



OCEAN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



March 4, 2024

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Our Mission

The Ocean City Police Department shall provide the highest degree of ethical behavior, professional conduct, and quality police services to all residents and visitors.

Organizational Chart



Chief of Police
Ross Buzzuro

**Executive Assistant to
the Chief of Police**
Marjorie Harms

Professional Standards
Lt. Frank Soscia

Public Affairs
DCM Ashley Miller



**Support Services
Division**
Captain Michael Colbert



**Criminal Investigation
Division**
Captain Shawn Jones



**Patrol
Division**
Captain James Grady

Human Resources

Lt. Dennis Eade
Section Commander

Training & Recruiting

Reserve Officers

Services Management

Lt. Frank Wrench
Section Commander

Arrest & Detention

Property & Evidence

Finance Administration

Constance White
Fiscal Supervisor/Accountant

Records Management

Catherine Potter
Supervisor

Assistant Commander

Lt. Todd Speigle

Major Crimes

Narcotics & Vice

Intelligence Unit

Special Enforcement Unit

Forensic Services Unit

Crime Analysis

Assistant Commander

Lt. James Runkles

Special Events

Lt. Allen Hawk

Auxiliary Unit

Day Watch

Lt. Andrew Yeager
Shift Commander

Animal Control

Evening Watch

Lt. Jeffrey Heiser
Shift Commander

Midnight Watch

Lt. Charles Kelley
Shift Commander

Specialty Units

K-9 Unit

Mounted Unit

Traffic Safety Unit

Bike Maintenance Unit

Quick Response Team

Crisis Negotiation Team

Honor Guard

Noise Unit

Field Training & Evaluation Program

A Letter to Our Community

To the Residents and Visitors of Ocean City,

I am proud to present the 2023 Annual Report, which highlights the achievements of our department over the past year. Our officers have worked tirelessly to ensure that Ocean City remains a safe and secure place to live and visit. This report contains valuable information on our community engagement efforts and crime statistics.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend our officers for their hard work and dedication to the community. Their sacrifices have not gone unnoticed, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their service. I would also like to thank the residents, visitors, and business community of Ocean City for their support and partnership throughout the year. Together, we can continue to make our community a safer place.

Looking ahead, we will continue to explore new tactics, propose new legislation, and forge new partnerships to enhance our enforcement strategy. We are committed to overcoming any challenges that may arise along the way.

In closing, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the men and women of our department for their unwavering commitment to our community. We are fortunate to have such dedicated officers working to maintain the quality of life here in Ocean City. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Ross Buzzura
Chief of Police





It's Our 125th Anniversary



Partnering with our Community

Special Olympics of Maryland

OCPD is a huge supporter of the Special Olympics of Maryland. From the torch run on the Boardwalk to the Polar Bear Plunge, our officers find ways to help support the athletes. We hosted several Cover the Cruiser events this summer. We had one of our most successful years to date.

Holiday Toy Drive

OCPD hosted a toy drive for the eighth year in a row to benefit Worcester G.O.L.D. Our citizens' generosity and love help ensure families in Worcester County had a wonderful holiday season.

Shop with a Cop

The holiday spirit was in full swing this year. We joined several other law enforcement agencies in the area to participate in the Shop with a Cop program. We spent the day shopping at Walmart and bringing smiles to many faces.

American Cancer Society

In December, six of our officers volunteered at the annual American Cancer Society's Holiday Wrapping Luncheon & Fashion Show. Rumor has it, our officers were the highlight of the show!

National Night Out

National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors & law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. We were joined by members from the Ocean City Fire Department, Ocean City Fire Marshal's Office, Atlantic General Hospital, and Worcester County Sheriff's Office.

Coffee with a Cop

We've teamed up with the Cruisin' promoters to host Coffee with Cops twice a year. At the event, Cruisin' participants got to enjoy some coffee and get their vehicles judged by our officers.



We Brought home the Cup

We threw our hat into the 2023 Wor-Wic First Responder 5k Team Cup Challenge this year. We competed alongside fellow officers from the Salisbury Police Department, Delmar Police Department, and the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office.





Crime Prevention Programs

Residential Security Check

Are you planning to go on vacation or own a second home in Ocean City which remains vacant? Do you feel worried about leaving your property unattended? Worry no more! Our Residential Security Check program offers you peace of mind by checking on your property up to five times a week, completely free of cost.

