

# 2001 Annual Report



Metropolitan Police Department  
Office of Professional Responsibility

January 1, 2002



Charles H. Ramsey, Chief of Police

Force Investigation Team





*"In a very short period of time, our Force Investigation Team has dramatically improved the quality of our own use-of-force investigations, and it has set a new standard of excellence for law enforcement agencies nationwide in this critical area." – Chief Charles Ramsey*

## Introduction

The Metropolitan Police Department's Force Investigation Team is the unit that investigates use-of-force incidents involving MPD officers. The Force Investigation Team, part of the Office of Professional Responsibility, was created in January 1999, following a Pulitzer Prize-winning series in the Washington Post. The articles documented serious shortcomings in the internal tracking and investigation of use-of-force incidents. The series, entitled *Deadly Force*, also revealed that during the 1990s, the MPD had the highest per-capita rate of officer-involved shootings in the United States.

The Force Investigation Team spent the first three months of its existence researching legal issues and best practices in the use-of-force area, and then customized a set of operational policies and procedures. The team itself was empowered to research, plan, and, upon approval, implement the policies and procedures that addressed the unique needs of the MPD and the District of Columbia. Using progressive leadership models and business theories, the team established a system that ensures high quality, comprehensive, and professional force investigations.

The system included a multi-tiered process for investigating use-of-force incidents, and was formalized in an operational plan that included detailed flowcharts and written plans. To ensure quality and accountability, the team created reporting templates, worksheets, and questions that are used at force scenes to ensure that all pertinent information is collected.

The Force Investigation Team unit has also engaged in non-traditional training designed to emphasize quality, foster balanced reviews of force incidents, and ensure empathy and fairness for all parties involved. For example, the Force Investigation Team has partnered with private industry, sought out perspectives from local and national civil rights and law enforcement organizations, and conducted innovative training exercises.

The Force Investigation Team also created an automated central repository to track and analyze police use-of-force data, and this has helped the department to track use-of-force trends and identify opportunities for additional officer training.

The Force Investigation Team became operational on April 11, 1999, and was originally charged with the responsibility to investigate incidents in which Metropolitan Police Department officers killed suspects. Over the past two years, the investigative responsibilities of the team increased through the process of managed expansion. The responsibilities of the team eventually grew to include the investigation of almost all police-related firearm discharges, deaths of persons in police custody, officer suicides involving a service weapon, and firearm discharges by agents assigned to the District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General.

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Force Investigation Team

In 2000, the Force Investigation Team built on the success from the previous year. The team continued to improve the quality of its investigations, and further expanded its force related statistical data collection and analysis. In 2001, the Force Investigation Team was able to quickly identify use-of-force trends and initiated intervening action that contributed to use-of-force reductions in those areas.

In 2001, the Force Investigation Team continued its commitment to professionalism and extremely high quality. Additionally, the team garnered over 2000 hours of training, and continued its tradition of experiential learning via benchmarking with outside organizations. Also, the Force Investigation Team continued its commitment to civil rights protection, both for the citizenry and for police officers.

The Force Investigation Team today is an award winning high quality police unit that has set new standards for investigation, innovation, and training. It now serves as a model for law enforcement agencies worldwide, and has been emulated by other agencies. The Force Investigation Team has been featured at seminars both in the United States and abroad.

Chief Ramsey has recognized the team's success, and directed that the Force Investigation Team be expanded to handle instances of less-lethal uses of force. A second team was established in October 2001, and became operational January 1, 2002. In addition to deadly force, the Force Investigation Team in 2002 will investigate uses of force resulting in broken bones, hospitalization, head strikes, loss of consciousness, police dog bites, and criminal referrals from the Office of Citizen Complaint Review.

Statistically in 2001, Metropolitan Police Department police deadly force injuries has stabilized. The department had seen intentional police-related deadly force injuries drop 78% over the past two years. This year brought slight increases in firearm discharges and numbers of people injured. In 2001, three people were killed and fourteen people were injured by police firearm discharges, as opposed to one killed and six injured last year. The department did experience reductions in accidental firearm discharges, as well as shootings at animals. Nonetheless, the department is encouraged that, in general, the number of incidents have stabilized well below the high numbers of the 1990s. However, the Force Investigation Team will strengthen its link to the department's Institute of Police Science to further reduce force incidents.

The Force Investigation Team's statistical systems were able to help the department identify force related trends that allowed for intervening action. Additionally, the Force Investigation Team helped develop a civil disturbance use of force continuum for major demonstrations.

This Annual Report contains a plethora of information that helps paint a picture of the police use-of-force situation in the District of Columbia. The report helps us to fulfill our responsibility to be accountable to the community.

It is clear that police use-of-force will continue to be a volatile issue for law enforcement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Force Investigation Team is glad to be part of the formula to keep community confidence and trust in the Metropolitan Police Department.



## Vision, Mission, and Structure

A core element of the success enjoyed by the Force Investigation Team is its commitment to its established vision, values, and mission. The team, which self-developed its *Vision/Value Statement* and *Team Mission Statement*, places great importance on these established principles. To ensure quality and professionalism, every action taken by a member of the Force Investigation Team comports with at least one of the vision/value statements. In January 2001, the Force Investigation Team updated its vision and mission to reflect the team's evolution. The team's vision/value statement is revised annually to ensure that it remains a focused, contemporary, and high-quality investigative unit. The vision/value statement is posted conspicuously throughout the Force Investigation Team's offices.

Force Investigation Team

### Force Investigation Team Vision/Value Statement - 2001

The Metropolitan Police Department Force Investigation Team will:

- Promote the professionalism, values, and ethics associated with the finest traditions of the Metropolitan Police Department
- Conduct fair, impartial, and highly professional reviews of use-of-force incidents involving Metropolitan Police officers.
- Take our obligation seriously--to the public and our officers--to thoroughly, accurately, and expeditiously investigate these incidents.
- To become the model in the nation as it relates to police use-of-force investigations.
- Create, welcome, and support the leadership skills and expertise of all members of the team.
- Encourage team building, open communication, and mutual respect.
- Constantly strive to improve our ability to conduct investigations through professional development. Aspire to become a "learning organization."
- Maintain unbiased and respectful treatment of all people.
- Be committed to cultural sensitivity.
- Continually strive to enhance the confidence, trust, and support of the community.
- Accept accountability and responsibility for our duties and responsibilities.



