months, while dozens of burglaries or thefts could be handled by a single detective during the same period.

In the BPD, detectives investigate primarily serious felony crimes, that is, UCR Part I Index Crimes, and in-custody cases requiring follow-up investigation. As such, it would be anticipated that their caseload would not be significant, but the time required to conduct these more serious crimes would be.

As we assessed detective workload, we identified two significant anomalies that warrant consideration:

- Supervisors carry an investigative caseload due to overburdened detectives, in addition to handling case filings.
- Detectives serve as forensic investigators at crime scenes, a task better suited for civilian forensic specialists.

Additionally, Billings has seen an increase in violent crimes over the past five years, with a significant spike in 2020. Investigations of these crime is labor-intensive. We have and will address these anomalies throughout this section.

While CPSM normally examines the past three years of caseload data, here we focused on 2019 data as BPD staff reported that 2017 and 2018 detailed case information was not retrievable. This speaks to the absence of a robust case management system.

In 2019, BPD reported 5,174 Part 1 Crimes. A large number of these cases were disposed as suspended, inactive, or closed. This would include cases that were handled to completion by patrol officers. For instance, shoplifting is considered a Part 1 crime, and in fact in 2019 shoplifting accounted for the highest percentage of Part 1 crimes by category (3,266 of the 5,174). The remaining 838 Part 1 cases were assigned to 12 detectives, or an average of 69 cases per detective per year.

While this is not a significant caseload carried by BPD detectives, they are also responsible for performing more ancillary duties than their counterparts in the majority of detective sections of comparable size. What may be the most significant of these duties is, again, the collection of forensic evidence at crime scenes.

## Staffing Analysis

In evaluating appropriate staffing levels, we consider, among other factors, current detective caseloads, case complexity, nature and rate of crime, case management practices, and ancillary duties.

An examination of BPD cases assigned to detectives shows that these cases are generally serious or in-custody crimes needing follow-up investigation. These are not informational cases that are suspended or closed, artificially spiking caseload levels. Sixty-nine cases per detective in 2019

averages to 6.2 cases a month. This assumes that officers are off work an average of five weeks a year due to illness, vacation, Family Medical Leave Act, training, etc. While 6.2 cases monthly may not seem to be excessive, the nature of the crimes and other factors must be considered.

Ancillary duties and associated issues CPSM discovered when assessing Detectives' staffing levels were:

- Six detectives are trained as child forensic interviewers. Collectively, they conducted 124 lengthy interviews at the Child Advocacy Center. This requires a child forensic interviewer other than the primary investigator.
- Detectives respond to crime scenes to identify, collect, preserve, and book trace and biological evidence. This is highly unusual for a department the size of Billings. In homicides or other major crime scenes, this laborious task requires four detectives, in addition to the primary and back-up detective, for photographing, identification, collection, processing, and booking evidence, and time involved in writing the evidence report. Highly trained forensic units are normally deployed to handle this task in mid-size to large agencies.
- Detectives handle all death investigations, including infant deaths, suicides, and officer-involved shootings.
- Detectives do not document time spent assisting fellow detectives on search warrants, assistance to outside agencies, downloading more than 4,000 case photos that officers send to detectives on a shared drive, handling 432 requests for multiple tasks from the County Attorney, and 85 cell phone extractions, among other tasks.
- Filing an average of 5 to 15 cases daily with City or County Prosecutors. This task falls to supervisors, including Sergeants, the Lieutenant, and the Captain.
- The impact of new laws and the rise in violent crime. In the past two years, new felony crimes were enacted. Both added considerably to caseload. One law deemed the act of strangulation by a partner or family member to be a felony. In 2019, detectives investigated 144 strangulation crimes, according to the County Attorney's office.
- Since 2015 violent crime in Billings has risen steadily to a rate approaching nearly twice the national average. From 2019 to 2020, homicides rose from 3 to 12, a staggering increase of 300 percent in one year. Following up on these homicides alone encompasses many months of investigations, some of which will continue into 2021.
- Detective Sergeants and the Lieutenant should not be handling cases. A case management summary report dated November 1 to December 8, 2020 showed that 48 cases were assigned to detectives. Thirty-five cases were assigned to the Detective Sergeant, two to the Street Crimes Sergeant, and one to the Lieutenant. This is an inefficient use of resources, occurring because supervisors and managers, to their credit, feel compelled to alleviate the caseload burden on detectives. In 2019 supervisors cleared 452 cases alone to help with the backlog.

The absence of an effective case management system hampers CPSM's ability to make precise recommendations regarding BPD's Investigations staffing; however, it is apparent the Detectives Section is understaffed based on the factors described above. Detectives in departments that CPSM studies do not perform all of these duties, except in small agencies with much lower crime rates. In the dozens of police studies that CPSM associates have conducted, few, if any, Detective Sections have been challenged with as many duties as in Billings.

The involvement of Sergeants and the Lieutenant in detective-level work is another indicator of a staffing shortage. All cases assigned should go to detectives for investigation and filing with the

County Prosecutor, not to supervisors or managers who need to devote time to supervision, managing, and planning.

Detectives Section staffing has not increased since 2015. CPSM contends that a minimum of two new FTE detectives are required to relieve supervisors and managers from handling detective cases and some ancillary duties. If the crime increase in the city continues, the hundreds of cases supervisors now handle would be assigned to the new detectives. This may also provide time for detectives to file the daily average of 5 to 15 cases with prosecutors directly instead of relying on supervisors to do so.

CPSM also identified a civilian staffing opportunity that would contribute greatly to alleviating some of the time-consuming tasks detectives now perform. A Police Service Officer (PSO) assigned to the Detectives Section could handle some of the following duties:

- Download the 4,000 photos that detectives receive yearly, an average of 333 a month.
- Respond to the 400-plus annual follow-up tasks the County Prosecutor requests.
- Assist detectives on search warrants by handling administrative duties.

The number of requests from the County Prosecutor the PSO could handle would depend on the nature of the request.

Whether it is LERMS or a succeeding records management system, detailed case information needs to be extracted and transformed into relevant and timely management reports for investigative supervisors and department managers to analyze. The lack of a quantitative and qualitative assessment process needs to be addressed. This will heighten BPD management's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the department's investigative function and the success of its efforts to address crime in the community.

### **Detectives Workload Recommendations:**

- Consider adding two FTE police officer positions in the Detectives Section to meet workload demand. (Recommendation No. 27.)
- Consider creating one FTE Police Service Officer position to relieve detectives of rudimentary duties. (Recommendation No. 28.)

### **Cold Case Homicides**

No cold case homicide unit exists at BPD. Currently, the number of unsolved murder cases is unknown; however, in at least six cases the evidence has been sent to a private lab to extract the DNA. Once results are back the DNA will be submitted to the national Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) for analysis. This may be a suitable opportunity to use salary savings to hire a temporary, part-time experienced investigator to reexamine cold cases and identify those where investigative leads may be available based upon new technologies. Those could then be assigned to a detective for follow-up.

### **Crime Scene Investigations**

Successful identification and collection of evidence, especially trace and biological evidence, is of paramount importance in solving crime. In the most serious of cases such as homicides and sexual assaults, without such evidence, the filing of charges and the prosecution of offenders can be compromised. Crime scene investigators must have a high degree of training, experience, skill, and commitment to master this art. In many agencies the size of Billings, it is

typical that specialized Crime Scene Investigations manage this work. In many cases, these units are staffed by civilians.

In Billings, these duties fall to patrol officers and detectives. For more routine crimes such as burglaries, the responsibility falls to patrol. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is a hit-or-miss proposition, and if the call load is high on a given shift, little effort may go into attempts to collect evidence. If a crime is significant, officers call detectives to the scene to process it for physical evidence collection. In either case, this is an added duty for the patrol officer or detective, one for which they generally have little training.

CPSM staff requested reports regarding the frequency of collection of evidence at crime scenes, the quality and viability of the evidence collected, and the evidentiary value of that evidence. However, information of this type is not collected by BPD. As a result, a qualitative evaluation by CPSM of the effectiveness of the department in collecting evidence was not possible. Collecting this information would enable the department to establish benchmarks that will assist in performance measurement and the identification of training needs.

While the department has an ID Tech Unit, its role is limited to the analysis of fingerprint evidence collected by patrol or detectives. CPSM recommends that the department explore the development of a Crime Scene Investigations unit, staffed by civilians, which would be charged with the collection of evidence at most crime scenes.

The International Crime Scene Investigators Association provides extensive training, certification, and sets standards for crime scene processing. Neither patrol officers nor detectives have the time to pursue the strict regimen required to achieve expertise in crime scene evidence identification and collection. As an example, crime scene technicians are trained to recognize and/or collect trace evidence, DNA, bodily fluids, blood spatter, tire marks, latent prints, tool marks, and more. The collection of this range of evidence types requires intensive training and experience to achieve expertise.

This issue is more fully addressed later in the section as we report on Identification Technicians, who currently perform a limited and more focused role, and do not respond to crime scenes.

As mentioned previously, detectives use a crime scene van for processing crime scenes. The Identification Technicians should be using the van in a greater capacity. CPSM's recommendation, contained in the Identification Technicians section, is to increase the Identification Technician staffing, improve their training, and deploy them to crime scenes for evidence collection, thus relieving detectives and often patrol officers from these responsibilities.

## Crime Scene Investigations Recommendation:

- If the proposed development of a Crime Scene Investigations Unit is approved, phase out the practice of detectives collecting trace and biological evidence at crime scenes.  
(Recommendation No. 29.)

### Technology

With the exception of the lack of a robust case management system, technology in the Detectives Section is good. The crime scene van is equipped with a FARO 3D Laser scanner, used often for major injury traffic investigations and major crime scenes. Cellebrite, a software system that extracts cellphone data, aids in many investigations. Upgrades for both FARO and Cellebrite are two priorities for detectives. Both technologies have greatly improved forensic capabilities in Investigations.

## Augmenting Detective Staffing

At the time of the CPSM site visit, there were limited vacancies in the department, but this situation can be fluid and many agencies find themselves carrying numerous vacancies for extended periods of time. If this occurs, workload builds up, often resulting in shortcircuiting of investigations or backlogging of work.

To lessen the impact of vacancies, many police departments utilize temporary, part-time staff paid for from funds accrued by salary savings resulting from the vacancies. As such, this does not require a special budget appropriation.

Department retirees are an excellent source for this temporary staffing. They are experienced, and the department can be selective in the hiring process to ensure that the temporary employee possesses the skill sets and motivation to be of value to the organization. The temporary employee could review cold case homicides, assist with thefts or crimes in which the retiree had previous investigative experience, or help with other investigative duties. When the vacant position is filled, the part-time position ends, unless other vacant positions exist, allowing an extension.

This use of retirees as temporary part-time employees is not uncommon in many departments, nor is it limited to detective functions. Often, background investigations are assigned to this workforce. We know of one small agency that used a retired homicide investigator in a part-time position to review grand theft cases. He solved several cases, recovering loss for some victims. Use of temporary staff is not limited to sworn personnel. Some 911/Communication Centers and Records Divisions utilize this option as well.

Another source of help is volunteers. Volunteers are an overlooked resource in police departments, particularly for detective units. In departments the size of Billings, volunteers have been used in the following ways:

- Locating missing persons and runaway juveniles by calling family members or reporting parties to check the status. Missing persons often return home or are located, but families sometimes do not notify police.
- Administrative work such as organizing and filing.
- Assisting in identity theft investigations by doing preliminary work such as contacting bank officials and victims. This is usually done by former bank officials, police investigators, attorneys, etc., but is not limited to those occupations.
- Assistance in computer forensics.

BPD Citizen Police Academy graduates are an excellent source for this labor pool as they have insight into department operations.

## Augmenting Staffing Recommendations:

- Consider using salary savings from vacant positions to hire retired, temporary part-time police investigators. (Recommendation No. 30.)
- Consider identifying ways that volunteers could be of help in the department, and recruit volunteers from Citizen Police Academy graduates. (Recommendation No. 31.)

## STREET CRIMES UNIT (SCU)

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The Street Crimes Unit was formed in 2018 to target an increase in crimes affecting quality of life such as burglaries, auto thefts, and low-level thefts, etc. A Sergeant supervises one detective and three police officers. A fourth officer will soon be assigned to augment the unit. The SCU works a 4-day, 10-hour swing shift from Monday through Thursday. When the additional officer is added, the unit will split into two teams, creating an additional shift from Tuesday to Friday.

The SCU generates its own cases, focusing on street crimes, and follows up on some patrol-initiated cases. The SCU also targets drug offenses, as they are commonly linked to thefts.

The SCU has produced impressive results. A report on its activities is summarized in the following table. The SCU has also generated cases it has referred to various federal agencies and task forces such as the DEA, ATF, FBI, and the CCSIU. This is a highly productive team that should be continued. The only impediment the SCU faces is the lack of county jail space for offenders.

We found that no written policy exists in the department's policies and which addresses the Street Crimes Unit, its purpose, and its goals. CPSM recommends the department create a policy that describes the functions and goals of the SCU.

**TABLE 5-2: Street Crimes Unit Activity, 2018–2019**

Cases initiated	376
Arrests	99
Warrants served	525
Cites/warnings	273
Stolen vehicles recovered	94
Guns seized	58
Drugs seized	92 lbs.
U.S. currency seized	\$113,621

### SCU Recommendation:

- Develop a policy for the Street Crimes Unit, including its purpose, function, and goals. (Recommendation No. 32.)

## TRAINING

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The Investigations Division relies on the department's training manager to arrange training for Division personnel. Once an officer or detective is assigned to Detectives, they are to attend a basic two-week investigations course, as well as courses in interview and interrogation and search warrants. As the detective begins to develop skill in a specialty, for example, sex offenses, he or she may ask to be sent to a sex crimes course. There is no written or formal regimen of training classes for detectives or a timeline in which they are to be completed. A list of essential and desirable courses for detectives and supervisors should be identified. New employees should receive training within a designated and reasonable time upon their appointment. Some staff report that they have not received timely training.

In addition, the department should consider creating a formal training program for detectives and Sergeants, similar to the patrol field training officer format, with benchmarks and supervisory

oversight. These training programs exist in other departments; they are an excellent introduction to a new assignment and help to ensure accountability. A key component is training new detectives and supervisors in essential policies and procedures and their documentation. The primary purpose is to ensure excellence and to minimize risk of misconduct and errors.

The Detectives Section should also have a reference manual for Police Support Specialists, detectives, and supervisors. This should include common forms, search warrant samples, and operational guidelines. Examples of manuals are available from other police departments. These operational manuals benefit new detective staff and supervisors, easing the transition into Investigations. The Carlsbad, Calif., police department has an outstanding training program and is an excellent resource for the latter two recommendations.

## Investigations Training Recommendations:

- Identify essential and desirable training courses for every position in Detectives, including civilian through managers. (Recommendation No. 33.)
- Create a formal training program for detectives and supervisors. (Recommendation No. 34.)
- Develop operational/reference manuals for Police Support Specialists and detectives. (Recommendation No. 35.)

## FEDERAL TASK FORCES AND FEDERAL AGENCY STAFFING

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Law enforcement partnerships at all levels of government — federal, state, and local — are both necessary and beneficial. These partnerships enable collaboration in addressing organized crime and other major criminal activity that threaten the peace and security of our communities. Local agencies especially benefit from these partnerships as few have the resources to individually address intrastate and interstate criminal networks or web-based crimes.

As the largest municipal policing agency in Montana, it is both appropriate and necessary that Billings PD be an active player in these law enforcement partnerships. Several task forces are based in Billings, which provides the city with additional law enforcement resources. Billings PD recognizes the importance of these collaborative efforts and commits significant resources to them.

The BPD participates in five task forces: FBI Regional Cell Phone/Computer Forensics Task Force; U.S. Marshal's Montana Violent Offenders Task Force; Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); City-County Special Investigations Unit (CCSIU); and the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) (which was previously reported upon in the Operations Division (Section 4) as the officer assigned to ICAC is technically housed there). Each task force is housed at an off-site location.

We will briefly address each of these task forces (except ICAC). While CPSM believes that each of the task forces has value, since the department commits significant resources to them, it should regularly review via a cost benefit analysis the value of continuing each of the partnerships, and whether an additional commitment of resources is necessary. This review should be formalized and data driven, and should be conducted annually.

### **FBI Regional Cell Phone/Computer Forensics Task Force**

One BPD detective has been assigned to this task force for more than ten years. He is partnered with an FBI agent and they work at an off-site location. Their expertise lies in computer forensics,

including extracting data from cell phones and computers. They are not assigned a BPD caseload. Detectives rely regularly on this team for cell phone and computer data extraction. This appears to be an effective partnership for BPD and should be continued.

### **U.S. Marshal's Montana Violent Offenders Task Force**

One detective is assigned to the Billings District Violent Offenders Task Force. Their primary duties involve making high-risk arrests, predominantly warrants. The following table shows an overall increase in seizures of firearms, currency, and all narcotics and drugs, except marijuana from 2018 to 2019.

**TABLE 5-3: Billings District Violent Offenders Task Force Activity, 2018–2019**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
High-Risk Arrests	660	659
Firearms Seized	36	116
Marijuana	6,908.09 grams	5,657.1 grams
Methamphetamine	6,411.82 grams	8,550.93 grams
Heroin	487.5 grams	563.3 grams
Cocaine	17.7 grams	78.1 grams
Vehicles seized	21	20
Currency seized	\$36,819	\$118,000

### **Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)**

One detective is assigned to the ATF and another to the DEA. Neither is in a task force; this is a lengthy assignment to the respective agencies. The Investigations Division Captain is their BPD report. Though no activity reports were available for CPSM, the Captain reported that the affiliations with ATF and DEA have been invaluable through close relationships and shared resources.

### **City-County Special Investigations Unit (CCSIU)**

The CCSIU is a High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force that provides additional federal resources to help eliminate or reduce drug trafficking. The HIDTA is part of the Rocky Mountain High-Intensity Drug Trafficking area that encompasses Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. A BPD Sergeant supervises three BPD detectives, two Yellowstone Country Sheriff's detectives, three Homeland Security agents, one FBI agent, one DEA agent, one ATF agent, one Border Patrol agent, a Postal Inspector, Montana Highway Patrol, and U.S. Marshals. A BPD K9 unit assists with a drug detection dog.

The CCSIU focuses on mid- to upper-level drug traffickers. Though the CCSIU generates its own cases, each day the unit receives more drug-related calls from dispatchers than it can handle, and two to three tips each weekday from BPD detectives. Some of the CCSIU-generated cases result in asset forfeiture cases, which generates shared revenue funds among the agencies.

The Rocky Mountain HIDTA provides equipment and training for the CCSIU, including weeklong classes and advanced schools.

CPSM contacted the Rocky Mountain HIDTA Acting Director regarding the CCSIU. She described the CCSIU HITDA group's work as exceptional over the past several years. In 2018, the CCSIU Unit

earned the "Outstanding HIDTA Group" for the Rocky Mountain HIDTA four-state region. The CCSIU operates as an effective unit.

## Task Force Recommendation:

- An annual cost benefit assessment should be conducted relative to the department's continued participation in each federal, state, and regional task force. (Recommendation No. 36.)

## CRIME ANALYSIS

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The systematic analysis of data and information is valued by police agencies seeking to improve their effectiveness. Crime analysts review all police reports with the goal of identifying patterns as they emerge. A crime analyst can identify developing problems and alert command and operational staff to the activity as soon as possible so that effective tactics and strategies can be employed to prevent and reduce crime. The crime analysis function is integral to good policing and the appropriate utilization of limited police resources. Billings has sufficient activity to benefit from this service.

The BPD has one Crime Analyst who reports directly to the Detective Lieutenant. She belongs to the professional organization for crime analysts, the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts, IALEIA. It appears that Detectives and Crime Prevention may not be familiar with the analytic tools a crime analyst can provide. The only specialized software in use other than the department's LERMS RMS is ArcGis, a mapping and software program that enables the Analyst to do crime mapping and other functions. ArcGis recently previewed a free link analysis feature that the Analyst may find useful, as she has been without that function. The BPD Crime Analyst prepares various statistical crime reports for the Investigations Division and command staff. She does not receive feedback.

CPSM viewed the BPD website and its crime mapping listed under "Crime Statistics." The city pays crimemapping.com for the service. According to the Crime Analyst, she could deliver the same product, saving the city the additional expense.

Basic duties of the BPD Crime Analyst should include monitoring crimes and notifying commanders of crime patterns and/or crime series; creating statistical reports, maps, charts, diagrams, and timelines; creating ad-hoc reports of various types; responding to external surveys and questionnaires; analyzing suspect/victim call detail records; and creating databases as needed.

In addition, Crime Prevention should be working with the Crime Analyst to track crime sprees and concentrations of incidents where intervention may prevent crime. However, one impediment for the Analyst in producing the most current crime data is the impact of delayed data input.

The public may report minor crimes such as petty theft and malicious mischief online, or in person at the Crime Prevention Center (CPC), where volunteers take reports. Records retrieves and enters the crime data from online reports and from the CPC into LERMS. The Crime Analyst uses LERMS to mine data for past criminal activity to identify potential crime or suspect patterns and methods of operation. Delays in entering data from online and CPC-generated reports into LERMS can then delay the Analyst's real-time reporting capabilities. Delays can be up to a week or more, according to the Analyst. CPSM recommends that steps be taken to ensure that crime data from online and CPC-generated reports are promptly entered into LERMS.

A related issue is the lack of streaming data. The Analyst has to download crime data from Records (RMS), resulting in dated information. Timely crime data is important for identifying trends in quality-of-life crimes such as petty theft and graffiti as well as more serious crime. If IT is able to provide streaming data this would eliminate the delay and improve reporting. CPSM recommends that the BPD determine if IT is able to provide streaming data to improve data access.

CPSM reviewed the city's Crime Analyst's job flyer. It contains eight essential duties and responsibilities, including "Detects and solves community crime problems, develops effective strategies and tactics to prevent future crimes." This suggests that the Analyst and sections such as Detectives, Patrol, and Crime Prevention should work together more closely to prevent and reduce crime.

The Analyst position should be leveraged more than it is now for developing value-added information. Department executives must communicate their vision for the Crime Analyst to ensure clarity and expectations. To formalize this strategy the department should consider creating a policy describing the purpose and expectations of the Analyst. This should include persons or units receiving analysis or reports and evaluating these work products for their usefulness.

### Crime Analysis Recommendations:

- Ensure that data from crime reports taken online and at the CPC is promptly entered into LERMS. (Recommendation No. 37.)
- Determine if IT is able to provide streaming data to the BPD to improve crime analysis. (Recommendation No. 38.)
- Consider writing a crime analysis policy to ensure the information developed by the Crime Analyst is received by the appropriate persons, acted upon by such persons, and evaluated for its usefulness. (Recommendation No. 39.)

## EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY UNIT

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The intake, processing, storage, and disposal of evidence and property are important functions for any law enforcement agency. It is especially true for weapons, narcotics and dangerous drugs, and cash. Police agencies across the country have often faced the consequences of mismanaged property and evidence sections, including terminations and arrests of police employees from janitors to police chiefs for thefts of narcotics, cash, jewelry, guns, and other items of value. In some cases, audits that revealed unaccounted-for property and evidence led to the termination of police executives, though they were not suspected of being implicated in the theft/loss of the evidence. Controlling access to the property and evidence areas, inventory control, and regular audits are critical to the effective management of the evidence and property function.

### Facilities

In 2018, the Billings City Council approved the expansion of the police evidence facility by an additional 12,000 square feet, including eight vehicle storage bays. The new facility is adjacent to the old evidence storage building, located about three miles from the downtown police station. During CPSM's visit, the transfer of stored property to the new facility was underway; this is expected to be completed by late 2021.

The new evidence facility was dedicated in November 2020. Staff has been transferring items from the old facility to the new one for months. CPSM examined both facilities and saw that it will be at least six to eight months, if not longer, before the transfer of all items to the new facility is complete.

Every entrance into the facility and secure areas within requires a key fob. The device records the identity of the key fob holder, and the time and date of entry. The room where guns, cash, and drugs are stored requires a two-person authenticated entry. Internal and external CCTV video cameras record 24 hours a day throughout the facility. The main storage area for inventoried items is large, organized, and immaculate. Rows of shelves were stacked with boxes containing neatly labeled evidence envelopes. A refrigerator and freezer store bodily fluids and sexual assaults kits. Both property and vehicles can be released in a secure manner, thus minimizing face-to-face contact.

Another feature of the facility is a multipurpose meeting room. It can be used for training, meetings with prosecutors, or for other purposes. It is equipped with a monitor and three two-way evidence lockers designed to allow prosecutors to view evidence before court proceedings.

While it is not desirable to store property and evidence at an off-site facility, it is a common practice in many law enforcement agencies, as sufficient available on-site space rarely exists.

The design of the Evidence facility is consistent with best practices, and the transition appears to be orderly.

## **Staffing**

The Evidence and Property Section is under the direction of a Lieutenant who supervises one Evidence Tech Supervisor and three Evidence Technicians. The Lieutenant reports to the Investigations Division Captain.

## **Work schedule**

Staff work staggered 4/10 schedules so as to provide service Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On Wednesdays, Evidence is closed to the public so that staff can make deliveries and pick-ups to and from the state crime lab, and send discovery requests to City Hall.

## **Training**

The professional association prominently serving this field is the International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE). IAPE provides valuable training and technical support. The PE staff are all members of IAPE, positioning the department to be current with the best practices.

The Evidence and Property staff have attended IAPE courses, including Certified Property and Evidence Technician training and webinars through the software company EvidenceonQ. These courses are beneficial; however, we found there is not a core regimen of required, desirable, or on-going classes identified for staff. Such a training regimen should be developed and followed for all employees.

## **Policy**

BPD does not have a policy guiding the department's intake, processing, storage, and disposition of evidence and property. Policy 9-5, Acquired Property Management, is a very brief policy draft containing three rules for managing the property room and one reference to the

Professional Standards Captain conducting audits. A more comprehensive policy should be written.

As well, an Evidence and Property operational manual should also be developed and maintained.

Templates for both of these documents are available on the IAPE website. CPSM recommends that an Evidence and Property policy be developed along with an operational manual for reference.

## Operation of Evidence and Property

### ***Intake***

The property and evidence intake process is as follows: Officers seizing property or evidence transport items to the evidence facility where they use a key fob to enter the packaging room. All security key fobs record the time, date, and identity of the person entering a room. Officers use the EvidenceonQ software program to print a barcode that tracks the items to be stored; it includes the case number, identifying information, ownership, and booking officer, etc. The officer attaches the printed barcode to the packaged items and places them into one of dozens of various-sized two-way lockers. Once the property is secured in the locker with the door shut, the officer can no longer open it from the packaging room. Evidence Technicians subsequently collect the property from the other side of the locker inside the secured evidence facility. Using the barcode for tracking, they assign the items to a storage location until further action regarding the evidence is required.

Storage for biohazards such as blood and larger items such as bicycles is also available.

The following table shows the number of items in inventory, received, released, and awaiting disposition in 2019. It can be seen that 18,202 items were received in 2019 and 19,807 items were released. The number of items released or disposed of is remarkable, though it may be attributable to the move into the new facility. Many police department evidence and property rooms accept more items than they release each year, year after year, accumulating an unmanageable inventory. This data should be a performance benchmark, as it reflects an effective operation.

**TABLE 5-4: Evidence & Property Inventory, Intake, and Release, 2019**

	<b>Number of Items</b>
Items in inventory	69,448
Items received	18,202
Items released/disposed	19,807
Items awaiting disposition	647

### ***Inventory Control***

EvidenceonQ, the inventory control program, is facilitated by a computer software program called "File on Q." All stored items moved or booked into the new facility are tracked on EvidenceonQ.

As noted, in 2019 during the preparation for moving into the new facility, Evidence staff purged 19,318 items of evidence, some of which had been in storage for decades. Disposing of backlogged property is a problem at nearly every police evidence facility and must be

addressed on a regular basis. The department is to be commended for purging such a substantial number of items.

In a monthly or quarterly report the number of items received in Evidence and Property should be reported to department management, along with the number of items disposed of or released. The volume of items stored can easily outpace those released, causing huge backlogs and a significant inventory problem in the future.

One common problem in evidence and property rooms is disposing of evidence in criminal cases. The department's evidence tracking software, EvidenceonQ, should be used to alert staff when the statute of limitation for prosecution of an offense has been reached. CPSM learned that this feature has not been activated, possibly due to a backlog of cases. Quarterly measures should be established to ensure that adequate resources and effort are committed to this task. Should the quarterly target not be reached, additional resources should be added to ensure that performance goals are met.

The first step in addressing a backlog of property and evidence is to identify which items have no evidentiary value. Purging of property and evidence for cases with expired statutes of limitation for prosecution will allow for a significant reduction of inventory. Though Evidence staff has done an excellent job of purging unnecessary property and evidence, it is imperative that purging continue to be a department-wide commitment. Without the commitment to stay on top of this issue, the department will find itself in the position of needlessly storing obsolete property and evidence.

### **Discovery and Public Records Requests**

Evidence and Property is greatly impacted by the growing number of discovery and public records requests. An Evidence Technician processes an average of 50 discovery requests weekly for in-car police videos. The requests come from city and county attorneys, private attorneys, and the media. These copies are made at no cost. It is estimated that the copying of the hard drives from police body-worn cameras and vehicle cameras takes about 60 percent of the work time for the one Evidence Technician. This is a significant impact and underscores the need for the creation of a Discovery Unit, as was recommended in reporting on the Records Section, and the transference of this task to that Unit.

### **Audits and Inspections**

Audits and inspections are essential for effective evidence and property management. Both scheduled and unannounced audits and inspections should occur. These should include internal and external audits, the latter from outside the Investigations Division.

CPSM learned that the Evidence staff performs quarterly internal audits of drugs, cash, and guns, and sends them to the Professional Standards and the Investigations Divisions. No records of the quarterly audits were available. According to past practice, the Professional Standards captain makes an appointment to do random audits. CPSM asked for a copy of the last Professional Standards' audit and learned that the captain documented that an audit was done in FY 2018-19 but no information was included about the outcome of the inspection. The Captain did inspect the ongoing construction to ensure compliance with procedures. CPSM learned that no policies or checklist exist of items in Evidence and Property to be audited or inspected.

CPSM recommends that a schedule for audits and inspections of the evidence and property facilities be created in policy. The department should consider including the following procedures, or follow the guidelines in the International Association for Property and Evidence website:

- Once a month the Evidence supervisor will ensure adherence to appropriate policies and procedures.
- Unannounced inspections of the storage areas shall be conducted and documented at least annually as directed by the Chief of Police.
- An annual audit of evidence held by the department will be conducted by a Captain not routinely or directly connected with evidence control.
- Whenever a change is made to personnel who have access to the evidence room, an inventory of all evidence/property shall be made by an individual not associated with the property room or function to ensure that records are correct and all evidence/property is accounted for.
- Ensure that audits include total inventory on hand, including number of items received and disposed of during the time period of the audit.

While no current audit reports were available for review, we note that most audits that CPSM has reviewed involve known samples. Auditors access records from the department's evidence tracking software to select a random sampling, then seek to locate the item in storage, or ensure that proper disposal documentation exists.

CPSM suggests that in addition to, or in place of this methodology, a sampling of reports from the Records Section be examined to find cases in which property or evidence was booked. Those cases should then be used for purposes of conducting the audit. If the sampling only draws from records within the property and evidence tracking software, it may be more difficult to identify property that had been misappropriated and records purged. This is not meant to suggest that misconduct has occurred; rather, this simply introduces an alternate audit process that CPSM believes to be superior.

### **Civilianization of Evidence and Property**

The current lieutenant's insight, guidance, and commitment has been invaluable in establishing a state-of-the-art evidence and property room. Given his experience and involvement in this long-term project, it is prudent that the lieutenant oversees the transition until the new facility is fully operational. The department should consider a transition at that time from a sworn to a civilian Evidence and Property supervisor. Civilians have increasingly assumed the role of evidence and property room supervisors at police departments across the country with great success. We will address this more fully in Section 7 as we address the creation of a civilian career ladder.

### **Evidence and Property Recommendations:**

- Identify essential, desirable, and on-going training classes for all Evidence and Property staff. (Recommendation No. 40.)
- Create a policy for the Evidence and Property function. (Recommendation No. 41.)
- Develop an operational manual as a reference guide for Evidence Technicians. (Recommendation No. 42.)
- Include the number of items received and dispositioned or released in a monthly or quarterly report. (Recommendation No. 43.)
- Transfer responsibility for copying police video camera footage to the (proposed) Discovery Unit. (Recommendation No. 44.)

- Develop a policy describing audits and inspections of the Evidence and Property facility in accordance with standards of the International Association for Property and Evidence. (Recommendation No. 45.)
- Ensure that audits conducted of the Evidence and Property Unit include reports on total inventory on hand to include the number of items received and disposed of during the time period of the audit. (Recommendation No. 46.)
- Consider transitioning the Evidence and Property Lieutenant's position to a civilian supervisor once the new evidence facility is in full operation. (Recommendation No. 47.)

## IDENTIFICATION TECH UNIT

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The Evidence Lieutenant oversees the Identification Tech Unit, consisting of an Identification Tech Supervisor and one Identification Tech. Both are civilian employees. Identification Technicians are referred to by many titles in police work, including crime scene technician, forensic specialists, crime scene investigator, etc. Many respond to crime scenes to process evidence. This is not the practice at BPD.

The sole ID Tech works exclusively on latent print identification in the laboratory located in the new evidence facility. Neither she nor her supervisor respond to crime scenes. They accept trace and biological evidence and send it to the state crime lab for analysis. Both the ID Tech and the supervisor are second print qualified, meaning that they can validate an identification made by the initial examiner; this is a notable achievement for the department.

The following table shows a considerable number of latent prints are submitted for comparison, although there has been a decrease of 43 percent in latent prints processed over the three-year period. It is unclear why this occurred; staff surmised that it may have been due to experienced officers retiring and newer officers' unfamiliarity with latent print collection.

**TABLE 5-5: Evidence Technicians Latent Print Activity, 2017–2019**

	2017	2018	2019
Latent prints examined	984	792	564

The ID Tech supervisor also assists in the Evidence and Property room. This has been time-consuming, given the need to move thousands of items from the old facility to the new property room. CPSM also learned that the sole ID Tech will be retiring soon.

CPSM suggests that the department and community would be better served by expanding the Identification Tech Unit and deploying ID Techs to crime scenes for evidence processing. This would entail extensive training of five new proposed staff in the collection and preservation of physical evidence. This skill can often be central to the prosecution of high-profile cases that rely heavily upon the existence of forensic evidence. It is vital that personnel involved in this process receive appropriate training, and that adequate records exist of training attended. The lack of training and training records can create complications for prosecutors attempting to qualify expert witnesses and thus can create challenges in prosecuting crimes.

An expanded ID Tech Unit should be staffed with a minimum of six FTE ID Techs and an ID Tech supervisor. If this proposal is adopted, this expansion would likely be phased in gradually. It is essential that the supervisor be experienced as a crime scene evidence technician. The intricate

knowledge required of a supervisor to be familiar with multiple disciplines in trace and biological evidence takes years of field experience and training.

This is a worthy goal that would professionalize BPD's evidence collection and relieve an overburdened detective section and patrol force from performing this time-consuming duty. The expertise that a well-trained ID Tech Unit brings to investigations would ensure greater credibility in court, as they could testify to their advanced training and experience. If this expansion occurs, a procedural manual should be developed to provide guidance and direction to staff.

### Identification Technician Recommendations:

- Consider expanding the ID Tech Unit, with the goal of having personnel respond to crime scenes for evidence collection and processing. (Recommendation No. 48.)
- Create five new FTE Identification Tech positions and train them in accordance with IAPE standards. (Recommendation No. 49.)
- Ensure that the ID Tech Supervisor in the proposed unit has extensive training and experience in crime scene evidence collection, processing, and preservation. (Recommendation No. 50.)
- A procedural manual should be developed to provide guidance and direction for the Identification Tech unit. (Recommendation No. 51.)

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# SECTION 6. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

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Under the direction of a Captain, the Professional Standards Division is made up of the following units/functions: Internal Affairs, Training, Employment Services, the volunteer program, public relations, Crime Prevention, the STEP program, School Resource Officer program, the Downtown Business Association team, and the Parks officer.

The following table lists the number of personnel assigned to these functions.

**TABLE 6-1: Office of Professional Standards Authorized Staffing Levels for FY 2020/2021**

Position	2020/2021 Authorized	2020/2021 Actual	Vacant
<b>Sworn Personnel</b>			
Captain	1	1	
Lieutenant	1	1	
Sergeant	1	1	
Police Officer	16	16	
Public Relations Officer (1)			
STEP (4)			
SRO (8)			
DBA Officer (2)			
Parks Officer (1)			
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>Civilian Personnel</b>			
Training Coordinator	1	1	
Volunteer Coordinator	1	1	
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	

## INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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### Personnel Complaints

Public trust is vital to the law enforcement mission, and this trust rests on departmental responsiveness to community needs and expectations. The department must receive commendations and complaints with equal professional interest and courtesy, and give both appropriate supervisory and management attention to foster public confidence and to promote constructive communication.