Our program is designed to ensure that your property remains safe and secure while you are away. With our help, you can enjoy your vacation or focus on your work, knowing that your property is in good hands.

So why wait? Sign up for our Residential Security Check program today, and let us take care of your property.

Citizens Police Academy

If you're looking to learn more about our department, then the Citizens Police Academy is the perfect opportunity for you! This free ten-week course offers a comprehensive education on various law enforcement topics such as traffic enforcement, evidence collection, firearms, arrest procedures, narcotics enforcement, and more.

Not only will you be learning from experienced officers, but you'll also have the chance to participate in practical scenarios, giving you a hands-on understanding of law enforcement applications.

Bicycle Registration

Protect your bicycle with our free registration program available to all residents. Registering your bicycle not only deters crime but also promotes the safety and accountability of your valuable asset.

Every year, OCPD officers recover several abandoned bicycles and bring them to the Public Safety Building for safekeeping. A registered bicycle can be quickly returned to its rightful owner with the help of a small decal that comes with the registration. Don't wait until it's too late, register your bicycle today!

Trespass Enforcement Authorization Program (T.E.A.P.)

If you're a property owner or manager in Ocean City, signing up for T.E.A.P. can provide you with an added layer of security and peace of mind. By pre-authorizing the Ocean City Police Department to enforce trespassing laws on your property, you can help deter criminal activity and protect your premises from unwanted visitors. This is particularly important during nighttime hours when it can be difficult to contact owners or managers about potential trespassing incidents. Consider signing up for T.E.A.P today to help keep your property safe and secure.

Are you interested in participating in one of our amazing programs? To learn more and access electronic applications, visit our website. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our friendly DCM, Ashley Miller, at 410-520-5395 or amiller@oceancitymd.gov. We're here to help!

Auxiliary Officer Program

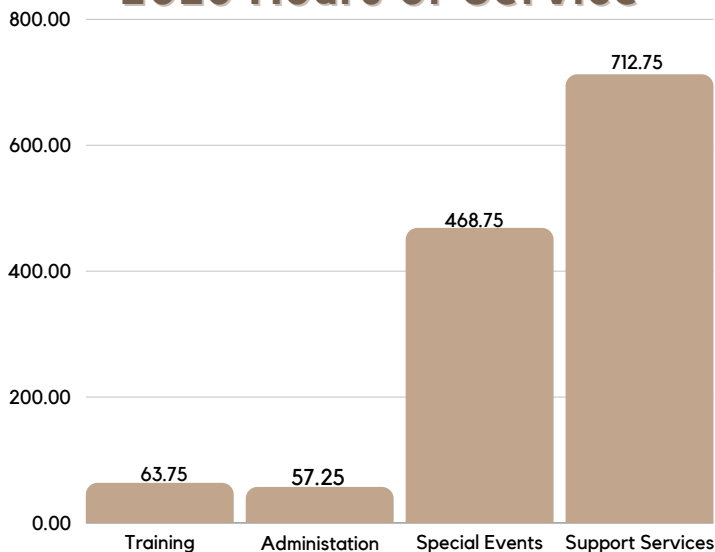
It is truly heartwarming to see how citizens have come forward to support the Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) since 1999. The department has been training volunteers to assist their staff and serve the people of Ocean City. These dedicated volunteers provide invaluable services that supplement the efforts of OCPD personnel in critical operational areas, such as town events like Springfest, Sunfest, and Winterfest, as well as administrative support for the Support Services Division.

Over the past 24 years, the Auxiliary Officer Program has provided an astounding 71,303.5 hours of service to the OCPD and the Town of Ocean City. In 2023 alone, the Auxiliary Officers contributed 1,327 hours of service, which resulted in a savings of over \$43,521 for the Town of Ocean City. We are thrilled to have welcomed five new members this year, bringing the total number of Auxiliary Officers to 12.

We are grateful for the selfless support provided by these volunteers. Their dedication and commitment to serving the community are truly inspiring. The OCPD and the Town of Ocean City extend their heartfelt appreciation to each and every volunteer for their service. Thank you for your unwavering support!



2023 Hours of Service



Are you looking for an opportunity to serve your community? Join the Auxiliary Officer Program of OCPD and become a part of the dedicated team. We are always looking for new members to join us in our mission to serve and protect. As an Auxiliary Officer, you will work alongside our officers to ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens.

Contact the Public Affairs Office at 410-520-5395 or email DCM Miller at amiller@oceancitymd.gov to take the first step in becoming a volunteer.

