



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

WEST ORANGE POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERNAL AFFAIRS

ROBERT D. PARISI
Mayor

JAMES P. ABBOTT
Chief of Police

Tel: (973) 325-4010

Fax: (973) 325-4011

Email- InternalAffairs@wopd.org

FROM CHIEF JAMES P. ABBOTT...

Internal Affairs and Disciplinary Process Annual Public Report 2019

A law enforcement entity in a democratic society can tie its effectiveness directly to the level of trust it enjoys within the community it serves. A significant factor in gaining and maintaining that trust is ensuring that there is a strict allegiance to a highly professional and transparent internal affairs function. It follows that the execution of the internal affairs function within a professional law enforcement entity presents challenges that require constant and consistent vigilance. I believe that a fair review of the *2019 Annual Report* will support the conclusion that the West Orange Police Department maintains that level of vigilance.

This introduction will not restate all the facts, figures and analysis articulated in this report, other than to remind the reader that police officers in the West Orange Police Department engaged in more than 42,811 police/citizen calls for service during the calendar year 2019. Any single complaint reported to the Internal Affairs Unit that was generated within that vast number of contacts was, without exception, taken, classified and addressed in accordance with the Departments' Written Directive System and the New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines Internal Affairs Policy and Procedures.

In an effort to adhere to the best law enforcement practices worldwide, the West Orange Police Department has achieved and maintained national law enforcement accreditation through The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (*CALEA*). Currently the West Orange Police Department is one of only seven municipal police agencies in the State of New Jersey to attain this elite status, and the only agency in Essex County. Adhering to the high standards set forth by *CALEA*, the Internal Affairs Unit conducts further system checks and balances through the Early Warning System and a quarterly auditing process to identify patterns, practices or trends of inappropriate behavior or conduct of our officers. If patterns, practices or trends are identified, those members are entered into the Early Warning System. The Early Warning System is an important risk management tool designed to detect and address improper police conduct before that conduct escalates. The Early Warning System therefore, serves to not only increase public safety and public confidence in law enforcement, but also assists officers through early intervention to disrupt emerging behavioral patterns,



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

www.westorange.org/police

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

practices or trends of poor performance. A total of three agency members were entered into the Early Warning System for a variety of minor rule infractions. All three agency members were subjected to intensive supervision, counseling, remedial training and re-training during that period of time.

The West Orange Police Department accepts, reviews and responds to complaints received from the public, including anonymous complaints, complaints from third party witnesses and complaints from parties not directly involved in the incident. Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, fax, email or through regular mail. Complaint forms are available in both English as well as Spanish and can be picked up at the West Orange Police Department or online at westorange.org. Similarly, West Orange Police has access to translation services for over 200 foreign languages 24 hours per day. This Department continues its commitment to ensuring that members of the public have ease of access to the complaint system. Further, citizens who are not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation are referred to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office for a follow up review of our procedures and investigations. This follow up review has continued to provide citizens significantly more opportunity to provide feedback, compliments or complaints about the West Orange Police Department and its personnel.

During 2019, 48 total complaints were reported and classified, as compared to 58 in 2018. This represents a 17% decrease in the numbers of reportable complaints received in 2019, then those received in the year 2018. One factor we believe contributes to our success are the random body worn camera reviews conducted bi-weekly during CompStat meetings. The random reviews have provided management with invaluable access to monitor and track both good and poor employee performance in real time. Second contributing factor is quality supervision. Highly trained supervisors and commanders have the ability to react to problems they identify through direct counseling and effective performance evaluations. Third contributing factor is an objective and impartial internal affairs process. The internal affairs process does not only focus narrowly on whether a subject officer engaged in misconduct, but also examines collateral issues presented or identified during this process. Lastly in 2018, the West Orange Police Department implemented bi-annual random drug testing for all sworn employees in accordance with the New Jersey Attorney General's Directive. Since its implementation, 30 employees have been randomly selected and tested for illegal drugs. We are proud to say every employee tested negative for illegal substances. Although, no one factor is solely responsible for our success we believe a combination of effective policy, effective supervision and an impartial internal affairs process is the best means of delivering high quality services to our community.