Regarding complaints, the stated goal of the Billings Police Department is to maintain public trust and department integrity by demanding all personnel maintain high standards of

professional conduct at all times. To ensure these standards are upheld, all complaints against department members are investigated. Professional Standards is responsible for the facilitation and management of all complaints filed against Billings Police Department personnel.

Billing's protocols for reporting and investigating public complaints and employee misconduct are established in Policy 2-6, Internal Affairs, and 2-7, Disciplinary Procedures. The policies outline comprehensive, step-by-step guidelines and processes for the receipt, investigation, and disposition of such complaints.

Any members of the public wishing to make a complaint are advised to bring the matter to the attention of the department. Complaints are accepted by whatever means they are received (in person, mail, e-mail, fax, telephone) and whether the complainant is identified or anonymous. To facilitate the acceptance of complaints, the department has made complaint forms available online, at the BPD facility, and at the Crime Prevention Center.

The document serves as both the department's complaint and commendation form. Public complaints will be accepted if received within 90 days of the incident generating the complaint. In cases where the complainant has a legitimate and involuntary incapacity to make the complaint within the 90-day period, or in cases where the initial evidence presented constitutes a serious allegation of misconduct, an exception may be granted by a department executive. If a complaint is initiated by a commander (Sergeant rank or above), or is brought to a commander's attention by any employee, it is classified as a Department Initiated Complaint.

Whether originating from a community or internal source, complaints are classified by BPD into two categories, Class I and Class II:

- Actions classified as Class I complaints that can result in discipline up to termination include excessive force, violations of criminal law, breach of civil rights, biased policing, corruption, false arrest, patterns of similar Class II complaints, and other more serious allegations. These complaints will be investigated by Professional Standards and are considered an Internal Affairs investigation.
- Class II complaints include allegations of inadequate service, courtesy, minor performance issues, improper procedure or other less serious and non-criminal conduct. Class II complaints where a written or oral reprimand may be issued are investigated by a department commander.
- In all cases, a Complaint Form must be filled out by the commander receiving the complaint.

If a Class I complaint is received, the commander fills out the Citizen's Complaint Form and immediately forwards the complaint to Professional Standards for follow up. The Office of Professional Standards Captain generally investigates all Class I complaints and most Class II complaints not resolved initially at the commander level. The procedure for handling Class I complaints includes:

- Within 60 days of initiating the investigation, the Office of Professional Standards Captain submits a completed report to the Chief of Police. This report details the investigation and includes an outline of potential allegations.
- The case is presented by the Captain for review to the Chief, along with the Assistant Chief and City Attorney.
- Findings and discipline are determined by the Chief.

- The City Attorney will review the investigation for completeness and for possible criminal charges (if applicable).
- Any discipline recommendation above that of a written reprimand requires a due process hearing with the Chief of Police.

The receiving commander of a Class II complaint is responsible for interviewing the complainant in an effort to resolve the issue if possible. If the complaint is not resolved at that point, the commander may investigate the complaint themselves or forward it to Professional Standards for investigation or assignment to another commander. If the commander investigating the complaint determines that the complaint is valid and warrants only a documented verbal warning or a written reprimand, they may take this action on their own. The completed complaint form, along with the original documents of the investigation, and a completed corrective action form or finding of not-sustained shall be sent to the Office of Professional Standards for record keeping.

For tracking purposes all complaints are assigned a number (C20-01, C20-02, etc.).

Documentation of Class I and Class II complaint investigations are essentially the same, though Class I complaints typically are more in-depth, which usually means more documentation. The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for maintaining all records in a secure location while the investigation is in progress. All records of completed investigations are maintained by the Office of Professional Standards in secure storage.

Possible dispositions upon conclusion of an investigation are defined by policy as:

**Unfounded:** The investigation conclusively proved that the act or acts complained of did not occur. This finding also applies when individual officer(s) or employee(s) named were not involved in the act or acts which may have occurred.

**Exonerated:** The acts which provided the basis for the complaint or allegations did occur, but were justified, lawful, and proper. This finding may also be used when the acts did occur and were not proper or justified, but resulted from a lack of training or a policy deficiency.

**Not sustained:** The results of the investigation failed to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation(s) made.

**Sustained:** The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation(s) made.

**Resolved with Complainant:** This only applies to Class II complaints. The determination of guilt may not be clear (sustained or not sustained) whereas the complainant is satisfied with the results of the investigation.

These dispositions are commonly used in many law enforcement agencies and are appropriate.

The following tables represent the dispositions following BPD's investigation of both public and internal complaints for 2017, 2018, and 2019.

It is important to note 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. As an example, one formal complaint could lead to three alleged policy violations. In other words, action resulting in a single allegation of unprofessional conduct may result in the potential violation of three policies.

All complaint data in the following tables was provided by the department and reflect the total number of complaints received and associated dispositions for the period noted.

**TABLE 6-2: Public Complaint Personnel Investigations, 2017–2019**

Year	Total	Sustained	Not Sustained	Exonerated	Unfounded	Resolved	Pending
2017	61	6	2	27	12	14	0
2018	72	10	3	28	21	9	1
2019	91	10	3	28	21	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>

**Source:** Billings Police Department

**TABLE 6-3: Internal Complaint Personnel Investigations, 2017–2019**

Year	Total	Sustained	Not Sustained	Exonerated	Unfounded	Resolved	Pending
2017	83	49	4	21	2	4	3
2018	94	65	4	13	3	4	5
2019	101	65	4	13	3	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

**Source:** Billings Police Department

Over the three-year period reviewed:

- 11.6 percent (26) of the 224 public complaints were sustained (investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation(s) made).
- 61 percent (137) of the public complaints were found to be exonerated (acts which provided the basis for the complaint or allegations did occur, but were justified, lawful, and proper) or unfounded (investigation conclusively proved that the act or acts complained of did not occur).
- The number of internal complaints increased by about 18 percent over the three-years we reviewed.
- Internal complaints were sustained about 64 percent of the time during that three-year period.

Cases in which the allegations are sustained are addressed through a notice of discipline. The severity of discipline is determined by the nature of the allegation that has been sustained along with the disciplinary history of the involved employee. The disciplinary options to which an employee may be subjected upon a sustained allegation of misconduct include but are not limited to written reprimand, suspension, demotion, or termination. BPD has established a Management Guide to Discipline to assist supervisors in assessing the appropriate level of discipline and corrective action

### **Tracking and Managing Complaints**

BPD utilizes an Excel spreadsheet for management of personnel complaints. The spreadsheet tracks documented complaints and includes individual officer complaints, complaint type, and class of complaint. The department does not rely on a specialized IA tracking software program. Such programs contain an early intervention or warning feature that identifies employees with

job stress or performance problems at early stages within a specified time frame. BPD believes the spreadsheet system has met the department's tracking needs due to its size, though recently staff have begun to explore investigation tracking software. CPSM supports this decision and provides a discussion below in support of transitioning to an appropriate IA tracking software program.

Data regarding administrative investigations and public complaints are valuable as a risk management tool to identify training needs, performance deficiencies, or patterns of misconduct. Many departments have turned to software systems to assist in this critical management responsibility, as employing specialized software is an efficient means of producing graphs and reports quickly and with relative ease.

A significant number of agencies utilize IA Pro for management of Internal Affairs administrative investigations. IA Pro is a robust software package that is capable of tracking a variety of information, including personnel complaints, use of force incidents, traffic accidents, and personnel commendations. The IAPro software package includes a module called Blue Team which involves data entry at the supervisor level to track and complete commendable, noteworthy actions as well as high-liability risk management.

IAPro also includes an Early Intervention Program (EIP) module as a resource for supervisory personnel to identify employees who may display symptoms of job stress or performance problems at early stages. The intent of an EIP is to proactively provide employees with the assistance and training necessary to perform their assigned duties in an effective and efficient manner. While individual incidents such as personnel complaints, traffic collisions, and uses of force are reviewed at the time of occurrence by a supervisor and the chain of command, these incidents may appear acceptable in isolation, but a pattern of less-than-optimal job performance may be developing that is more difficult to identify. Tracking the indicators detailed in this program enables supervisors to examine the totality of an individual's actions and make a more accurate assessment of the employee's well-being. Any IA tracking software selected should have such a system.

The following table shows a sample of early intervention indicators and a threshold schedule that may be of value to the organization. Each agency that chooses to utilize an EIP should establish its own list of indicators and a threshold schedule that meets the needs of the organization, taking into account workload demands present in that agency. Again, this is only a sample for illustration.

**TABLE 6-4: Sample Early Intervention Program Thresholds**

Incident Type	# of incidents	Threshold
Administrative investigation	X	3 incidents within 12 months
Citizen complaint	X	3 incidents within 12 months
Missed court	X	2 incidents within 12 months
Use of force	X	4 incidents within 12 months
Vehicle accidents	X	2 incidents within 12 months
Vehicle pursuit	X	2 incidents within 12 months
Cumulative total	X	7 incidents within 12 months

It is important to note that the notification triggered by reaching a threshold in and of itself does not suggest a definitive problem with an employee, but rather, informs supervision of a high rate of total incidents. Again, this number is determined by the department. For instance, officers

working high-crime areas are more commonly involved in arrests and uses of force, which has the potential to trigger a notification even though their actions are entirely appropriate. This applies to more proactive officers as well. Nonetheless, the department can look at the employee's pattern of conduct and determine if there may be a problem. If so, it may address the problem through counselling, training, or as otherwise called for.

### **Reporting**

BPD publishes a very thorough, comprehensive annual report that outlines department activities and programs. The report includes detailed information on criminal activity, arrests, and citations, as well as data on public and internal complaints against BPD personnel. The publication of this information is vital to maintaining the public trust and shows the department is being transparent with the community. BPD would benefit from producing a detailed internal monthly management report mirroring the data in the annual report. This report would be an effective management tool for executive staff to maintain awareness of department activity.

### **Captain's Role in Personnel Complaints**

As outlined above, the Professional Standards Captain generally investigates all Class I complaints and most Class II complaints not resolved initially at the commander level. Department complaints totaled 502 over the last three years (2017–2019). The Office of Professional Standards has responsibility for 10 department functions, and is staffed by 21 personnel. These include a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, 17 officers, and two professional staff. The functions handled by the office are all department training, employment services, domestic violence investigations, the volunteer program, public relations, crime prevention, the STEP program, school resource officer program, the Downtown Business Association team, and the Parks officer.

The Captain indicated that in the two and one-half years in the position he has never had a time when he did not have a complaint assigned to his office. The Captain also indicated that nearly all of his time is dedicated to personnel investigations and he spends very little time managing or providing direction to the units under his command. He said the assigned personnel follow the chain of command very well and their tenure and experience enable them to operate in the absence of proper oversight and their need to seek his advice is minimal.

CPSM believes the time of a police Captain is better spent managing, directing, planning, and organizing the functions and personnel in his division; providing overall technical and administrative direction; and coordinating the division's work with other department managers. A Captain is not a level that should be tasked with conducting personnel investigations, but more appropriately should review and manage such investigations.

To address this issue, CPSM is proposing a department reorganization that would include adding in this Division mid-level supervisory staff to conduct complaint investigations. Doing so would provide a means for the Captain position to be appropriately utilized. See Section 8 of this report for a detailed discussion of the proposed reorganization.

### **Personnel Complaint Recommendations:**

- Implement a software-based IA investigation tracking system such as IAPro or similar. (Recommendation No. 52.)
- IAPro's Blue Team module and early warning program (or similar capabilities in whatever program is selected) should be included with the software purchase. (Recommendation No. 53.)

- Produce a detailed internal monthly management report mirroring the data published in the annual report, with enhancements provided by an IA software program. (Recommendation No. 54.)
- Under a proposed reorganization, refocus the role of the Office of Professional Standards Captain. (Recommendation No. 55.)
- Under a proposed reorganization, in the Professional Standards Division, add mid-level supervisory positions who would conduct complaint investigations. (Recommendation No. 56.)

## Use of Force

The necessary and appropriate use of force in carrying out a police officer's duties up to and including the taking of a human life is among the most complex and critiqued actions of law enforcement. At no time in the past has the use of force been looked at, examined, and judged as it is today. With the ease with which people are using smartphones to record officers in the performance of their duties, including their use of force, it is essential and critical that the department have and follow a comprehensive policy on the use of force. Providing relevant training for the use of force is critical for the department. The purpose of comprehensive training in the use of force is to ensure employees are using proper and reasonable applications of force in the performance of their duties. With respect to the use of deadly force, no other responsibility of the city or department has more importance.

The use of force by BPD personnel is governed by Policy 3-1, Use of Force. The policy, which is 11 pages in length, provides guidelines on appropriate uses of force, reporting, and supervisory responsibilities. Officers are authorized to use physical force when and to the extent force is objectively reasonable to accomplish their official duty. Use of less lethal weapons issued by the department — including OC-10, ASP, Specialty Impact Munitions, and Tasers — is also addressed in the policy. Any time an officer uses any level of physical force, including a less lethal weapon, the officer must immediately notify his or her commander or an on-duty commander and complete the use of force report form to articulate and justify why the level and use of force was necessary.

Section II of the policy directs the handling commander to complete a "Response to Resistance" (Use of Force) form when physical or less lethal force is used by an officer. The policy section allows a commander to use discretion in completing the form in circumstances where a minimal level of force/restraint is used.

After review of the officer's report and completion of the noted form with comments as to the reasonableness of the use of force, the commander routes the form through the chain of command to the Patrol Captain and the Office of Professional Standards Captain for final review and filing. If an issue with the use of force is identified at any review level, a complaint investigation can be initiated. A detailed statistical review of BPD use of force is included in the department's annual report. It is recommended this information be incorporated into a monthly management report to provide more timely information for command staff review.

## Minimal Reportable Force

BPD staff indicate an officer should document the minimal force/restraint in their report whether or not a supervisor completed a Response to Resistance report. However, on what basis is this determined? Current language in the policy does not provide a clear definition of minimal reportable force. If minimal reportable force is not defined in policy, then officers, supervisors, and managers alike lack guidance in determining a minimal force/restraint event. This ambiguity leaves an officer and BPD guessing as to whether force was used in these minimal events.

Determining an officer is to face discipline for unreported force that BPD concludes should have been reported would be problematic without clear policy.

CPSM recommends a minimal reportable force definition be developed to provide a clear threshold as to the department's expectation of when reporting of force (verbal and written) is required. For consideration as an example, a Lexipol force definition states: "Force - The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents, or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained." A large agency defines its force threshold as: "Force is defined as any physical effort used to control or restrain another, or to overcome the resistance of another."

### **Duty to Intercede and Report, De-escalation Provisions**

In recent years, law enforcement agencies nationwide have begun to include duty to intercede and report provisions in their use of force policies. Duty to intercede requires an officer to intercede if they witness a department member using force that is clearly beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances. A duty to report policy requires any officer who observes a law enforcement officer or an employee use force that potentially exceeds what the officer reasonably believes to be necessary to report such observation to a supervisor.

Sample Duty to Intercede and Report policy from Lexipol states:

*Any officer present and observing another law enforcement officer or an employee using force that is clearly beyond that which is necessary, as determined by an objectively reasonable officer under the circumstances, shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. Any officer who observes a law enforcement officer or an employee use force that potentially exceeds what the officer reasonably believes to be necessary shall promptly report these observations to a supervisor as soon as feasible.*

In addition, de-escalation requirements have been incorporated into use of force policies. This policy requires officers to utilize de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention tactics, and other alternatives to force when feasible. "Feasible" has been defined for policy purposes in some jurisdictions as, "Reasonably capable of being done or carried out under the circumstances to successfully achieve the arrest or lawful objective without increasing risk to the officer or another person." Staff indicate BPD policy regarding "de-escalation" is incorporated in Policy 2-1, Oath of Office and Code of Ethics, where it states in part: "Force should be used only with greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation, and persuasion have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective."

CPSM recommends in the interest of clarity that clear policy provisions including duty to intercede and report and de-escalation provisions be incorporated into a comprehensive revision of the force policy, to include related training requirements.

As part of its force discussion with BPD staff, CPSM learned Montana officials will soon publish recently developed force policy revisions. BPD staff indicated the department force policy is also under review with the intention of including some of the policy recommendations discussed here.

### **Review of Use of Force Incidents**

Policy authorizes deadly force when an officer is justified in the use of force likely to cause death or serious bodily injury only if the officer reasonably believes that such force is necessary to

prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony.

Policy 3.1, Section VI, "Officer Involved Shooting / Deadly Force Procedures," contains detailed policy and procedure guidelines. Responsibilities of involved and on-scene officers, responding supervisors, assigned investigations, and administrative staff are outlined. The policy directs the Office of Professional Standards to respond to the scene to initiate an Internal Affairs Investigation. Should initial investigation identify any policy, civil rights, or criminal violations the Chief of Police may request an outside agency to conduct a parallel investigation into the incident.

A department Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) may be activated following an officer-involved shooting (or other critical incident) to provide a confidential, non-evaluative one-on-one and/or group discussion of individual involvement, thoughts, reactions, and feelings resulting from a critical incident. CISM serves to mitigate the impacts of stress resulting from exposure to the critical incident through ventilation of thoughts and feelings, along with educational, informational, and appropriate referral components.

BPD has established a Use of Deadly Force Review Committee to review circumstances surrounding each incident where an officer has discharged a weapon for other than training, recreation, or for the purpose of dispatching a wounded animal. The committee consists of the Assistant Chief, Office of Professional Standards Captain, Firearms Sergeant, and two officers below the rank of Sergeant. The committee is convened within a reasonable time after the report of a firearms discharge, but not before all investigative reports are completed. The committee can seek approval from the Chief for additional investigation if the review indicates a potential violation of policy or criminal law, and can make recommendations for policy modification or additional training. The committee's report on their findings is forwarded to the Chief for review before filing in the Internal Affairs file or complaint file.

CPSM recommends that a Use of Force Review Committee made up of the Administrative Sergeant, Professional Standards Lieutenant, and a subject matter expert on the nature of force used be created and tasked with the analysis of use of force incidents. Due to the number of incidents, a threshold may need to be established for those incidents subject to review (e.g., Taser deployment, baton strikes, OC application, injuries sustained, etc.). As well, a reporting mechanism would need to be established to provide the committee with relevant and concise information to allow for such a review.

A requirement for an annual review of the force policy should be contained in department training policy, along with other critical policies. The current Use of Force policy, 3-1, and Department Training Requirements policy, 11-2, do not contain this requirement. The recommended policy revisions, to include a minimal force definition, duty to intercede and report, and de-escalation tactics training, will be key components when introducing the provisions to BPD personnel.

### **Use of Force Incidents**

From January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, BPD recorded 79,694 calls for service and officer-initiated contacts. With 131 reportable Response to Resistance (use of force) incidents, the BPD used force in 0.17 percent of the contacts. In comparing force to the number of arrests during this time frame, BPD used force in 1.2 percent of the 11,604 arrests. It is noted that there was a 45.5 percent increase in reported incidents from 2018 to 2019. This follows a 23 percent increase from 2017 to 2018. Factors such as training and supervision as well as increased public scrutiny are all factors that can impact this high-risk aspect of policing. Identifying the specific reasons for

these variances is beyond the scope of this study, but should be examined by BPD management.

The following table reflects reported use of force incidents for calendar years 2017 through 2019.

**TABLE 6-5: Use of Force Incidents, 2017–2019**

Year	Incidents	Policy Violations
2017	78	0
2018	90	1
2019	131	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>3</b>

**Source:** Billings Police Department

As recommended in the discussion on personnel complaints, the department would benefit from utilizing IA Pro software (or similar program) to track use of force incidents. This will give supervisors and managers the ability to extract data for analyzing trends. (See the Personnel Complaints section of this report for further discussion on personnel activity tracking programs and their capabilities including IA Pro's Blue Team and Early Intervention Program.)

### Use of Force Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the information on use of force typically included in the annual report be incorporated into a monthly management report to provide more timely information for command staff review. (Recommendation No. 57.)
- CPSM recommends a definition of minimal reportable force be developed to provide a clear threshold as to the department's expectation of when reporting of force (verbal and written) is required. (Recommendation No. 58.)
- CPSM recommends that, in the interest of clarity, clear policy provisions including duty to intercede and report and de-escalation provisions be incorporated into a comprehensive revision of the department's force policy, to include related training requirements. (Recommendation No. 59.)
- CPSM recommends that a Use of Force Review Committee be created and be made up of the Administrative Sergeant, Professional Standards Lieutenant, and a subject matter expert on the nature of force used. This committee should be tasked with the analysis of use of force incidents. (Recommendation No. 60)
- Revise the force reporting mechanism to provide the Force Review Committee with relevant and concise information, which will enable the Use of Force Committee to conduct an in-depth analysis. (Recommendation No. 61.)
- A requirement for an annual review of the force policy should be contained in department training policy, along with other critical policies. (Recommendation No. 62.)
- A department review of the increases in the use of force over the past two years should be conducted to identify causal factors. (Recommendation No. 63.)
- As recommended in the Personnel Complaints section, the department should explore utilizing IA Pro software (or similar program) to track use of force incidents. (Recommendation No. 64.)

## TRAINING

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Training is one of the most important functions in a law enforcement agency. Effective training is critical in providing essential information and minimizing risk and liability. The outcome of effective training can be assessed in part by such measures as a high level of proactive policing and low level of citizen complaints, low numbers of claims or lawsuits, high citizen satisfaction with the police, well-written and investigated reports, safe driving records, and appropriate implementation and documentation of use-of-force incidents.

The policy of the department is to provide training to all officers which offers innovative and efficient methods or techniques to accomplish the goals and the mission of the department. Training is provided within the confines of funding, requirements of a given assignment, staffing levels, and legal mandates. Under management of the Office of Professional Standards Captain, the Administrative Lieutenant has primary responsibility for developing and coordinating department training. The Lieutenant is assisted by the Training Coordinator.

The Montana Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Bureau sets minimum selection and training standards for Montana law enforcement. All new, entry level officers hired by the department must successfully complete a MT POST certified law enforcement training academy. BPD utilizes the Montana Law Enforcement Academy for recruit training. The academy curriculum requires 480 training hours for MT POST certification. Over the last three years (2017-2019), 24 BPD recruits have attended the academy.

Once new officers graduate from the academy, they enter the department's Field Training Program (FTO), and must complete four phases of training over 17 weeks. The FTO phases are preceded by three administrative weeks of trainee orientation that include department functions such as payroll, employee benefits, records, property and evidence. Defensive tactics and firearms training beyond the basic academy hours are also included.

The field training program is intended to facilitate an officer's transition from the academic setting (academy) to the performance of general patrol duties. (See the Field Training Officer Program section for additional detail.)

### **Training Records**

Maintaining the training records of department personnel to ensure officers are up to date in the training required to keep their certification current is an extremely important task. The Training Coordinator is responsible for record keeping, staff and facility scheduling, and vendor liaison. BPD currently utilizes an Excel spreadsheet to track department training. Training staff is exploring the use of the department's LERMS RMS capabilities in this area. Thus far, they have found the software has not met their needs.

As LERMS does have a "Training" module, CPSM recommends BPD seek training from the vendor on this particular module to better evaluate its potential use. After that, if LERMS is still found to be lacking, there are other software packages for training records which can be explored, such as LEFTA or SPILLMAN. These web-based resources enable agencies to create, store, and access their sworn and civilian employee training records in one comprehensive application.

### **Training Plan and Calendar**

A well-designed training plan ensures that a high level of training and development is provided to department members, both sworn and civilian. Such a plan is key to making sure employees have the information, skills, and competencies to work effectively. Though BPD provides significant training hours to its staff, an advantage to having a master training plan is that as

training priorities shift based upon any number of factors, such as community expectations and legal mandates, it provides a guideline so vital training is not forgotten.

An accompanying master training calendar provides a planning tool that ensures the goals of the training plan are accomplished.

Policy calls for the Administrative Lieutenant to hold a meeting with various department staff regarding training needs. In reality, this is an ongoing process at BPD, wherein the Lieutenant meets with concerned staff regularly to discuss and modify training as necessary. CPSM recommends an annual assessment of training needs occur per policy. From the meeting, a comprehensive training plan that identifies specific mandatory, and optional training requirements should be created. A master training plan and scheduling calendar should be created and submitted to the Chief and Assistant Chief for review and approval.

BPD lacks a department training manual; such a document could assist in the application of the training plan. This manual should be a priority development item by the Training Section.

### **In-service Training**

MT POST establishes in-service training requirements for peace officers. Currently, a minimum of 20 hours every two years is required. MT POST does not specify the type of required training and there is no reporting standard. However, the training requirement is subject to random audit by POST. BPD requires 16 hours of annual in-service or continuing professional and perishable skills training to include firearms training, department policy updates, Intoxilyzer certification, and Taser recertification. The 16 hours can and generally are part of the 20 hours required by POST.

Again, annual mandatory in-service training subject areas include firearms training, policy updates and review, Intoxilyzer certification, and Taser recertification. Alternate-year mandatory in-service training includes legislative and legal updates, ASP refresher, blood-borne pathogens, workplace violence, sexual harassment, and social issues to include anti-bias, cultural awareness, and ethics. Training that addresses mental health situations and de-escalation techniques needs to be added to the annual training cycle.

Training topics are identified annually by the Administrative Lieutenant. BPD supplements requirements with optional internal and external training opportunities as outlined in BPD Training Policy 11-2. Optional training is limited by the availability of relief personnel and training funds. BPD should determine a reasonable training cadre and seek additional funds to provide increased optional training opportunities.

BPD training records indicate personnel attending training had an annual mean average of approximately 74 hours of training over the last three years (2017–2019). BPD estimates that 95 percent of its personnel are in compliance with training requirements. As discussed above, the BPD training management system is in transition and has minimal capabilities of extracting these data efficiently.

Most of BPD's training is accomplished through in-person sessions, which enables a better training environment and improved interaction with the instructor.

To supplement the in-person training, the BPD subscribes to Police One Academy to meet some of its training needs. Each employee has an account that provides unrestricted access to the Police One video library. Each year, the Administrative Lieutenant assigns three to four PoliceOne trainings that are each one to two hours in duration. In 2019, three courses (one hour each) were assigned as mandatory training. The employee can log onto specific training as directed by the Administrative Lieutenant as well as select training that interests the employee.

The system creates records for the agency that can be reviewed for training compliance and historical archives. However, Police One records must be manually entered into an individual officer's LERMS record to account for the training hours in department records. The PoliceOne system also gives BPD the capability to create its own training videos and upload them into the Police One server to be watched by BPD personnel. These videos can also be watched on the in-car computer monitor.

### **Training at Briefings**

BPD's briefing training is based on the initiative of individual Sergeants. Sergeants are encouraged to discuss training points of recent incidents whether from a BPD or outside agency event. These discussions should be an opportunity to review relevant policy and procedure, along with officer safety. Department instructors from time to time may also provide briefing training within their areas of expertise (SWAT, FTOs, firearms, defensive tactics, etc.) based on issues observed or experienced. These ad hoc briefing sessions are infrequent, and are not documented or tracked.

BPD should require Sergeants to develop quarterly briefing training sessions compatible with the environment. The relatively short, but significant interaction between supervisors and officers enables each to voice their opinions, and provides an important opportunity for Sergeants to display leadership.

### **New Sergeant Training**

Promotion to first-level supervisor is an important step in law enforcement.

Most departments have some type of training program that consists of the new supervisor riding with an experienced supervisor for several weeks. This training includes operational, supervisory, and administrative benchmarks to be documented, similar to an FTO program. Newly promoted supervisors should also attend a recognized supervisor school where instruction covers accountability, leadership, counseling, evaluation of employees, and other related topics.

Presently, under an informal program, BPD's new Sergeants may ride with a tenured Sergeant for four to eight shifts, but in practice this is not a mandated requirement. New BPD Sergeants do attend a supervisory school for formal instruction in the topics noted above. CPSM recommends that BPD develop a formal training program for newly promoted Sergeants to ensure the department's supervisory expectations will be met through proper orientation to the position.

### **Professional Training for Executives**

Managing a police organization is a complex process for those tasked with ensuring the department operates at the most effective and efficient level. Those whose job it is to manage the organization must be as well-trained as officers in the field.

BPD does encourage professional training for executives of the department. Lieutenants and above have the opportunity to attend the FBI National Academy, Police Executive Research Forum courses, and Naval Academy (Master's Program), though it can take several years for an opportunity to arise. It is recommended the department establish a mandatory professional training requirement for the rank of lieutenant and above to include programs such as the FBI Academy and regional command schools.

### **Training Recommendations:**

- Seek vendor training on the LERMS training module to better evaluate its potential use for tracking training records. (Recommendation No. 65.)

- Develop a comprehensive training plan that identifies specific mandatory and optional training requirements. (Recommendation No. 66.)
- Develop a master training calendar as a planning tool for ensuring the goals of the training plan are accomplished. (Recommendation No. 67.)
- CPSM recommends the annual assessment of training needs occur per current policy. (Recommendation No. 68.)
- Develop a department training manual to assist in the application of the training plan. (Recommendation No. 69.)
- Implement training that addresses mental health situations and de-escalation techniques; this training should be included in the annual training cycle. (Recommendation No. 70.)
- BPD should determine a reasonable training cadre and seek additional funds to provide increased optional training opportunities. (Recommendation No. 71.)
- Require sergeants to develop relevant quarterly briefing training sessions compatible with the environment. (Recommendation No. 72.)
- Develop a formal Sergeant training program for newly promoted Sergeants to ensure proper orientation to the position; this training should include documented benchmarks. (Recommendation No. 73.)
- Establish a documented mandatory professional training policy for the rank of lieutenant and above to include programs such as the FBI Academy and regional command schools. (Recommendation No. 74.)

## Field Training and Evaluation

Once new officers graduate from the academy, they enter the department's field training program. It consists of direct supervision, training, and evaluation that requires the new officer to complete four phases of training "in the field." The field training program is intended to facilitate an officer's transition from the academic setting (academy) to the performance of general patrol duties.

Although an officer who has graduated from the academy has received a thorough introduction to basic law enforcement subjects, that officer cannot be expected to immediately assume the full patrol responsibilities of an experienced officer. Newly assigned officers must receive additional training in the field where they can learn from officers who have a great deal of practical patrol experience. The program introduces a newly assigned officer to the personnel, procedures, policies, and purposes of the department.

Field training officers (FTOs) serve as role models for new recruits and shape their behavior and understanding of the BPD vision, philosophy, and operational processes. FTOs have the dual responsibility of providing police service in their assigned beats while conducting training and evaluations for new officers.

Experienced officers are selected as field training officers (FTOs) to train police academy graduates. Minimum requirements for field training officers are three years of law enforcement experience as a Billings Police Officer, they must currently hold and maintain a satisfactory level on their most recent annual performance evaluation, and they must not have any sustained complaints involving use of force or mishandling of cases in the six months prior to being selected as a field training officer. The selection process includes an oral interview board weighted at 80 percent of the total score and a command review weighted at 20 percent. The

department has maintained an average of 20 to 25 active training officers over the last three years. This number varies due to attrition, promotion, etc. Each newly selected FTO must attend a minimum of 40 hours of classroom training based on the FTO standards before assuming their duties.

The field training program is supervised by a patrol Sergeant who is assigned as the FTO Coordinator in a collateral capacity. The Office of Professional Standards Administrative Lieutenant serves as the FTO Commander, also in a collateral capacity.

Each trainee officer is assigned to an FTO sergeant who provides supervision of the trainee during the FTO program. The Sergeant reviews the FTO's Daily Observation Report (DOR) and completes the Supervisors Weekly Report (SWR). The Sergeant meets with each trainee and FTO to discuss the reports and submits the documents to the FTO Coordinator for review and filing. Daily and weekly reports are important tools in providing feedback to the trainee as well as for identifying areas in which the department can provide further resources to assist in the success of new employees.

The FTO Coordinator meets at the end of each phase of training with the Sergeants and FTOs to discuss each trainee's progress. These meetings are critical to the success of the program. They provide the opportunity for FTOs to discuss trainees and issues they might be having with trainees. The FTO Coordinator and supervisor can also use the meetings as training opportunities.

Over the past three years (2017–2019), 37 trainees have entered the field training program. Of these, 30 were successful in completing the program; a success rate of 80 percent. There is currently one trainee in the program and five are starting the program soon. Comparing the number of trainees in a FTO program and the number who successfully complete the program can provide insight into the quality of training and any trends in trainee shortcomings. Contrasting and comparing this information can assist the department in strengthening its field training program.

The field training program is generally completed in four phases over a 17-week period. The first three weeks are considered a pre-training period. The officer is exposed to department administrative and personnel processes, training on various field scenarios, defensive tactics, and weapons training. The goal of this period is to enhance the trainees' chance of success in the program.

The first week after this familiarization period is an unscored time of field observation for the trainee with the assigned FTO. Each trainee is assigned with a different FTO for each of the first three phases. The trainee then returns to the first FTO in the fourth phase. In this last phase the FTO rides as an observer in civilian clothing, which puts the trainee in the position of having to fully display the level of skills learned before being considered for graduation from the program. We found that details and length of this last phase as described to CPSM differ from the language in Policy 11-3, Field Training Officer Program. This and any other discrepancies between policy and practice in the field training program should be reviewed and revised as necessary.

At any point, any trainee in the field training program who does not respond to training is removed from their current phase and placed into remedial training. The field training staff will develop an appropriate training strategy to remediate performance deficiencies. A trainee in remedial training must demonstrate response to training by displaying standards of performance in order to be placed back into the program phase from which they were removed. If deficiencies continue after remedial training has been provided, the training staff will consult

with the Assistant Chief of Police regarding further action, such as continued remedial training or termination recommendation.

It is important during the FTO program that trainees not only rotate through different training officers in their phases, but also that they rotate through the different shifts. BPD has the goal of assigning trainees to all shifts; however, the assignment to the day shift is often dictated by the availability of FTOs and beats. BPD should continue with its goal of assigning trainees to day shift, as this provides an additional level of experience and exposure to leadership.

### **Field Training Program Documentation**

Documentation of the training program is primarily paper based. The FTO Coordinator scans all written FTO/trainee documents into the LERMS training management system. The Coordinator indicated that most department personnel are unfamiliar with the use of LERMS, so it has not been implemented to its full capability for the field training program. It is recommended that appropriate training on LERMS be initiated to provide personnel the knowledge needed to utilize LERMS to its fullest. Using LERMS, a training management report to track details of the field training program and outcomes of trainees should be created.

### **Field Training Program Manual**

BPD does not maintain a field training program manual that provides guidelines for the training program. Staff indicated a collection of training documents has been compiled that could formulate the basis of a manual; however, this task has yet to be accomplished. This should be a priority task for the field training program staff.

## **Field Training Program Recommendations:**

- Contrast and compare field training program successes and failures to assist the department in strengthening its field training program. (Recommendation No. 75.)
- Differences in field training program policy vs. practice should be reviewed and revised as necessary. (Recommendation No. 76.)
- Continue the goal of assigning trainees to day shifts to provide an additional level of experience and exposure to leadership. (Recommendation No. 77.)
- Develop a training management report utilizing LERMS to track details of the field training program and trainee outcomes. (Recommendation No. 78.)
- LERMS training should be re-initiated so as to provide personnel the proper knowledge base to utilize LERMS to its fullest. (Recommendation No. 79.)
- Develop and publish a field training program manual. (Recommendation No. 80.)

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## RECRUITMENT/HIRING/BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

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The law enforcement profession always faces the challenge of renewing its ranks. For nearly every agency, this is an ongoing effort. However, for some time and especially more recently, finding qualified applicants who have the desire and ability to meet the requirements of the selection process and academy training has become a more challenging proposition. This has added to a growing shortage of law enforcement officers nationwide.

BPD recruitment, hiring, and background investigation activities are managed as a collateral duty by the Administrative Lieutenant assigned to the Office of Professional Standards. The Lieutenant is assisted as needed by department personnel via a Special Detail Request. Though these personnel are volunteers to the team, they are compensated through participation on a regular workday or on overtime if outside of normal work hours.

Recruitment marketing strategies that are used include social media avenues to communicate and promote the department. Contacts made by officers during their daily duties and personal contacts market the department and provide information to potential recruits. Ride-alongs and the Citizen's Police Academy also provide a recruitment avenue for those interested in these programs. In addition, BPD actively seeks female applicants and minority candidates, especially from the Native American community. A monetary incentive is offered to lateral candidates as a recruitment tool to encourage transfer to BPD.

No particular recruiting or marketing strategy utilized by BPD has been identified as a primary source of applicants. Staff report two major factors that are having an impact on recruitment: the negative national spotlight on law enforcement and the solid private sector job market in Billings.