Patrol Division

The Patrol Division is responsible for responding to all calls for police service in Ocean City, and they work tirelessly to prevent crime around the clock every day. This division is the largest within the department, with over two-thirds of the officers currently assigned to patrol duty.

Helping the Homeless

In 2023, Diakonia initiated a new program called the Rapid Response Team to help the homeless in Ocean City. This program dispatches staff members immediately after law enforcement, hospitals, EMTs, or other service providers identify a new homeless individual. The Rapid Response Team provides real-time assistance to the homeless.

The Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) is another element that aims to offer outreach to homeless individuals throughout the county in a more coordinated and efficient way. HOT comprises OCPD, Worcester County Health Department representatives, the Local Behavioral Health Authority, the Department of Social Services, Ocean City Crisis Coalition, and Atlantic General Hospital. The team works together on pre-scheduled days to coordinate efforts to help the homeless.

Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement

Cannabis became legal for recreational use in Maryland in 2023. One of the biggest myths out there was that officers could not arrest you for "driving while high."

Our officers are being trained through the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement course. This course trains law enforcement officers to observe, identify, and articulate the signs of impairment related to drugs, alcohol, or a combination of both to reduce the number of impaired driving incidents, serious injuries, and fatal crashes.

Cannabis use in a motor vehicle (by a driver or passenger) and impaired driving remain illegal under Maryland law. Law enforcement officers can make a cannabis DUI arrest if they observe impairment.



Trusted Tools of the Trade

A Small but Valuable Tool

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation requiring law enforcement agencies to implement body-worn cameras for police officers who regularly interact with members of the public by July 1, 2025. The Town of Ocean City and OCPD took a proactive approach and outfitted all personnel with body-worn cameras by July of 2022.

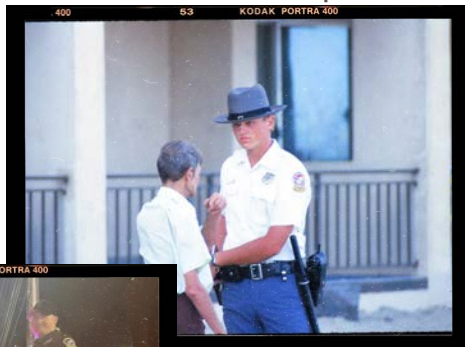
Benefits of the Body Worn Camera program include:

- Increased public confidence in community policing
- Officers with body-worn cameras have fewer incidents of use of force
- A reduction in the number of complaints and allegations made against police officers
- Reduced criminal justice costs due to an increase in early guilty pleas
- De-escalation of anti-social behavior

Keeping Criminals Out of Ocean City

License plate readers (LPRs) have been a crucial tool for the Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) for several years. LPRs automatically alert dispatchers when a vehicle enters Ocean City, which belongs to a wanted individual, has been reported stolen, or is associated with an AMBER Alert or missing person. Both fixed and mobile license plate readers have provided evidence and information leading to the resolution of numerous cases. LPRs cover all the entrances and exits of Ocean City, and they have repeatedly proven to be essential investigative tools for the department, allowing the officers to apprehend criminals as soon as they enter the city.

In addition to LPRs, video evidence has also played a vital role in solving cases. Video evidence from the City Watch Program, private businesses, and cell phone videos have been successfully used in many cases. The City Watch Program has around 250 cameras, and the department has more than two dozen personal cameras registered with them.



Community Crime Solvers

The Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) has been actively using social media to engage with the community. In 2023, our public assistance posts proved to be a great success. By collaborating with residents and utilizing various tools, we swiftly identified many of the suspects we were investigating.



Criminal Investigation Division

The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) comprises six specialized units: Major Crimes, Forensic Services, Crime Analysis, Narcotics & Vice, Intelligence, and Special Enforcement.

Working as a Team to Solve Crimes

The Major Crimes Unit investigates the most serious crimes and incidents in Ocean City. Detectives provide around-the-clock on-call coverage throughout the year. Major Crimes detectives work seamlessly with patrol officers, other detectives within CID, and the community to solve and reduce crime in Ocean City.

In 2023, the Major Crimes Unit investigated 168 cases, including 49 Part 1 offenses, the most severe crimes. Detectives assisted patrol officers in over 22 cases.

This team of specially trained detectives successfully closed 95 percent of the cases investigated within the unit in 2023, which exceeds the national average.