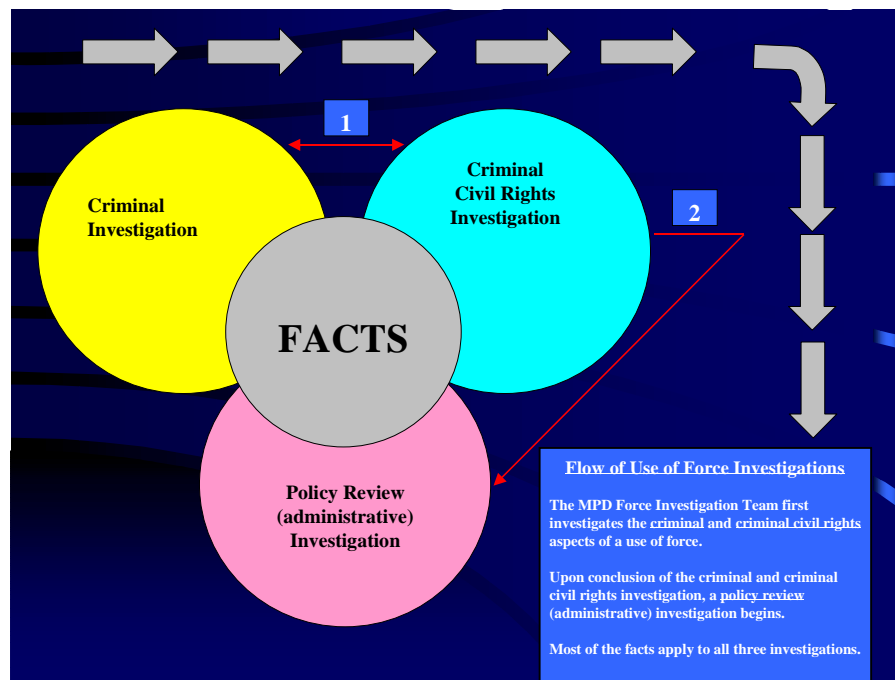
## Types of Investigations

The Force Investigation Team is the primary unit that conducts police use-of-force investigations within the Metropolitan Police Department. The Force Investigation Team conducts *three* types of force investigations:

- (1) A criminal investigation of an officer's actions as it relates to the use of force.
- (2) A criminal civil rights investigation of an officer's actions as it relates to the use of force.  
(This in no way precludes federal agencies from opening their own investigations)

Once a criminal declination or a criminal prosecution is completed by the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, the Force Investigation Team will:

- (3) Conduct a policy review of an officer's actions as it relates to the use of force. The policy review will include:
  - a. A determination of whether the use of force was consistent with MPD policy and training.
  - b. A determination of whether proper tactics were employed.
  - c. A determination of whether lesser force alternatives were reasonably available.



The Force Investigation Team currently primarily investigates instances of police use of deadly force. The Force Investigation Team will add an additional team in 2002 to investigate less than lethal uses of force. The duties of the teams are as follows:

Force Investigation Team



## Force Investigation Team – Team I

- ❑ Firearm discharges (except range and training incidents and discharges at animals)
- ❑ Uses of force resulting in death
- ❑ In-custody deaths
- ❑ Officer Suicides (with service weapon)
- ❑ Firearm discharges involving members of the D.C. Office of the Inspector General

## Force Investigation Team – Team II (effective January 1, 2002)

- ❑ Uses of force resulting in a broken bone
- ❑ Injuries requiring hospitalization as a result of a police use of force
- ❑ Head strikes with impact weapons
- ❑ Uses of force resulting in a loss of consciousness, risk of death, serious disfigurement, or disability or impairment of the functioning of any body part or organ
- ❑ Incidents where persons receive a bite from an MPD canine
- ❑ Serious Use of Force related referrals from the Office of Citizen Complaint Review that are forwarded to the United States Attorney's Office for review
- ❑ Serious uses of force involving members of the D.C. Office of the Inspector General
- ❑ Criminal allegations of police use of excessive force

Another major responsibility of the Force Investigation Team is to closely track, maintain, and analyze statistical data related to police use-of-force incidents. This data helps department executives to identify and address use-of-force trends involving officers. Also, the team administers the operation of the MPD's Use of Force Review Board (UFRB) for the Assistant Chief of Police in the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Currently, the Force Investigation Team consists of four two-member investigative response teams (called Force Review Teams) and one three-member management-level response team. These teams are available for on-duty or call-back response for incidents on a 24-hour basis.

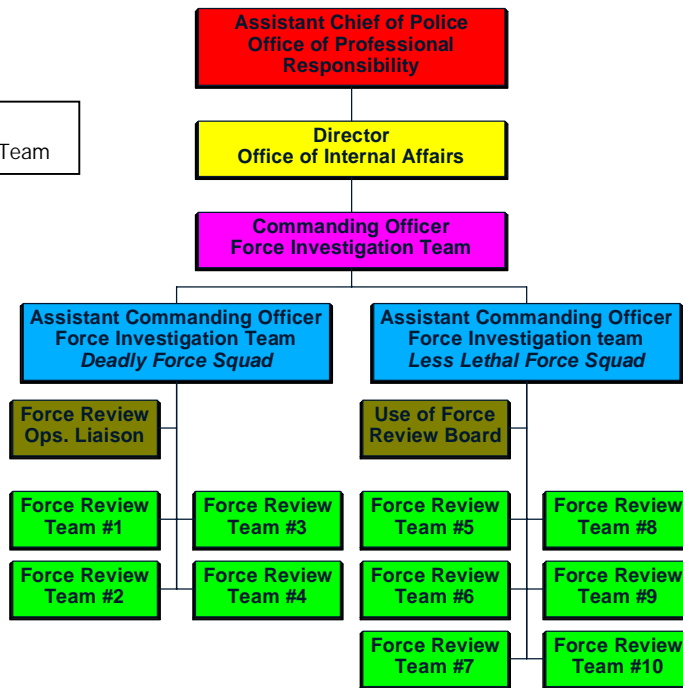
Effective January 1, 2002, the Force Investigation Team added six additional Force Review Teams to handle less-lethal force incidents. Moreover, the Force Investigation Team provides liaison support to the MPD Office of the General Counsel, the D.C. Office of the Corporation Counsel, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as other federal agencies and other organizations.

In 2001, the Force Investigation Team responded to the scene of 36 force related incidents. During this period, members of the Force Investigation Team completed 36 Preliminary Investigative reports, 23 Final Investigative reports, and processed 162 Use-of-Force Review Board cases. Moreover, members of the Force Investigation Team logged over 1,358 response hours, participated in 523 interviews, and worked over 3,888 follow-up hours.