The police department and the city's Human Resources department conduct all of the testing processes for the department. Applications are submitted to Human Resources and reviewed for completeness by the Administrative Lieutenant and the Training Coordinator. Applicants passing the screening process are given a written exam by a third-party examiner and a physical agility test. Scores are provided to the Lieutenant who invites the top 30 applicants to sit before an interview panel made up of officers, FTOs, and usually a commander. This panel interview includes a written exercise, an oral resume, and oral responses to seven questions. While interview panel scores are being tabulated, all applicants participate in a pre-background screening interview. Candidates with a score of 85 percent or higher are given a conditional offer of employment and a background investigation is started.

Completed backgrounds are reviewed by the Administrative Lieutenant, who presents a summary of successful candidates to a hiring panel consisting the Chief, Assistant Chief, and the Director of Human Resources. The panel conducts a blind review of applicants. The applicants are ranked and a list is promulgated.

Based upon department need, an appropriate number of applicants are required to sit for an interview before the Billings Police Commission.

The Commission has the authority to examine all applicants whose applications have been referred to the commission as to their age, legal, mental, moral, and physical qualifications and their ability to fill the office as a member of the police department. The Commission has the authority to remove an applicant from the eligibility list. A medical exam and drug screening are then administered. In their time prior to attending the police academy, newly hired personnel are provided firearms and other orientation training to enhance their chance for success in the

academy. Applicants not chosen in the initial hiring process are placed in a hiring pool to be drawn from based upon the need of the department.

### **Lateral Hiring**

BPD regularly recruits lateral officers; however, the laterals can only apply during an open competitive period to be a BPD police officer. Departments save time and money when they hire lateral officers, because they come to the agency with experience, which often eliminates the need to send them through an academy. They also can move through the agency's training program at a faster pace, which means they can be inserted into the operations schedule sooner than a newly trained recruit.

BPD's lateral hiring process consists of an applicant interview with Captains. If approved the applicant moves forward with pre-background interviews. A complete background investigation begins if the lateral applicant is successful in the interview process. We recommend that BPD develop an expedited lateral hiring program and allow for an open continuous application process to draw qualified applicants.

### **Process, Backgrounds, Data**

BPD hired 45 officers since August 2017, 12 of which were POST- certified laterals. During that time, 27 officers left the department for various reasons including retirement, personal reasons, and academy and FTO failures. There are no police officer vacancies at the time of this report. An application period for police officer recently closed, and testing and interviews are currently ongoing. This authorized exam process is to prepare for anticipated vacancies.

BPD did not have applicant and recruitment data readily available that could be shared with CPSM. However, it is recommended this information be collated and compared with the associated academy graduates and recruiting origin to assist the department in focusing its efforts and resources. The relevant statistics can provide insight to the department regarding the status of BPD's diversity hiring efforts, which should also be evaluated by agency management as part of the recruitment and hiring process.

Conducting background investigations is an important and critical part of the hiring process. The Office of Professional Standards conducts all of the background investigations for new applicants of the department. Detectives and senior training officers are utilized as needed to conduct background investigations. All backgrounds investigators attend mandatory training and are mentored in the process when newly assigned. Personnel involved in the hiring process are required to recuse themselves if any conflict of interest arises.

Personnel reported most applicant disqualifications are a direct result of deceptive information in the applicant's background, performance and reliability issues, and character. Applicant and new hire demographics, background failure rates and causes, reasons for attrition, and the traits of successful applicants should be continuously evaluated to ensure department resources are properly focused on recruiting and hiring the best personnel.

### **Recruitment/Hiring/Background Recommendations:**

- Develop an expedited lateral hiring program and allow for an open continuous application process. (Recommendation No. 81.)
- Examine the details of the BPD/HR recruitment statistical information to assist in focusing recruitment efforts and resources. (Recommendation No. 82.)

- The recruitment statistics should be evaluated by management as part of the department's diversity hiring efforts. (Recommendation No. 83.)
- Applicant and new hire demographics, background failure rates and causes, successful patrol trainees, reasons for attrition, and the traits of successful applicants should be continuously evaluated to ensure department resources are properly focused on recruiting, hiring, and retaining desired personnel. (Recommendation No. 84.)

## **SELECTIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP)**

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Traffic safety and the efficient flow of traffic are always important factors for any community. Traffic enforcement is designed to promote public safety by reducing traffic accidents and unsafe driving while enhancing the overall safety of the roadways. BPD Policy 5-1, Traffic Law Enforcement, states that every officer of the department must enforce traffic laws uniformly as an effective method of controlling traffic accidents and reducing the severity of accidents.

The Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) consists of four officers who respond to traffic-related complaints and concerns. They work details in areas such as school zones and neighborhoods, and they also focus on distracted drivers using cell phones. Sources of traffic complaints can be the community, business owners, city officials, or department members. STEP is also tasked with working regular traffic patrol throughout the city, targeting high-frequency accident rate intersections, areas with a high retail concentration, and locations with high traffic volume. The STEP units are not assigned calls unless emergency in nature. Though the unit's primary mission is traffic, a K9 component was added to the team due to the number of traffic stops where drugs were found on the violator or in the detained vehicle. The immediate access to a drug sniffing dog is seen to be a significant asset to STEP officers.

STEP units do not write accident reports. General patrol handles all accidents and is expected to cite and/or warn drivers to further the department's traffic enforcement effort. Fatal accidents are handled by a team of department personnel with training specific to these types of accidents. These personnel are assigned to patrol as well.

The STEP units generally work shifts of Sunday through Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.; Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The assigned officers may flex their schedules to meet selective enforcement assignments and training requirements. Canine training time demands are significant. Every other Wednesday is dedicated to training (full day), which includes regular training with neighboring agencies. Each K9 officer works a nine-hour shift rather than a full ten-hour shift to allow for a combination of one hour of daily training and care for the dog. Policy 8-5, Canine Unit, covers handler selection, initial and on-going training, records, deployment criteria, bite reports, etc. CPSM reviewed the policy and found it to be comprehensive, absent any reference to the STEP assignment.

Command and control of the department's K9 function is somewhat convoluted, as also noted in the Patrol K9 section of this report.

The Administrative Lieutenant of the Office of Professional Standards manages the STEP program. The STEP Sergeant has supervisory oversight of the STEP program as a whole, and coordinates the majority of the officers' activity and filters traffic complaints to be assigned to the team. When K9 operations occur, the Patrol K-9 Sergeant is charged with supervision of the activity. He coordinates the request, assigns a unit, and supervises the search if necessary.

The K9 Sergeant is assigned to the Operations Division, Patrol Section, and has the collateral duty of K9 Sergeant.

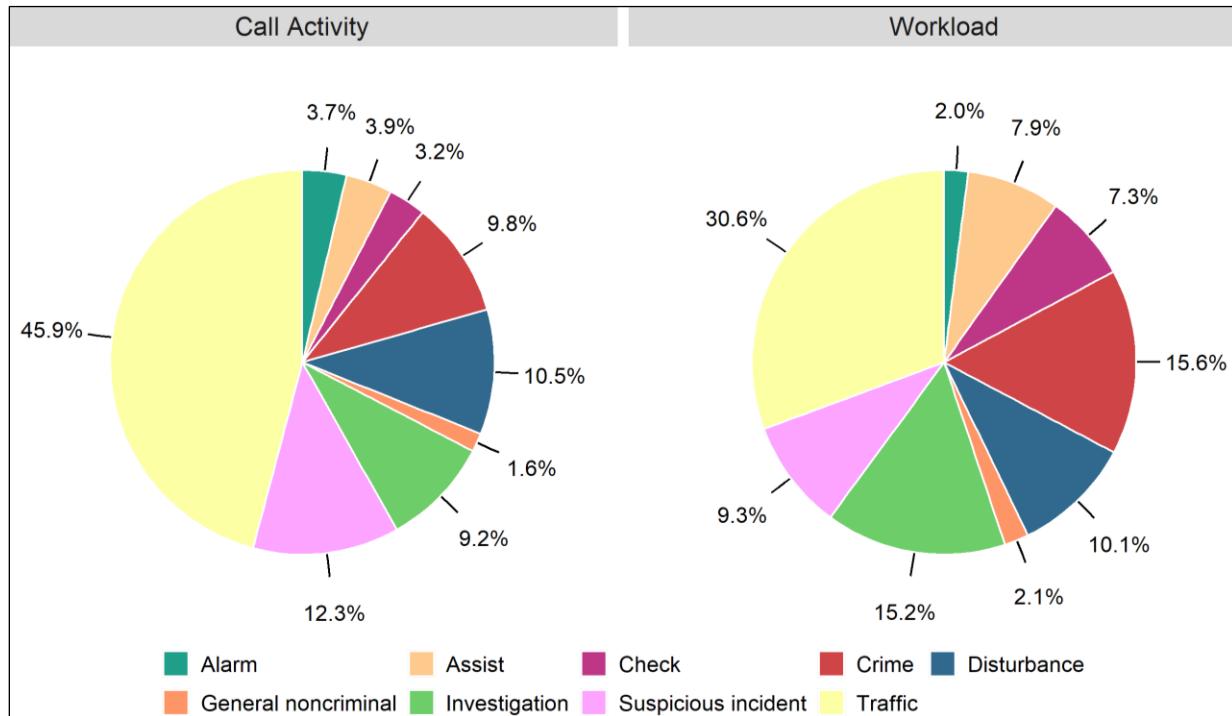
In general terms, an employee's direct supervisor is identified by the person writing the employee's performance evaluation. In this case, the Patrol K9 Sergeant writes the evaluation of the three STEP K9 officers due to his K9 expertise; the STEP Sergeant writes the evaluations of the non-K9 STEP officers. As the stated primary mission of the unit is traffic, the STEP Sergeant should be the direct supervisor who provides appropriate direction regardless of K9 experience, and should consult with the K9 Sergeant as necessary.

The following three tables and figure show the CAD data analyzed by CPSM. These data indicate that between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded 8,188 calls that involved Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) units. During this period, the dispatch center also recorded 3,183 activities assigned to STEP units that were not assigned a call number. These activities are identified as non-call activities and occupied times, commonly referred to as "out-of-service" time. While some out-of-service activities detailed in Table 6-8, such as roll call briefings, report writing, court appearances, follow-up, etc., are necessary and appropriate, these activities should be assessed and addressed by the department to ensure that this level of activity is an appropriate and necessary use of an officer's time.

**TABLE 6-6: STEP Units: Calls and Workload by Category**

Category	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	146	119.0
Alarm	303	54.2
Animal	22	7.2
Assist other agency	322	212.3
Check	259	197.1
Crime–person	254	182.8
Crime–property	257	135.9
Crime–society	291	101.8
Disturbance	859	271.1
Follow-up	38	17.0
Investigation	752	410.2
Miscellaneous	15	12.1
Suspicious incident	1,008	250.2
Traffic enforcement	279	133.2
Traffic stop	3,329	574.6
Warrant/prisoner	54	19.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,188</b>	<b>2,698.0</b>

**FIGURE 6-1: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, STEP Units**



**Note:** For this graph, we removed 5 calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 6-7: STEP Unit Calls, by Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	132	14
Alarm	299	4
Animal	18	4
Assist other agency	252	70
Check	8	251
Crime—person	248	6
Crime—property	237	20
Crime—society	218	73
Disturbance	816	43
Follow-up	0	38
Investigation	542	210
Miscellaneous	13	2
Suspicious incident	718	290
Traffic enforcement	176	103
Traffic stop	1	3,328
Warrant/prisoner	20	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>4,490</b>

**TABLE 6-8: STEP Unit Non-Call Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

<b>Unit Status Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ave. Occupied Time</b>	<b>Count</b>
Out of Service	10-100	11.7	78
Out of Service	10-19	48.6	96
Out of Service	10-21	12.6	6
Out of Service	10-42	10.7	67
Out of Service	10-6	33.9	18
Out of Service	Barn	39.4	139
Out of Service	Billings clinic	112.1	9
Out of Service	BPD	56.3	644
Out of Service	Briefing	54.4	5
Out of Service	City hall/court	71.1	31
Out of Service	Detail	100.5	53
Out of Service	Evidence	34.1	92
Out of Service	Home	6.0	1
Out of Service	Jail	29.4	7
Out of Service	Meeting	107.8	14
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	41.2	262
Out of Service	Out of service	40.6	41
Out of Service	Report	94.3	2
Out of Service	Training	80.5	3
Follow Up	Follow up	24.2	206
Reports	Reports	32.1	495
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.4</b>	<b>2,269</b>
Break	Break	45.9	648
Lunch	Lunch	37.6	266
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.5</b>	<b>914</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.7</b>	<b>3,183</b>

While STEP is a traffic-focused assignment with a K9 component, data suggest the unit has a much broader scope of work. This results in a more productive use of the valuable K9 resource, but detracts from the primary mission of traffic enforcement. A byproduct of the convoluted management of the unit discussed above is a lack of appropriate supervision and evaluation. According to staff, there is no clear process for receiving traffic complaints/concerns and limited to no coordination of planning and direction to address the complaints/concerns. This is evidenced by the low percentage of community-initiated calls that are traffic enforcement-related (4.8 percent), which should be one of the basic drivers of the program's activities. Management recognizes there is no formal process to evaluate specific results of the unit's efforts toward meeting its mission.

Examination of the tables and figure, above, and reported STEP activity statistics drawn from the department's 2019 annual report, indicate to CPSM that STEP functions should be bifurcated. It is recommended that a department-wide general traffic unit consisting of one sergeant and four officers be developed and assigned to Field Operations under the proposed reorganization which will be discussed later. This traffic unit should have enforcement and accident

investigation responsibilities, including for fatal accidents. The STEP K9s should be blended into the Patrol K9 program (see the Patrol K9 section of this report for further discussion).

The data and observations that support this recommendation include the following:

- 46 percent of the unit's activities (community- and police-initiated) were traffic-related. However, these activities account for only 31 percent of the unit's workload.
- 69 percent of the unit's workload was not traffic-related.
- 21 percent of traffic-related workload was traffic stops, with citations issued in only 28 percent of the stops.
- Warnings were issued in 72 percent of traffic stops, which would indicate a large number of pretext stops vs. traffic enforcement. In a pretext stop an officer detains a motorist for a legitimate traffic offense, though the officer may suspect the driver of involvement in another, more significant crime such as drug possession as well. The number of warnings issued is an increase over 2018 when two K9 units were added.
- The unit made 301 drug arrests in 2019, approximately one drug arrest every two shifts per STEP K9 officer.

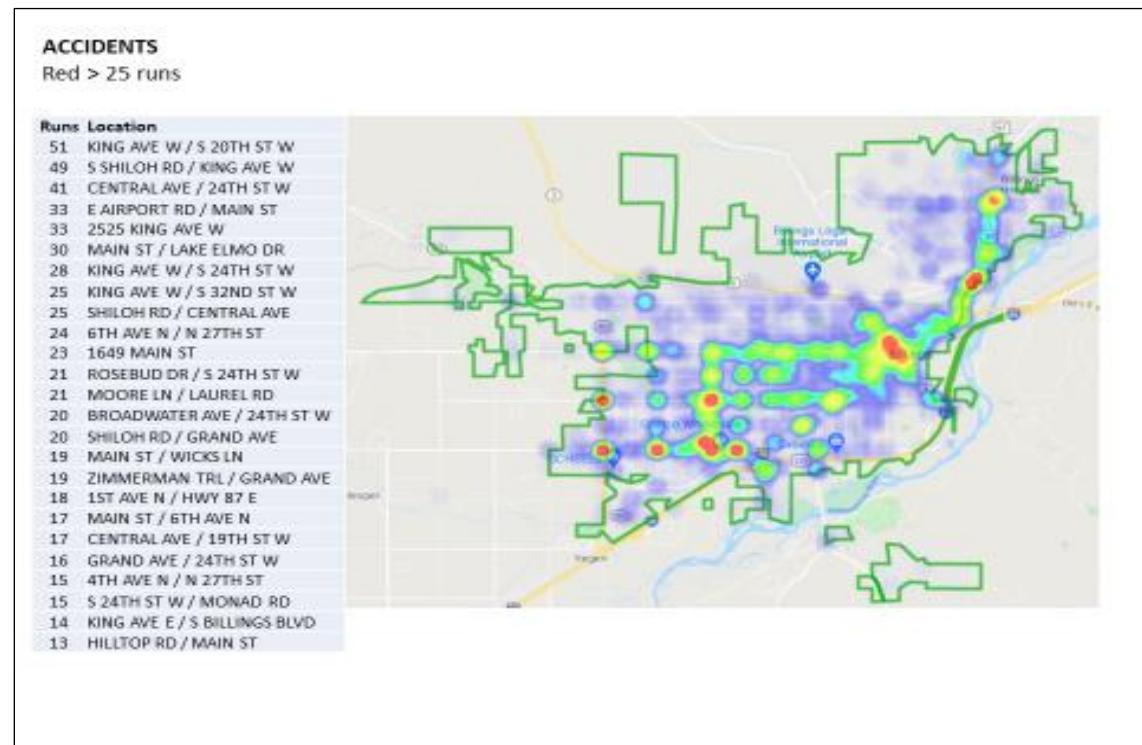
CPSM is aware of state law requiring documentation of traffic stops, but this team's charter necessitates enforcement beyond warnings.

As stated at the beginning of this section, traffic enforcement is designed to reduce traffic accidents and overall safety on the roadways. Even with the STEP team in place, city-wide accident rates have increased every year since 2016. This is a further indication the department's traffic enforcement program can be improved.

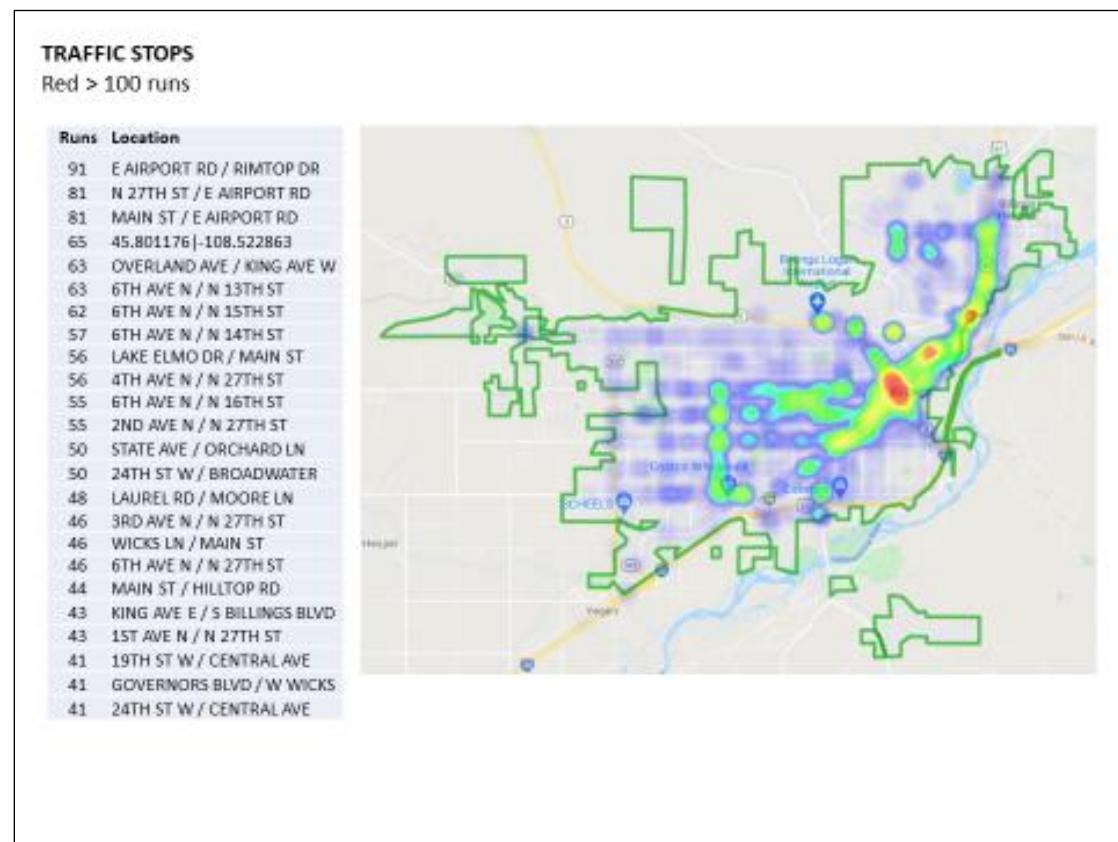
Figure 6-2 is a graphic depiction of where traffic accidents occur in the city, with a list of the top 25 high-frequency accident locations. Figure 6-3 is a graphic depiction of where traffic enforcement occurs at high levels. Locations with more than 100 traffic stops are listed. Note that this enforcement activity is not limited to STEP officers, but represents the efforts of the entire department. By comparing the maps, we can see that the middle and western areas of the city should be given additional traffic enforcement attention based on accident and citation activity.

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**FIGURE 6-2: High-Frequency Traffic Collision Locations**



**FIGURE 6-3: High-Frequency Traffic Enforcement Stop Locations**



## Traffic Management

In general, traffic safety is improved by the rigorous application of the three "E's": engineering education, and enforcement. In Billings, the creation of an interdepartmental traffic safety team made up of both traffic engineers and police personnel would be vital to traffic safety. The team should be made up of management-level personnel who are empowered to take necessary action appropriate to remedy identified traffic safety issues. They must meet regularly (quarterly), at intervals appropriate to their work plan. It is important that meeting agendas be specific, with concrete action plans that can be measured through traditional performance measurement methodologies.

The safety team's work should be focused on studying primary collision factors at high-frequency accident locations as identified in Figure 6-2, and/or other data available to the city.

Engineering solutions may include modifications to signal timing, signage, pavement markings, etc. Education solutions may include public awareness campaigns including temporary changeable message signage, social media, and other mechanisms. Enforcement targeted at these high-frequency locations and primary collision factors round out this comprehensive approach.

Representatives from the police department may include the Operations Captain, who has the authority to direct enforcement efforts, and a Traffic Sergeant, who could be charged with developing engineering recommendations based upon a review of primary collision factors, knowledge of the area, and traffic patterns. The point here is not to burden the limited resources of the either the traffic engineers or police department, but to ensure that the city makes a comprehensive and coordinated effort to address traffic safety.

Finally, to ensure that this important function is successful, reports on this team's efforts and outcomes should be provided to the Assistant City Administrator for their review and concurrence.

## STEP Recommendations

- STEP functions should be bifurcated, and a department traffic unit consisting of one sergeant and four officers should be developed and assigned to the Operations Division. (Recommendation No. 85.)
- K9 deployments should be transferred to general patrol. (Recommendation No. 86.)
- Consideration should be given to establishing a citywide traffic management team that would meet quarterly to examine engineering and education opportunities to reduce the incidence of collisions and improve traffic flow at locations with a recurring high incidence of accidents and/or congestion. (Recommendation No. 87.)

## PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

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The department's goal is to provide a crime prevention program that is proactive, flexible, multifaceted, and coordinated. It utilizes the Public Relations Officer (PRO) as its primary representative to accomplish this. The PRO is under the day-to-day supervision of the Crime Prevention Sergeant. The Office of Professional Standards provides oversight and management of the unit. The PRO is assigned to a Monday through Thursday, 4/10 schedule; however, he is free to work a flex schedule as needed to meet his myriad obligations. The position is a three-year rotational assignment to which the incumbent has been selected for several consecutive

terms. Policy 8-7, Crime Prevention and Public Relations, is outdated and requires revision to mirror current unit practice.

The PRO conducts "Neighborhood Watch" programs; however, these residential programs have morphed into a social media-based format from the traditional methods of meeting in living rooms, assigning block captains and patrols. Today's practice is to encourage use of social media such as "Facebook" sites where interested neighbors can communicate and exchange information through individual group pages. Business and public outreach crime prevention and safety presentations are frequently related to active shooter survival, drug and alcohol recognition, safe traffic stop behavior, and victim prevention through situational awareness. At appropriate city events, the PRO staffs a booth to provide crime prevention information and department recruitment information regarding police officer, civilian, and volunteer positions. The PRO is provided a small budget to purchase marketing merchandise to distribute at these events.

The PRO is also certified to provide Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) consulting services to Billings businesses. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is defined as the proper design and effective use of the built environment that can lead to a reduction in crime by assessing the elements of natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance, with simple alterations that can increase public safety.

Collateral duties assigned to the PRO include the Extra Duty Employment program, Abandoned Vehicle Tow project, the Prescription Drug Collection and Disposal program, and the Crime Stoppers program. These collateral duties are as follows:

**Extra Duty Program:** The policy of the department is to respond to requests for extra-duty police services for city events and public activities to the extent permitted by existing resources. The PRO is responsible for approval, coordination of personnel and equipment, and payroll.

**Abandoned Vehicle Tow Project:** The PRO is responsible for providing security for the Volunteer Patrol Unit while towing abandoned vehicles previously tagged with warnings by the VPU.

**Drug Collection and Disposal Program:** This program provides an environmentally safe alternative to disposing of medications in the landfill or sewer systems, which may later negatively affect the environment. This program encourages citizens to increase safety in their homes by disposing of medications in safe, secure receptacles. The PRO is responsible for the clearing and disposal of the items deposited by the public in the provided receptacles.

**Crime Stoppers Program:** The PRO is responsible for the review and oversight of tips, as well as rewards paid out through the Crime Stoppers program. Reward money paid to tipsters is the result of donations from individuals, corporations, and organizations. A three-person civilian board authorizes reward payment. Monies are paid in cash under the direction of the Investigations Division and tracked by the PRO through the TIPSOFT computer program. In addition, the PRO also coordinates payment of these same donated monies to informants developed by the Street Crimes Unit (SCU). These payments are channeled through a local bank by the PRO to the informants when authorized by an SCU investigator. This process concerns CPSM due to the lack of supervisory and management oversight and periodic audits. Current department policies 7-2, 8-3, and 8-7 do not clearly address these SCU payments.

The PRO sees the position as part public relations, and even more so in recent years, part crime prevention. The incumbent officer has significant tenure and expresses a strong dedication to the program's goals and expectations.

## Public Relations Officer Recommendation:

- Review the Crime Stoppers reward process to ensure appropriate funding, distribution, and accountability. (Recommendation No. 88.)

## DOWNTOWN BILLINGS RESOURCE OFFICERS

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The Billings Police Department has a public-private partnership with the Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID) in a cooperative safety program to make downtown Billings a better place to live, work, and play. The program assigns two BPD officers to downtown Billings as Downtown Resource Officers (DROs). The assigned officers are funded by a special tax levied against the downtown businesses based on square footage of their building. The officers provide additional presence, visibility, and assistance over and above assigned beat officers.

The officers work a 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 4/10 schedule, with one officer working Monday through Thursday and the other working Wednesday through Saturday. The early start time enables officers to contact homeless individuals who sleep in business doorways; the officers encourage these individuals to move on before the businesses open. The officers' deployment days and times provide broad availability to the business district and enable the officers to address their various tasks. Most special events planned by the DBID occur on Thursday, so the deployment overlap on Wednesday and Thursday are helpful for those events. The officers maintain an office in the DBID building.

The officers' primary duty is to liaison with the 150-plus business owners and to develop relationships through a "walk and talk" process. The businesses have the option of calling the DROs directly or BPD dispatch if a law enforcement response is necessary. If contacted directly, the officers advise dispatch of their response over the radio, which initiates a call for service in the CAD system. The DBID unit is generally not assigned calls in the area unless they are related to a downtown business. The patrol beat car handles non-business calls and business-related calls that may require follow-up outside the district.

A DBID-funded outreach counselor, who also works out of the DBID offices, frequently pairs with the officers to contact homeless in the area. The purpose of the contacts is to match up services applicable to the individual whether it be shelter, addiction services, mental health counseling, or other services. There are a number of community-based organizations in the Billings area which provide such services to which the team can connect homeless individuals. Officers can also provide transportation, if necessary.

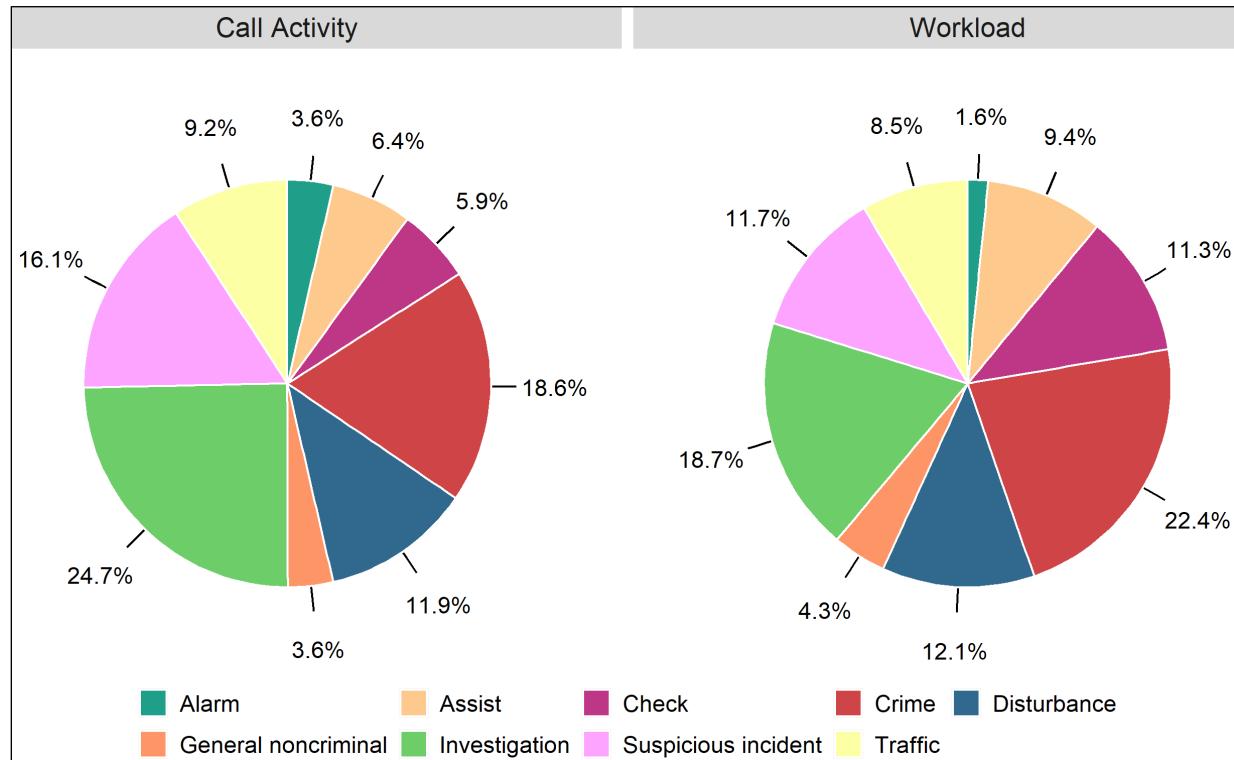
The DROs estimate that 30 to 40 homeless people sleep out overnight in the business district. Local jail population issues and COVID-19-related prisoner releases dramatically increased the homeless population in the city in 2020, and in-turn the officers' overall activity.

CAD data regarding DBID unit activity supplied to CPSM is detailed in the tables and figures that follow. The data indicate that between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded 3,279 calls that involved DORs. During this period, the dispatch center also recorded 1,246 activities assigned to DORs and which were not assigned a call number. These activities, known as "out-of-service time," are detailed in Table 6-11, Non-Call Activities and Occupied Times.

**TABLE 6-9: DRO Units, Calls and Workload by Category**

Category	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	63	32.9
Alarm	119	16.6
Animal	11	3.7
Assist other agency	211	96.4
Check	195	116.9
Crime—person	98	52.3
Crime—property	198	104.4
Crime—society	312	74.1
Disturbance	389	124.7
Follow-up	66	25.5
Investigation	810	192.6
Miscellaneous	23	6.2
Suspicious incident	528	120.7
Traffic enforcement	81	28.9
Traffic stop	158	25.8
Warrant/prisoner	17	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,279</b>	<b>1,030.4</b>

**FIGURE 6-4: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, DRO Units**



**Note:** For this graph, we removed two calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 6-10: DRO Units, Calls by Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	59	4
Alarm	118	1
Animal	7	4
Assist other agency	163	48
Check	2	193
Crime-person	90	8
Crime-property	177	21
Crime-society	213	99
Disturbance	332	57
Follow up	0	66
Investigation	400	410
Miscellaneous	15	8
Suspicious incident	283	245
Traffic enforcement	50	31
Traffic stop	0	158
Warrant/prisoner	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>1,359</b>

### Observations:

- The top four categories accounted for 71 percent of calls and 65 percent of workload:
  - 25 percent of calls and 19 percent of workload were investigations.
  - 19 percent of calls and 22 percent of workload were crimes.
  - 16 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload were suspicious incidents.
  - 12 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload were disturbances.
- 59 percent of calls associated with DBA units were community-initiated.
- The largest group of community-initiated calls involved crimes.
- The largest group of police-initiated calls involved investigations.

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**TABLE 6-11: DRO Units Non-Call Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

Unit Status Code	Description	Occupied Time (Min.)	Count
Out of Service	10-100	18.0	19
Out of Service	10-19	55.9	58
Out of Service	10-21	11.1	6
Out of Service	10-42	18.6	40
Out of Service	10-6	22.3	5
Out of Service	Barn	42.6	51
Out of Service	Billings Clinic	15.3	3
Out of Service	BPD	46.8	202
Out of Service	Briefing	41.3	7
Out of Service	City hall/court	78.8	6
Out of Service	Detail	59.1	9
Out of Service	Evidence	24.8	22
Out of Service	Home	54.9	4
Out of Service	Meeting	87.0	356
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	48.8	137
Out of Service	Out of service	77.4	15
Out of Service	Training	111.8	1
Follow Up	Follow up	11.9	23
Reports	Reports	42.5	116
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>57.7</b>	<b>1,080</b>
Break	Break	46.3	135
Lunch	Lunch	40.9	31
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>45.3</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>56.1</b>	<b>1,246</b>

### Observations:

- The most common out-of-service description was meeting.
- The recorded personal activities were for breaks and lunch breaks.
- The description with the longest average time was for training.
- The average time spent was 57.7 minutes for administrative activities and 45.3 minutes for personal activities.

### Downton Resource Officer Recommendations:

No recommendations are offered.

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs)

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School Resource Officers (SROs) serve as educators, mentors, and support figures for students and school staff while maintaining school physical security. SROs strive to hold juveniles responsible for their actions and prevent individual problems from developing into delinquency. SROs play a vital role in ensuring that schools are safe and welcoming places where all students can learn. The SRO program has been in place in Billings for 25 years.

Eight uniformed police officers are assigned as SROs and work out of the Professional Standards Division. Their Sergeant has several other units to oversee, thus limiting his time to provide adequate oversight. One SRO spends 80 percent of his time at the Career Center and 20 percent at the Billings Catholic schools. Three SROs are assigned to six middle schools, one officer is assigned to one elementary school, and three SROs are each assigned to one of the three high schools.

At their assigned schools, SROs develop positive relationships with students, teachers, administrators, and parents. According to the BPD 2019 Annual Report, during school year 2018–2019 the eight SROs handled 829 cases, 400 of which involved arrests. SROs handle the initial reports and forward felonies or serious cases to detectives for follow-up. Presently, when detectives may be seeking school-aged youth involved in crimes, SROs are a reliable source of information in the identification of suspects.

The Billings Unified School District (BUSD) pays full salaries for three of the SROs; the other five officers' salaries are prorated. The BUSD also reimburses the BPD for the costs of any required SRO police equipment such as the police radios and cars needed to complete their duties.

CPSM recommends that BPD consider reassigning SROs to the Investigations Division and as well create a new FTE SRO sergeant's position. This move would benefit the schools, SROs, and the department in the following ways:

- SROs could be trained as detectives and attend basic investigative courses. This would broaden their knowledge and skills and increase their value to the BPD.
- The SROs could continue to handle campus-related criminal cases, but follow cases to completion, in some instances filing charges or managing other dispositions.
- The work hours of detectives, schools, and SROs and their supervisor would be the same, enhancing communication and interaction.
- The SRO Sergeant could develop relationships with BUSD personnel and be a central point of contact during work hours.
- SROs could assist with detective cases during school breaks and as back-up on call-outs.
- The SRO Sergeant could attend investigation training and supervise investigations to be of greater assistance to detectives.
- The proposed SRO move better positions the Investigations Division to create a family violence unit, with the SRO Sergeant taking an active role.
- During school breaks, SROs could also be used in patrol, depending on staffing needs.

Some agencies use this model for their SRO program and have found it to be of great benefit for the reasons stated. The SRO program is an excellent investment that should be continued; however, the program needs more oversight to ensure accountability and acceptable performance from each SRO.

SROs also participate in school activities, meet with parents, teachers, administrators, and staff. The SRO program provides an excellent opportunity to create and sustain positive relationships with youth, school officials, and parents. This is an excellent program that should be continued.

## SRO Recommendations

- Transfer the SRO program from Professional Standards to Investigations Division, Detectives. (Recommendation No. 89.)
- Create a new FTE Sergeant's position to supervise the SRO program. (Recommendation No. 90.)

