



BOARDMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Todd Werth, CHIEF OF POLICE

Annual Boardman Police Department Use of Force Review: 2020

The duties of a police officer to protect life and property and to apprehend criminals by their very nature may necessarily involve the use of some degree of force. But the force used must be reasonably balanced against the resistance faced in the lawful performance of their duties. It is understood that Officers of the Boardman Police Department may at time encounter resistance or aggression while engaged in the execution of their lawful duties. Officers will respond to resistance or aggression with that degree of force that is necessary and reasonable in accordance with the objective reasonableness standard set by statutes and judicial precedence.

Boardman Police Department will collect and analyze data related to the use of force, conduct training in the proper application of force, and continually work to identify and address any issues related to the use of force by our department. As part of this ongoing effort, we will adjust our policies and procedures when necessary. During 2020, the Ohio Collaborative called for changes to law enforcement policies covering “choke holds” and “a duty to intercede.” Boardman Police incorporated/reinforced our policies covering the two areas below:

Response to Resistance/Aggression (102.11) The use of the choke hold is prohibited, unless lethal force is justified.

Response to Resistance/Aggression (102.004) Duty to Intercede - Officers have an affirmative duty to intervene if they witness a use force that is clearly unreasonable. Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to safely do so, intervene to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use of force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor who was not involved in the incident.

Training: Boardman Police Department conducts annual training in the areas of firearms, use of less lethal devices (Taser), subject control, and anti-biased based policing. 2020 was a challenging year for training due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. To minimize exposure to employees we had to reassess how and when we conducted departmental training. Minimizing exposure was essential to ensure we were able to maintain adequate healthy staffing to carry out our mission. We conducted firearms training, reinforced use of force policies and practices, and maintained mandated certifications during the year.

For 2021, we have made modifications and adjustments as most professions have to ensure we are able to safely conduct training for our employees. We have contracted with PoliceOne Academy, which is an on line training portal, to better facilitate situational and knowledge based training for the department. We have scheduled the use of a situational law enforcement firearms simulator that we will be using to train our officers. Firearms, subject control, medical trauma care, de-escalation, and other training is also set for our employees

during 2021. A key component of our training is sending officers to the week long Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training which helps them recognize individuals in mental health crisis and gives them the tools to better safely de-escalate an adverse encounter. Over thirty of our officers have been certified in CIT. This training was recently expanded to allow our emergency dispatchers the opportunity to attend a version of the CIT training as well.

Another upgrade to our process is the incorporation of Lexipol policy management software which facilitates the continuous policy training for our employees. This is part of a larger, extensive review of all of our department policies to ensure we incorporate all of the latest legal updates and institute best practices in our policies in a systematic and ongoing manner.

Boardman Police Department remains committed to fair and equitable enforcement practices. Department employees are currently completing online training that focuses on anti-biased based policing. In addition to that training, all of our supervisory staff recently attended an extensive workshop covering the below topics.

DIVERSITY/CULTURAL COMPETENCY - INTERPERSONAL AND PERSONAL RACISM

TRAINING: Interpersonal racism is a component of individual level racism and has been defined as “directly perceived discriminatory interactions between individuals whether in their institutional roles or as public and private individuals” (Krieger, 1999, p. 301).

Interpersonal racism includes maltreatment that the targeted individual attributes, at least in part, to conscious or unconscious racial/ethnic bias on the part of the perpetrator of the maltreatment. This training will explore the issues and problems of racism, tolerance and actions that can be taken in our personal lives to create an environment of respect for all.

CREATING STRONGER COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS: The mission of this training is to foster collaborative and positive relationships between law enforcement and the community's citizens. This is achieved through cultural training, joint activities, and a host of other initiatives that contribute to each entity having a better understanding of one another and their opportunities and challenges.

2020 Use of Force Statistics:

Upon every arrest, our officers complete an Apprehension/Detention Report (see attached blank form). For any arrest where our officers encounter resistance or aggression by a suspect or use force in any manner, the immediate supervisor will interview everyone involved, to include when possible the person arrested. The report is forwarded to the Division Commander who reviews the incident to make a preliminary assessment if the officers actions were within departmental policy. It is then forwarded to the Chief of Police for the final administrative review to determine if any other action is necessary.

On an annual basis, a review is conducted of the data as related to the incidents involving resistance or aggression encountered during an incident. Stressing that this is a wide range of conduct to include a suspect simply initially pulling away or fleeing from officers up to the use of deadly force. The data compiled is outlined in a detailed “Review of Resistance/Aggression Encountered During Arrest” and also an accompanying “Response to Resistance/Aggression Analysis” report.

The specific 2020 data is in the final stages of being compiled which will be used to complete the above reports. A preliminary analysis has been completed with the below listed totals of some of the key data fields of the over ninety fields collected.

Total Incidents Involving Resistance/Aggression Encountered: 61
Adults: 46
Juveniles: 15
Male: 39
Female: 22
Race (White): 36
Minority: 25
Use of Taser: 9

Boardman PD Community Interactions: In addition to calls for service (totaling 41,490 in 2020), arrests, self initiated enforcement actions, etc. our officers are involved in an extensive number of daily interactions with the public. This should be taken into account when looking at the sixty-one (61) uses of force the department was involved in during 2020.

Once the final analysis is complete we will publish the results as an update to this document. We are also currently working with academia to conduct a historical assessment of our departmental use of force to include comparing it to national trends.

Boardman Police Department remains committed to professionally and safely doing its job on a daily basis. An unfortunate aspect of the job is that at times force must be used to apprehend individuals involved in criminal conduct. We will continually look at how we respond to these situations to ensure we are doing so in a measured and appropriate manner.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 330-729-2028, or twerth@boardmantwp.com.

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