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Structure of the Force Investigation Team



Force Investigation Team

## Identified Customers

One of the most important aspects of the Force Investigation Team is its business-related perspective. Accordingly, the Force Investigation Team endeavored to identify its primary stakeholders, or "customer base." The identification of these customers help members of the Force Investigation Team focus on who they are conducting an investigation for. This concept helps keep the Force Investigation Team accountable to its customers, while fostering quality at every level of its operations.







## Trend Analysis

Investigating incidents of police use-of-force is a critical function. However, it is also imperative for law enforcement agencies to track and analyze data to identify trends. Once trends are identified, then intervening action can occur to minimize similar future occurrences.

In the past, the Metropolitan Police Department did not adequately track police use-of-force incidents. In fact, in 1997, MPD actually lost track of the number of police involved firearm discharges. The department has greatly progressed since that time. For example, in 2001, the Metropolitan Police Department was not only able to track police use of firearms, but to also identify trends related to the discharges.

The Force Investigation Team identified two sets of trends in 2001, and, via the Assistant Chief of the Office of Professional Responsibility, took intervening action.

In January 2001, the Force Investigation Team identified a series of accidental/negligent firearm discharges that occurred while police officers were physically struggling with suspects. The Office of Professional Responsibility alerted officials at the department's training facility, the MPD Maurice T. Turner Institute of Police Science, in order to incorporate this information in the department's bi-annual use-of-force training. Accordingly, the Metropolitan Police Department has seen a reduction in accidental/negligent firearm discharges as compared with last year.

In April 2001, the Force Investigation Team noted that ten animals (dogs) had been shot by police in three months. Again, the Office of Professional Responsibility alerted officials at the department's training facility to incorporate this information into the department's bi-annual use-of-force training. Following this alert, only six additional animal shootings occurred during the ensuing eight months of the year.

The ability to track data and identify trends in a timely manner has allowed the Metropolitan Police Department to take intervening action and reduce the number of both these types of force during the year.

## Statistical Review

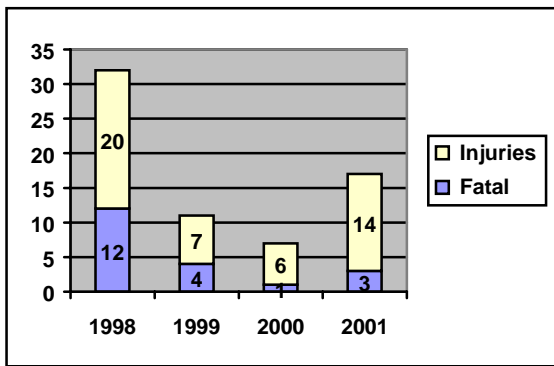
The Metropolitan Police Department recognizes it has an obligation to the citizenry to document and report use-of-force data. The statistical review section reflects the department's responsibility to the community to share with them, in a comprehensive format, the plethora of information related to use-of-force by members of the department. The following pages contain summary data that has been used to track, analyze, and improve police practices as it relates to police use of force.



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Force Investigation Team

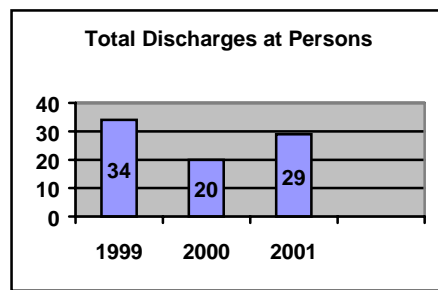


**Intentional firearm discharges at people** by members of the Metropolitan Police Department **that resulted in injury or death** rose slightly in 2001. However, this year's figures reflect a stabilization of the huge declines the department experienced since the implementation of use-of-force reforms in 1999 and 2000.

In 1998, officers shot a total of 32 people; 12 were killed and 20 were injured. In 1999, officers shot a total of 11 people; 4 were killed and 7 were injured. In 2000, one person was killed and 6 were injured. In 2001, 3 were killed and 14 were injured.

It should be noted that in 2001, one citizen was wounded as a result of an accidental police firearm discharge, one less as in 2000. A summary of the incident is included later in this report.

**The total number of intentional police firearm discharges at people** (whether or not there were injuries) also increased, but reflect the stabilization mentioned earlier. In 1999, there were 34 total firearm discharges at persons by MPD Officers. In 2000, there were 20 total firearm discharges at persons. In 2001, there were 29 firearm discharges at persons.



**Firearm discharges at animals** (dogs) declined in 2001. This reflects a three-year trend of reductions. Prior to 1999, no statistics were captured. In 1999, 21 dogs were shot. In 2000, 18 dogs were shot. In 2001, 16 dogs were shot. Most of the dogs shot by police this year were of the Pit Bull breed.

Police District or Jurisdiction	1999 Animal Shootings	2000 Animal Shootings	2001 Animal Shootings
First District (1D)	0	1	1
Second District (2D)	0	0	1
Third District (3D)	2	0	2
Fourth District (4D)	2	3	0
Fifth District (5D)	4	6	2
Sixth District (6D)	5	4	3
Seventh District (7D)	6	3	3
Maryland (MD)	2	1	4
Virginia (VA)	0	0	0

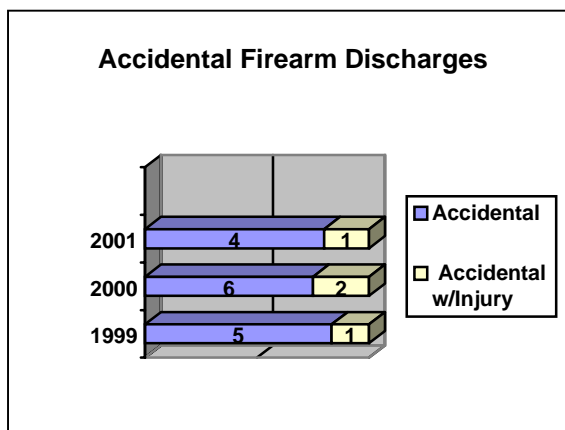


Breed of Dog	1999	2000	2001
Pit Bull	16	14	9
Akita	1	0	1
Rotweiler	1	1	4
German Shepherd	1	2	1
Retriever	0	1	1
Unknown Breed	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>

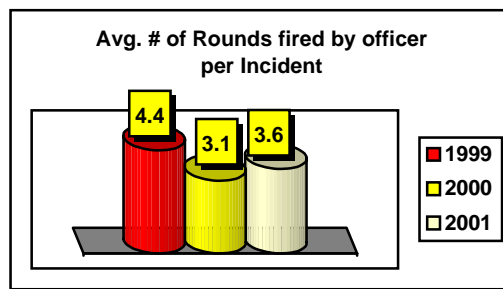
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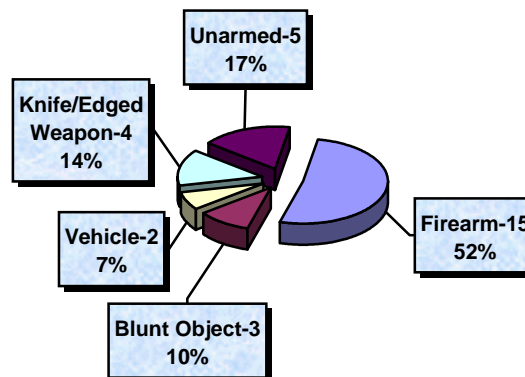
There was a reduction in the number of **accidental firearm discharges** by members of the Metropolitan Police Department. In 2001, there were a total of 5 accidental discharges, with one resulting with an injury. In 2000, there were 8 accidental, with 2 resulting in injury. In 1999, there were 6 accidental discharges, with one resulting in injury.