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVESTIGATIONS

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One police officer is assigned to handle misdemeanor domestic violence investigations, and is referred to as the Domestic Violence Investigator (DVI). The DVI has held this position since 2012 when the city attorney's office obtained funding for a grant to create the city's Domestic Violence Unit. The unit consists of a designated prosecutor, two victim-witness specialists, and the DVI. The same DVI has held this position since the grant's inception. The BPD pays for the DVI's salary, and the grant pays for her training and overtime. The DVI works out of the Crime Prevention Center.

The department's organizational structure reflects that this position falls under the direction of the Professional Standards Captain. In reality, that Captain provides no supervisory control over the DVI; rather, the DVI is technically supervised by a detective Sergeant, though her cases are not included in detectives' workload calculations.

The nexus between misdemeanor and felony domestic violence cases is well established, and the national occurrence of domestic violence-related homicides stresses the need to address prevention, intervention, and prosecution. The DVI should be working with fellow detectives assigned to felony domestic violence assaults, including Partner Family Member Assaults (PFMAs).

The DVI's caseload averages 350 cases annually. Though the DVI is primarily tasked with investigating misdemeanor domestic violence, she initiates an average of 50 felony domestic violence and stalking cases yearly, handling them to completion. At the request of the Yellowstone County prosecutor, she also investigates additional felony cases. The DVI also is responsible for writing grants. According to the DVI, she declines to investigate additional domestic violence cases after she reaches the limit of what she can handle. This occurs monthly. The excess cases either go to the City Attorney or Investigations.

According to the DVI, the City Attorney's office is seeking an additional prosecutor to handle an increase in domestic violence cases. This will have a domino effect of creating more cases for investigators, prosecutors, the court, and presumably, the need for jail space. It is evident that an additional detective is needed to handle the surplus investigations the DVI cannot handle and to provide relief from her caseload. CPSM recommends that one additional detective be assigned as a domestic violence investigator, whether through attrition, realignment of assignments, or creating a new FTE officer.

### ***Creating a Family Violence Unit***

The BPD should consider consolidating its resources to combat domestic violence, perhaps by expanding the current city Domestic Violence Unit. The DVI handles an extraordinary level of

misdemeanor domestic violence cases offsite and works with the City Attorney, while felony domestic violence and child abuse cases are investigated by detectives at the main PD facility. Many police departments have established family violence units that include representatives from the City or County Prosecutors' Offices, probation, Child Protective Services, detectives, and victim support/advocates. Such a holistic strategy to combat family violence identifies first-time and repeat offenders. Ideally, the response to each case would therefore be better informed and more effective.

The current BPD Detective Sergeant proposed a similar concept to include a team of two officers tasked with enforcing domestic violence restraining orders. This viable option would be a timely enforcement tool to ensure compliance with court orders and victim safety. CPSM recommends that the department consider working with stakeholders to create a family violence unit with the goal of reducing violence and ensuring victims' safety.

## DVI Recommendations

- Transfer the Domestic Violence Investigator (DVI) from Patrol to the Investigations Division, Detectives. (Recommendation No. 91.)
- Transfer an officer or create one FTE police officer position in Domestic Violence. (Recommendation No. 92.)
- Consider collaborating with the City Attorney's office to create an expanded family violence unit consisting of investigators and representatives from probation, Child Protective Services, prosecutors, and victim advocates. The emphasis for this unit would be on domestic violence, child and elder abuse, stalking, and threats. (Recommendation No. 93.)

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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The BPD Volunteer Program provides assistance to the department with a current cadre of 39 volunteers. Their activities are directed by a Volunteer Program Coordinator employed by the police department. The program is housed at the Crime Prevention Center (CPC). The CPC hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Volunteer activities include report writing, manning a volunteer patrol unit, tagging and towing abandoned vehicles, writing parking tickets, and providing fingerprinting services. Volunteers also assist the city and police department during special events and handle other miscellaneous tasks as needed.

As report takers, the volunteers write reports on non-workable incidents. The source of these reports are walk-ins and call-ins to the CPC, calls from the dispatch center, and reports submitted online via Lexis Nexis. Volunteers wrote 2,657 reports in 2019, which provides significant relief to patrol personnel.

The volunteer patrol unit deploys a morning and afternoon unit. In 2019, the unit tagged 1,865 abandoned vehicles and initiated the towing of 358 vehicles whose owners failed to heed the tag warning. While volunteers are in the process of having a vehicle towed by contracted tow services a BPD officer stands by to ensure there is no interference. During the year, the volunteer unit wrote 230 parking tickets, including 63 handicapped space violations, which is a towable violation.

## Volunteers Recommendation:

- The Volunteer Program Coordinator should work with Records Supervisor to explore the deployment of volunteers at the Records counter. (Recommendation No. 94.)

# SECTION 7. MISCELLANEOUS

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In this section, we will discuss factors that are important to police operations, but are outside the confines of a specific operating division. These include police facilities, custody operations, succession planning, information technology, expanded civilian opportunities, and department policies.

## POLICE FACILITIES

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As previously noted, the department operates out of multiple facilities that include:

- Police headquarters, which houses administration, supervisors, detectives, records, and some support personnel.
- The “barn,” which houses personnel assigned to field deployments such as patrol and STEP.
- The property and evidence facility, located adjacent to the “barn.”
- Off-site offices that house multi-agency taskforce personnel.
- The Crime Prevention Center, which houses some volunteer services.
- The outdoor firing range.

As a result of this decentralization, staff must routinely travel between multiple facilities to perform essential work functions.

For instance, patrol supervisors, including Lieutenants and Sergeants, must brief on-coming patrol shifts at the “barn,” and then move to the downtown police headquarters where their offices are located. Patrol officers deploy from the “barn,” but must travel to downtown police headquarters for meetings with supervisors, detectives, to obtain equipment supplied by the quartermaster, report writing (should be limited to lengthy reports as the officers’ vehicles are equipped with MDTs), and submitting work that cannot be electronically submitted, as just some examples. Task force personnel are assigned at yet other locations in the city. This decentralization creates a less-than-efficient working environment, and may contribute to the high level of out-of-service time.

As we conducted our work at police headquarters, we noted cramped office space, open floor plans that are disruptive to a work environment, the absence of adequate meeting space, etc. We were advised that there are some preliminary discussions regarding acquisition of property that would allow for co-location of police operations, including regional task force personnel. We strongly support this effort.

### Police Facility Recommendation:

- Pursue opportunities to acquire and relocate to a police facility that will better serve the needs of the community and department. (Recommendation No. 95.)

## CUSTODY OPERATIONS (JAIL)

---

Jail services are provided by the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Department. The jail is routinely overcrowded, resulting in the absence of space to house individuals arrested for a wide variety of crimes, both violent and nonviolent. As a result, persons arrested for crimes are routinely released on a citation to appear at a future date, and so return to the areas of their suspected crimes. Anecdotal reports suggest that many re-offend within hours. Many others do not appear in court, and warrants for arrest are issued by the court. Still, without space to house the individual, the warrants cannot be served. In some cases, individuals accrue dozens, even scores, of warrants.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the absence of adequate jail space is central to many of the issues the community and department struggle with, both in terms of crime and quality of life. Both high crime rates and heavy workload demands on the department are reflected in this.

Impacts on the community include an ongoing threat to the safety, peace, and serenity of the community. There is ample evidence to support this conclusion, including the Downtown Billings Alliance's need to establish a public safety assessment on their members to fund dedicated police patrols in that area. As well, heavy workload on the patrol officers is a contributing factor in lengthy response times experienced in the city.

The impacts on the department are profound. These include excessive workload demands and frustration on the part of officers who must repeatedly confront the same individuals, who undoubtedly feel empowered to continue anti-social behaviors due to the lack of meaningful sanctions. Not only does this impact the patrol officers, but as well detectives that are saddled with increased caseloads, records personnel who must process the cases, and the courts.

This, at times, culminates in use of force incidents. An anecdotal report suggested that in one such incident, a fatal use of force occurred when officers shot and killed a suspect who had been arrested multiple times in the preceding few months, including an incident involving violence directed at Billings' officers. In the experience of CPSM consultants, chronic offenders often resort to violence at some point along their path. This is not unique to police–citizen contacts. For example, it is clear that in domestic violence cases, without effective intervention and removal from the situation, abusers often increase their level of violence toward their partner. This can apply to child abuse as well.

In any event, it is abundantly clear that the absence of adequate jail space is having an adverse impact on the community and department. The solution lies in a collaborative effort between the City of Billings, the County of Yellowstone, the courts, including judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys, and the community. Any of these groups hiding within their silo only impedes the ability of the collective will of the people of Billings to improve the quality of life for all its residents, businesses, and visitors.

### Jail Recommendation:

- Work collaboratively with the County of Yellowstone, the courts, prosecutors and defense attorneys, and community members to address the conditions that foster crime, including the lack of adequate jail space in situations where custody is warranted. (Recommendation No. 96.)

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

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As we noted in the Executive Summary, within the next four years the department will see the retirement of most if not all its entire upper-level command staff, down through the rank of Lieutenant, and including civilian command-level personnel. It is imperative that the department consider a structured succession plan, including mentoring of the next generation of department leaders. While the plan must focus on command-level positions, the development of future mid-management and first-line supervisors must be considered as well. Exposure of all potential future leaders to a variety of administrative assignments and tasks is essential to prepare them for these future responsibilities.

The Chief should work with the department's command staff to discuss performance observations of Lieutenants in an effort to identify strengths and deficiencies. Interviews should be conducted with each Lieutenant to ascertain what he/she believes are needed areas of professional development in preparation for increased future responsibilities. Command staff should be assigned, in a one-on-one capacity, to serve as mentors and ensure that identified development needs for their assignee, including training needs and assignment of advanced administrative tasks, are successfully completed.

Lieutenants should join the command staff to conduct a similar analysis of Sergeants. Once a development plan is determined for current Sergeants, Lieutenants should serve as mentors to the Sergeants, and be charged with ensuring that the plan is successfully implemented.

To maximize effectiveness, this needs to be a formal, structured plan with benchmarks and regular progress reviews. Relying on an informal strategy to develop personal is not appropriate or adequate.

### Succession Planning Recommendation:

- It is imperative that efforts be made to develop the future leaders of the department. The focus cannot be limited to ranking officers, but must transcend the hierarchy of the organization to prepare the next generation of command staff down through the future first line supervisors, both sworn and civilian. In addition to formal educational opportunities (FBI National Academy, Senior Management Institute for Police, etc.), assignment of administrative tasks and to specialized units should be part of this plan. The recommendations offered in this assessment offer the opportunity to place administrative responsibilities on the shoulders of these first-line supervisors and mid-level management staff. Finally, this cannot be an informal process, but must be a carefully develop and written strategic plan. (Recommendation No. 97.)

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Throughout this report, we have identified technology needs, many of which are related to case management, management of personnel issues, crime analysis, and a host of related subjects. No law enforcement agency can afford to acquire all of the "latest and greatest" technologies. However, in the areas described, a significant need exists in Billings for commonly utilized technology. We need not revisit specific needs that were addressed previously in reporting on the individual divisions. Here, though, we would offer a recommendation that the department create an Information Technology Committee.

The committee should be chaired by someone such as a Captain who has the authority to move recommendations forward, and should be made up of end users from throughout the department. As well, the city's IT employee who works with the department should be included as a member of the committee. It is important that the participants are diverse in their skill levels regarding technology. Committees of this type have a tendency to attract only those who have levels of skill and comfort with technology; thus, the technologies that they recommend/acquire are not user friendly for those with more general knowledge or less comfort. That results in the acquisition of technology that end users shy away from, and the technology is then underutilized and ineffective.

Anecdotal evidence from our interviews with staff at all levels of the organization suggest the need for the department to increase its utilization of technology. In focus groups, we discussed technology needs, and the potential for the development of such a committee. Several personnel responded favorably to such a consideration.

### Information Technology Recommendation:

- CPSM recommends that the department create an Information Technology Committee to address the department's technology needs as well as recommend ways to maximize the use of existing technology. (Recommendation No. 98.)

## CIVILIAN CAREER LADDER

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The department should consider expanding civilian opportunities in Patrol, Detectives, and Evidence and Property. If Police Service Officer (PSO) positions are created in Patrol and Detectives, the department will benefit in two ways. First, PSOs would relieve police officers from performing rudimentary duties best handled by civilians, leaving officers with more time for proactivity. Second, PSOs gain broader experience by having at more than one assignment to work. Each assignment expands the PSOs' knowledge and skills, increasing their value to the department.

In Evidence and Property, CPSM recommends upgrading one of the three Evidence and Property Technicians to a supervisor level. The supervisor could still assist with intake and disposition of evidence and property, while fulfilling supervisory oversight. Finally, when the current Evidence and Property Lieutenant retires, the department should consider converting his position from sworn to a civilian administrator. The administrator could oversee Evidence and Property, ID Technicians, Crime Analysis, Records, and Animal Control, reporting directly to the (proposed) Support Services Division Captain. A conversion from a sworn Lieutenant to a civilian administrator will result in salary savings and will provide an opportunity for civilians to compete for a mid-management position. These recommendations could be phased in gradually, through attrition.

## Civilian Career Ladder Recommendation:

- Consider creating a civilian career ladder with lateral and upward opportunities. (Recommendation No 99.)

## DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

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Policies serve as operational guidelines and are critical to the effective and efficient management of any law enforcement organization. Given the mission of law enforcement, and ever-changing laws that regulate the performance of such, a comprehensive and current policy manual is vital.

Few law enforcement agencies, including Billings, have the time and resources available to maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive policy manual. This is truly a daunting task! Many agencies that CPSM has worked with and which have attempted to do so have indicated that it requires the work of a full-time supervisor, such as a Lieutenant or Sergeant. And even with this commitment of resources, they struggle to keep current with changes in the law and best practices. Given the experience of CPSM team members in our former agencies, we know this to be true. In our operational assessment, we found instances in which department practices did not fully align with policy or policies for a function were absent. As we reported on specific units, we cited examples.

There are private firms that specialize in aiding police agencies in maintaining a policy manual that meets current standards for best practices and legal mandates. An increasing number of agencies are relying on such firms to assist with this vital function. One such firm, Lexipol, is highly regarded and widely utilized across the country. Lexipol's legal team and subject matter experts continuously track changes and conditions that warrant policy revisions, and at least annually, but often two to three times per year, provide agencies with revised policies for consideration.

While Lexipol provides sample policies consistent with best practices and legal mandates, each agency maintains the ability to modify the policies to meet their specific operational needs and objectives. If the agency accepts the revision, Lexipol immediately updates the manual.

In our experience, we have heard from police departments, city attorneys, and Joint Powers Insurance Agencies (JPIA) that the services provided by Lexipol are essential in policy management. In one case, a JPIA refused to provide insurance to agencies that did not utilize Lexipol.

While Lexipol provides continuing support in ensuring that policies match current statutes and court decisions, we recommend that critical policies receive annual review by the department's staff to ensure that department practices and policies align. One of the best ways to ensure compliance is to use the policy manual as a guide for department-wide audits and inspections.

## Policy Recommendations:

- Strong consideration should be given to contracting with Lexipol for development and maintenance of an improved policy manual. (Recommendation No. 100.)
- Review critical policies on an annual basis to ensure that department practices align with department policy, and that policies reflect best practices. (Recommendation No. 101.)

# SECTION 8. PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

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## DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION (PROPOSED)

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Police department organization structures vary widely based upon a number of variables, including the size and complexity of departments, breadth of services provided, operational objectives, fiscal constraints, and the preferences of the leadership of the organization, among other factors. There is no “one size fits all,” or only one, to the exclusion of all others, that is right for any organization. That is the case in Billings, as well. Nonetheless, for reasons that have been addressed, CPSM believes that the present organization structure is less than ideal, and that an alternative that may be more suitable should be considered.

At present, the department organization chart describes three operating divisions: Operations, Investigations, and Professional Standards. CPSM believes that through reorganization, there is an opportunity to group functions and roles in a streamlined arrangement, increase efficiencies, and broaden opportunities for civilian members of the department, all while ensuring consistency with best practices and improving service delivery.

CPSM recommends that the department be reorganized into four operating divisions:

- Professional Standards Division.
- Field Operations Division.
- Investigative Services Division.
- Support Services Division.

### Organizational Restructure Recommendation:

- Consideration should be given to an organizational restructure that more closely aligns similar work efforts and improves command and control. (Recommendation No. 102.)

We will describe the alignment and functions of each proposed division in the discussions that follow. This will include both the transfer of staff where appropriate, and the addition of new positions where warranted. Additionally, we will include tables to reflect proposed staffing of each division.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

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Under the direction of the Assistant Chief of Police, the Professional Standards Division would encompass Internal Affairs, Training, and Employment Services. Arguably, these are the most important functions, along with supervision, that a department performs in ensuring excellence of service. The selection and training of personnel unquestionably establishes a foundation for success. Internal Affairs serves to ensure that behaviors and performance comply with both department policies and performance expectations. Other subfunctions of this division would be use of force review, policy management, and safety committee (accident and injury reviews).

CPSM suggests that this division be headed by the Assistant Chief of Police, as he is best positioned to ensure that these functions are resourced and carried out to meet community's and department's expectations. Staffing would be comprised of one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and one Training Coordinator. These positions, with the exception of the second of the two sergeants, would transfer from the existing Professional Standards Division. The second sergeant position would require authorization of a new FTE sergeant through the city's budget process. The following table shows this division's proposed staffing.

**TABLE 8-1: Proposed Professional Standards Division Staffing**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Proposed Authorized</b>	<b>Proposed Added Positions</b>
<b>Sworn</b>		
Assistant Chief of Police	1	
Lieutenant	1	
Sergeant*	2	1
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Civilian</b>		
Training Coordinator	1	
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

**Note:** \*Includes one new FTE sergeant.

## FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Field Operations Division would operate under the direction of a police Captain. Under the present structure, the Operations Division includes Patrol, K9, Billings Clinic, the Court Officer, Records, the Quartermaster, and the Radio Technician.

Under our proposal, the Field Operations Division would include the following functions: Patrol, K9, Billings Clinic, and transferred from the current Professional Standards Division, STEP, Downtown Billings Alliance deployment, and the Parks deployment. The Court Officer, Records, the Quartermaster, and the Radio Technician functions would transfer to the proposed Support Services Division.

As addressed in reporting on the current divisions, several staffing enhancements/adjustments are warranted and included in this proposal. These are:

- Add a new authorized FTE sergeant position to oversee STEP, Billings Clinic Deployment, Downtown Billings Alliance Deployment, and the Parks deployment.
- Refocus the mission of the STEP program to include a greater emphasis on traffic safety and management.
- Remove K9s from the STEP deployment.
- Reduce total K9 teams to four handlers and four canines.
- Create of a job classification of Police Service Officer, with an authorized staffing level of six new positions.

**TABLE 8-2: Proposed Field Operations Division Staffing**

Position	Proposed Authorized	Proposed Added Positions
<b>Sworn</b>		
Captain	1	
Lieutenant	3	
Sergeant	13	1*
Patrol Officer	78	
K9	4**	
Billings Clinic	2	
STEP – Traffic (No K9s)	4***	
DBA	2	
Parks	1	
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Civilian</b>		
Police Service Officer***	6	6
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>7</b>

**Notes:** \*Includes one new FTE sergeant to oversee new STEP-Traffic Unit, Billings Clinic, DBA, and Parks deployments. \*\*Transfer one K9 handler from STEP to Patrol to be replaced by a non-K9 patrol officer. \*\*\*Through attrition, eliminate the remaining K9s from STEP. \*\*\*\*Newly created job classification.

## INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

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The Investigative Services Division would operate under the direction of a police captain. A number of changes are recommended here.

- Detectives, Narcotics, and the federal task forces would remain in the Investigative Division.
- The Domestic Violence Investigator and the SRO program would be transferred from the Professional Standards Division into the new Investigative Services Division.
- The ICAC officer would be transferred here from the Operations Division.
- Evidence, Identification Technicians, and Crime Analysis would be transferred from the Investigative Division to the proposed Support Services Division.

The proposed moves are designed to improve supervisory oversight, and ensure that each unit and investigators' duties are in alignment with divisional responsibilities and goals.

Two Police Support Specialists are technically assigned to the Records Division, but operate from Investigations to provide transcription support, primarily on homicide cases and officer-involved shootings. As well, they perform records-related functions within the Investigations Division. If this is intended to be a permanent assignment within the Investigative Division, those positions should be transferred to into the Division and appropriately reflected in budget and other organization documents.

The table on the following page shows the proposed staffing for this division.

**TABLE 8-3: Proposed Investigative Services Division Staffing**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Proposed Authorized</b>	<b>Proposed Added Positions</b>
<b>Sworn</b>		
Captain	1	
Lieutenant	1	
Sergeant (Dets/CSU/CCSIU/SRO)	5	2
Detective/Officer	16	2
ICAC (FBI) Officer	1	
Domestic Violence Investigator	1	
SRO	8	
ATF	1	
DEA	1	
Street Crimes Unit	4	
Federal Task Forces*	5	
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Civilian</b>		
Administrative Support Specialist	1	
Police Support Specialists**	2**	
Police Service Officer***	1	1
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>5</b>

**Notes:** \*Federal Task Forces include CCSIU-HIDTA, FBI Forensics, & U.S. Marshals. \*\*While the Police Support Specialists are technically assigned to Records, they work out of the Investigations Division. \*\*\*New employment classification.

## SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

Under the direction of a police Captain, the Support Services Division would be made up of the following functions: Crime Prevention, Crime Analysis, Records, Animal Control, ID Tech/Forensics, Property and Evidence, Quartermaster, and Radio Technician.

**TABLE 8-4: Proposed Support Services Division Staffing**

Position	Proposed Authorized	Proposed Added Authorized
<b>Sworn</b>		
Captain	1	
Lieutenant	1	
<b>Court Services</b>		
Court Officer	1	
<b>Crime Prevention</b>		
Public Relations Officer	1	
<b>Total Sworn</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Civilian</b>		
Volunteer Coordinator	1	
<b>Crime Analysis</b>		
Crime Analyst	1	
<b>Records</b>		
Records Supervisor	1	
Records Support Specialists	14.5	1.5*
<b>Animal Control</b>		
Animal Control Supervisor	1	
Animal Control Officer	4	
<b>Forensics / Property and Evidence</b>		
Identification Supervisor	1	
Identification Technician	6	5
Evidence Technician	3	
<b>Inventory Specialist</b>		
Quartermaster	1	
<b>Radio Technician</b>		
Public Safety Technician	.3	
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>6.5</b>

**Note:** \*Discovery Unit

## AUTHORIZED COMPARED TO PROPOSED AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT-WIDE

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In the following table we provide a summary of current authorized and proposed staffing as recommended by CPSM. For this illustration, we assume that the proposed reorganization is adopted. Should the city and police department determine that any of the recommendations that involve added personnel as offered by CPSM not be implemented, these numbers would adjust accordingly.

**TABLE 8-5: Proposed Authorized Department Staffing Levels Under the Reorganization**

Position	2020/2021 Authorized	Proposed Added Authorized
<b>Sworn</b>		
Chief	1	
Assistant Chief	1	
Captain	3	
Lieutenant	6	
Sergeant	16	4
Officer	126	2
<b>Sworn Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Civilian</b>		
Administrative Coordinator	1	
Administrative Support Specialist	1	
Senior Office Assistant	1	
Identification Supervisor	1	
Identification Tech	1	5
Evidence Tech	3	
Records Supervisor	1	
Police Support Specialist	13	1.5
Animal Control Supervisor	1	
Animal Control Officer	4	
Public Safety Tech	0.3	
Crime Analyst	1	
Training Coordinator	1	
Quartermaster	1	
Volunteer Coordinator	1	
Police Service Officer*		7
<b>Total Civilian</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Total Authorized Personnel</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>19.5</b>

**Note:** \*New employment classification.

# SECTION 9. DATA ANALYSIS

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This data analysis of police patrol operations for the Billings Police Department focuses on three main areas: workload, deployment, and response times. These three areas are related almost exclusively to patrol operations, which constitute a significant portion of the police department's personnel and financial commitment.

All information in this analysis was developed using data from the Billings City/County Communications Center's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.

CPSM collected data for one year from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019. The majority of the first section of the report, concluding with Table 9-9, uses call data for one year. For the detailed workload analysis, we use two eight-week sample periods. The first period is from January 4 through February 28, 2019, or winter, and the second period is from July 7 through August 28, 2019, or summer.

## WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

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When CPSM analyzes a set of dispatch records, we go through a series of steps:

- We first process the data to improve accuracy. For example, we remove duplicate patrol units recorded on a single event as well as records that do not indicate an actual activity. We also remove incomplete data, as found in situations where there is not enough time information to evaluate the record.
- At this point, we have a series of records that we call "events." We identify these events in three ways:
  - We distinguish between patrol and nonpatrol units.
  - We assign a category to each event based upon its description.
  - We indicate whether the call is "zero time on scene" (i.e., patrol units spent less than 30 seconds on scene), "police-initiated," or "community-initiated."
- We then remove all records that do not involve a patrol unit to get a total number of patrol-related events.
- At important points during our analysis, we focus on a smaller group of events designed to represent actual calls for service. This excludes events with no unit time spent on scene and directed patrol activities.

In this way, we first identify a total number of records, then limit ourselves to patrol events, and finally focus on calls for service.

As with similar cases around the country, we encountered several issues when analyzing Billings' dispatch data. We made assumptions and decisions to address these issues.

- 1,382 events (about 2 percent) involved patrol units spending zero time on scene.
- 11 calls lacked accurate busy times. We excluded these calls when evaluating busy times and work hours.

- The computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system used approximately 97 different event descriptions, which we condensed into 16 categories for our tables and 9 categories for our figures (shown in Chart 9-1). Table 9-29 in the appendix shows how each call description was categorized.

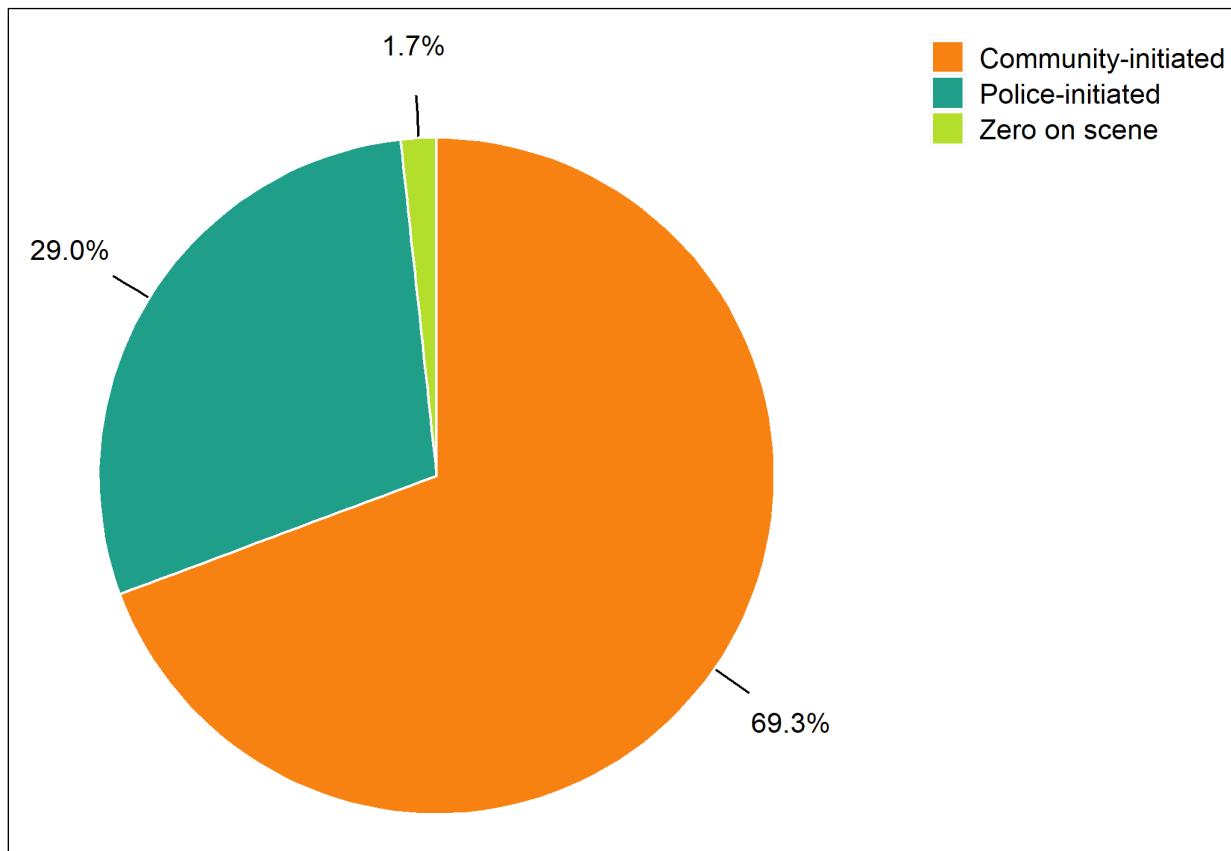
Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the communications center recorded approximately 81,076 calls that were assigned call numbers. When measured daily, the department was dispatched to an average of 222 patrol-related events per day, approximately 2 percent of which (3.8 per day) had fewer than 30 seconds spent on the call.

In the following pages, we show two types of data: activity and workload. The activity levels are measured by the average number of calls per day, broken down by the type and origin of the calls, and categorized by the nature of the calls (crime, traffic, etc.). Workloads are measured in average work hours per day.

### CHART 9-1: Event Descriptions for Tables and Figures

Table Category	Figure Category
Alarm	Alarm
Assist other agency	Assist
Check	Check
Crime–person	Crime
Crime–property	
Crime–society	
Disturbance	Disturbance
Animal	General noncriminal
Follow-up	
Miscellaneous	
Warrant/prisoner	
Investigation	Investigation
Suspicious incident	Suspicious incident
Accident	Traffic
Traffic enforcement	
Traffic stop	

**FIGURE 9-1: Percentage Events per Day, by Initiator**



**Note:** Percentages are based on a total of 81,076 events.

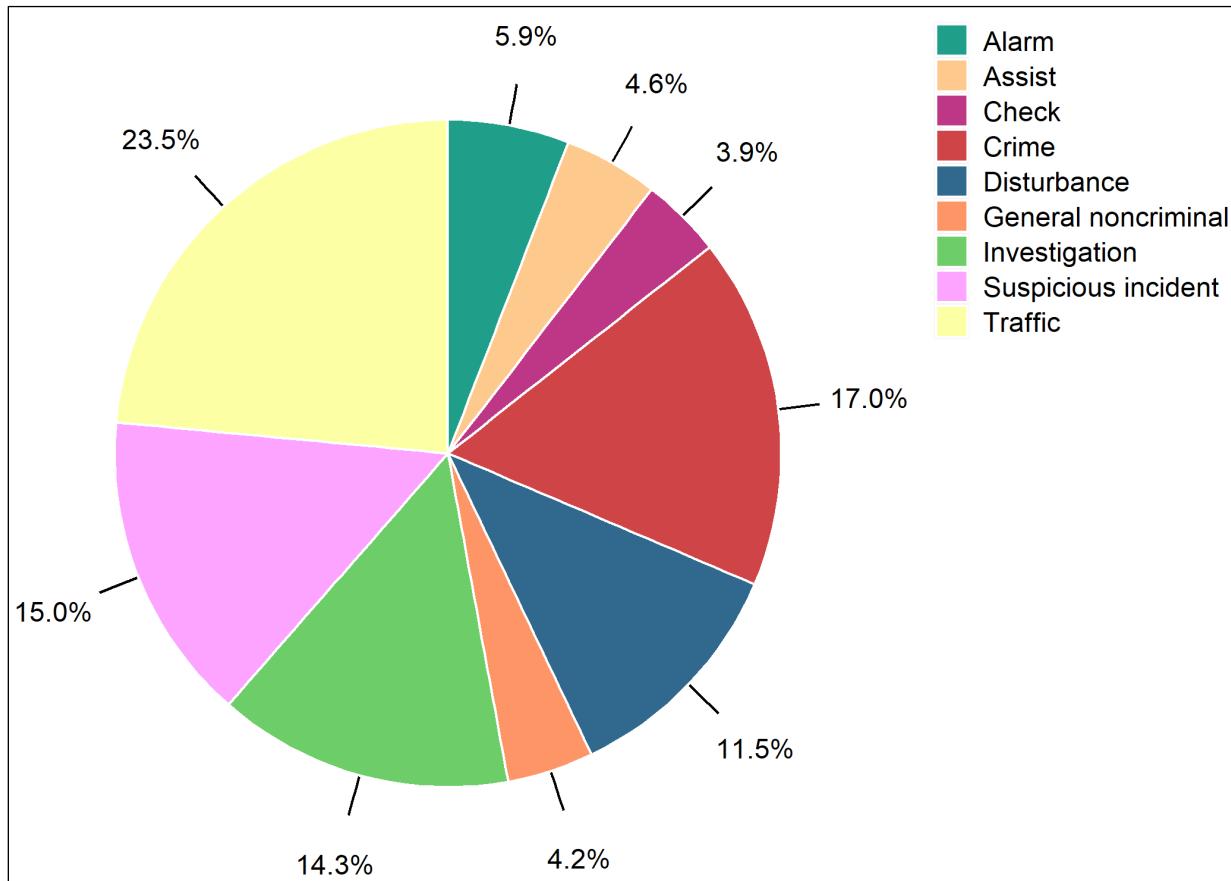
**TABLE 9-1: Events per Day, by Initiator**

Initiator	No. of Events	Events per Day
Community-initiated	56,207	154.0
Police-initiated	23,487	64.3
Zero on scene	1,382	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,076</b>	<b>222.1</b>

### Observations:

- 69 percent of all events were community-initiated.
- 29 percent of all events were police-initiated.
- 2 percent of the events had zero time on scene.
- On average, there were 222 events per day, or 9.3 per hour.

**FIGURE 9-2: Percentage Events per Day, by Category**



**Note:** The figure combines categories in the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1.

**TABLE 9-2: Events per Day, by Category**

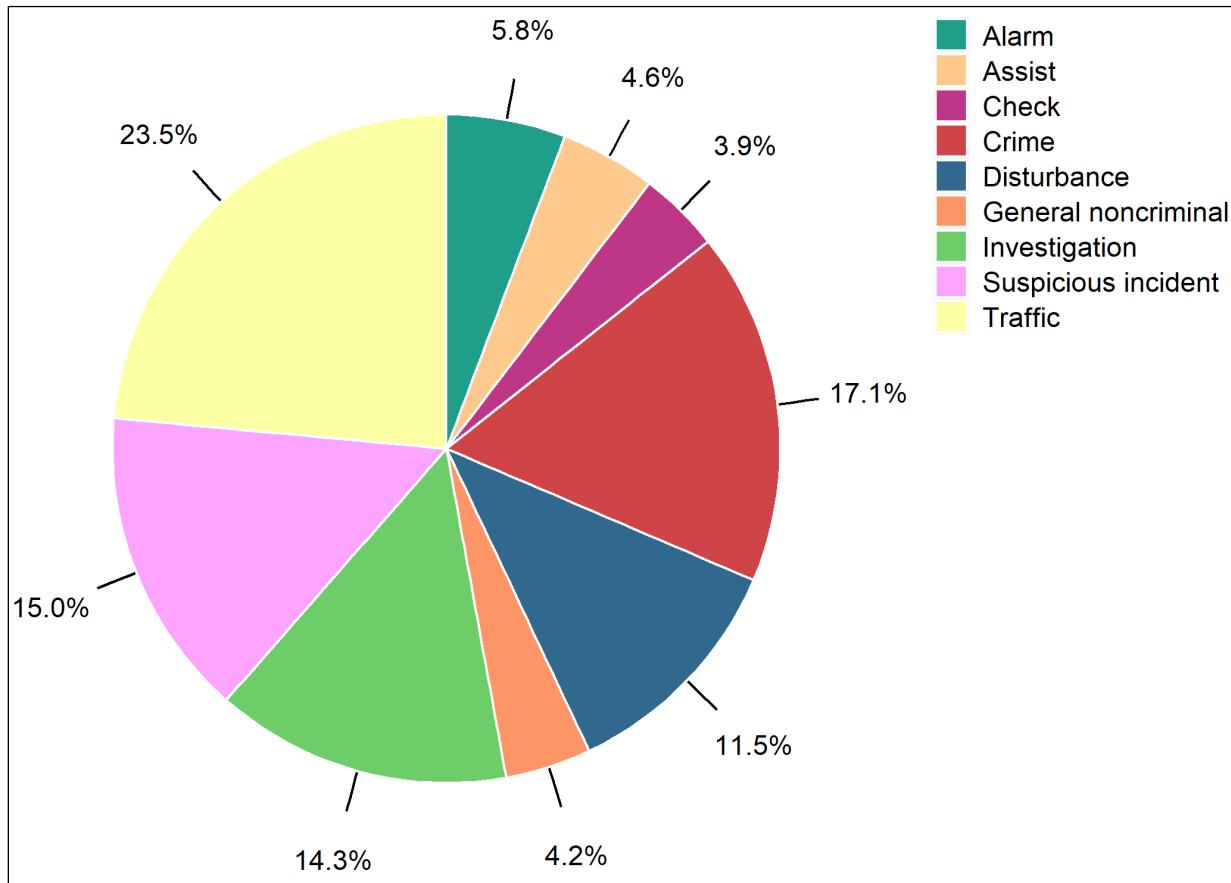
Category	No. of Events	Events per Day
Accident	3,587	9.8
Alarm	4,770	13.1
Animal	330	0.9
Assist other agency	3,720	10.2
Check	3,179	8.7
Crime–person	3,451	9.5
Crime–property	6,441	17.6
Crime–society	3,908	10.7
Disturbance	9,327	25.6
Follow-up	1,522	4.2
Investigation	11,617	31.8
Miscellaneous	948	2.6
Suspicious incident	12,196	33.4
Traffic enforcement	3,492	9.6
Traffic stop	11,962	32.8
Warrant/prisoner	626	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,076</b>	<b>222.1</b>

**Note:** Observations below refer to events shown within the figure rather than the table.

### Observations:

- The top four categories accounted for 70 percent of events:
  - 24 percent of events were traffic-related.
  - 17 percent of events were crimes.
  - 15 percent of events were suspicious incidents.
  - 14 percent of events were investigations.