Case in point: Major Crimes Detectives responded to an armed robbery that occurred in the Montego Bay neighborhood on a summer afternoon. Detectives learned that the victim was approached by three unknown individuals who produced a handgun and stole the victim's property. During the investigation, detectives learned that the same group committed two other robberies in Delaware. Detectives worked with Delaware agencies and tracked the victim's property to an area in Washington, DC. With the assistance of the US Capital Police and Washington Metro Police, detectives were able to locate and apprehend the suspects. Two suspects were charged with armed robbery and related charges.

The Science Behind Solving Cases

The Forensic Services Unit (FSU) is staffed by five civilian crime scene technicians. FSU works closely with officers and detectives to solve cases.

| | |
|---|-------|
| Crime Scenes Processed | 116 |
| Evidence Submissions | 3,493 |
| Digital Evidence Requests | 3,181 |
| Latent Fingerprint Hits to Suspects | 18 |
| DNA Hits to Suspects | 15 |
| Firearm Traces | 61 |
| National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Leads | 7 |



OCPD established a full-time Drug Analysis Lab in 1971.

Criminal Investigation Division

Using Special Enforcement to Combat Crime

The Special Enforcement Unit (SEU) operates in plain clothes and varies its schedule constantly. They work at peak hours in areas where high criminal activity is expected. In 2023, SEU detectives made 54 arrests for crimes ranging from peace and order violations to robberies and felony assaults.

During June, SEU conducted an investigation into a bicycle theft scheme that lasted for a month. More than 30 bicycles were reported stolen, and two male JI students from Romania were identified as the primary suspects. They had been selling the stolen bicycles to other JI students in the area through social media accounts.

SEU conducted surveillance on the suspects, which led to one of the suspects being arrested. A search and seizure warrant was executed on the suspect's residence. During this time, the second suspect was also arrested.

Several stolen bicycles were seized from their residence, along with thousands of dollars in cash (proceeds from sales of stolen bicycles) and other evidence of their theft scheme. Detectives determined that the two males had stolen numerous other bicycles that had gone unreported. In total, they were responsible for over 60 bicycle thefts in Ocean City during a one-month period.

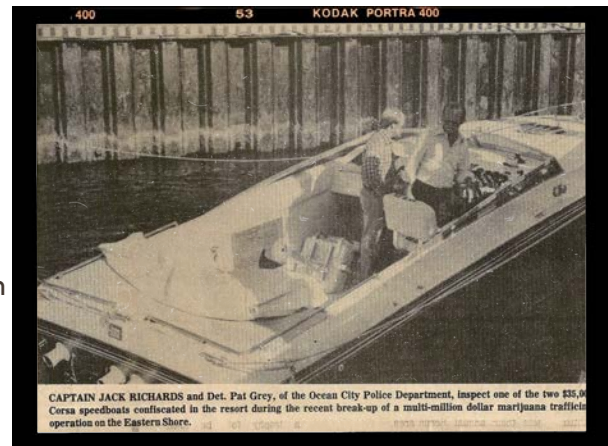
Holding Drug Distributors Accountable

One of the many missions of the Narcotics & Vice Unit is to ensure that drug distribution suspects are held accountable for the death of victims who overdose on the drugs provided by distributors.

In 2023, OCPD narcotics detectives set up and conducted 41 undercover drug buys, made 24 arrests, and executed 35 search warrants.

The Narcotics Unit conducted a long-term undercover drug operation in the southern end of Ocean City. A narcotics detective was able to identify and infiltrate several drug trafficking targets operating in Ocean City. As a result of this investigation, seven arrests were made, and four search and seizure warrants were executed. In total, a large amount of crack/powder cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, suboxone, one handgun, two vehicles, and US currency were seized.

During July 2023, the Narcotics Unit received a tip from a resident about drug activity in midtown Ocean City. Narcotics Detectives identified the target, conducted countless hours of surveillance, and authored a search warrant for their residence. In September 2023, the Narcotics Unit served that search warrant in Ocean City and seized approximately 42 grams of powder cocaine. As a result of this investigation, an additional mid-level cocaine distributor in Ocean City / Worcester County, MD, was identified. Narcotics Detectives were then able to infiltrate the mid-level distributor and purchase a total of 70 grams of powder cocaine in an undercover capacity. In November 2023, the Narcotics Unit arrested the mid-level distributor in Ocean City and charged him with multiple felony and misdemeanor drug charges.