The **average number of rounds fired by officer per incident** also remained stable. In 2001, the average number fired by officers was 3.6, in 2000 the average was 3.1, and in 1999 the average was 4.4. There are no records previous to 1999.

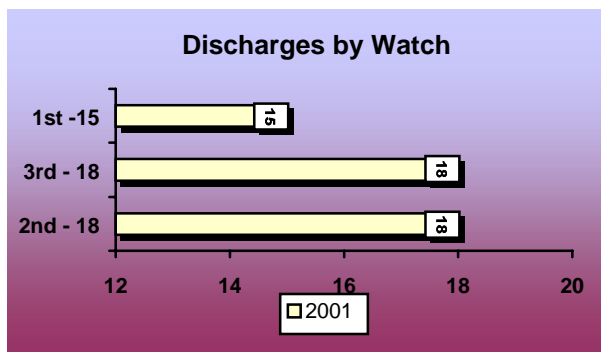


In 2001, members of the Metropolitan Police Department faced a **variety of threats** during encounters that escalated into police firearm discharges. The greatest threat faced by officers was firearms, which represented 52% of the threats in 2001.



In 2001, **firearm discharges occurred during all three watches**. The occurrences were spread out evenly, with more than 2/3 of the discharges occurring during the day and evening, and less than 1/3 occurring during overnight hours. The watches are normally as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Watch      11pm – 7am
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Watch      7am - 3pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Watch      3pm -11pm



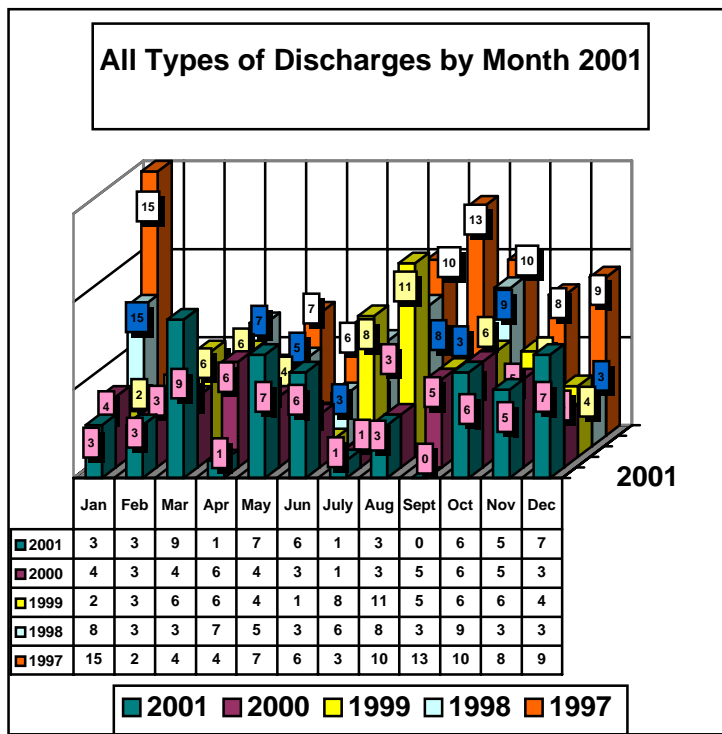
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Force Investigation Team

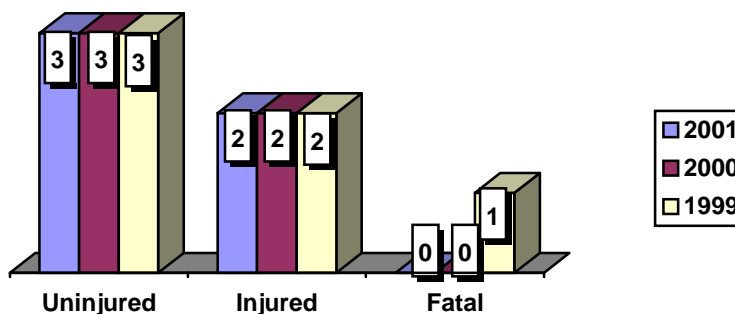
In 2001, there were 51 **total overall firearm discharges**. This includes discharges at persons, accidental discharges, and discharges at animals. In 2000, there were 47 overall discharges. In 1999, there were 62. In 1998, there were 61, and in 1997, there were 91.

The greatest number of **firearms discharges by month** was March (9), followed by May and December (7 each).



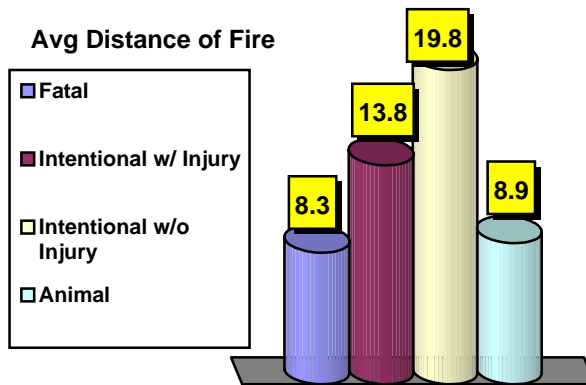
In 2001, there were 5 **police firearm discharges at unarmed persons**. 2 of the 5 were injured, none fatally. These persons represented either a physical threat, or a perceived deadly threat.

### Discharges at Unarmed Persons



In 2001, the overall **average distance of fire** upon initial threat was 13.3 feet. Fatal discharges occurred just over 8 feet away from the subject.