**FIGURE 9-3: Percentage Calls per Day, by Category**



**Note:** The figure combines categories in the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1.

**TABLE 9-3: Calls per Day, by Category**

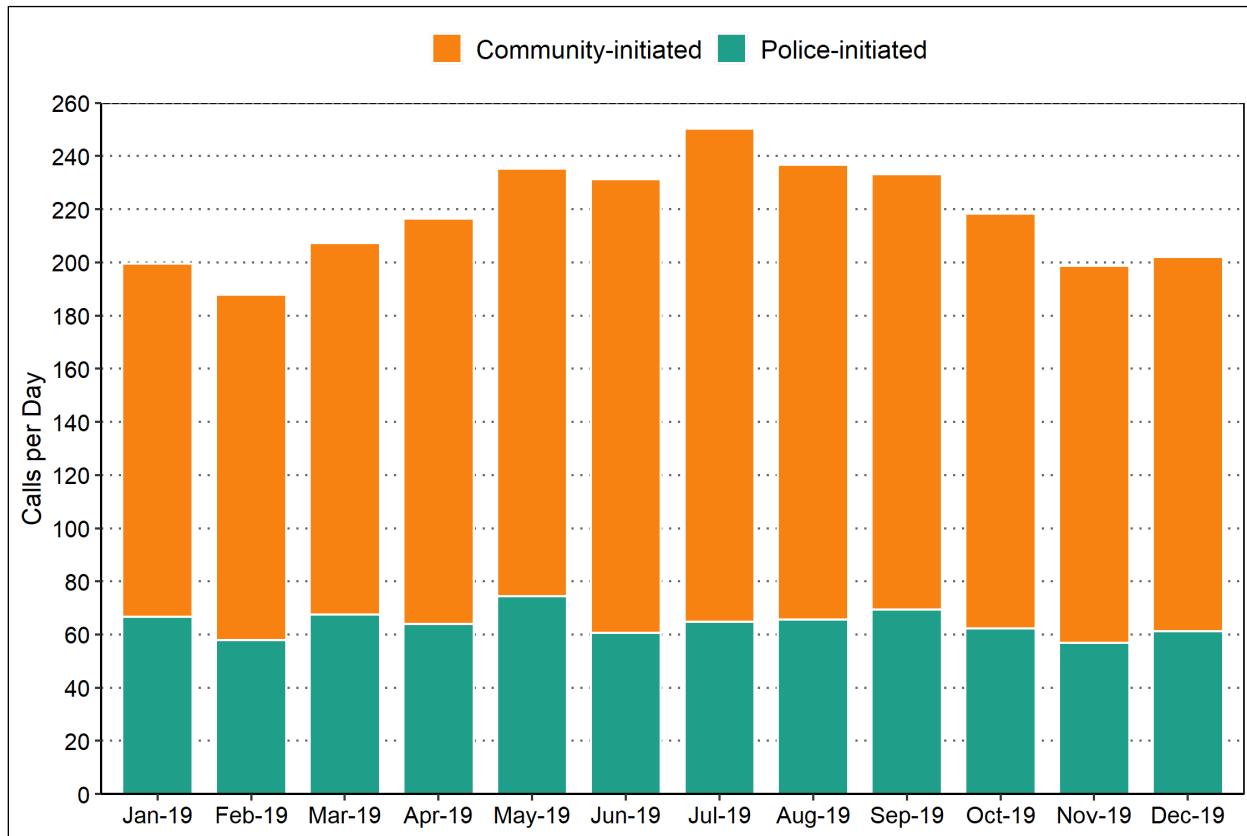
Category	No. of Calls	Calls per Day
Accident	3,541	9.7
Alarm	4,600	12.6
Animal	320	0.9
Assist other agency	3,686	10.1
Check	3,144	8.6
Crime–person	3,413	9.4
Crime–property	6,364	17.4
Crime–society	3,839	10.5
Disturbance	9,197	25.2
Follow-up	1,503	4.1
Investigation	11,414	31.3
Miscellaneous	880	2.4
Suspicious incident	11,958	32.8
Traffic enforcement	3,292	9.0
Traffic stop	11,929	32.7
Warrant/prisoner	614	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,694</b>	<b>218.3</b>

**Note:** The focus here is on recorded calls rather than recorded events. We removed 1,382 events with zero time on scene.

### Observations:

- There was an average of 218.3 calls per day or 9.1 per hour.
- The top four categories accounted for 70 percent of calls:
  - 24 percent of calls were traffic-related.
  - 17 percent of calls were crimes.
  - 15 percent of calls were suspicious incidents.
  - 14 percent of calls were investigations.

**FIGURE 9-4: Calls per Day, by Initiator and Month**



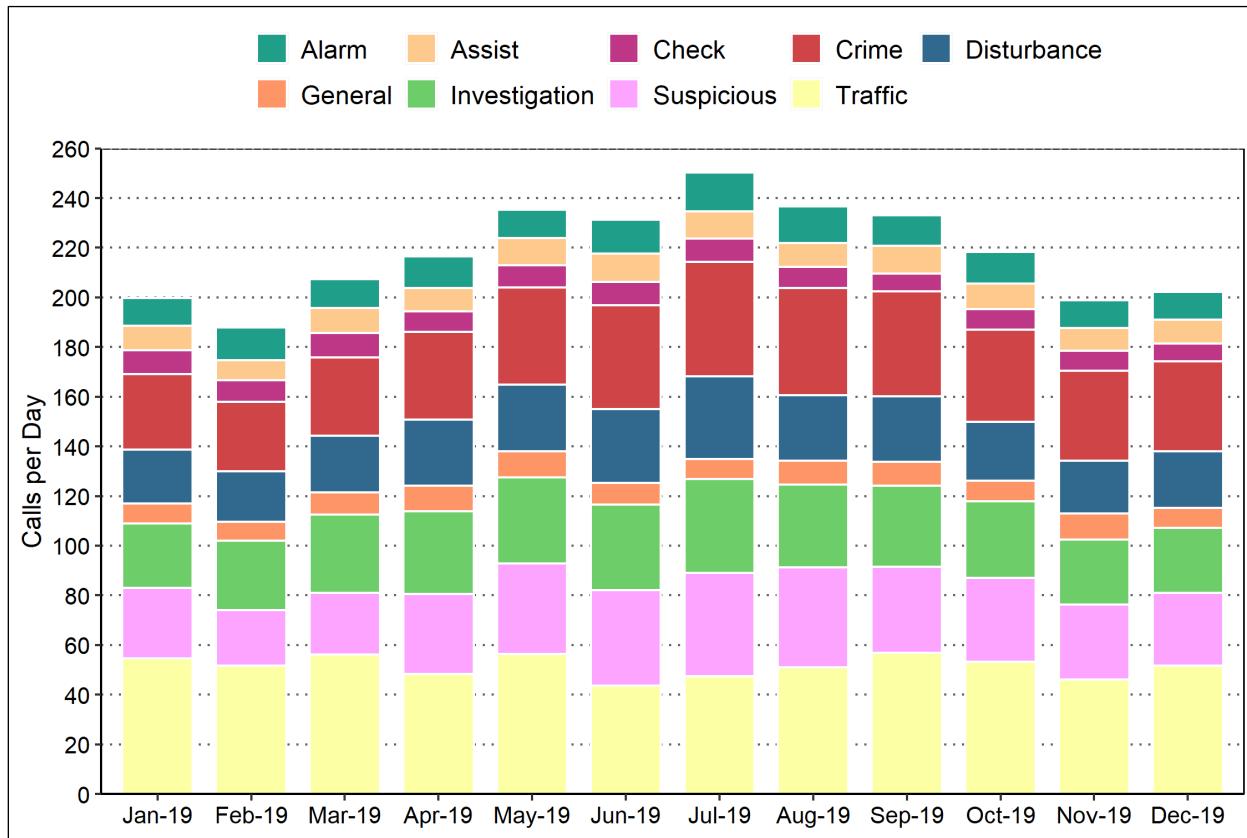
**TABLE 9-4: Calls per Day, by Initiator and Months**

Initiator	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Community	133.1	129.9	140.0	152.5	160.9	170.7	185.5	170.9	163.7	156.1	141.9	140.8
Police	66.6	58.0	67.4	64.0	74.4	60.6	64.8	65.7	69.4	62.2	56.9	61.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>199.6</b>	<b>187.9</b>	<b>207.4</b>	<b>216.5</b>	<b>235.3</b>	<b>231.2</b>	<b>250.4</b>	<b>236.6</b>	<b>233.2</b>	<b>218.3</b>	<b>198.8</b>	<b>202.1</b>

### Observations:

- The number of calls per day was lowest in February.
- The number of calls per day was highest in July.
- The months with the most calls had 33 percent more calls than the months with the fewest calls.
- May had the most police-initiated calls, with 31 percent more than November, which had the fewest.
- July had the most community-initiated calls, with 43 percent more than February, which had the fewest.

**FIGURE 9-5: Calls per Day, by Category and Month**



**Note:** The figure combines categories in the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1.

**TABLE 9-5: Calls per Day, by Category and Month**

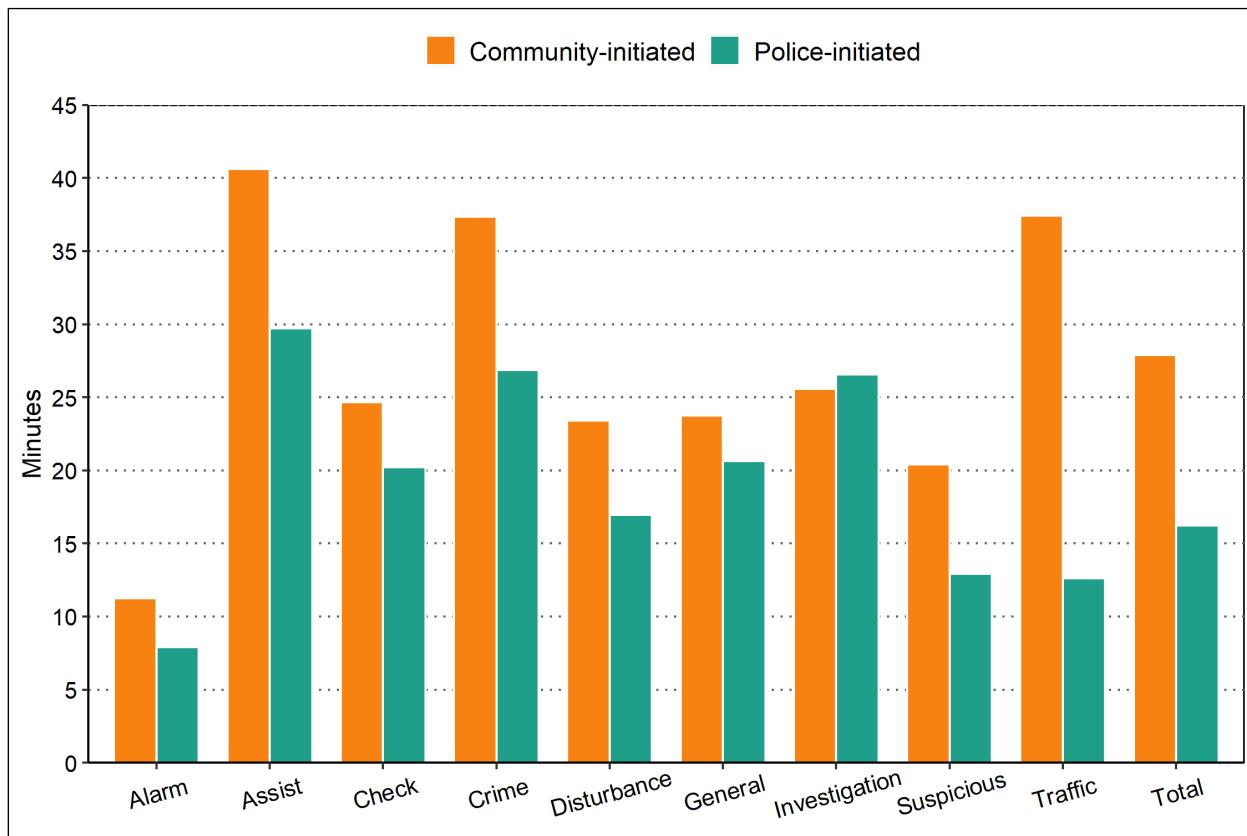
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Accident	9.2	12.1	9.5	7.8	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.8	9.9	11.4	9.8	10.1
Alarm	11.0	13.1	11.6	12.7	11.4	13.7	15.7	14.6	12.3	12.8	11.2	11.0
Animal	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.9
Assist other agency	10.0	8.2	10.1	9.4	10.9	11.3	10.9	9.8	11.3	10.3	9.2	9.8
Check	9.5	8.6	9.8	8.4	8.9	9.5	9.4	8.5	7.3	8.3	8.0	7.1
Crime–person	8.1	7.8	8.7	10.2	9.3	10.8	10.6	9.4	10.5	8.6	8.7	9.3
Crime–property	14.6	13.4	14.6	16.2	19.5	18.6	22.5	21.5	18.5	17.5	15.9	16.2
Crime–society	7.8	6.8	8.4	8.9	10.4	12.3	13.0	12.1	13.1	11.1	11.5	10.7
Disturbance	21.5	20.5	22.7	26.7	26.9	29.8	33.3	26.5	26.5	23.6	21.2	22.8
Follow-up	4.0	4.1	4.9	4.7	4.8	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.0	3.4	4.9	3.7
Investigation	25.9	28.1	31.6	33.4	34.7	34.4	37.8	33.3	32.7	30.8	26.2	26.2
Miscellaneous	2.1	1.7	1.8	3.2	3.2	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.0
Suspicious incident	28.4	22.3	24.9	32.0	36.5	38.5	41.5	40.4	34.7	33.9	30.0	29.2
Traffic enforcement	10.2	10.5	11.6	8.3	8.3	7.9	8.5	9.5	9.2	9.1	8.3	6.8
Traffic stop	35.3	29.0	34.9	32.3	38.9	26.8	29.9	31.7	37.7	32.6	28.0	34.5
Warrant/prisoner	1.6	1.1	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.5	2.0	1.4	2.1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>199.6</b>	<b>187.9</b>	<b>207.4</b>	<b>216.5</b>	<b>235.3</b>	<b>231.2</b>	<b>250.4</b>	<b>236.6</b>	<b>233.2</b>	<b>218.3</b>	<b>198.8</b>	<b>202.1</b>

**Note:** Calculations were limited to calls rather than events.

## Observations:

- The top four categories (traffic, crime, suspicious incident, and investigation) averaged between 68 and 71 percent of calls throughout the year:
  - Traffic calls averaged between 43.7 and 56.7 calls per day throughout the year.
  - Crimes averaged between 27.9 and 46.1 calls per day throughout the year.
  - Suspicious incidents averaged between 22.3 and 41.5 calls per day throughout the year.
  - Investigations averaged between 25.9 and 37.8 calls per day throughout the year.
- Crimes accounted for 15 to 18 percent of total calls.

**FIGURE 9-6: Primary Unit's Average Occupied Times, by Category and Initiator**



**Note:** The figure combines categories using weighted averages from the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1. For this graph and the following Table 9-6, we removed 11 calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 9-6: Primary Unit's Average Occupied Times, by Category and Initiator**

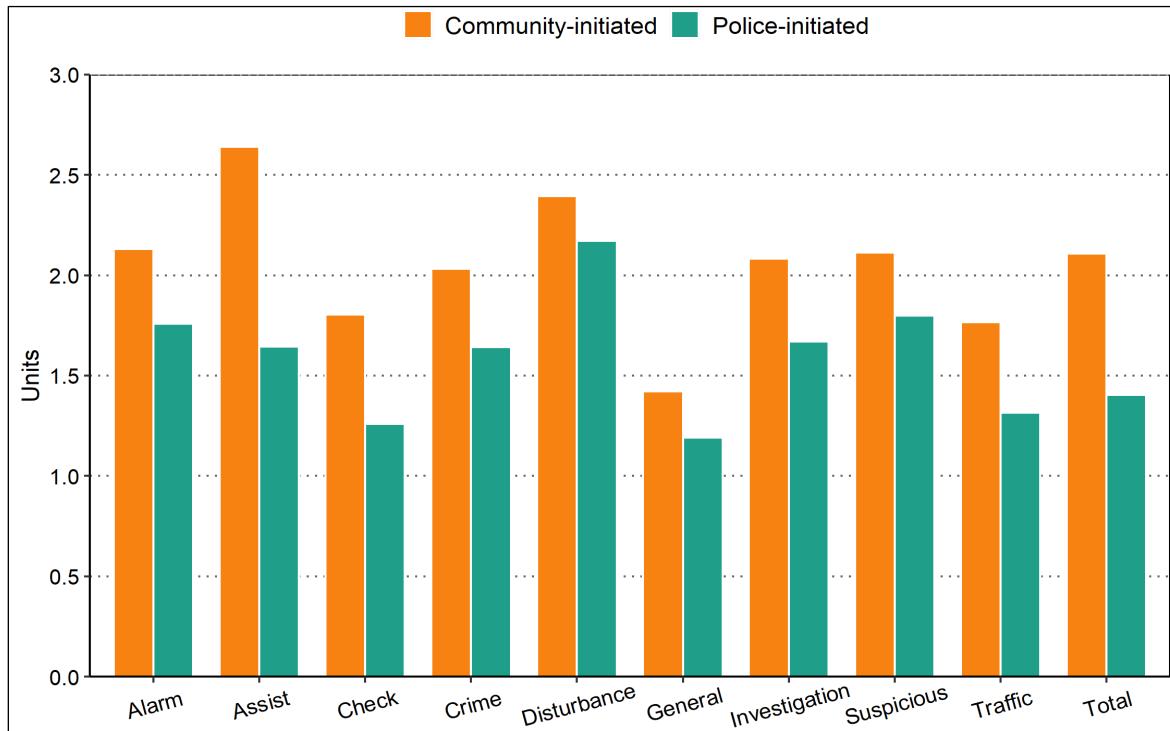
Category	Community-Initiated		Police-Initiated	
	Minutes	Calls	Minutes	Calls
Accident	47.9	3,351	38.5	190
Alarm	11.2	4,567	7.9	33
Animal	19.4	274	11.5	46
Assist other agency	40.6	3,165	29.7	521
Check	24.7	61	20.2	3,075
Crime—person	45.8	3,302	60.9	110
Crime—property	40.7	6,126	36.8	237
Crime—society	22.9	3,360	14.1	479
Disturbance	23.4	8,857	16.9	340
Follow-up	19.7	48	19.1	1,455
Investigation	25.6	9,659	26.6	1,755
Miscellaneous	20.8	803	18.4	77
Suspicious incident	20.4	9,713	12.9	2,245
Traffic enforcement	23.6	2,514	26.6	777
Traffic stop	23.9	9	11.3	11,920
Warrant/prisoner	33.1	396	32.7	218
<b>Weighted Average/Total Calls</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>56,205</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>23,478</b>

**Note:** The information in Figure 9-6 and Table 9-6 is limited to calls and excludes all events that show zero time on scene. A unit's occupied time is measured as the time from when the unit was dispatched until the unit becomes available again. The times shown are the average occupied minutes per call for the primary unit, rather than the total occupied minutes for all units assigned to a call. Observations below refer to times shown within the figure rather than the table.

### Observations:

- A unit's average time spent on a call ranged from 8 to 41 minutes overall.
- The longest average times were for community-initiated assist calls.
- The average time spent on crime calls was 37 minutes for community-initiated calls and 27 minutes for police-initiated calls.

**FIGURE 9-7: Number of Responding Units, by Initiator and Category**

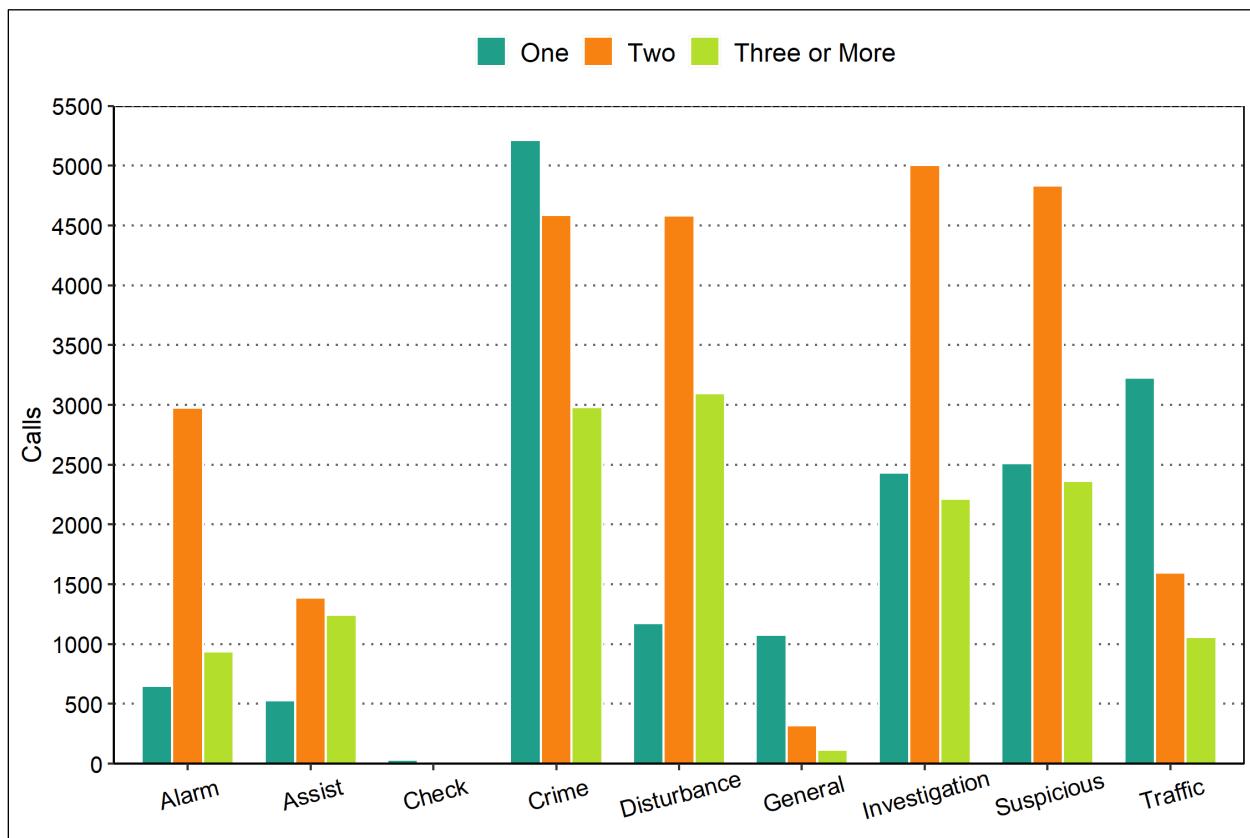


**Note:** The figure combines categories using weighted averages from the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1. The information in Figure 9-7 and Table 9-7 is limited to calls and excludes events with zero time on scene.

**TABLE 9-7: Average Number of Responding Units, by Initiator and Category**

Category	Community-Initiated		Police-Initiated	
	No. of Units	Calls	No. of Units	Calls
Accident	1.8	3,351	1.8	190
Alarm	2.1	4,567	1.8	33
Animal	1.3	274	1.2	46
Assist other agency	2.6	3,165	1.6	521
Check	1.8	61	1.3	3,083
Crime–person	2.4	3,303	2.1	110
Crime–property	1.8	6,126	1.6	238
Crime–society	2.1	3,360	1.6	479
Disturbance	2.4	8,857	2.2	340
Follow-up	1.2	48	1.1	1,455
Investigation	2.1	9,659	1.7	1,755
Miscellaneous	1.3	803	1.2	77
Suspicious incident	2.1	9,713	1.8	2,245
Traffic enforcement	1.7	2,515	1.5	777
Traffic stop	1.9	9	1.3	11,920
Warrant/prisoner	1.7	396	1.8	218
<b>Weighted Average/Total Calls</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>56,207</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>23,487</b>

**FIGURE 9-8: Number of Responding Units, by Category, Community-initiated Calls**



**Note:** The figure combines categories using weighted averages from the following table according to the description in Chart 9-1.

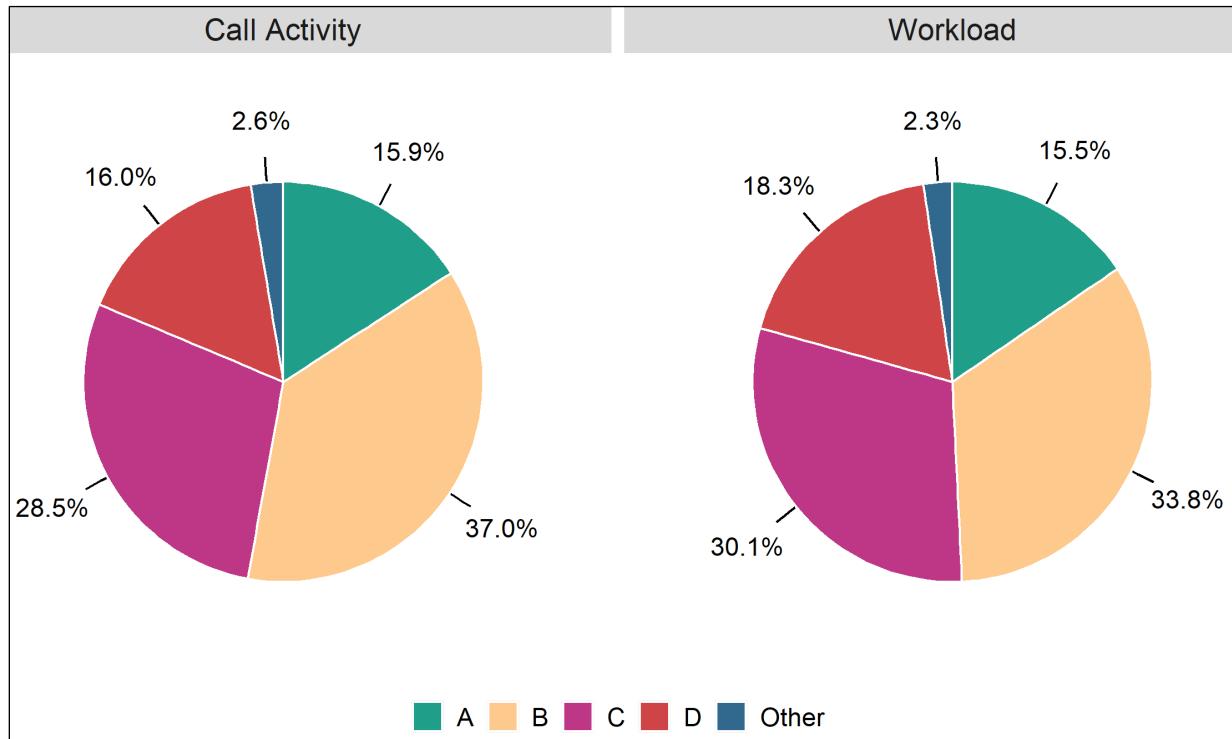
**TABLE 9-8: Number of Responding Units, by Category, Community-initiated Calls**

Category	Responding Units		
	One	Two	Three or More
Accident	1,813	861	677
Alarm	652	2,976	939
Animal	204	50	20
Assist other agency	531	1,390	1,244
Check	33	21	7
Crime—person	1,246	1,014	1,043
Crime—property	3,244	1,794	1,088
Crime—society	727	1,780	853
Disturbance	1,174	4,583	3,100
Follow-up	39	9	0
Investigation	2,436	5,007	2,216
Miscellaneous	621	143	39
Suspicious incident	2,513	4,836	2,364
Traffic enforcement	1,406	731	378
Traffic stop	3	4	2
Warrant/prisoner	217	121	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,859</b>	<b>25,320</b>	<b>14,028</b>

### Observations:

- The overall mean number of responding units was 1.4 for police-initiated calls and 2.1 for community-initiated calls.
- The mean number of responding units was as high as 2.6 for assist calls that were community-initiated.
- 30 percent of community-initiated calls involved one responding unit.
- 45 percent of community-initiated calls involved two responding units.
- 25 percent of community-initiated calls involved three or more responding units.
- The largest group of calls with three or more responding units involved disturbances.

**FIGURE 9-9: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Zone**



**Note:** The “other” category includes 108 calls located at police headquarters, 1,095 calls assigned to miscellaneous YCSO regions, and 901 calls without a zone record.

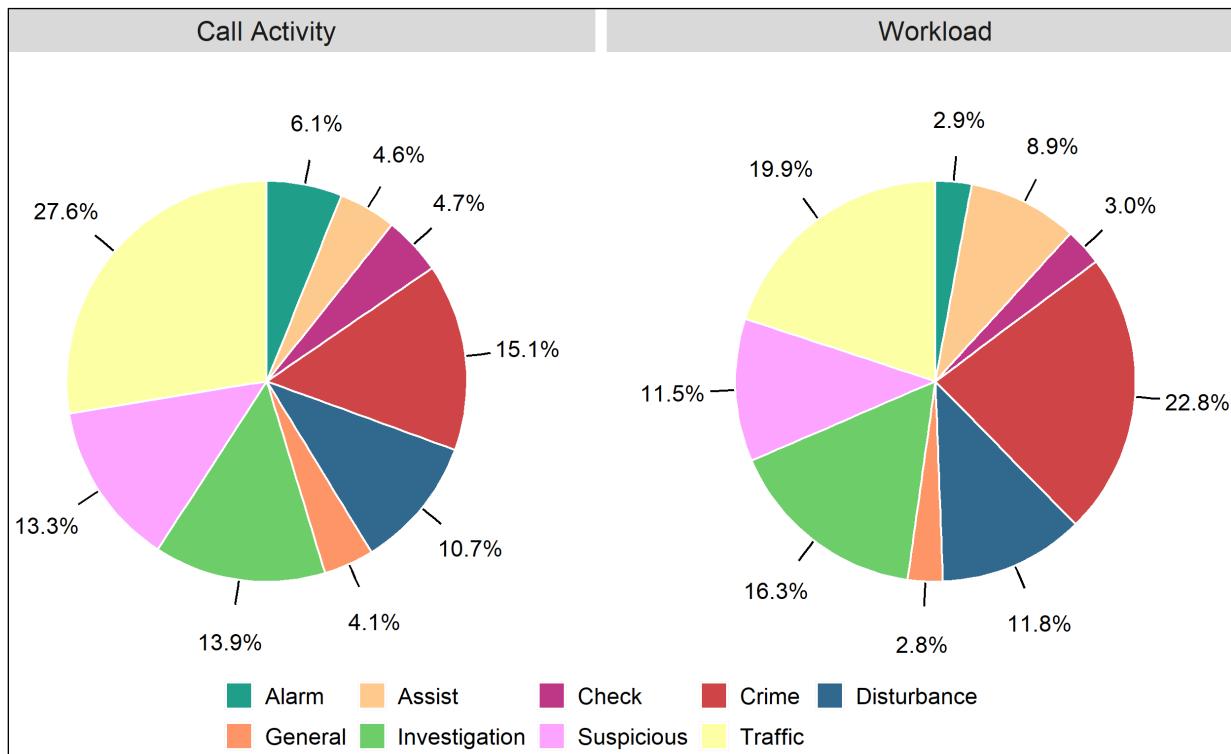
**TABLE 9-9: Calls and Work Hours by Zone, per Day**

Zone	Per Day		Area (Sq. Miles)	Population (2019 Est.)
	Calls	Work Hours		
A1	20.6	13.6	12.2	20,147
A2	14.0	9.1	2.3	8,500
B1	27.1	18.4	3.2	16,665
B2	53.7	31.0	1.7	5,922
C1	22.5	16.0	9.6	30,192
C2	18.5	13.1	3.8	12,989
C3	21.1	15.0	5.3	9,117
D1	18.0	13.8	2.0	5,996
D2	17.0	13.1	4.6	7,777
HQ	0.3	0.1	NA	NA
Miscellaneous	3.0	1.8	NA	NA
Unknown	2.5	1.5	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>218.3</b>	<b>146.3</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>117,305</b>

## Observations:

- Zone B had the most calls and workload, and it accounted for 37 percent of total calls and 34 percent of the total workload.
- Excluding “other” calls, an even distribution would allot 53.1 calls and 35.8 work hours per zone.

**FIGURE 9-10: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, Winter 2019**



**TABLE 9-10: Calls and Work Hours per Day, by Category, Winter 2019**

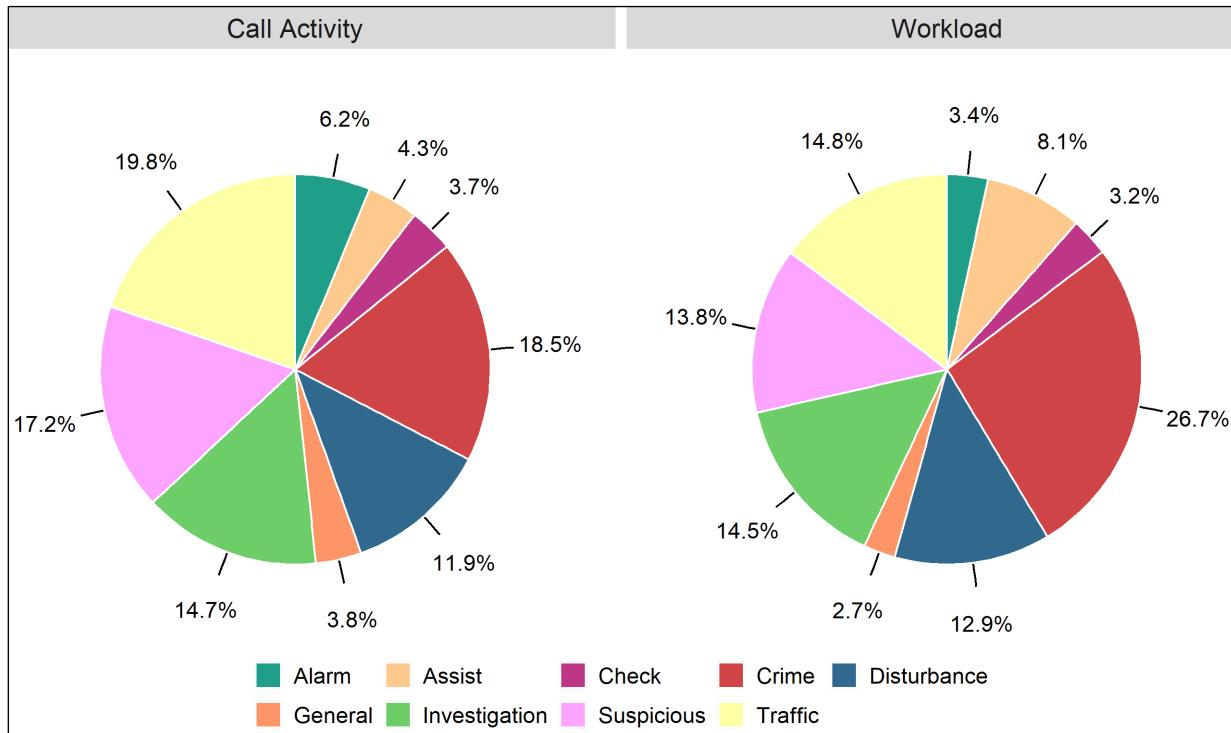
Category	Per Day	
	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	10.5	10.4
Alarm	11.8	3.8
Animal	0.5	0.2
Assist other agency	9.0	11.7
Check	9.1	4.0
Crime—person	7.9	11.1
Crime—property	14.1	14.0
Crime—society	7.3	5.1
Disturbance	20.7	15.5
Follow-up	4.1	1.5
Investigation	26.8	21.5
Miscellaneous	1.9	0.9
Suspicious incident	25.7	15.2
Traffic enforcement	10.2	7.1
Traffic stop	32.6	8.8
Warrant/prisoner	1.4	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>193.7</b>	<b>132.0</b>

**Note:** Workload calculations focused on calls rather than events.

### Observations, Winter:

- Total calls averaged 194 per day or 8.1 per hour.
- Total workload averaged 132 hours per day, meaning that on average 5.5 units per hour were busy responding to calls.
- Traffic calls constituted 28 percent of calls and 20 percent of workload.
- Crimes constituted 15 percent of calls and 23 percent of workload.
- Suspicious incidents constituted 13 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload.
- Investigations constituted 14 percent of calls and 16 percent of workload.
- These top four categories constituted 70 percent of calls and 71 percent of workload.