Support Services Division

The Support Services Division comprises four sections: Human Resources (Training & Recruiting), Services Management, Budget & Financial Services and Records Management.

Public Safety that is Fiscally Responsible

We prioritize public safety while also being responsible with our resources. The OCPD regularly seeks grants to support its budget, enabling us to continue our commitment to keeping the community safe.

| Fiscal Year | Adopted Budget | Actual Spending | Savings |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 2019 | \$21,398,450 | \$20,934,317 | \$464,133 |
| 2020 | \$21,792,273 | \$23,299,722 | \$219,024 |
| 2021 | \$22,893,141 | \$23,299,722 | (\$406,581) |
| 2022 | \$24,198,153 | \$24,623,217 | (\$425,064) |
| 2023 | \$25,822,074 | \$25,031,613 | \$790,461 |

In FY23, the Ocean City Police Department was awarded \$30,756 through the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO). These funds were used for traffic enforcement targeting four main areas: Impaired driving (\$14,784.00), speed enforcement (\$1,320.00), occupant protection (\$1,056.00), and pedestrian/bicycle safety (\$13,596.00). This funding was instrumental in keeping Ocean City's roads safe for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

OCPD was also awarded the Police Accountability, Community, and Transparency (PACT) Grant Funding from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for specialized training in the amount of \$27,552.00. PACT funding program helps law enforcement agencies achieve their goals while enhancing community relations, safety, and training for law enforcement, promoting safe communities, and strengthening community engagement through coordinated criminal justice strategies and data-driven decisions.

An Essential Behind-the-Scenes Function

The Records Management Section is responsible for storing police records. In 2023, the personnel completed several critical tasks, including reviewing over 5,600 incident reports, preparing 3,285 cases for prosecution, processing 647 expungement orders, and fulfilling 1,495 report requests. They recorded and delivered court summonses to officers and provided the FBI with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) monthly.

Furthermore, the Records Management Section is responsible for billing, collecting payments for the Inlet parking lot, and collecting parking fines. They review cameras daily, correct any unpaid fines, prepare files for invoices, and resolve customer inquiries by phone or online. In 2023, the personnel reviewed and prepared 35,925 invoices and resolved 1,720 online appeals.

Join OCPD

Bringing you the Best & Brightest

OCPD prides itself on having the best and brightest police officers in the region. The Recruiting Team strives to ensure that the department's high standards are met. In 2023, our recruiting efforts focused on our traditional method of in-person recruiting and expanded our digital presence. Our recruiters visited 52 colleges and universities along the northern portion of the east coast. We hosted 4 Zoom informational sessions with 48 attendees combined.

The Ocean City Police Department transitioned to using the PoliceApp website to conduct applications and background investigations in 2022. This new tool is specifically used for advertising law enforcement jobs for both sworn and non-sworn positions. The website increases the Training and Recruiting Department's array of applicants and helps streamline the background process for all applicants involved. In 2023, we implemented a \$15 application fee similar to other agencies to increase the commitment to attending the testing weekend. The application fee reinforces the applicant's commitment to our agency rather than applicants applying to all agencies.

In March of 2023, the Mayor and City Council approved the addition of 4 new full-time police officers for the 2024 Fiscal year budget. This brought our full-time staff number from 116 to 120 officers.

In 2023, 11 new full-time officers graduated from the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy, and 2 lateral officers were hired. With these 13 new officers, the department was staffed with 120 sworn officers.



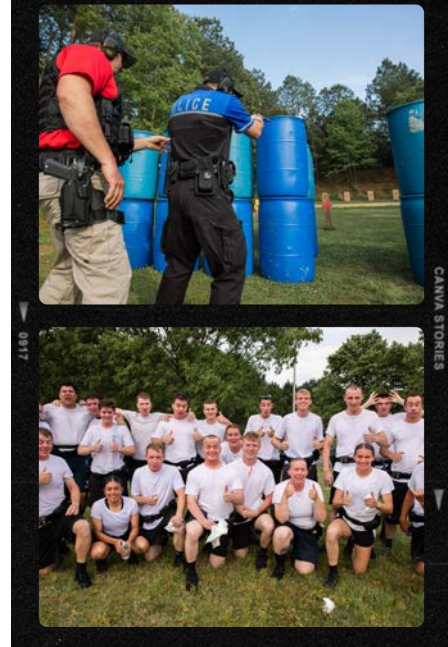
2023 Seasonal Candidates

In preparation for the 2023 season, 88 applicants tested for police officer positions, 24 of whom were hired as seasonal officers. Twenty-one officers successfully completed the academy. Seven seasonal officers returned from the previous summer, making for 28 seasonal officers for the 2023 summer season.