### Avg Distance of Fire

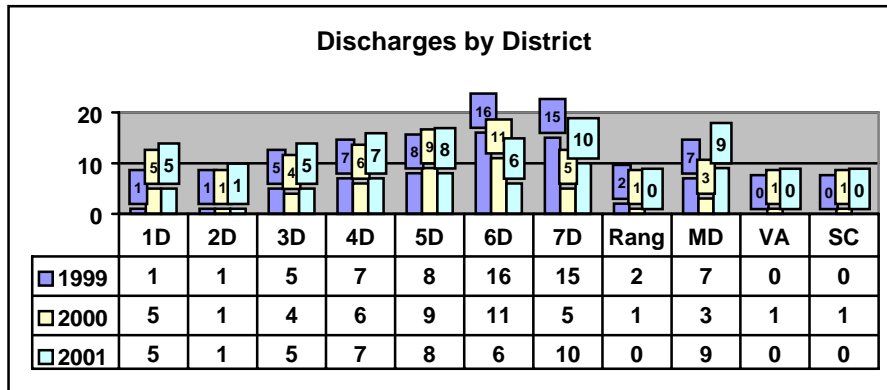


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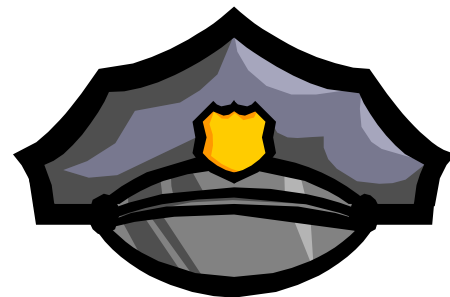
In 2001, most of the department's firearm discharges were concentrated in the Central and East **Regional Operations Command (ROC)**. ROC-Central and ROC-East experienced 17 discharges respectively, while ROC-North experienced 8 discharges. The 9 remaining discharges occurred in Maryland. The Second District experienced the lowest number of discharges (1), while the Seventh District experienced the most (10). The Sixth District experienced the largest decline (55%), while the Seventh District experienced the largest increase (50%).

Force Investigation Team



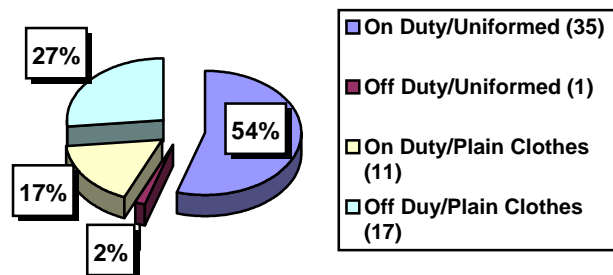
*ROC Central – 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> Districts; ROC EAST – 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Districts; ROC North – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Districts*

For 2001, the median **age of MPD officers discharging** their firearms is 33 years old, with the majority between 31 and 35 years of age. The median age of officers on the department is 37 years old.



The **average years of service of MPD officers discharging** their firearms is 8.5 years. The average years of service of officers on the department is 11.4 years of service.

In 2001, the great majority of MPD officers involved in firearm discharges were **on-duty** and wearing a uniform (72%). On-duty uniformed officers accounted for 35 of the discharges, while on-duty plainclothes officers accounted for 11 of the discharges. Off-duty officers accounted for 28% of the discharges.



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Force Investigation Team

As it relates to **in-custody deaths**, one person died in 2001 while in police custody. This is the same number as in 2000 and in 1999. A summary of this in-custody death is included in this report. Additionally, the Force Investigation Team is investigating the death of a subject who died in a hospital three days after he had been in police custody. While it has not been determined if the person died in as a result of police interaction, the Force Investigation Team is investigating the matter as a precaution. Preliminary autopsy reports indicate the possible cause of death as acute cocaine intoxication. A summary of this incident is included in the in-custody death section of this report.

In 2001, one Metropolitan Police Department member committed **suicide**. A First District Officer committed suicide with her service weapon during a domestic dispute. Prior to committing suicide, the officer shot and wounded a male acquaintance. There were no police officer suicides in 2000 or in 1999. A summary of this suicide is included in the police suicide section of this report.

The Metropolitan Police Department tracks the **race and gender of officers discharging firearms**. In 2001, the majority of discharging officers were African American (66%). Caucasian officers represent 11% of the discharging officers. Please note that African Americans represent 64% of the department, while Caucasian officers represent 27% of the department.

Additionally, 89% of the discharging officers were male, while 11% of the officers were female. Males represent 76% of the department, while females represent 26% of the department.

MPD also tracks the **race and gender of subjects who were shot by police**. In 2001, two African American males were killed, and one Hispanic male was killed. Eleven black males were shot and wounded, while two Caucasian males and one Hispanic male were shot and wounded.

## Race & Gender of Discharging Officers and the Race & Gender of the Suspects that they fired at:\*

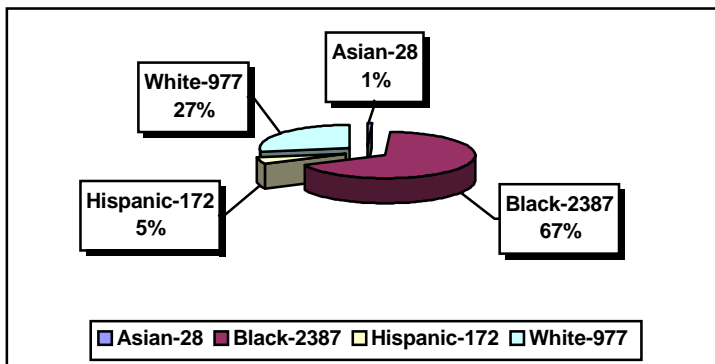
BLACK MALE OFFICER / BLACK MALE SUSPECT	18
BLACK MALE OFFICER / WHITE MALE SUSPECT	1
BLACK MALE OFFICER / HISPANIC MALE SUSPECT	1
BLACK MALE OFFICER / BLACK FEMALE SUSPECT	0
BLACK FEMALE OFFICER / HISPANIC MALE SUSPECT	0
BLACK FEMALE OFFICER / BLACK MALE SUSPECT	3
BLACK FEMALE OFFICER/ WHITE MALE SUSPECT	1
BLACK FEMALE OFFICER/ BLACK FEMALE SUSPECT	0
WHITE MALE OFFICER / BLACK MALE SUSPECT	12
WHITE MALE OFFICER / BLACK FEMALE SUSPECT	0
ASIAN MALE OFFICER / BLACK MALE SUSPECT	1
HISPANIC MALE OFFICER/ BLACK MALE SUSPECT	1
ASIAN MALE/ASIAN MALE SUSPECT	1

\*This chart reflects the # of officers discharging a firearm at a suspect, whether or not the suspect was struck. This includes incidents where more than one officer fired at the same suspect, or where one officer fired at more than one suspect. It also includes an incident where a suspect was injured as a result of an unintentional discharge.