**FIGURE 9-11: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, Summer 2019**



**TABLE 9-11: Calls and Work Hours per Day, by Category, Summer 2019**

Category	Per Day	
	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	9.4	11.8
Alarm	15.0	5.4
Animal	1.1	0.4
Assist other agency	10.3	12.9
Check	8.9	5.0
Crime—person	9.9	14.6
Crime—property	22.1	20.5
Crime—society	12.6	7.2
Disturbance	28.8	20.5
Follow-up	3.9	1.3
Investigation	35.6	22.9
Miscellaneous	2.8	1.3
Suspicious incident	41.5	21.8
Traffic enforcement	8.9	5.0
Traffic stop	29.4	6.7
Warrant/prisoner	1.4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>241.6</b>	<b>158.4</b>

**Note:** Workload calculations focused on calls rather than events.

### Observations, Summer:

- The average number of calls per day and the daily workload was higher in summer than in winter.
- Total calls averaged 242 per day or 10.1 per hour.
- Total workload averaged 158 hours per day, meaning that on average 6.6 units per hour were busy responding to calls.
- Traffic calls constituted 20 percent of calls and 15 percent of workload.
- Crimes constituted 18 percent of calls and 27 percent of workload.
- Suspicious incidents constituted 17 percent of calls and 14 percent of workload.
- Investigations constituted 15 percent of calls and 14 percent of workload.
- These top four categories constituted 70 percent of calls and 70 percent of workload.

## OUT-OF-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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In the period from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded activities that were not assigned a call number. We focused on those activities that involved a patrol unit. We also limited our analysis to noncall activities that occurred during shifts where the same patrol unit was also responding to calls for service. Each record only indicates one unit per activity. There were a few problems with the data provided and we made assumptions and decisions to address these issues:

- We excluded activities that lasted fewer than 30 seconds. These are irrelevant and contribute little to the overall workload.
- Another portion of the recorded activities lasted more than eight hours. As an activity is unlikely to last more than eight hours, we assumed that these records were inaccurate.
- After these exclusions, 67,475 activities remained. These activities had an average duration of 43.1 minutes.

In this section, we report out-of-service activities and workload by type of activity. In the next section, we include these activities in the overall workload when comparing the total workload against available personnel in winter and summer.

**TABLE 9-12: Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

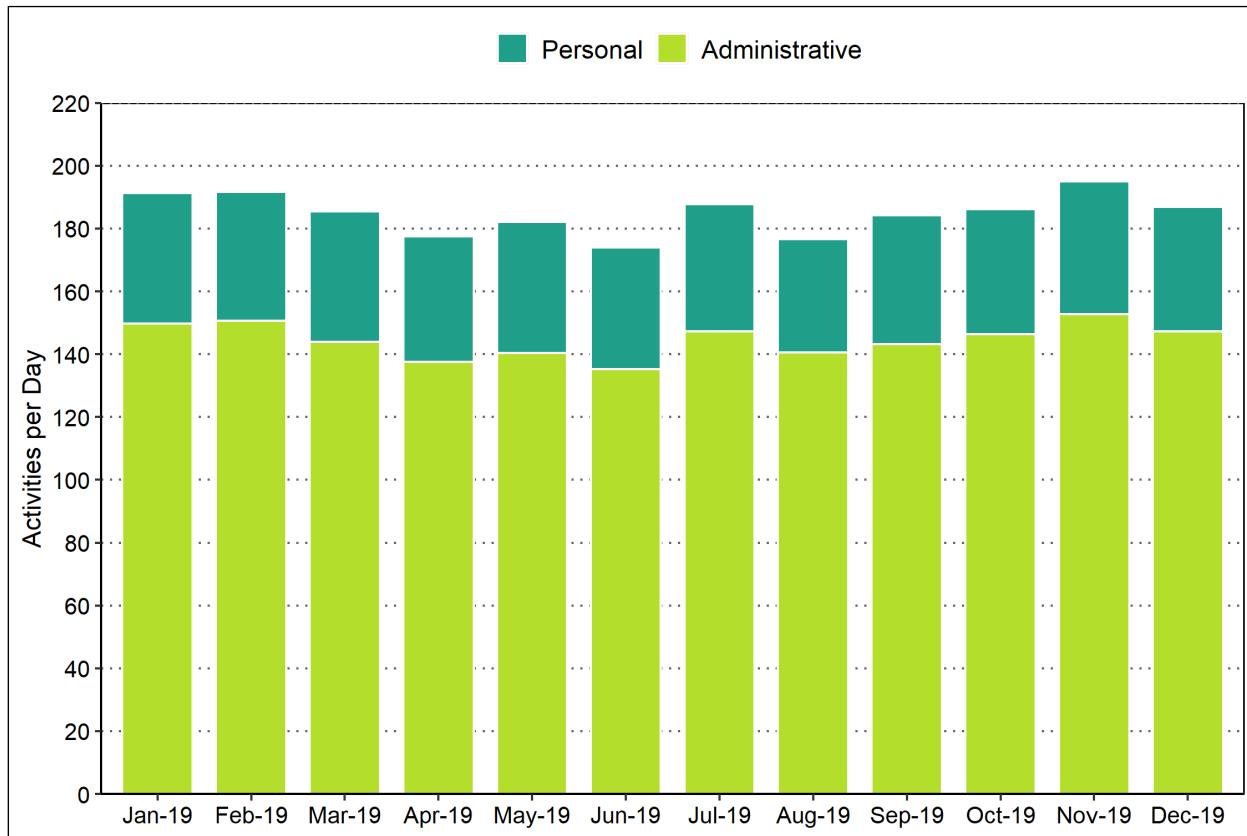
Unit Status Code	Description	Occupied Time, Minutes	Count
Out of Service	10-100	8.8	2,889
Out of Service	10-19	56.2	3,262
Out of Service	10-21	14.0	891
Out of Service	10-42	13.4	1,550
Out of Service	10-6	19.1	350
Out of Service	Barn	31.8	1,841
Out of Service	Billings clinic	99.6	212
Out of Service	BPD	64.0	15,566
Out of Service	Briefing	49.8	111
Out of Service	City hall/court	88.7	485
Out of Service	Detail	88.5	352
Out of Service	Evidence	25.7	1,210
Out of Service	Home	16.6	142
Out of Service	Jail	22.8	51
Out of Service	Meeting	85.5	422
Out of Service	Miscellaneous*	28.7	5,437
Out of Service	Out of service	54.0	766
Out of Service	Report	64.7	33
Out of Service	Training	95.2	108
Follow Up	Follow up	16.2	2,027
Reports	Reports	37.6	15,073
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.3</b>	<b>52,778</b>
Out of Service	Break	10.7	96
Break	Break	45.0	11,362
Lunch	Lunch	35.0	3,239
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.6</b>	<b>14,697</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.1</b>	<b>67,475</b>

**Note:** The miscellaneous category includes activities without descriptions or at a variety of low-frequency locations.

### Observations:

- The most common out-of-service descriptions were “at BPD” and report writing.
- The recorded personal activities were for meals and breaks.
- The descriptions with the longest average time were for training, city hall/court, and detail.
- The average time spent was 43.3 minutes for administrative activities and 42.6 minutes for personal activities.

**FIGURE 9-12: Activities per Day, by Month**



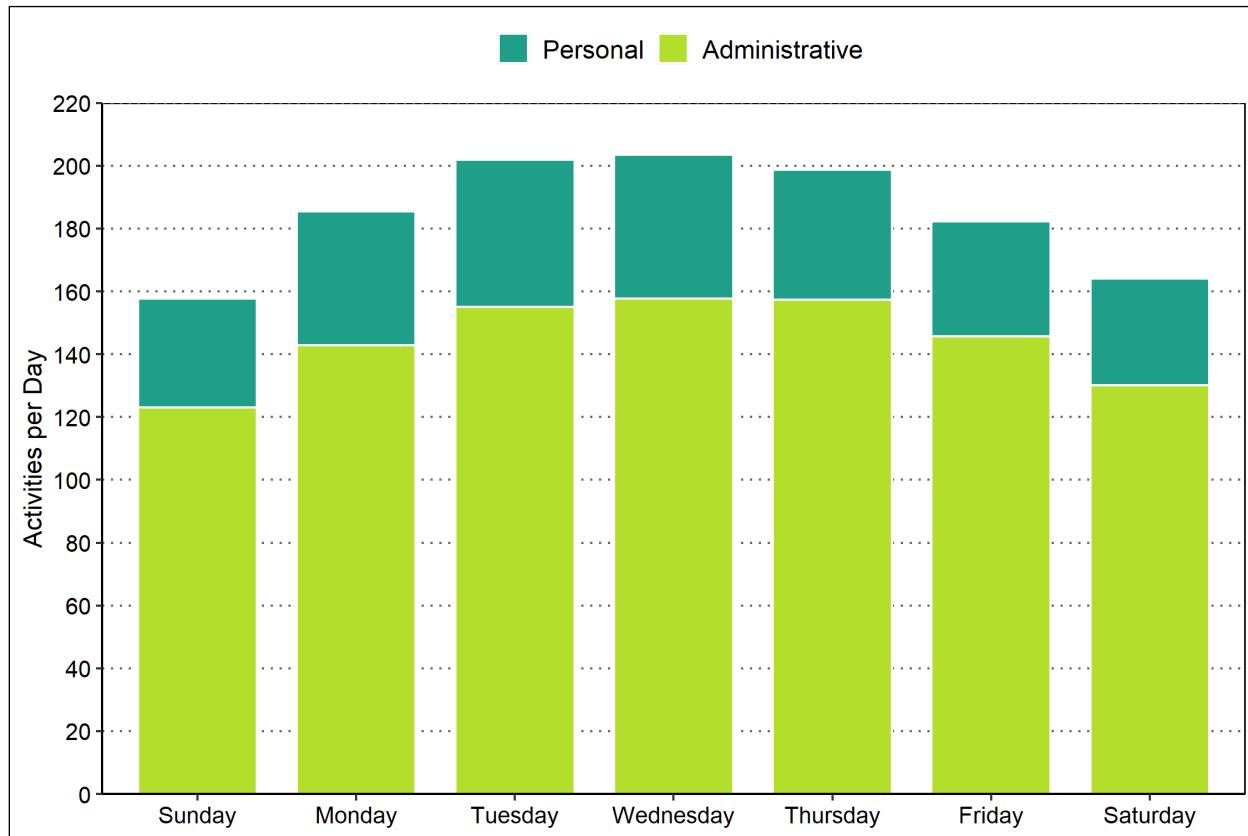
**TABLE 9-13: Activities per Day, by Month**

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Personal	41.6	41.0	41.5	40.0	41.6	38.6	40.5	36.0	41.0	39.7	42.1	39.5
Administrative	149.7	150.7	143.9	137.5	140.5	135.3	147.3	140.6	143.3	146.5	152.8	147.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>191.4</b>	<b>191.6</b>	<b>185.5</b>	<b>177.6</b>	<b>182.1</b>	<b>173.9</b>	<b>187.8</b>	<b>176.6</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>186.2</b>	<b>194.9</b>	<b>186.8</b>

### Observations:

- The number of activities per day was lowest in June.
- The number of activities per day was highest in November.

**FIGURE 9-13: Activities per Day, by Day of Week**



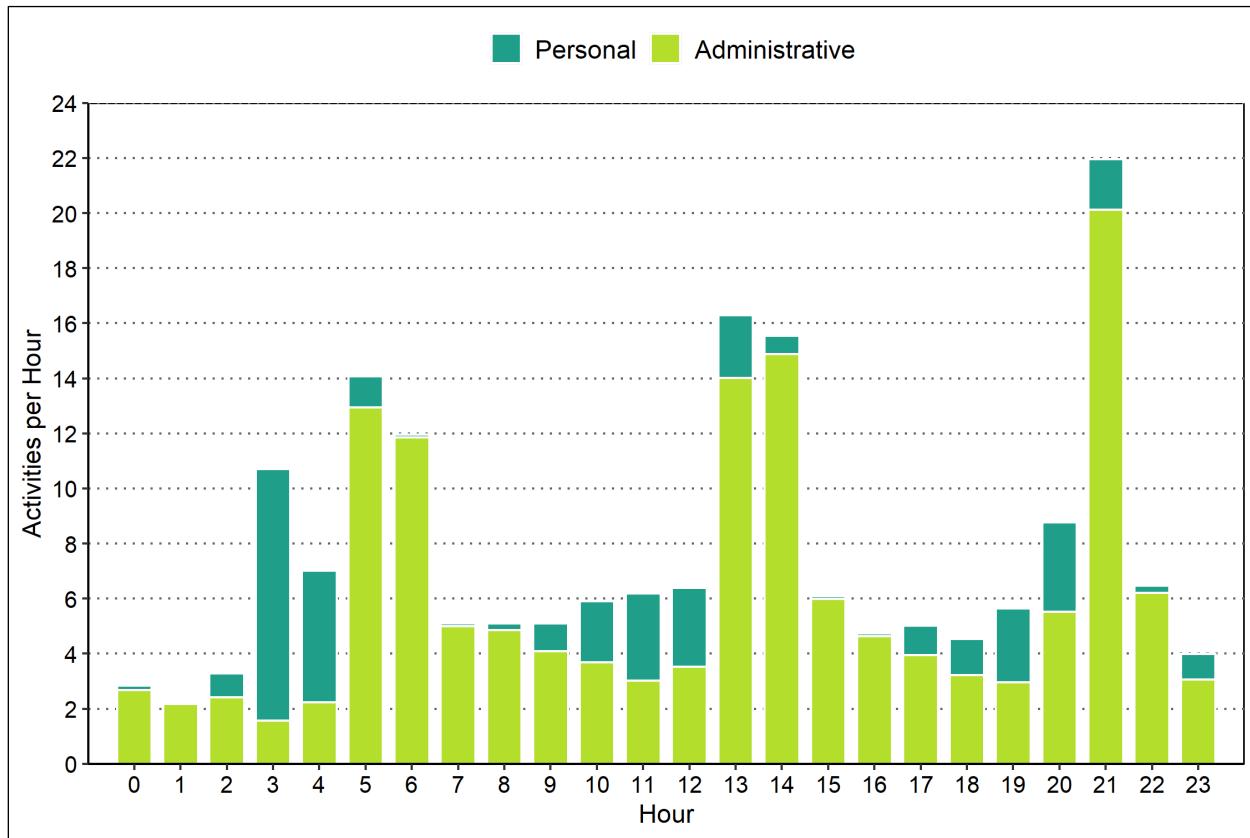
**TABLE 9-14: Activities per Day, by Day of Week**

Day of Week	Administrative	Personal	Activities per Day
Sunday	123.1	34.5	157.6
Monday	142.8	42.7	185.6
Tuesday	155.1	46.8	202.0
Wednesday	157.8	45.8	203.6
Thursday	157.3	41.4	198.7
Friday	145.7	36.6	182.2
Saturday	130.2	33.8	164.0
<b>Weekly Average</b>	<b>144.6</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>184.9</b>

### Observations:

- The number of noncall activities per day was lowest on weekends.
- The number of noncall activities per day was highest on Wednesday.

**FIGURE 9-14: Activities per Day, by Hour of Day**



**TABLE 9-15: Activities per Hour, by Hour of Day**

Hour	Personal	Administrative	Total
0	0.17	2.67	2.84
1	0.09	2.17	2.26
2	0.88	2.41	3.28
3	9.14	1.56	10.70
4	4.78	2.23	7.01
5	1.12	12.95	14.07
6	0.08	11.86	11.95
7	0.11	5.00	5.10
8	0.24	4.85	5.09
9	1.00	4.09	5.09
10	2.21	3.69	5.90
11	3.16	3.02	6.18
12	2.85	3.53	6.38
13	2.28	14.01	16.29
14	0.65	14.88	15.54
15	0.11	5.98	6.09
16	0.09	4.64	4.73
17	1.06	3.95	5.01
18	1.31	3.22	4.52
19	2.67	2.96	5.64
20	3.26	5.51	8.78
21	1.83	20.12	21.95
22	0.25	6.21	6.47
23	0.93	3.07	4.00
<b>Hourly Average</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>6.02</b>	<b>7.70</b>

### Observations:

- The number of activities per hour was highest between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- The number of activities per hour was lowest between 1:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m.
- The department's patrol shifts begin at 6:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. A high number of activities occur around those times of the day.

## DEPLOYMENT

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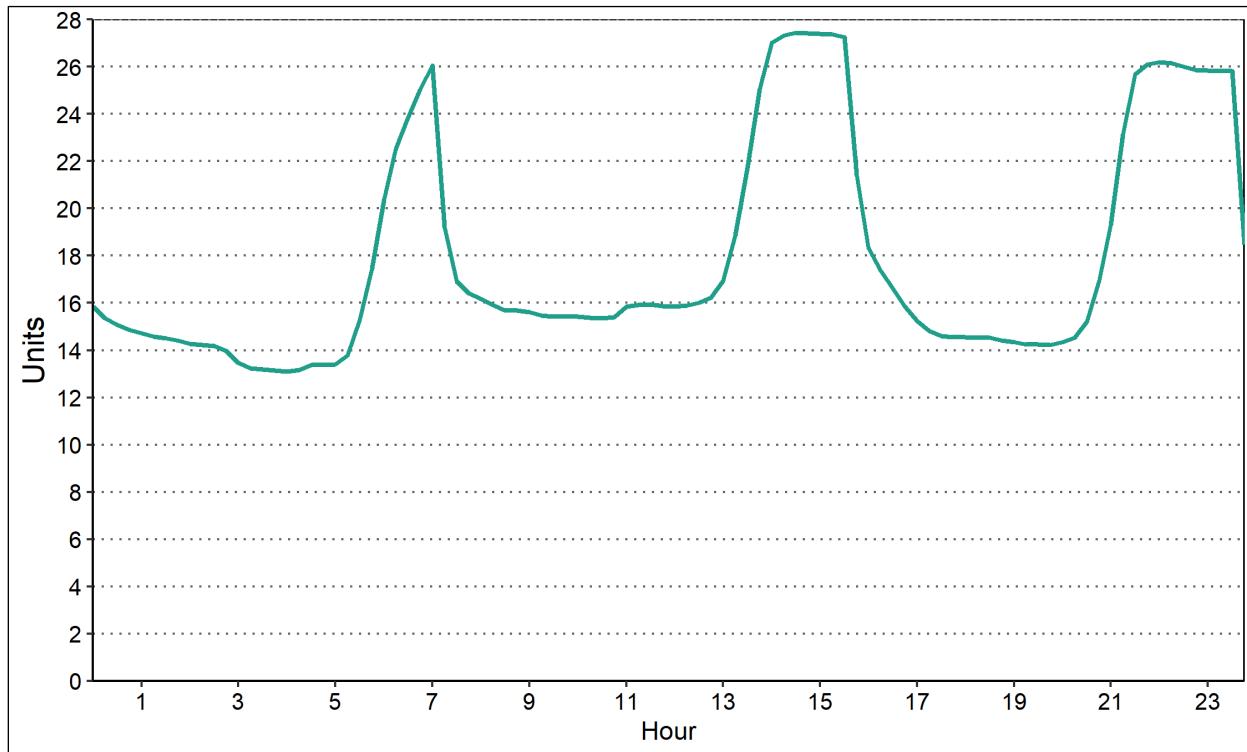
For this study, we examined deployment information for eight weeks in winter (January 4 through February 28, 2019) and eight weeks in summer (July 7 through August 28, 2019). The department's main patrol force consists of patrol officers, patrol sergeants, patrol lieutenants, K9 units, DBA units, STEP units, Billings Clinic units, and a Parks unit. During 2019, they operated on 10-hour shifts starting at 6:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. The police department's patrol force deployed an average of 16.9 units per hour during the 24-hour day in winter and summer 2019.

In this section, we describe the deployment and workload in distinct steps, distinguishing between summer and winter and between weekdays (Monday through Friday) and weekends (Saturday and Sunday):

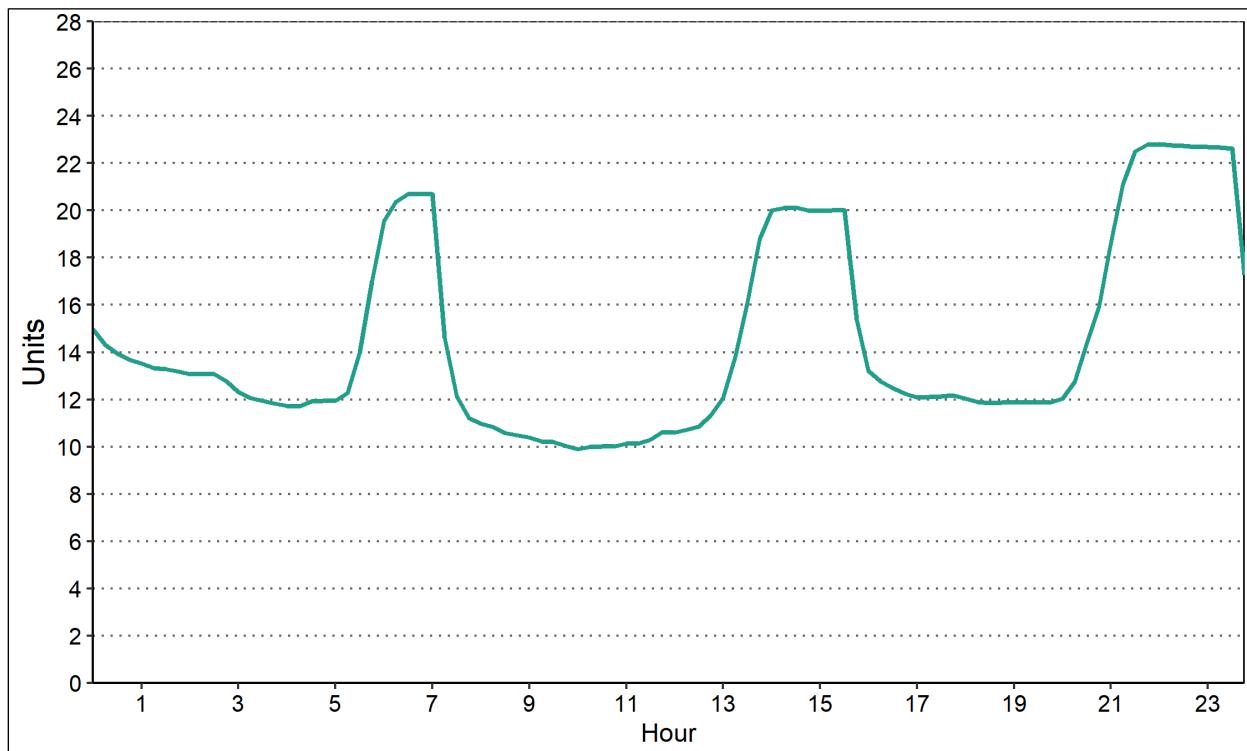
- First, we focus on patrol deployment alone.
- Next, we compare "all" workload, which includes community-initiated calls, police-initiated calls, and out-of-service activities.
- Finally, we compare the workload against deployment by percentage.

Comments follow each set of four figures, with separate discussions for winter and summer.

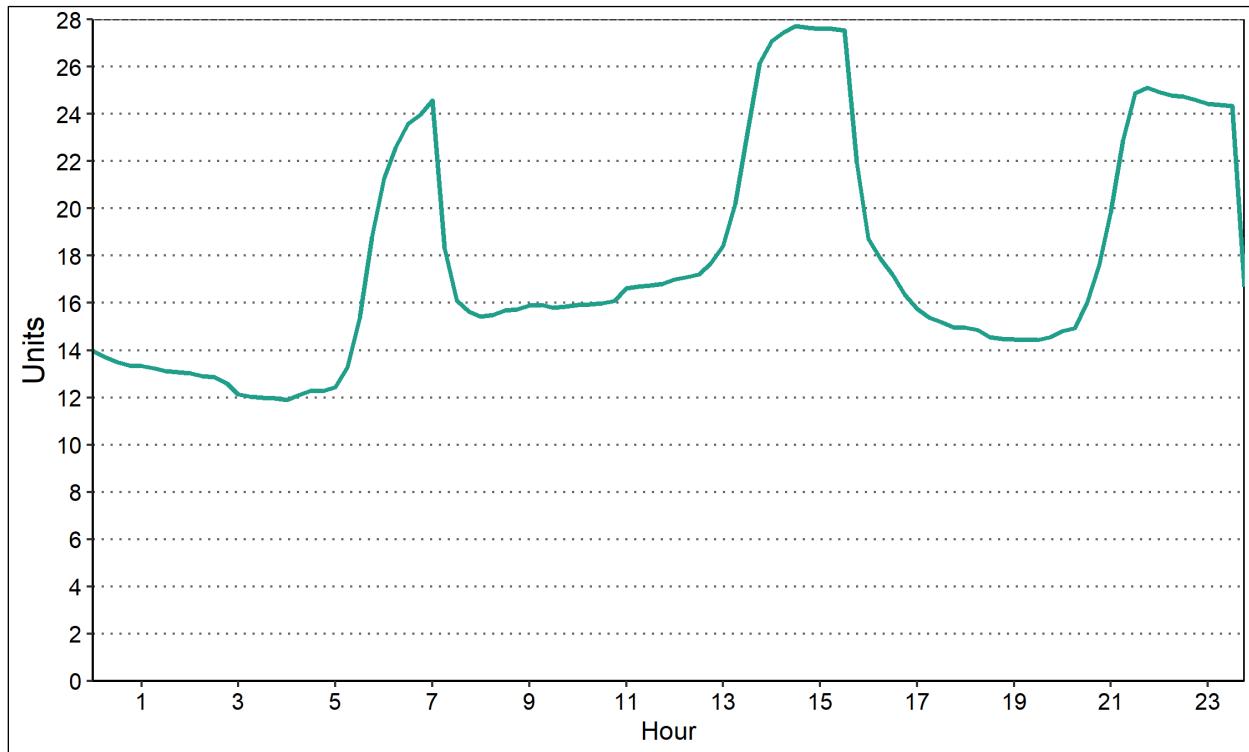
**FIGURE 9-15: Deployed Units, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



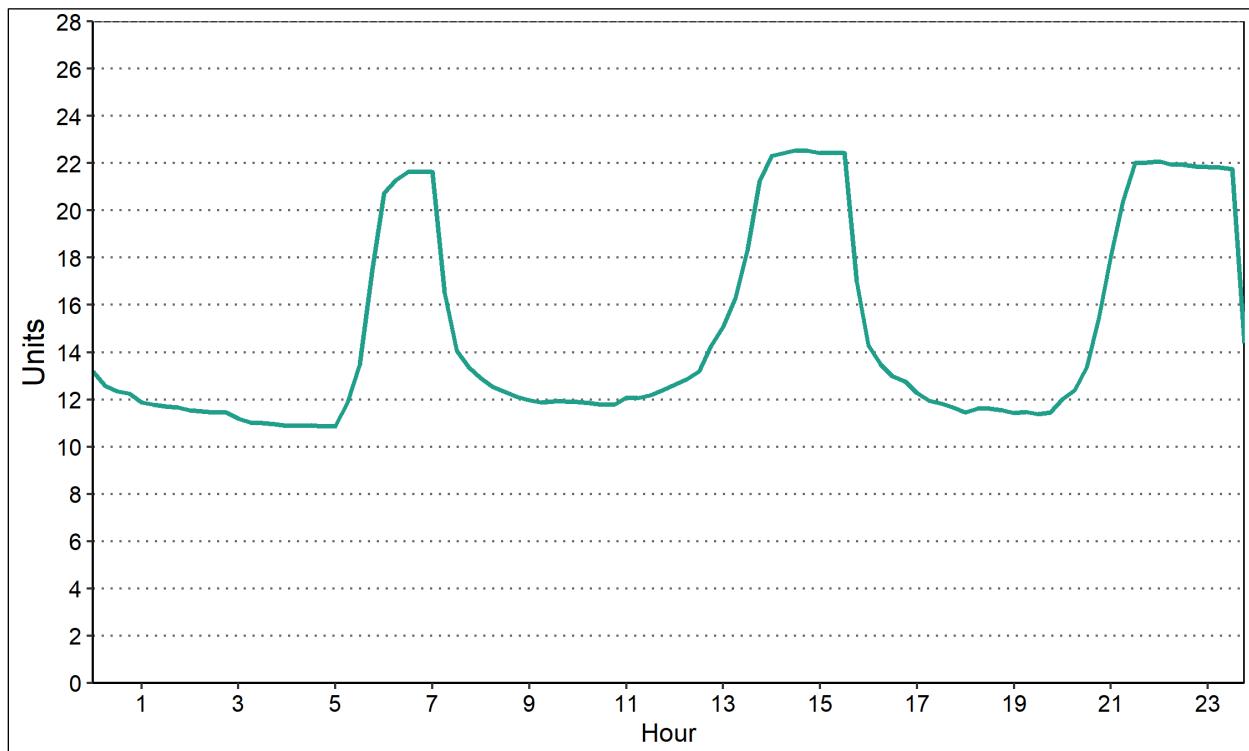
**FIGURE 9-16: Deployed Units, Weekends, Winter 2019**



**FIGURE 9-17: Deployed Units, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



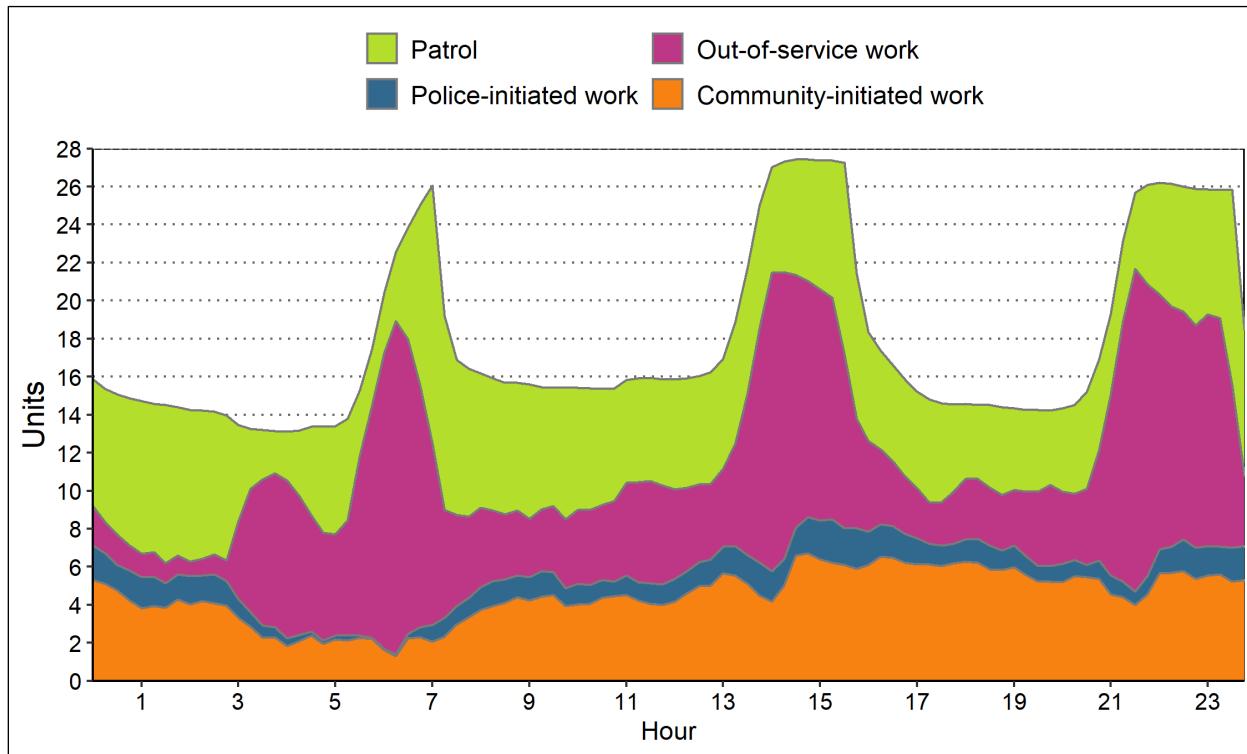
**FIGURE 9-18: Deployed Units, Weekends, Summer 2019**



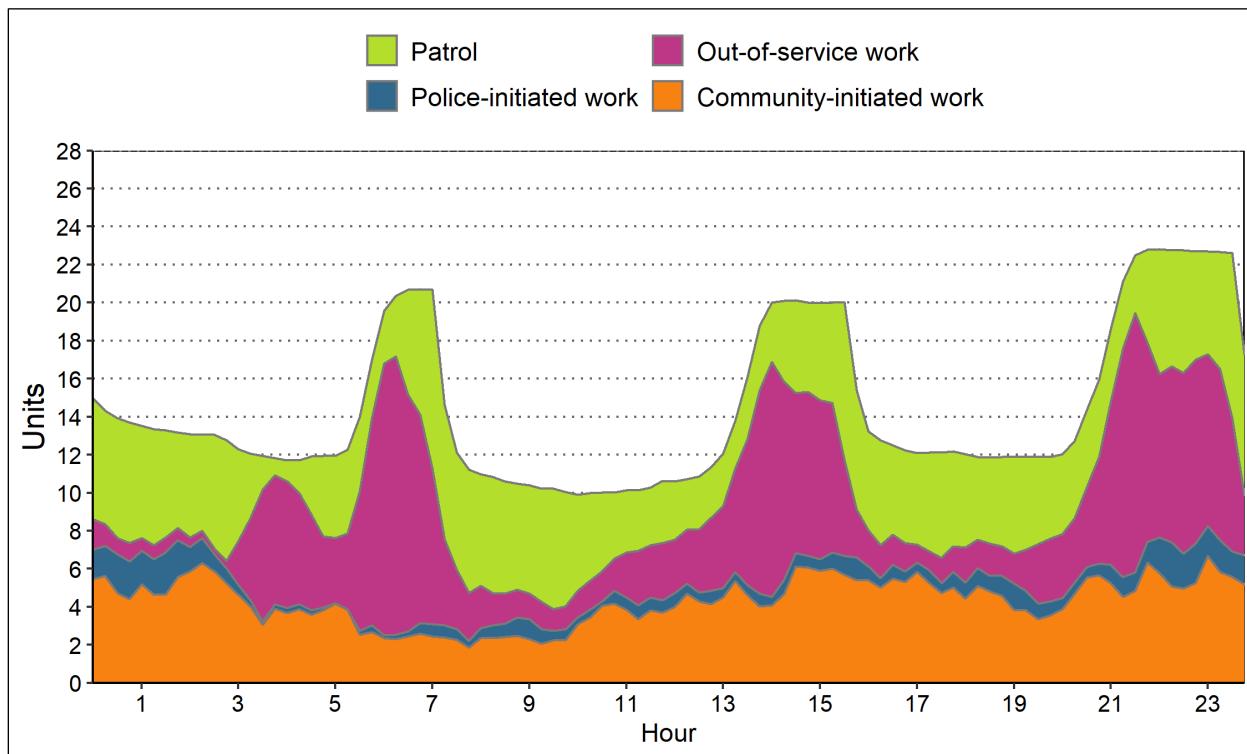
## Observations:

- For Winter (January 4 through February 28, 2019):
  - The average deployment was 17.9 units per hour during the week and 14.5 units per hour on the weekend.
  - Average deployment varied from 13.1 to 27.4 units per hour on weekdays and from 9.9 to 22.8 units per hour on weekends.
- For Summer (July 7 through August 28, 2019):
  - The average deployment was 17.7 units per hour during the week and 14.8 units per hour on the weekend.
  - Average deployment varied from 11.9 to 27.7 units per hour on weekdays and from 10.9 to 22.6 units per hour on weekends.
- For both winter and summer, three sharp spikes occur when shifts overlap from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and from 9:00 p.m. to midnight.