Internal Affairs Summary Report

<u>Type of Complaint</u> 2018	<u>Anonymous</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Citizen</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Complaints</u>
Excessive Force		1		1
Improper Arrest		3		3
Improper Search		1		1
Improper Entry				0



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
www.westorange.org/police

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

Other Criminal Violations					
Differential Treatment			3		3
Demeanor			15		15
Domestic Violence					0
Other Rule Violations	2		19	14	35
Total	2		42	14	58
<u>Type of Complaint</u> <u>2019</u>		<u>Anonymous</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Citizen</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Agency</u> <u>Complaints</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Complaints</u>
Excessive Force			1		1
Improper Arrest			1		1
Improper Search					0
Improper Entry					0
Other Criminal Violations					0
Differential Treatment			2		2
Demeanor			11		11
Domestic Violence			1		1
Other Rule Violations	2		20	11	32
Total	2		36	11	48

Agency Disposition by Category

<u>2018</u>	<u>Sustained</u>	<u>Exonerated</u>	<u>Not Sustained</u>	<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>Administratively Closed</u>	<u>Total</u>



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

www.westorange.org/police

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

Excessive Force		1				1
Improper Arrest		3				3
Improper Entry		1				1
Improper Search						0
Other Criminal Violations						0
Differential Treatment		3				3
Demeanor	3	11	1			15
Domestic Violence						0
Other Rule Violations	15	11	1	1	5	33
Total	18	30	2	1	5	58
<u>2019</u>	<u>Sustained</u>	<u>Exonerated</u>	<u>Not sustained</u>	<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>Administratively Closed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Excessive Force		1				1
Improper Arrest		1				1
						0
Improper Search						0
Other Criminal Violations						0
Differential Treatment		2				2
Demeanor	1	8	1			10
Domestic	1					1



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
www.westorange.org/police

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

Violence						
Other Rule Violations	13	10	2	1	3	29
Total	15	22	3	1	3	44

All complaints are categorized based on the alleged conduct. Each allegation, upon review by the Chief of Police, is determined to have one of the following five dispositions:

Sustained: The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to prove the allegation, and the actions of the officer violated provisions of rule(s) and regulation(s) or agency procedure(s).

Exonerated: The alleged incident did occur, but the actions of the officer were justified, legal, and proper.

Not Sustained: Not Sustained. The investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation.

Unfounded: The alleged incident did not occur.

Administratively Closed: Examples include situations when a complainant voluntarily requests that a complaint be withdrawn or does not cooperate in the investigation and their cooperation is necessary. (Note: Investigations may still proceed without complainant cooperation.)

Note: The West Orange Police Department employs a system of progressive discipline. Discipline plays an important role in the overall performance and credibility of any police agency. Condemnations of unacceptable and inappropriate behaviors not only provide for a specific deterrence to the affected employee in the hopes of preventing future acts of misconduct but also serves as a general deterrent to the force at large. Moreover, and of arguably the utmost importance is that it protects the integrity of the organization, a necessary ingredient to earning the public's trust.

It is not uncommon for cases involving similar allegations or circumstances to result in dissimilar penalties; as an officer's past history is taken under consideration and repetitive transgressions will typically result in augmented discipline up to and including termination. Furthermore, the most egregious violations may spawn termination notwithstanding an otherwise unremarkable disciplinary record.



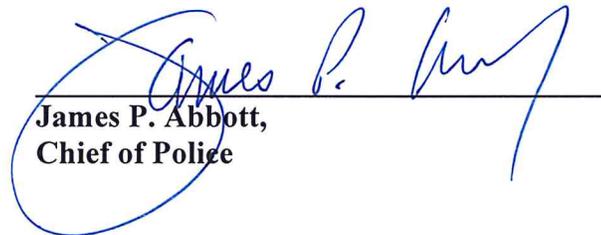
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
www.westorange.org/police

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

SYNOPSIS OF MAJOR DISCIPLINE IN 2019

- Member while on-duty was involved in a motor vehicle crash causing damage to township vehicle. The member admitted to the violation, sustaining the complaint. The member agreed based on theory of progressive discipline to a **suspension for a period of 122 days**.
- Member while on-duty had an unauthorized absence from his assignment in patrol division. The member admitted to the violation, sustaining the complaint. The member agreed based on the theory of progressive discipline to a **suspension for a period of 31 days**.



James P. Abbott,
Chief of Police



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

www.westorange.org/police