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For reference purposes, this chart reflects the racial composition of the 3,564 sworn members of the Metropolitan Police Department. (These statistics were provided by the Human Services Division and were current as of December 19, 2001).



Force Investigation Team

As it relates to **incident policy determinations**, the Force Investigation Team creates a final investigative report for every incident that reflects both the criminal and policy-related findings of a use of a police use-of-force. The Force Investigation Team notifies the U.S. Attorney's Office within 24 hours of the occurrence of a police firearm discharge at a person or an in-custody death. A formal in-person consultation occurs with the U.S. Attorney's Office within 3 days. All investigative findings, after review by the U.S. Attorney's Office, are subject to final policy review and determination by the *MPD Use of Force Review Board* and the Chief of Police. Therefore, many of the team's findings have not completed its route through the investigative and review processes. Force Investigation Team findings are classified into four areas;

**Justified, Within Departmental Policy** – this classification reflects a finding in which a police use of force is determined to be justified, and during the course of the incident the subject officer did not violate department policy.

**Justified, Policy Violation** - this classification reflects a finding in which a police use of force is determined to be justified, but during the course of the incident the subject officer violated a department policy.

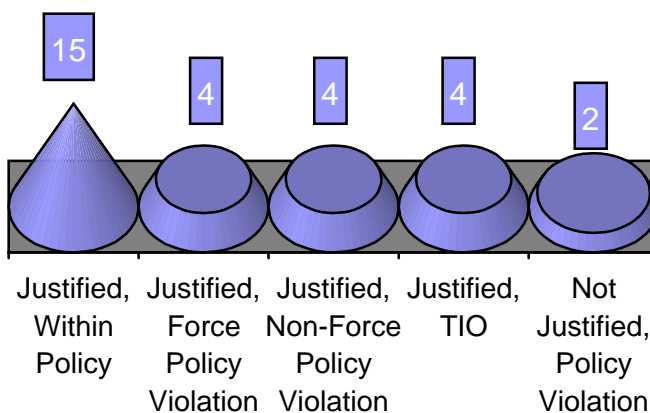
**Justified, Tactical Improvement Opportunity** - this classification reflects a finding in which a police use of force is determined to be justified, and during the course of the incident no departmental violations occurred. However, the investigation revealed tactical errors that could be addressed through non-disciplinary and tactical improvement endeavors.

**Not Justified, Not Within Departmental Policy** - this classification reflects a finding in which a police use of force is determined to be not justified, and during the course of the incident the subject officer violated a department policy.

Based on the information available, it is preliminarily projected that the majority of shots fired at people were justified. It is projected that 8 of the incidents included a policy violation, 4 of which were force related.

\* (None of the not-justified incidents resulted in injury or death).

## Projected Determinations





## Case Summary Highlights

### Fatal Firearm Discharges

#### OPR/FIT Case #S01-012-F

This incident involved two uniformed officers that had responded to a police radio assignment to handle a complaint of a group of disorderly subjects. Shortly after their arrival on the scene, the officers heard a gunshot emanate from a nearby apartment building. As one of the officers approached the building, he encountered a suspect in the stairwell who was pointing a handgun at him. The officer fired his service pistol, fatally wounding the suspect. The final disposition of this case is pending at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

#### OPR/FIT Case #S01-020-F

This incident involved an off-duty MPD officer who was driving his privately owned vehicle in the District. The officer observed a vehicle occupied by three subjects, one of which was consuming alcohol. The officer initially did not take police action, however, the operator of the other vehicle pulled in front of the officer's car forcing him to stop. The suspects in the other car exited their vehicle and began throwing beer cans at the officer. The officer identified himself, and sought to stop the situation. One of the suspects produced a chair, while the second suspect produced a 28-inch steel ratchet and struck the officer in the head. The third suspect started to throw a bottle at the officer. Fearing for his life and being overcome by the suspects, the officer drew his pistol and fired. One suspect was killed and another wounded. The final disposition of this case is pending at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

#### OPR/FIT Case #S01-024-F

This incident involved two uniformed officers investigating a report of an injured person. The person was located, but refused medical treatment and refused ambulance transportation to Howard University Hospital. The officers attempted to verbally persuade the subject to go to the hospital, however, the subject produced a knife and began to walk away from the officers. The officers followed the suspect and ordered him to drop the knife. The suspect did not comply, and instead swung the knife at an uninvolved citizen. The officer feared for the citizen's safety and discharged one round from his service pistol and fatally wounded the suspect. The final disposition of this case is pending at the U.S. Attorney's Office.





## Police Officer Suicide

OPR/FIT Case #S01-018-S

In this incident, an off-duty female officer became involved in an argument with a male acquaintance. During the argument, the officer became enraged, and shot the male, striking him in his chest. The officer then shot herself in the head, killing herself. The male made a full recovery from his wound.

## In-Custody Death

OPR/FIT Case #LL-01-01

In this incident, uniformed officers were flagged-down by citizens who reported that a naked male subject was running in the street. The officers responded to the area and observed the subject running and then stop in a grassy public area. The officers called for ambulance to respond to the scene, at which point the subject got off the ground and ran toward the officers. The officers struggled with the subject, who subsequently sustained abrasions to his knees. The subject was transported to the Washington Hospital Center, and later died. The D.C. Medical Examiner's Office reported that the cause of death was as the result of acute cocaine intoxication. The final disposition of this case is pending at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

OPR/FIT Case #LL-01-02

*It is noted that the subject in this case died three days following his interaction with police. While it has not been determined if this case will be classified as an in-custody death, the Force Investigation Team is investigating the matter as a precaution.*

In this incident, four uniformed officers responded to a police radio assignment concerning a suspicious person. Upon their arrival on the scene, the officers observed a suspect armed with a pair of scissors. During the suspect's apprehension, witnesses reported that the officers struck the suspect with a service baton. The suspect was transported to D.C. General Hospital for emergency psychiatric evaluation. The next day the suspect was transported to Greater Southeast Hospital in an unconscious state. Two days later the suspect died. The D.C. Medical Examiner's Office reported that the cause of death was acute cocaine intoxication with agitated delirium. The final disposition of this case is pending at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

## Intentional Firearm Discharges with Injuries (non-fatal)

OPR/FIT Case #S01-002-I

An officer was investigating the sound of a car alarm. Upon his arrival in the block, he attempted to interview an apparent homeless subject. The subject began ranting, retrieved a wooden object from a nearby tent, and approached the officer as to attack him. The officer retreated, walking slowly backwards while drawing his service baton.