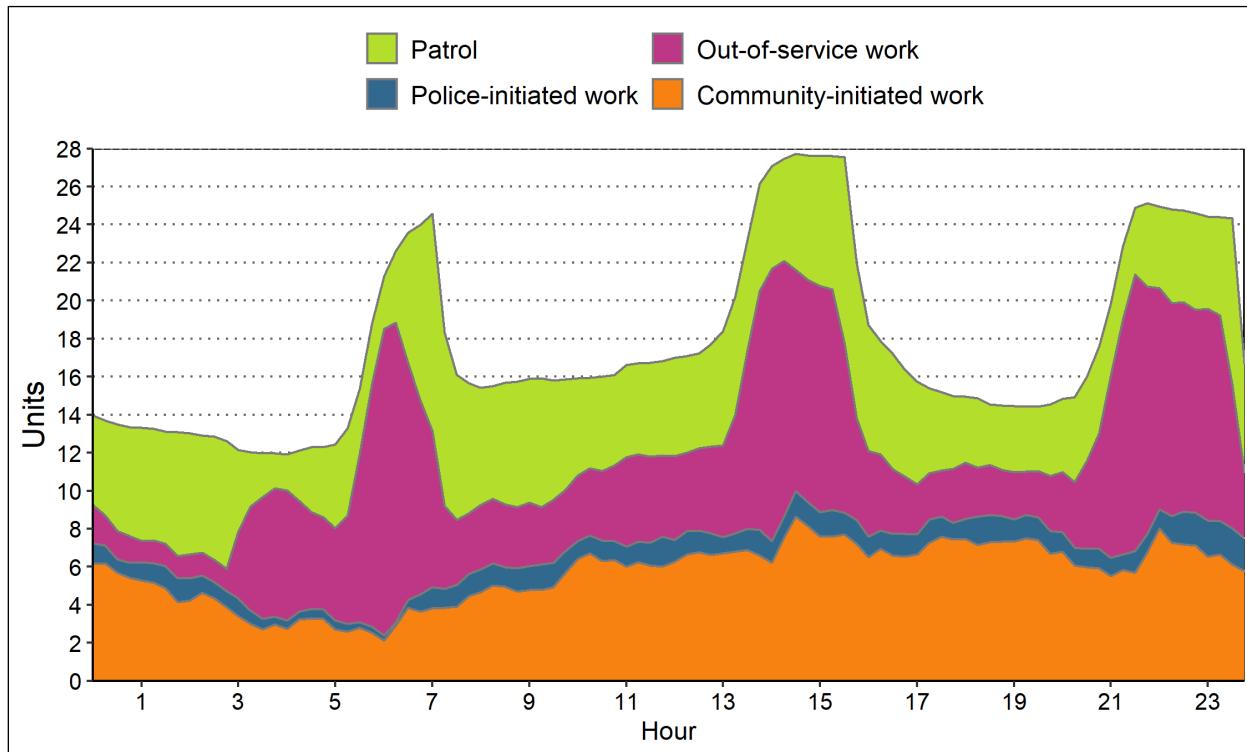
**FIGURE 9-19: Deployment and All Workload, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



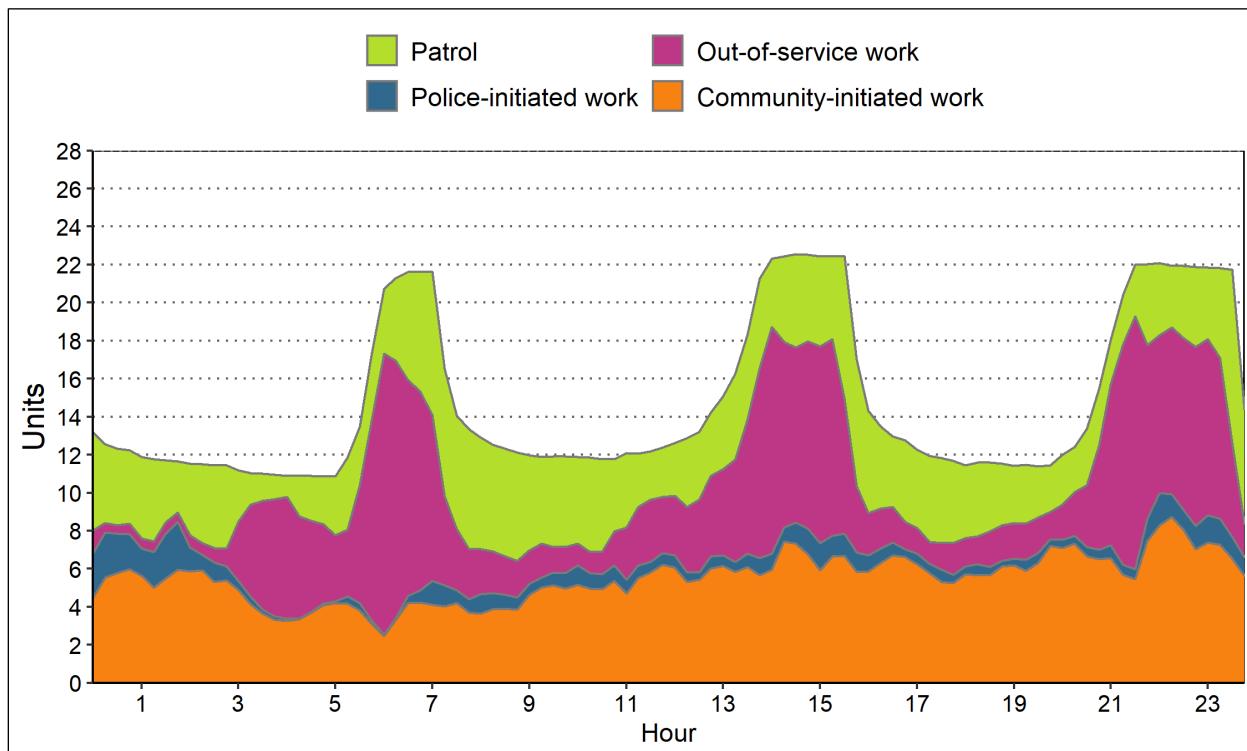
**FIGURE 9-20: Deployment and All Workload, Weekends, Winter 2019**



**FIGURE 9-21: Deployment and All Workload, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



**FIGURE 9-22: Deployment and All Workload, Weekends, Summer 2019**



**Note:** Figures 9-19 to 9-22 show deployment along with all workload from community-initiated calls and police-initiated calls and out-of-service work.

## Observations:

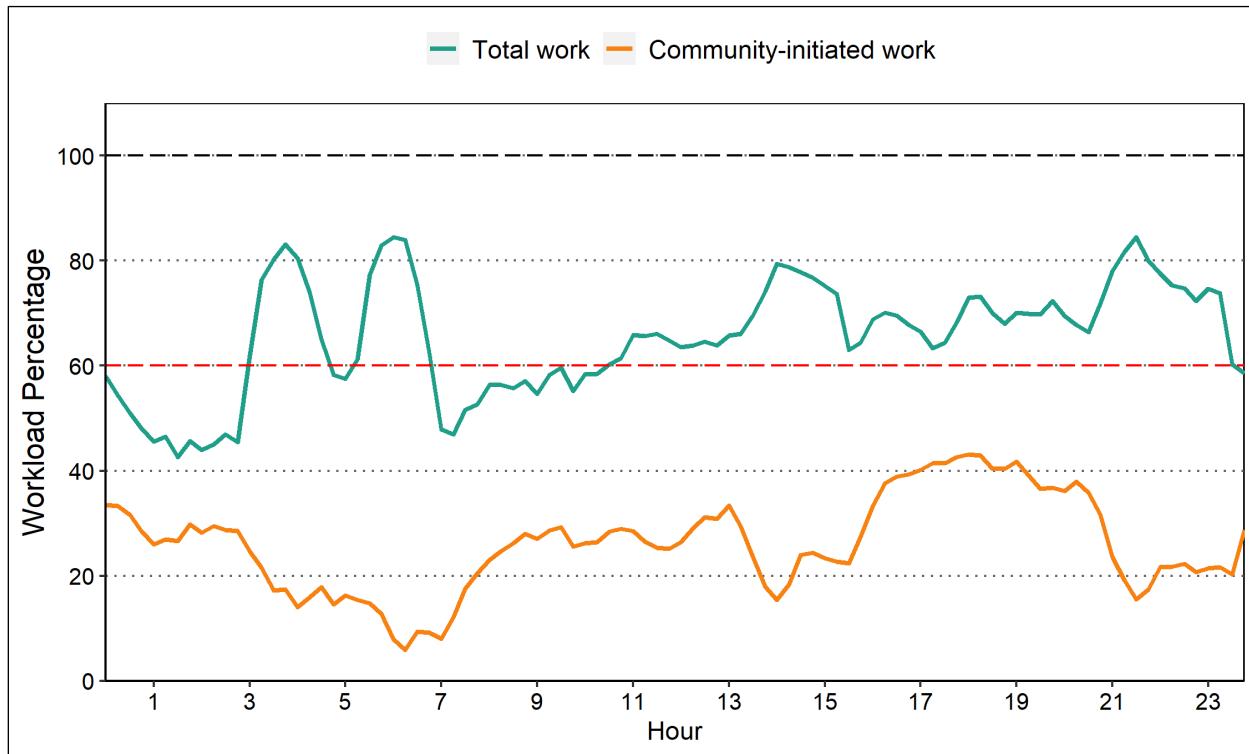
### **Winter:**

- Community-initiated work:
  - Average community-initiated workload was 4.5 units per hour during the week and 4.3 units per hour on weekends.
  - This was approximately 25 percent of hourly deployment during the week and 30 percent of hourly deployment on weekends.
- All work:
  - Average workload was 11.9 units per hour during the week and 9.7 units per hour on weekends.
  - This was approximately 67 percent of hourly deployment during the week and 67 percent of hourly deployment on weekends.

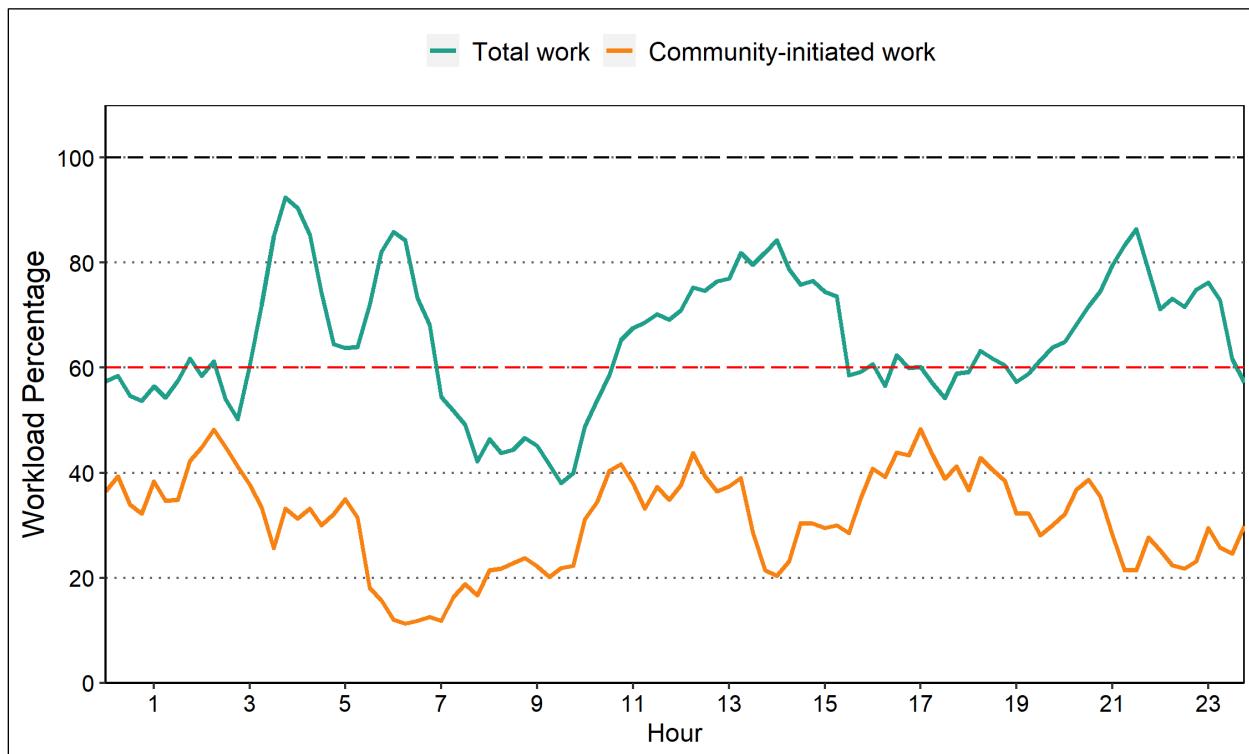
### **Summer:**

- Community-initiated work:
  - Average community-initiated workload was 5.7 units per hour during the week and 5.5 units per hour on weekends.
  - This was approximately 32 percent of hourly deployment during the week and 37 percent of hourly deployment on weekends.
- All work:
  - Average workload was 12.5 units per hour during the week and 10.8 units per hour on weekends.
  - This was approximately 70 percent of hourly deployment during the week and 73 percent of hourly deployment on weekends.

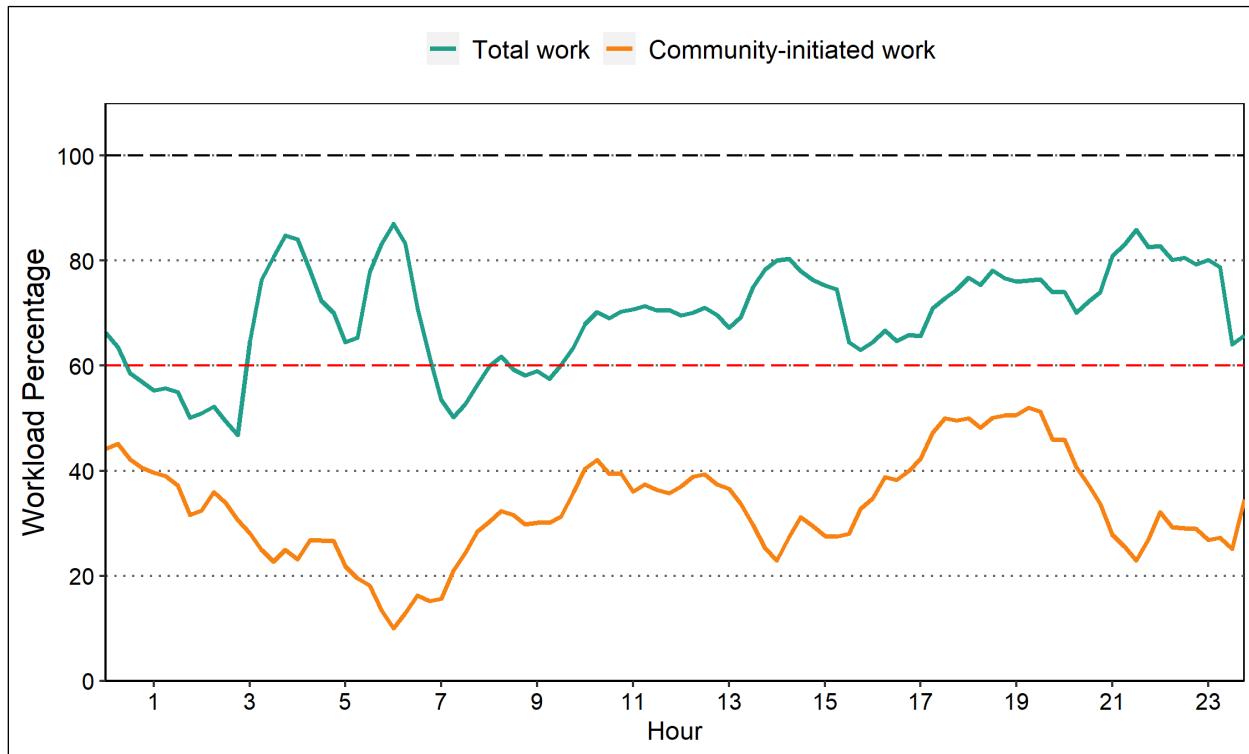
**FIGURE 9-23: Percentage of Workload, Weekdays, Winter 2019**



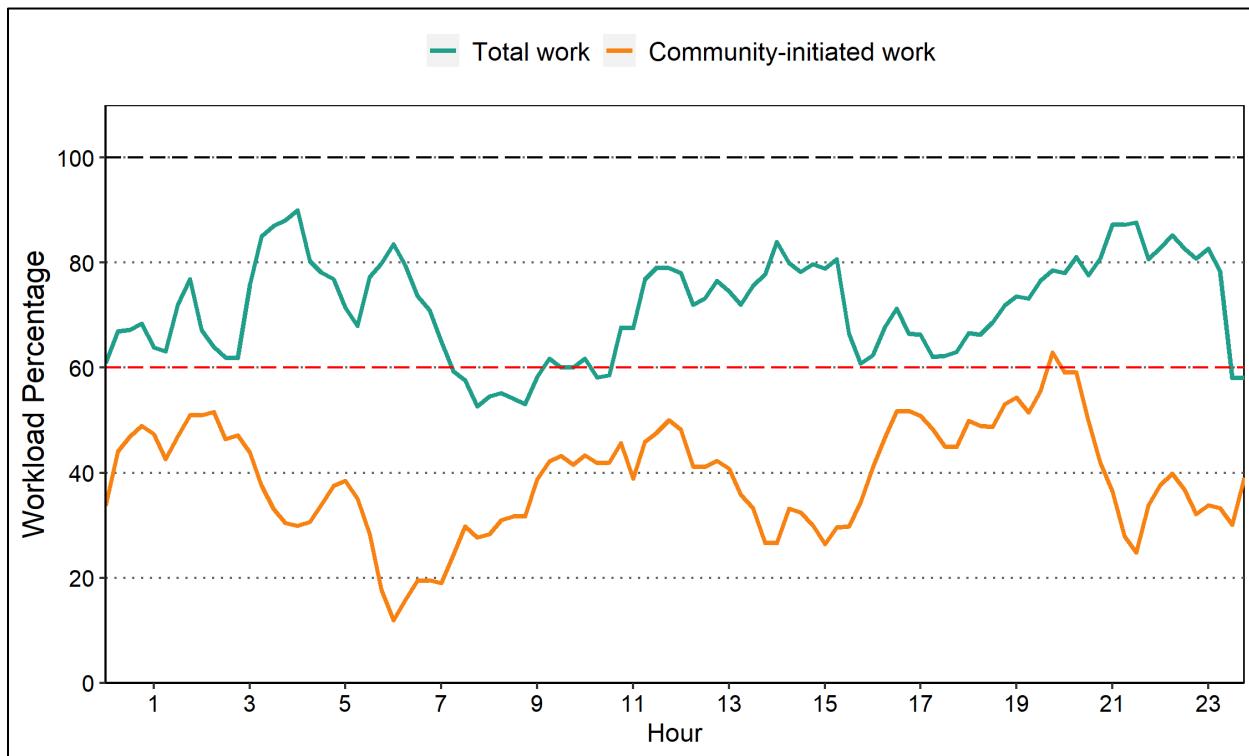
**FIGURE 9-24: Percentage of Workload, Weekends, Winter 2019**



**FIGURE 9-25: Percentage of Workload, Weekdays, Summer 2019**



**FIGURE 9-26: Percentage of Workload, Weekends, Summer 2019**



## Observations:

### **Winter:**

- Community-initiated work:
  - During the week, workload reached a maximum of 43 percent of deployment between 5:45 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.
  - On weekends, workload reached a maximum of 48 percent of deployment between 2:15 a.m. and 2:30 a.m. and between 5:00 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.
- All work:
  - During the week, workload reached a maximum of 85 percent of deployment between 6:00 a.m. and 6:15 a.m. and between 9:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.
  - On weekends, workload reached a maximum of 92 percent of deployment between 3:45 a.m. and 4:00 a.m.

### **Summer:**

- Community-initiated work:
  - During the week, workload reached a maximum of 52 percent of deployment between 7:15 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
  - On weekends, workload reached a maximum of 63 percent of deployment between 7:45 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- All work:
  - During the week, workload reached a maximum of 87 percent of deployment between 6:00 a.m. and 6:15 a.m.
  - On weekends, workload reached a maximum of 90 percent of deployment between 4:00 a.m. and 4:15 a.m.

## RESPONSE TIMES

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We analyzed the response times to various types of calls, separating the duration into dispatch delay and travel time, to determine whether response times varied by call type. Response time is measured as the difference between when a call is received and when the first unit arrives on scene. This is further divided into dispatch delay and travel time. Dispatch delay is the time between when a call is received and when the first unit is dispatched. Travel time is the remaining time until the first unit arrives on scene.

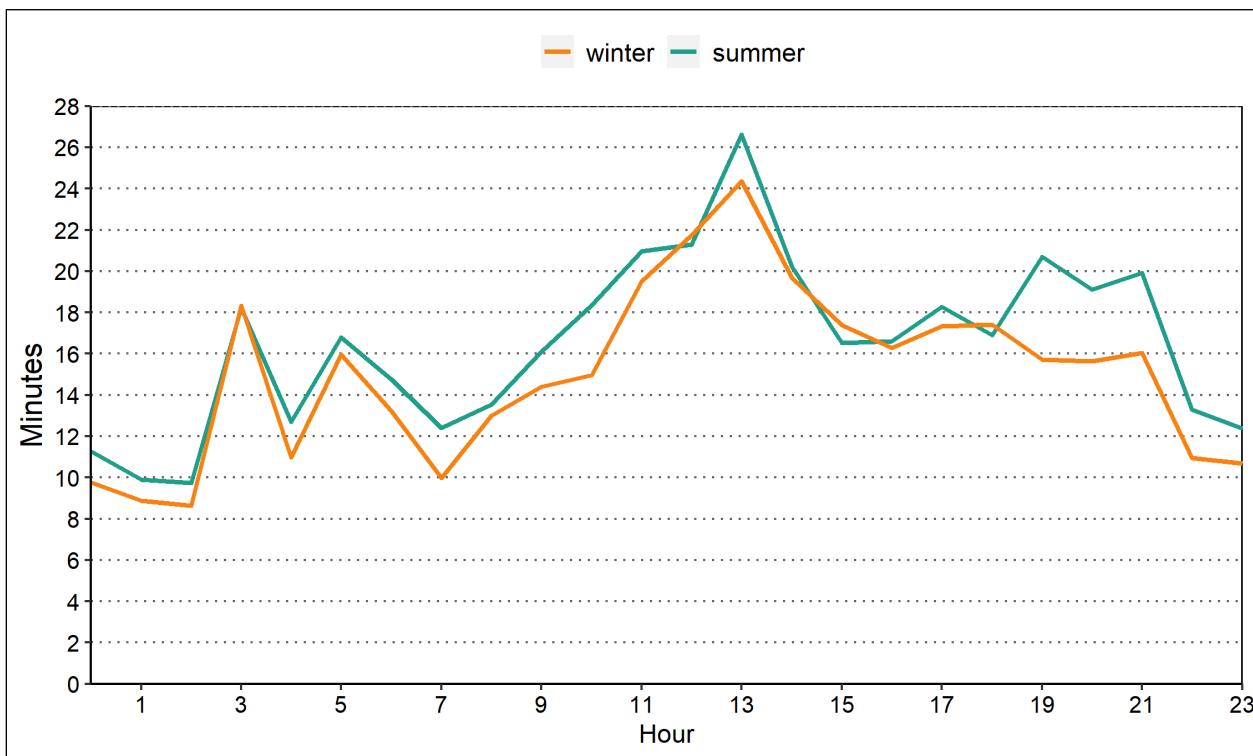
We begin the discussion with statistics that include all calls combined. We started with 10,845 calls for winter and 13,538 calls for summer. We limited our analysis to community-initiated calls, which amounted to 7,332 calls for winter and 9,937 calls for summer. Also, we removed a few calls lacking a recorded arriving unit. We were left with 6,788 calls in winter and 9,237 calls in summer for our analysis. For the entire year, we began with 79,694 calls, limited our analysis to 56,207 community-initiated calls. With similar exclusions, we were left with 52,213 calls.

Our initial analysis does not distinguish calls based on priority; instead, it examines the difference in response to all calls by time of day and compares the summer and winter periods. We then present a brief analysis of response time for high-priority calls alone.

## All Calls

This section looks at all calls without considering their priorities. In addition to examining the differences in response times by both time of day and season (winter vs. summer), we show differences in response times by category.

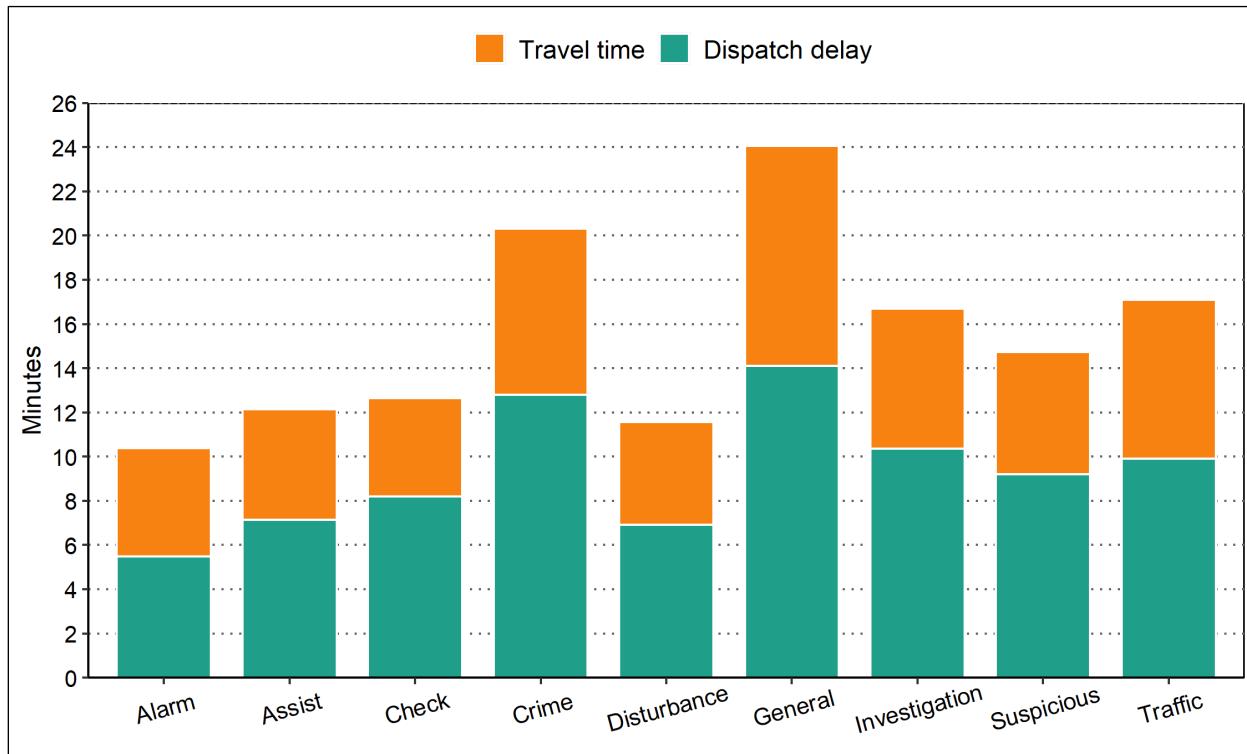
**FIGURE 9-27: Average Response Time and Dispatch Delays, by Hour of Day, Winter and Summer 2019**



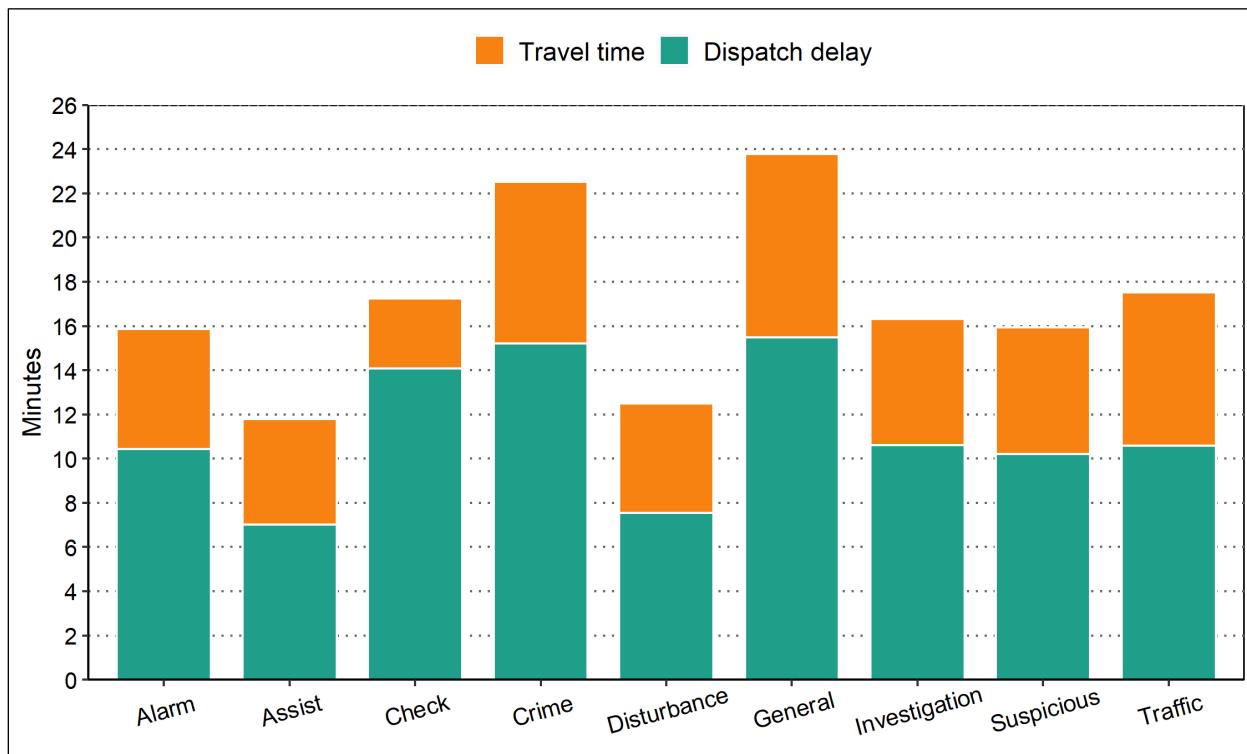
### Observations:

- Average response times varied significantly by the hour of the day.
- In winter, the longest response times were between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m., with an average of 24.3 minutes.
- In winter, the shortest response times were between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m., with an average of 8.6 minutes.
- In summer, the longest response times were between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m., with an average of 26.6 minutes.
- In summer, the shortest response times were between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m., with an average of 9.8 minutes.

**FIGURE 9-28: Average Response Time by Category, Winter 2019**



**FIGURE 9-29: Average Response Time by Category, Summer 2019**



**TABLE 9-16: Average Response Time Components, by Category**

Category	Minutes in Winter			Minutes in Summer		
	Dispatch	Travel	Response	Dispatch	Travel	Response
Accident	10.9	7.8	18.7	10.0	7.3	17.3
Alarm	5.5	4.9	10.4	10.4	5.4	15.9
Animal	11.5	9.3	20.8	9.4	7.6	17.0
Assist other agency	7.2	5.0	12.1	7.0	4.8	11.8
Check	8.2	4.5	12.7	14.1	3.2	17.3
Crime-person	11.7	7.4	19.1	12.4	6.5	19.0
Crime-property	15.1	8.9	24.0	19.3	8.7	27.9
Crime-society	9.4	4.9	14.3	9.8	5.5	15.3
Disturbance	6.9	4.6	11.6	7.5	4.9	12.5
Follow-up	36.1	8.6	44.7	16.9	20.8	37.7
Investigation	10.4	6.3	16.7	10.6	5.7	16.3
Miscellaneous	15.2	9.1	24.3	18.2	8.7	26.9
Suspicious incident	9.2	5.5	14.7	10.2	5.7	15.9
Traffic enforcement	8.4	6.4	14.8	11.4	6.4	17.8
Traffic stop	4.5	6.0	10.5	0.3	0.3	0.6
Warrant/prisoner	8.9	12.5	21.4	13.8	6.9	20.6
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>17.1</b>

**Note:** The total average is weighted according to the number of calls per category.

### Observations:

- In winter, the average response time for most categories was between 10 minutes and 21 minutes.
- In winter, the average response time was as short as 10 minutes (for alarms) and as long as 24 minutes (for general noncriminal calls).
- In summer, the average response time for most categories was between 12 minutes and 23 minutes.
- In summer, the average response time was as short as 12 minutes (for assists) and as long as 24 minutes (for general noncriminal calls).
- The average response time for crimes was 20 minutes in winter and 23 minutes in summer.

**TABLE 9-17: 90th Percentiles for Response Time Components, by Category**

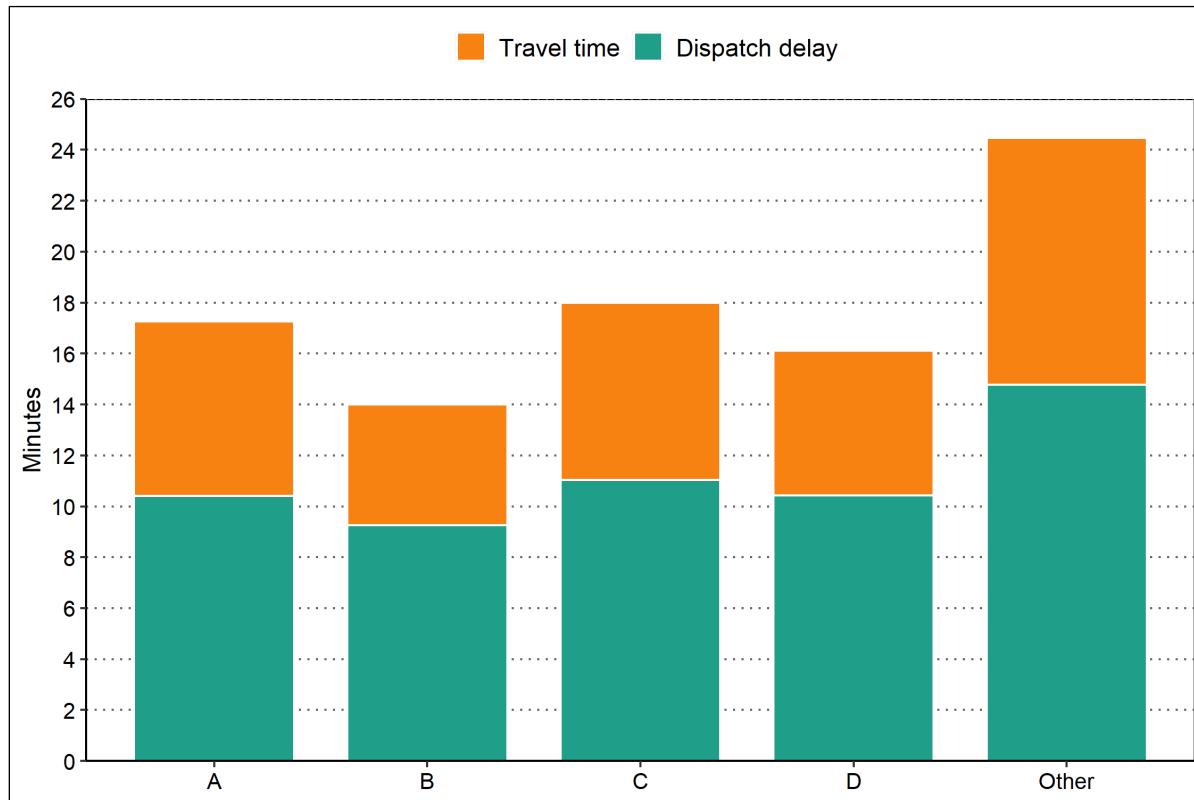
Category	Minutes in Winter			Minutes in Summer		
	Dispatch	Travel	Response	Dispatch	Travel	Response
Accident	32.8	15.7	47.9	27.7	14.9	40.0
Alarm	15.8	9.5	22.4	33.4	10.9	43.3
Animal	31.9	15.5	54.4	21.1	15.5	30.8
Assist other agency	19.2	10.0	25.9	17.2	9.4	23.8
Check	15.5	6.5	19.8	43.3	5.8	46.5
Crime—person	37.9	15.1	53.4	38.6	12.7	51.1
Crime—property	57.7	18.4	78.6	78.6	19.7	102.7
Crime—society	29.2	9.3	38.4	28.4	10.2	42.2
Disturbance	20.3	9.0	25.4	20.0	9.6	28.3
Follow-up	116.0	22.9	125.4	23.2	61.9	83.0
Investigation	28.8	12.9	40.7	30.6	11.3	40.5
Miscellaneous	60.4	19.8	68.9	70.8	19.0	88.1
Suspicious incident	26.1	10.6	35.4	27.8	11.2	37.6
Traffic enforcement	22.9	13.9	33.4	33.9	14.1	47.4
Traffic stop	4.5	6.0	10.5	0.3	0.3	0.6
Warrant/prisoner	18.0	45.9	67.9	43.4	12.4	49.7
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>45.0</b>

**Note:** A 90th percentile value of 39.4 minutes means that 90 percent of all calls are responded to in fewer than 39.4 minutes. For this reason, the columns for dispatch delay and travel time may not be equal to the total response time.

### Observations:

- In winter, the 90th percentile value for response time was as short as 20 minutes (for checks) and as long as 69 minutes (for general noncriminal calls).
- In summer, the 90th percentile value for response time was as short as 24 minutes (for assists) and as long as 75 minutes (for crimes).