However, the officer tripped and fell over a large log. With the suspect continuing to advance, the officer drew his service pistol and fired, striking the suspect once in the right arm. The suspect was charged with Assault on a Police Officer while Armed. The case was declined by the U.S. Attorney's Office and found to be within policy.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-007-H**

A plainclothes narcotics team consisting of several officers were on patrol when they observed three subjects standing beside an automobile. Upon the officers' approach, one subject began running, and a MPD officer began to pursue him. The suspect turned, pointed a handgun, and fired a round at the officer. Subsequently, officers began to discharge their service pistols at the subject who continued to flee. The suspect then observed additional officers in an unmarked police vehicle and fired a round that lodged in the door of their vehicle. At this time, an officer exited the vehicle and returned fire at the suspect. The suspect stopped after being wounded by one of the officers' rounds, but he fired additional shots at the officers. The suspect was subsequently arrested. A total of 7 officers had fired their service weapons. A female victim who was walking nearby was struck in the leg by one of the suspect's errant bullets (ballistics confirmed this). The case was declined by the U.S. Attorney's Office, but there was a tactical improvement opportunity. A police official was cited for a non-force related violation.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-013-H**

In this incident, an off-duty officer was seated in a chair getting a haircut in the District of Columbia. The officer observed through a window a suspect in the parking lot display a handgun and fire shots at citizens. The Officer exited the establishment, identified himself as a police officer, and ordered the suspect to drop his weapon. The suspect fired it in the direction of the officer. The officer fired his service pistol, grazing the right side of the suspect's head. The suspect ran, and the officer pursued the suspect. The suspect subsequently reached into his coat and turned toward the officer. The officer fired his service pistol, striking the suspect in the right foot and knee. The suspect was taken into custody. The case was declined by the U.S. Attorney's Office and found to be within policy.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-016-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer operating a marked patrol car witnessed the driver of another vehicle commit a traffic violation. The officer attempted to effect a traffic stop, however, the driver failed to stop. The officer initiated a pursuit, and was joined by other marked patrol units. Once the vehicle was stopped, the initiating officer perceived that one of the assisting officers had been run over by the suspect. The office fired one shot, striking the driver in the jaw. The driver was arrested and charged with Assault on a Police Officer and Destruction of Property. This case has been declined by the U.S. Attorney's office, however, there appears to be a possible policy violation.



## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-017-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer responded to a police radio assignment of a report of a man with a knife threatening citizens. The officer located the suspect, at which time the suspect approached the officer. The suspect threw several knives at the officer, who subsequently fired his service pistol at the suspect, striking him in the abdomen. The suspect was charged with Assault on a Police Officer while Armed. The case was declined by the U.S. Attorney's Office and found to be within policy.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-021-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer received a complaint from a citizen that a naked male was walking in the street. The Officer located the subject, and ordered him to stop. The suspect instead approached the officer, at which time the officer drew her service pistol and began to retreat while calling for assistance. The suspect quickened his approach and started to growl. The officer fired three shots, striking the suspect in the left hand, left chest, right chest and left buttocks. The suspect was arrested and charged with Assault on a Police Officer. This case has been declined by the U.S. Attorney's office, however, there appears to be a possible non-force policy violation and a tactical improvement opportunity.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-030-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer conducted a traffic stop of a vehicle occupied by two subjects. The officer observed in plain view a plastic bag containing cocaine inside the stopped vehicle. The officer arrested the driver and attempted to stop the second suspect who had exited the vehicle. The second suspect approached the officer with clinched fists, and then began to run away. The suspect turned again to face the officer, this time brandishing a knife. The officer fired a shot at the suspect, striking the suspect in the lower abdomen. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-031-H**

In this incident, an off-duty officer in the District parked his vehicle while talking to a female. A male suspect, armed with a knife, opened the officer's vehicle door and demanded money. The suspect stabbed the officer in the face and knee. The officer fired his service weapon at the suspect, striking him in the left arm. The suspect continued his assault, whereupon the officer fired additional shots, striking the suspect in the buttocks. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office. There appears to be a possible policy violation.

## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-032-H**

In this incident, an off-duty officer dressed in casual clothes was inside a bank in the District. Two suspects, one armed with a handgun and the other with a knife, entered the premises. The gunman took a hostage and ordered the officer to the floor. The officer drew and fired his service pistol, striking the gunman in the right shoulder.



The second suspect, still armed with a knife, also grabbed a hostage. The hostage collapsed onto the floor, out of the suspect's hands. The officer fired at the second suspect, missing. The second suspect suffered cuts from broken glass. Both suspects were arrested. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office. There appears to be a possible non-force policy violation.

#### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-033-H**

In this incident, four uniformed officers observed a male subject with blood covering most of his shirt. The officers stopped to ascertain if the male needed assistance. The male suspect then drew a handgun from his waistband and raised the weapon to his head. The suspect subsequently lowered the weapon and pointed it in the direction of the officers. Both officers fired their service pistols at the suspect. The suspect suffered wounds to his neck, chest, arm, and hip. The suspect was arrested and charged with Assault on a Police Officer while Armed. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office.

#### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-042-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle. The driver attempted to flee and intentionally rammed into the officer's marked police vehicle. The driver continued to flee and became involved in a collision with a different vehicle. The officer approached the vehicle, at which time the driver placed his vehicle in gear and drove directly towards the officer. The officer fired his service weapon, striking the suspect in the hip. The suspect continued to flee and was involved in a third collision before being arrested and charged with Assault on a Police Officer while Armed. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office. There appears to be a possible policy violation.

#### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-043-H**

In this incident, two uniformed officers were alerted by citizens that a man armed with a handgun was walking in a nearby field. The officers pursued the suspect across the field and ordered the suspect to stop. The suspect turned to face the officers and pointed a handgun in their direction. Both officers fired their service pistols, striking the suspect in the knee. The suspect was arrested. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office.

#### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-046-H**

In this incident, an off-duty officer was inside his home in the District. He was alerted to a burglary-in-progress of his neighbor's home. The officer approached several suspects as they were departing the burglarized home. One of the suspects began to run, and then turned toward the officer, and drew what the officer perceived was a handgun. The officer fired his service pistol and struck the suspect in the hip. The suspect initially escaped, but was later arrested at a nearby hospital. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office. There are possible non-force policy violations.