**FIGURE 9-30: Average Response Time Components, by Zone**



**Note:** The “other” category includes 314 calls assigned to miscellaneous YCSO regions and 275 calls without a zone record.

**TABLE 9-18: Average Response Time Components, by Zone**

Zone	Minutes			Calls	Area (Sq. Miles)	Population
	Dispatch	Travel	Response			
A1	10.7	7.0	17.8	4,879	12.2	20,147
A2	9.9	6.7	16.6	3,425	2.3	8,500
B1	10.6	5.4	16.0	6,597	3.2	16,665
B2	8.5	4.3	12.9	11,707	1.7	5,922
C1	11.7	7.6	19.3	5,704	9.6	30,192
C2	10.5	6.3	16.9	4,684	3.8	12,989
C3	10.8	6.8	17.6	5,441	5.3	9,117
D1	10.2	5.4	15.6	4,874	2.0	5,996
D2	10.7	5.9	16.7	4,313	4.6	7,777
Miscellaneous	12.1	9.4	21.5	314	NA	NA
Unknown	17.9	10.0	27.9	275	NA	NA
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>52,213</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>117,305</b>

### Observations:

- Zone B had the shortest average dispatch and response time.
- Excluding the “other” category, zone C had the longest average response time.

## High-Priority Calls

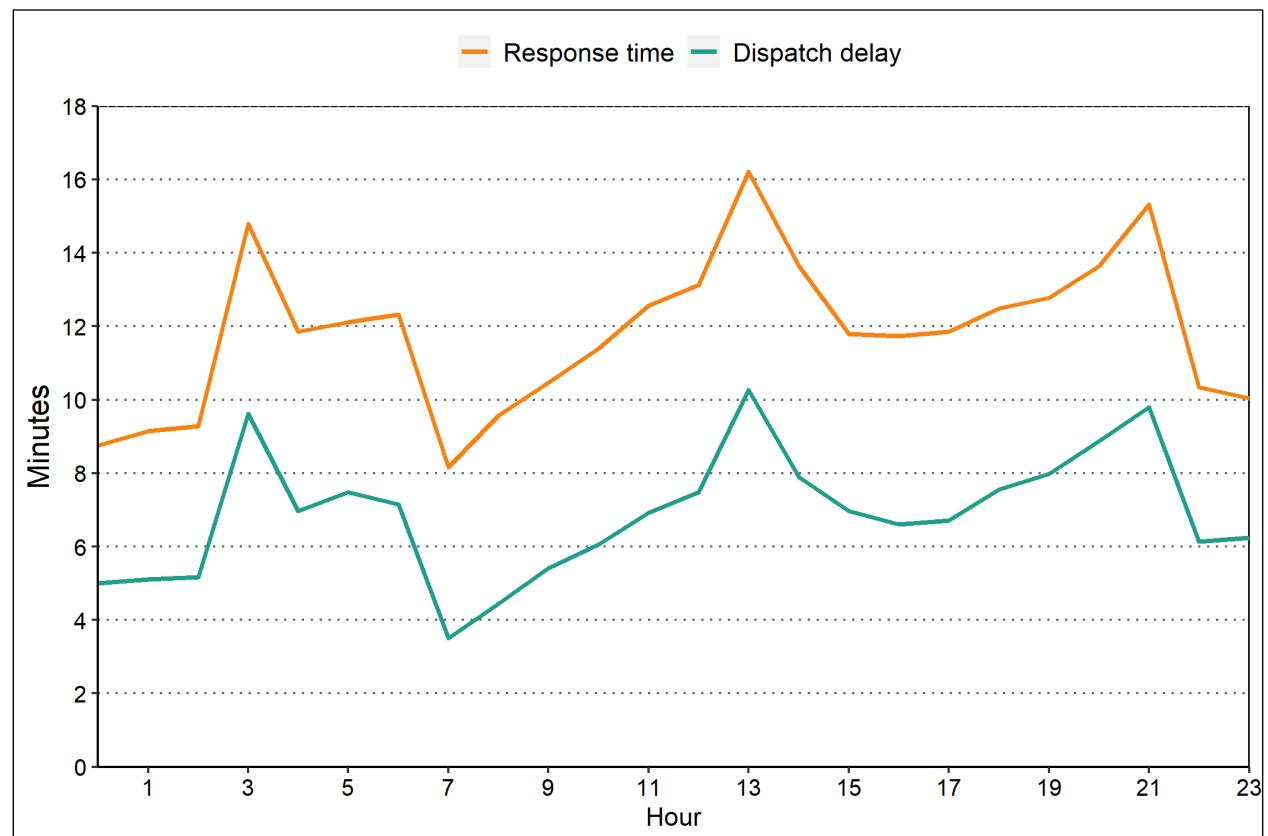
The department assigned priorities to calls with priority “1-Critical” and “2-High” as the highest priority. Table 9-19 shows average response times by priority. Figure 9-31 focuses on priority 1 and 2 calls only. Also, we identified the majority of injury accidents based upon their call descriptions, “Accident - W/Injuries,” to see if these provided an alternate measure for emergency calls.

**TABLE 9-19: Average and 90th Percentile Response Times, by Priority**

Priority	Minutes			Calls	90th Percentile Response Time, Minutes
	Dispatch Delay	Travel Time	Response Time		
1-Critical	6.7	4.5	11.3	61	21.4
2-High	7.0	4.9	11.9	27,163	26.4
3-Medium	10.8	6.1	16.9	15,742	42.1
4-Low	18.7	8.8	27.5	9,247	87.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>52,213</b>	<b>41.6</b>
Injury Accident	3.1	4.8	7.9	487	14.6

**Note:** The total average is weighted according to the number of calls within each priority level.

**FIGURE 9-31: Average Response Times and Dispatch Delays for High-Priority Calls, by Hour**



## Observations:

- More than 50 percent of the calls used in this analysis were assigned a high priority.
- High-priority calls had an average response time of 11.9 minutes, lower than the overall average of 16.2 minutes for all calls.
- The average dispatch delay was 7.0 minutes for high-priority calls, compared to 10.2 minutes overall.
- For high-priority calls, the longest response times were between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m., with an average of 16.2 minutes.
- For high-priority calls, the shortest response times were between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., with an average of 8.2 minutes.
- Average dispatch delay for high-priority calls was consistently 9.8 minutes or less, except between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- The average response time for injury accidents was 7.9 minutes, with a dispatch delay of 3.1 minutes.

## DOWNTOWN BILLINGS ASSOCIATION UNITS

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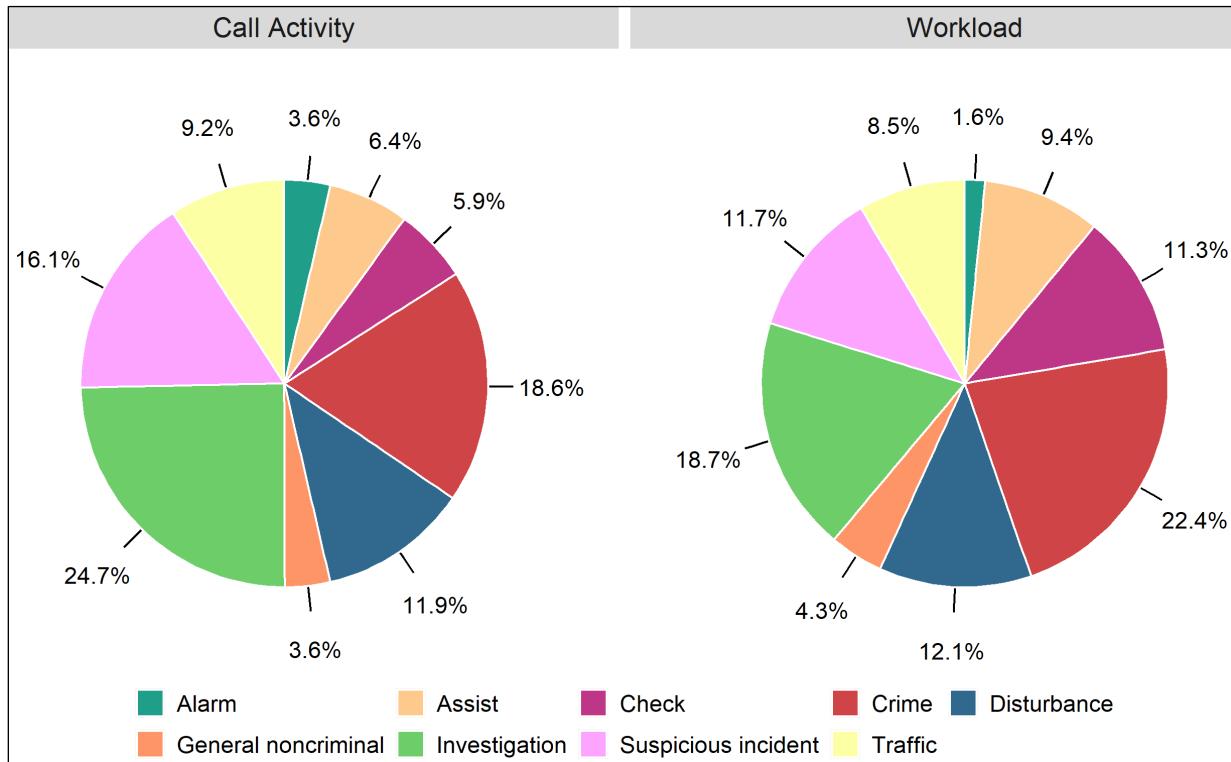
Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded 3,334 events that involved Downtown Billings Association (DBA) units. After excluding zero time on scene events, 3,279 calls were included in the analysis. During this period, the dispatch center also recorded 1,246 activities assigned to DBA units that were not assigned a call number.

**TABLE 9-20: DBA Units – Events, Calls, and Workload by Category**

Category	Events	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	64	63	32.9
Alarm	122	119	16.6
Animal	11	11	3.7
Assist other agency	212	211	96.4
Check	198	195	116.9
Crime–person	100	98	52.3
Crime–property	199	198	104.4
Crime–society	322	312	74.1
Disturbance	394	389	124.7
Follow-up	67	66	25.5
Investigation	828	810	192.6
Miscellaneous	24	23	6.2
Suspicious incident	533	528	120.7
Traffic enforcement	84	81	28.9
Traffic stop	159	158	25.8
Warrant/prisoner	17	17	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>3,279</b>	<b>1,030.4</b>

**Note:** Events include all recorded calls which involved a DBA unit. We removed 55 events with zero time on scene when calculating the number of calls with each call category.

**FIGURE 9-32: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, DBA Units**



**Note:** For this graph, we removed two calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 9-21: DBA Units Calls, by Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	59	4
Alarm	118	1
Animal	7	4
Assist other agency	163	48
Check	2	193
Crime–person	90	8
Crime–property	177	21
Crime–society	213	99
Disturbance	332	57
Follow-up	0	66
Investigation	400	410
Miscellaneous	15	8
Suspicious incident	283	245
Traffic enforcement	50	31
Traffic stop	0	158
Warrant/prisoner	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>1,359</b>

## Observations:

- The top four categories accounted for 71 percent of calls and 65 percent of workload:
  - 25 percent of calls and 19 percent of workload were investigations.
  - 19 percent of calls and 22 percent of workload were crimes.
  - 16 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload were suspicious incidents.
  - 12 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload were disturbances.
- 59 percent of calls associated with DBA units were community-initiated.
- The largest group of community-initiated calls involved crimes.
- The largest group of police-initiated calls involved investigations.

**TABLE 9-22: DBA Units Noncall Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

<b>Unit Status Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Occupied Time, Minutes</b>	<b>Count</b>
Out of Service	10-100	18.0	19
Out of Service	10-19	55.9	58
Out of Service	10-21	11.1	6
Out of Service	10-42	18.6	40
Out of Service	10-6	22.3	5
Out of Service	Barn	42.6	51
Out of Service	Billings Clinic	15.3	3
Out of Service	BPD	46.8	202
Out of Service	Briefing	41.3	7
Out of Service	City hall/court	78.8	6
Out of Service	Detail	59.1	9
Out of Service	Evidence	24.8	22
Out of Service	Home	54.9	4
Out of Service	Meeting	87.0	356
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	48.8	137
Out of Service	Out of service	77.4	15
Out of Service	Training	111.8	1
Follow Up	Follow-up	11.9	23
Reports	Reports	42.5	116
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>57.7</b>	<b>1,080</b>
Break	Break	46.3	135
Lunch	Lunch	40.9	31
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>45.3</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>56.1</b>	<b>1,246</b>

### Observations:

- The most common out-of-service description was meeting.
- The recorded personal activities were for breaks and lunch breaks.
- The description with the longest average time was for training.
- The average time spent was 57.7 minutes for administrative activities and 45.3 minutes for personal activities.

## K9 UNITS

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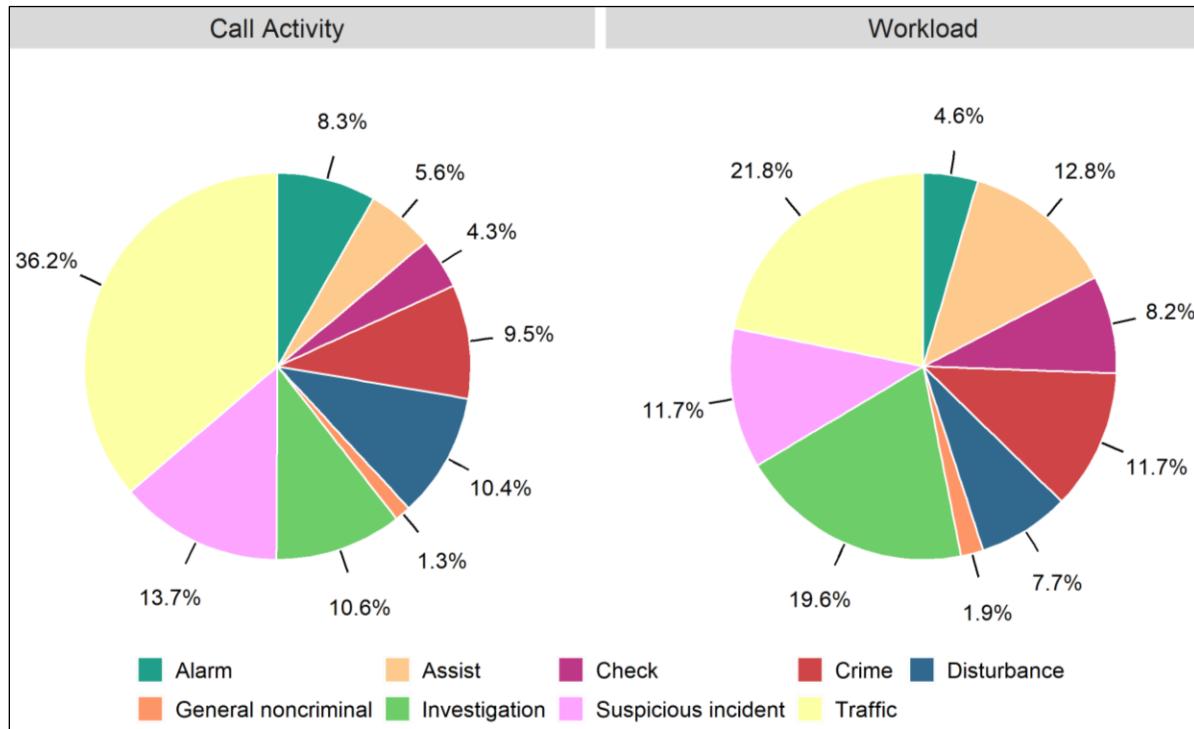
Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded 3,183 events that involved K9 units. After excluding zero time on scene events, 3,146 calls were included in the analysis. During this period, the dispatch center also recorded 1,526 activities assigned to K9 units that were not assigned a call number.

**TABLE 9-23: K9 Units – Events, Calls, and Workload by Category**

Category	Events	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	61	61	24.5
Alarm	268	260	44.5
Animal	5	5	3.9
Assist other agency	178	177	125.4
Check	136	135	79.9
Crime–person	138	138	56.6
Crime–property	98	97	43.5
Crime–society	65	64	14.5
Disturbance	331	328	75.0
Follow-up	5	5	3.7
Investigation	342	335	191.2
Miscellaneous	7	7	1.8
Suspicious incident	438	431	114.4
Traffic enforcement	96	91	26.0
Traffic stop	990	987	162.8
Warrant/prisoner	25	25	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,183</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>976.9</b>

**Note:** Events include all recorded calls which involved a K9 unit. We removed 37 events zero time on scene when calculating the number of calls with each call category.

**FIGURE 9-33: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, K9 Units**



**Note:** For this graph, we removed 3 calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 9-24: K9 Units Calls, by Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	57	4
Alarm	259	1
Animal	4	1
Assist other agency	127	50
Check	1	134
Crime–person	133	5
Crime–property	94	3
Crime–society	59	5
Disturbance	318	10
Follow-up	0	5
Investigation	229	106
Miscellaneous	7	0
Suspicious incident	340	91
Traffic enforcement	61	30
Traffic stop	1	986
Warrant/prisoner	9	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,447</b>

## Observations:

- The top four categories accounted for 71 percent of calls and 61 percent of workload:
  - 36 percent of calls and 22 percent of workload were traffic-related.
  - 14 percent of calls and 12 percent of workload were suspicious incidents.
  - 11 percent of calls and 20 percent of workload were investigations.
  - 10 percent of calls and 8 percent of workload were disturbances.
- 54 percent of calls associated with K9 units were community-initiated.
- The largest group of community-initiated calls involved suspicious incidents.
- The largest group of police-initiated calls involved traffic activities.

**TABLE 9-25: K9 Units Noncall Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

<b>Unit Status Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Occupied Time, Minutes</b>	<b>Count</b>
Out of Service	10-100	8.7	15
Out of Service	10-19	49.3	82
Out of Service	10-21	22.2	27
Out of Service	10-42	19.0	26
Out of Service	10-6	35.3	41
Out of Service	Barn	41.2	111
Out of Service	BPD	33.8	220
Out of Service	Briefing	58.2	1
Out of Service	City hall/court	125.3	14
Out of Service	Detail	60.7	36
Out of Service	Evidence	39.5	42
Out of Service	Home	11.4	1
Out of Service	Jail	35.5	2
Out of Service	Meeting	80.6	3
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	36.5	308
Out of Service	Out of service	40.3	18
Out of Service	Report	63.6	20
Out of Service	Training	108.8	48
Follow Up	Follow-up	41.1	3
Reports	Reports	30.1	172
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>40.7</b>	<b>1,190</b>
Break	Break	41.7	224
Out of Service	Break	10.8	95
Lunch	Lunch	41.0	17
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>32.9</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>39.0</b>	<b>1,526</b>

### Observations:

- The most common out-of-service description was “miscellaneous.”
- The recorded personal activities were breaks and meal breaks.
- The description with the longest average time was for city hall/court-related activities.
- The average time spent was 40.7 minutes for administrative activities and 32.9 minutes for personal activities.

## STEP UNITS

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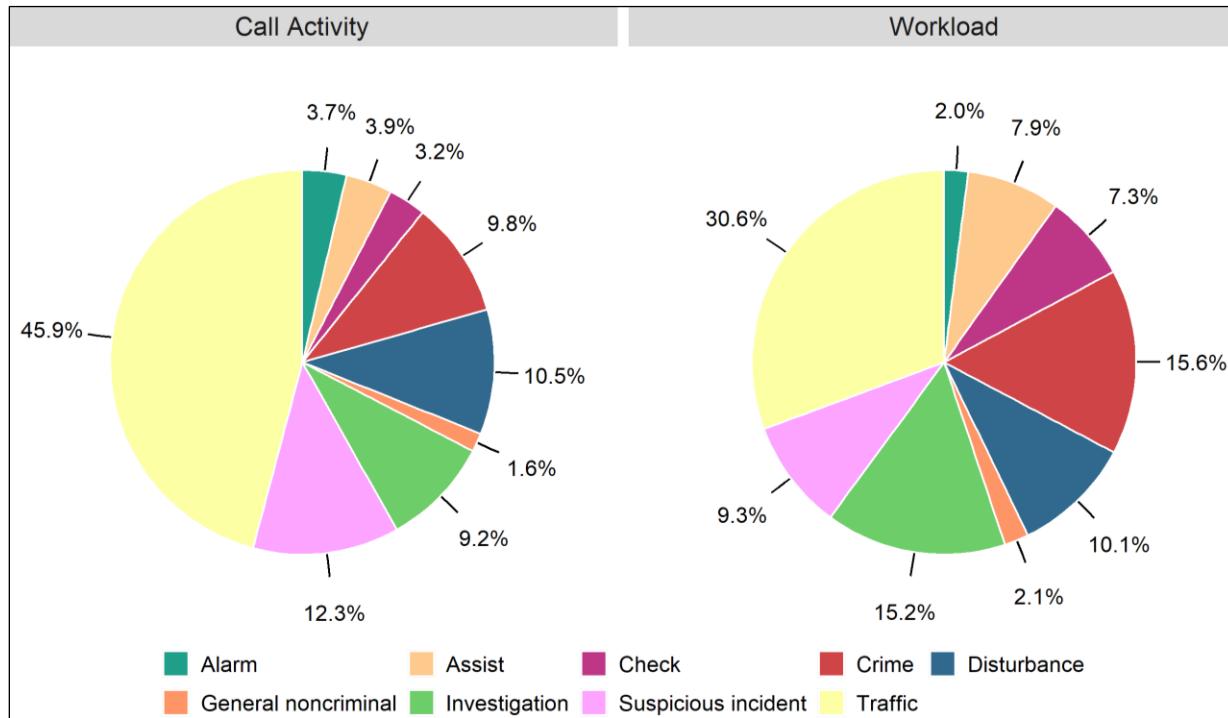
Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the dispatch center recorded 8,253 events that involved Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) units. After excluding zero time on scene events, 8,188 calls were included in the analysis. During this period, the dispatch center also recorded 3,183 activities assigned to STEP units that were not assigned a call number.

**TABLE 9-26: STEP Units – Events, Calls, and Workload by Category**

Category	Events	Calls	Work Hours
Accident	149	146	119.0
Alarm	307	303	54.2
Animal	22	22	7.2
Assist other agency	325	322	212.3
Check	261	259	197.1
Crime–person	257	254	182.8
Crime–property	260	257	135.9
Crime–society	294	291	101.8
Disturbance	866	859	271.1
Follow-up	38	38	17.0
Investigation	762	752	410.2
Miscellaneous	15	15	12.1
Suspicious incident	1,026	1,008	250.2
Traffic enforcement	287	279	133.2
Traffic stop	3,330	3,329	574.6
Warrant/prisoner	54	54	19.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,253</b>	<b>8,188</b>	<b>2,698.0</b>

**Note:** Events include all recorded calls which involved a STEP unit. We removed 65 events zero time on scene when calculating the number of calls with each call category.

**FIGURE 9-34: Percentage Calls and Work Hours, by Category, STEP Units**



**Note:** For this graph, we removed five calls with inaccurate busy times.

**TABLE 9-27: STEP Units Calls, by Initiator**

Category	Community-Initiated	Police-Initiated
Accident	132	14
Alarm	299	4
Animal	18	4
Assist other agency	252	70
Check	8	251
Crime–person	248	6
Crime–property	237	20
Crime–society	218	73
Disturbance	816	43
Follow-up	0	38
Investigation	542	210
Miscellaneous	13	2
Suspicious incident	718	290
Traffic enforcement	176	103
Traffic stop	1	3,328
Warrant/prisoner	20	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>4,490</b>

## Observations:

- 46 percent of the calls and 31 percent of the workload were traffic calls.
  - Accidents accounted for 2 percent of calls and 4 percent of workload.
  - Traffic enforcement calls accounted for 3 percent of calls and 5 percent of workload.
  - Traffic stops accounted for 41 percent of calls and 21 percent of workload.
- 45 percent of calls associated with STEP units were community-initiated.
- The largest group of community-initiated calls involved disturbances.
- The largest group of police-initiated calls involved traffic stops.

**TABLE 9-28: STEP Units Noncall Activities and Occupied Times by Description**

<b>Unit Status Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Occupied Time, Minutes</b>	<b>Count</b>
Out of Service	10-100	11.7	78
Out of Service	10-19	48.6	96
Out of Service	10-21	12.6	6
Out of Service	10-42	10.7	67
Out of Service	10-6	33.9	18
Out of Service	Barn	39.4	139
Out of Service	Billings Clinic	112.1	9
Out of Service	BPD	56.3	644
Out of Service	Briefing	54.4	5
Out of Service	City hall/court	71.1	31
Out of Service	Detail	100.5	53
Out of Service	Evidence	34.1	92
Out of Service	Home	6.0	1
Out of Service	Jail	29.4	7
Out of Service	Meeting	107.8	14
Out of Service	Miscellaneous	41.2	262
Out of Service	Out of service	40.6	41
Out of Service	Report	94.3	2
Out of Service	Training	80.5	3
Follow Up	Follow-up	24.2	206
Reports	Reports	32.1	495
<b>Administrative - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.4</b>	<b>2,269</b>
Break	Break	45.9	648
Lunch	Lunch	37.6	266
<b>Personal - Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>43.5</b>	<b>914</b>
<b>Weighted Average/Total Activities</b>		<b>42.7</b>	<b>3,183</b>

### Observations:

- The most common out-of-service descriptions were "BPD" and "break."
- The recorded personal activities were breaks and lunch breaks.
- The description with the longest average time was related to the Billings Clinic.
- The average time spent was 42.4 minutes for administrative activities and 43.5 minutes for personal activities.

## APPENDIX A: CALL TYPE CLASSIFICATION

Call descriptions for the department's calls for service from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, were classified into the following categories.

**TABLE 9-29: Call Type, by Category**

Call Type Description	Table Category	Figure Category
Alarm	Alarm	Alarm
Alarm Hold Up		
Carbon Monoxide		
Fire Building Alarm		
Ambulance Only	Assist other agency	Assist
Assist Fire		
Assist Police		
EMS Call		
EMS Code Response		
EMS No Code Response		
Extrication		
Fire Law Enforcement		
Grass Fire		
Hazmat Investigation		
LEA		
MVA EMS Code		
MVA EMS No Code		
Rescue		
Service Assist Fire		
Service Assist Law Enforcement		
Structure Fire		
Transport		
Trash/Dumpster Fire		
Vehicle Fire		
Area Check	Check	Check
Assault	Crime—person	Crime
Bomb Threat		
Child Abuse		
Escape		
Kidnapping		
PFMA		
Robbery		
Sex Offense		
Shooting		
Stabbing		

Call Type Description	Table Category	Figure Category
Threats/Harassment		
Weapons		
Auto Theft		
Burglary		
Burglary Attempted		
Forgery / Fraud		
Littering	Crime–property	
Theft		
Unauthorized Use Motor Vehicle		
Vandalism		
Vehicle Theft		
Custodial Interference		
Trespass	Crime–society	
TROV		
Disturbance		
Fireworks	Disturbance	Disturbance
Noise Complaint		
ACO Call		
Animal Complaint Officer Respons	Animal	
Follow Up	Follow-up	
>New Call<		
Abandoned Vehicle		
Accident Alert Policy		
Choose Call Type ----->		
COPS		
Inspections		
Livestock		
No Dispatch		
Ordinance Violations		
Slick Streets		
SVOR		
Truancy		
Warrant	Warrant/prisoner	
911 Hang Up		
Attempt to Locate		
Civil		
Death	Investigation	Investigation
Drug Investigation		
Drunk		
Explosion		

Call Type Description	Table Category	Figure Category
Found/Lost Property		
Lost/Found Child		
Lost/Found Property		
MAAP		
Missing Person		
Prowler		
Recovered Vehicle		
Runaway		
Sick/Injured		
Suicide Attempts/Threats		
Tobacco/Liquor Law Violation		
Utilities		
Welfare		
Suspicious Activity	Suspicious incident	Suspicious incident
Accident - W/Injuries	Accident	
Accident DUI		
Accident Hit and Run		
Accident Property Damage	Traffic enforcement	Traffic
DUI		
Parking Complaint		
Traffic Investigation/Complaint	Traffic stop	
Traffic Stop		

## APPENDIX B: UNIFORM CRIME REPORT INFORMATION

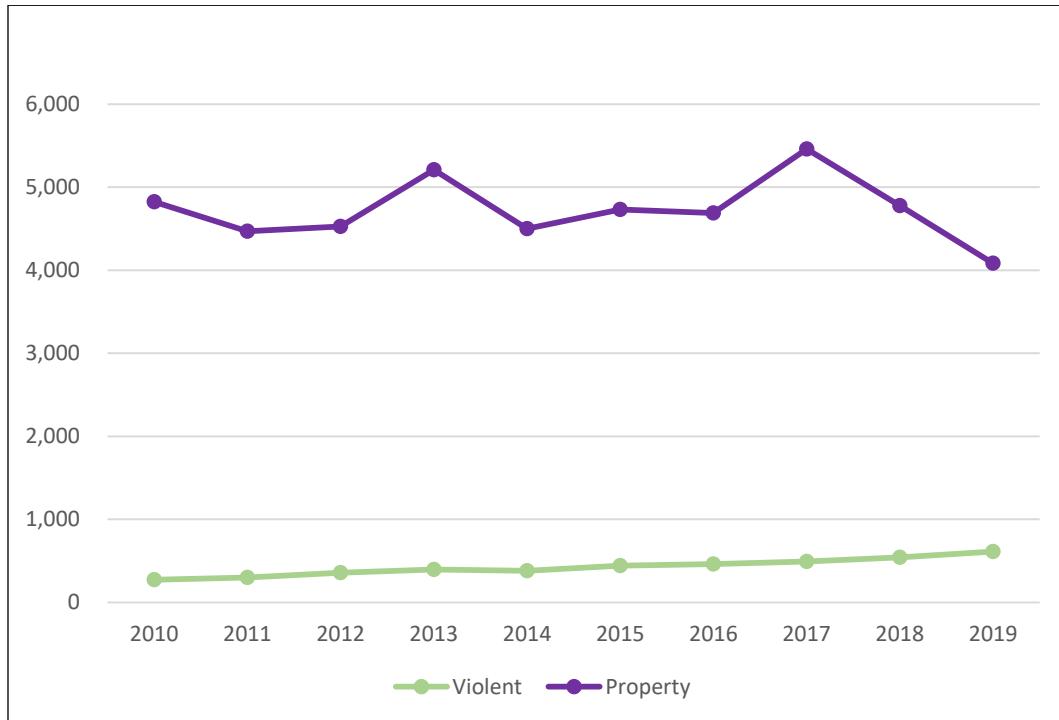
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This section presents information obtained from Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Montana Board of Crime Control. The tables and figures include the most recent information that is publicly available at the national level. This includes crime reports for 2010 through 2019, along with clearance rates for 2019. Crime rates are expressed as incidents per 100,000 population.

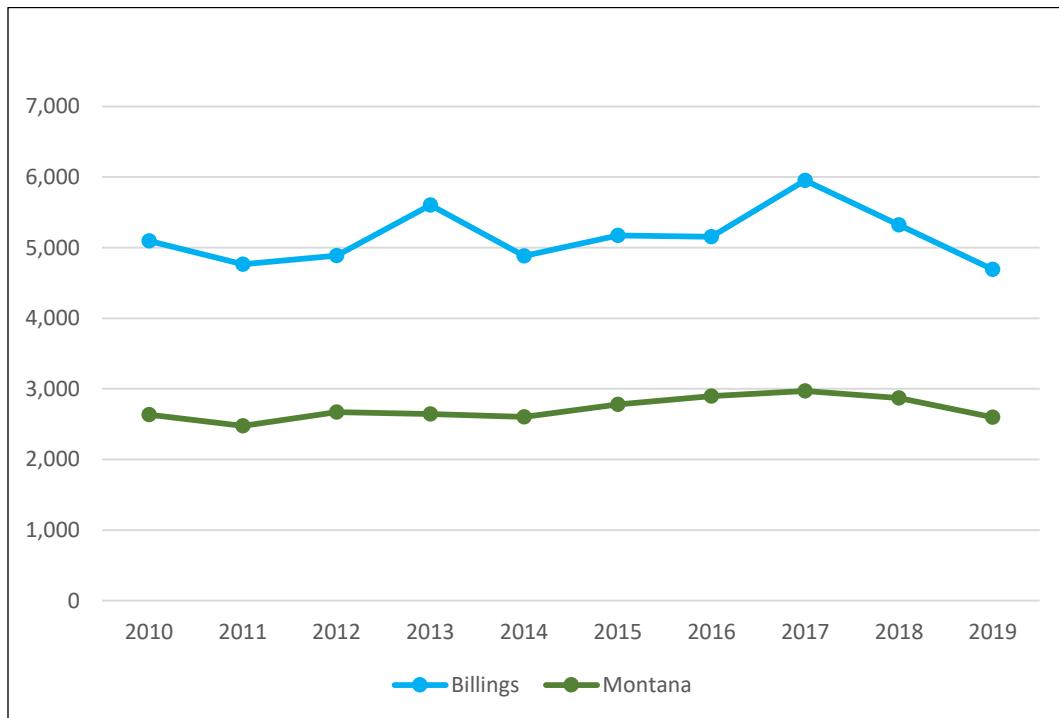
**TABLE 9-30: Reported Crime Rates in 2019, by City**

City	State	Population	Crime Rates		
			Violent	Property	Total
Fargo	ND	127,423	450	3,122	3,572
Sioux Falls	SD	185,628	483	3,045	3,528
Bend	OR	100,588	154	1,908	2,062
Rochester	MN	118,267	216	1,881	2,097
Pueblo	CO	112,381	604	4,272	4,876
Fort Collins	CO	170,889	217	2,173	2,390
Belgrade	MT	9,204	380	1,901	2,281
Bozeman	MT	50,152	245	1,693	1,938
Columbia Falls	MT	5,695	193	1,212	1,405
Great Falls	MT	58,637	515	5,807	6,322
Havre	MT	9,738	534	3,697	4,231
Helena	MT	32,806	579	4,268	4,847
Kalispell	MT	24,473	417	3,355	3,772
Laurel	MT	6,768	414	2,615	3,029
Miles City	MT	8,393	262	2,907	3,169
Missoula	MT	75,422	411	4,086	4,497
Polson	MT	5,075	512	3,882	4,394
Sidney	MT	6,376	471	1,192	1,663
<b>Billings</b>	<b>MT</b>	<b>110,198</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>4,083</b>	<b>4,693</b>
<b>Montana</b>		<b>1,068,778</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>2,193</b>	<b>2,598</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>328,239,523</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>2,489</b>

**FIGURE 9-35: Reported Billings Violent and Property Crime Rates, by Year**



**FIGURE 9-36: Reported City and State Crime Rates, by Year**



**TABLE 9-31: Reported Billings, Montana, and National Crime Rates, by Year**

Year	Billings				Montana				National			
	Population	Violent	Property	Total	Population	Violent	Property	Total	Population	Violent	Property	Total
2010	104,170	273	4,822	5,095	1,055,270	255	2,381	2,636	314,170,775	393	2,833	3,225
2011	105,095	299	4,467	4,766	1,064,639	256	2,220	2,476	317,186,963	376	2,800	3,176
2012	106,371	358	4,527	4,885	1,071,788	259	2,411	2,670	319,697,368	377	2,758	3,135
2013	107,802	395	5,208	5,603	1,078,577	264	2,379	2,642	321,947,240	362	2,627	2,989
2014	110,245	381	4,500	4,881	1,087,522	298	2,302	2,601	324,699,246	357	2,464	2,821
2015	109,997	442	4,730	5,172	1,099,717	327	2,452	2,779	327,455,769	368	2,376	2,744
2016	111,447	463	4,689	5,152	1,101,927	352	2,547	2,899	329,308,297	383	2,353	2,736
2017	111,317	493	5,458	5,951	1,050,493	377	2,592	2,969	325,719,178	383	2,362	2,745
2018	110,397	542	4,779	5,321	1,062,305	374	2,496	2,870	327,167,434	369	2,200	2,568
2019	110,198	610	4,083	4,693	1,068,778	405	2,193	2,598	328,239,523	379	2,010	2,489

**TABLE 9-32: Reported Billings, Montana, and National Crime Clearance Rates**

Crime	Billings			Montana			National		
	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances	Rate	Crimes	Clearances*	Rate
Murder Manslaughter	3	2	67%	35	20	57%	14,325	8,796	61%
Rape	75	10	13%	614	72	12%	124,817	41,065	33%
Robbery	98	38	39%	210	82	39%	239,643	73,091	31%
Aggravated Assault	499	285	57%	2,601	1,486	57%	726,778	380,105	52%
Burglary	608	58	10%	2,688	357	13%	981,264	138,358	14%
Larceny	3,266	835	26%	19,152	3,923	20%	4,533,178	834,105	18%
Vehicle Theft	625	76	12%	2,234	400	18%	655,778	90,497	14%

**Note:** \*National clearance counts were calculated from crimes and clearance rates, as these numbers are not directly available from the FBI.

END