## **OPR/FIT Case #S01-048-H**

In this incident, a uniformed officer with a police recruit riding with him responded to a complaint of a disorderly person. Upon arriving on the scene, information was learned that one of the involved suspects was wanted on an outstanding warrant. While the officer detained the suspect, the suspect physically assaulted him. The officer attempted to subdue the suspect with his service baton, but the suspect gained control of it and attacked the officer. The officer then fired at the suspect, striking him in the right arm. The suspect was charged with Assault on a Police Officer and an outstanding warrant for Escape. This case is still pending at the U.S. Attorney's office.

## **Accidental and Negligent Firearm Discharges**

### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-006-U/I**

This case involved two on-duty plainclothes officers who conducted a traffic stop on a stolen vehicle with their pistols drawn. As one of the officers approached the passenger-side of the vehicle, the passenger placed what appeared to be crack-cocaine into his mouth. When the officer informed the passenger that he was under arrest, the passenger became combative. The passenger grabbed the officer's pistol and a struggle ensued over the officer's weapon. During the struggle, the officer's service pistol discharged and the passenger was struck in the leg.

### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-019-M**

This case involved an off-duty officer in casual clothes. The officer fell asleep in his personal vehicle in a shopping center parking lot in Prince George's County, Maryland. An unknown suspect approached the officer's vehicle, and the officer was awakened suddenly and exited his vehicle. The suspect assaulted the officer, and stole the officer's vehicle. The officer fired several shots at his vehicle as it was being driven away by the suspect. The suspect escaped, and there was no evidence to indicate that the suspect was injured. The case was not pursued by the Prince George's County Police Department. An investigation by the Force Investigation Team cited the officer for policy violations.

### **OPR/FIT Case #S01-035-N**

This case involved an off-duty male officer dressed in plain clothes who had arrived at the home of a female friend in Prince Georges County, Maryland. There was an apparent domestic-related disagreement and the male officer was refused entry into the female's residence. Witnesses reported hearing gunfire, but there were no injuries. The following day, two bullet shell casings were recovered outside of the apartment. Preliminary information indicates that the bullet shell casings came from the male officer's service pistol. The officer has been temporarily suspended from duty. This case is pending final investigation by the Prince Georges County Police Department.



## OPR/FIT Case #S01-036-N

This case involved an on-duty investigator in plainclothes. The investigator had concluded the processing of an arrest at a police station, but returned to the station's cellblock area to ask the arrestee some additional questions. In doing this, he placed his unholstered service pistol in the inside breast pocket of his jacket, laid the jacket on a file cabinet, and returned to the cellblock area. When he completed the questioning of the arrestee, he retrieved his jacket and attempted to remove the pistol. The pistol had become entangled in the pocket's fabric, and the weapon discharged. There were no injuries.

## OPR/FIT Case #S01-041-N

This case involved a uniformed officer who was detaining a suspect who matched the description of an armed robbery suspect. The officer previously had his service pistol drawn prior to physically detaining the suspect, and was attempting to re-holster it. When a struggle ensued, the officer's service pistol fired accidentally. There were no injuries. The suspect was arrested.

## OPR/FIT CASE #S01-047N

This case involved an officer who was in pursuit of a suspect who had been in a stolen automobile. The suspect hid in a nearby yard. The officer, with his weapon drawn, was searching for the suspect when the suspect suddenly jumped out from his hiding place and startled the officer. The officer lost his balance and accidentally fired his service pistol. There were no injuries, and the suspect was arrested.

## Training and Professional Development

*Still the question recurs "can we do better?" The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew." – Abraham Lincoln*

The Force Investigation Team sustained its commitment to education and training in 2001. This commitment has helped the team to adhere to a primary aspect of its vision statement, which challenges members to *"Constantly strive to improve our ability to conduct investigations through professional development. Aspire to become a learning organization"* Accordingly, in 2001 members of the Force Investigation Team participated in 2,015 hours of training. These hours comprised of both traditional and contemporary training endeavors.

Another strategy that the Force Investigation Team uses to expand its perspectives is the practice of *benchmarking*. Benchmarking involves interaction with other agencies and organizations to observe various best-practice methods to improve operations.



# 2001 Annual Report



For 2001, here are just some of the training and benchmarking activities that the Force Investigation Team participated in:

**Shooting Reconstruction:** This seminar was originally designed for crime scene processing technicians. Team members learned complex theories and techniques to reconstruct shooting scenes.

**Civil Rights Supreme Court Visit:** Members of the Force Investigation Team observed an actual Supreme Court Case and toured the building. Team members were also assigned to research a Civil Rights or Police Authority Supreme Court Decision. During a follow-up session, the visit and Court decisions were discussed to emphasize the importance of Civil Rights laws.



**Spanish Language Training:** This seminar, sponsored by the Public Agency Training Council, provided Spanish language training for team members. With the growing Hispanic community in the District of Columbia, this training will help enhance communication between the citizenry and the Force Investigation Team.

**Microsoft Law Enforcement Software Seminar:** This program, sponsored by the Microsoft Corporation, featured a program examining the most cutting edge law enforcement computer hardware and software. The Force Investigation Team is exploring the concept of "virtual investigations," in which investigations are completed in a paperless electronic process. Team members learned of various technological opportunities for future force investigations.

**National Institute of Justice Perspectives on Crime Series:** This series of seminars sponsored by the Department of Justice focused on a variety of justice research in the United States. During the course of the year, members of the Force Investigation Team learned about the latest research on the latest criminal justice system topics.

**Harley Davidson Assembly Plant Site Visit:** Members of the Force Investigation Team visited this assembly plant to observe the importance of following a high-quality system. Harley Davidson is renown in the motorcycle industry for its quality improvement processes.



**Psychological Approach to Detecting Danger:** This seminar provided members of the Force Investigation Team various approaches that police officers use to detect dangerous individuals. The course helped team members better understand challenges faced by contemporary patrol officers.

Force Investigation Team



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The Force Investigation Team has been recognized as a worldwide leader in police use-of-force investigations. In 2001, members of the Force Investigation Team have conducted presentations, lectures, and seminars about its force investigation processes and commitment to quality. Presentations have been made at the following places:

- Community organizations in the District of Columbia.
- The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) Annual Conference, held in the District of Columbia
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police International Policing Conference, held in Toronto, Canada.
- The International Law Enforcement Academy, held in Budapest, Hungary. (photo above)



Force Investigation Team

To date, thirty five local and federal law enforcement agencies have sought assistance from the team in developing or improving their own deadly-force investigations. The Force Investigation Team will continue its efforts into 2002, and will strive to improve on the successes it has garnered. The Force Investigation Team is glad to be part of the solution, and is proud that the Metropolitan Police Department is the trendsetter in the area of police use-of-force investigations.

This Annual Report was prepared by the Metropolitan Police Department Office of Professional Responsibility Force Investigation Team

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