There were 45 applicants for the public safety aide positions, 35 of whom were hired. Ten former public safety aides returned for a total of 45 public safety aides for the 2023 summer season.

Interested in a career with the Ocean City Police Department?

Visit our website, www.joinocpd.com, to learn more about the different career opportunities, upcoming testing dates, and much more! If you already know that Ocean City is the spot for you, head on over to www.policeapp.com to start the process!



Departmental Awards



Each year, the Commendation Board meets bi-annually to review nominations and make recommendations to the Chief of Police concerning award and commendation nominations.

The Commendation Board is made up of seven members who serve for two years, with new appointments every year. The members are selected to represent each Division of the Department fairly.

In 2023, the following commendations were awarded:

The *Meritorious Service Commendation* is awarded to any employee who distinguishes themselves by performing their duties in a manner that clearly exceeds what is normally required or expected or for a highly creditable accomplishment and sufficient to distinguish the individual from those performing comparable duties.

Lt. Frank Wrench

Lt. Allen Hawk

Sgt. Richard Wawrzeniak

A *Special Commendation* is awarded to any employee who distinguishes themselves by performing extraordinary physical acts or accomplishments or renders life-saving techniques to aid in the preservation of human life.

Ofc. Justin Koser

Ofc. William Mossop

Mr. James Peck

Mr. Michael Hansen



Departmental Awards

Excellent Performance is awarded to any employee for an act or achievement above that which is normally required or expected or to any employee who distinguishes themselves by the performance of an act or contributes to a device or method that is adopted by the department to increase efficiency in administrative or operational procedure.



Lt. Andrew Yeager
Sgt. Joseph Bushnell
Sgt. Kyle Murray
Cpl. Michael Karsnitz (x2)
DFC Corey Gemerek
DFC Margaret Hall
DFC Alexander Hawkins
DFC Kory Moerschel
PFC Devin Bartrom
PFC Mark Cutter (x2)
PFC Patrick Keller
PFC Patrick McElfish
PFC Yovanny Ramirez (x2)
PFC Erika Rhode (x2)
Ofc. Emma Hamilton-Blackford
Ofc. Dylan Harlos
Ofc. Terrance Jankouskas
CO Jessica Lagas

Thank You!

Thank you to our wonderful host, Mike Bradley. DJ Wax provided the missing touch of music. Larry Yates provided a heartfelt message from the community and an invocation before a delicious dinner at Princess Royale.

Thank you to the Mayor and City Council, Senator Mary Beth Carozza, and Delegate Wayne Hartman for your continued support.

Thank you to the Neighborhood Watch Groups and Citizens Police Academy participants who attended to represent the amazing Ocean City Community.



Officers of the Year

DFC Amy Gutowski



Detective First Class Amy Gutowski was chosen as the Officer of the Year by 5 community members.

We would like to thank Larry Yates, Tonja Sas, Charles "Newt" Weaver, Megan Alvarado, and Lee Gerachis for meeting with the nominees and selecting the Officer of the Year.

Also nominated were Corporal Ryan Flanagan, PFC Mark Cutter, PFC Kevin Herbert, and PFC Corwin Vincent.

DFC Gutowski is a 13-year member of the department. She has been a member of the Major Crimes Unit for the past 2 years.

In 2023, Detective Gutowski was the primary detective on 35 investigations, including 12 rape/sex assault cases and multiple other complex felony investigations. Detective Gutowski also assisted other detectives and the patrol division with numerous investigations throughout the year.

Detective Gutowski dedicates herself to shaping the future of law enforcement. She serves as a Defensive Tactics Instructor for the OCPD seasonal academy and the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy, as a Taser CEW Instructor, as a Drill Instructor for the OCPD seasonal academy and the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy, and as a Field Training Officer Instructor. Throughout the year, she passes her expertise and knowledge to the officers serving in Ocean City and all the officers attending the academy on the Eastern Shore. DFC Gutowski earned the distinction of the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy Police Instructor of the Year for 2023.



Colleen Douglas

Colleen Douglas enrolled in the Auxiliary Officer program in 2013.

In 2023, she demonstrated her dedication by contributing 504 hours of service. Colleen serves as the liaison between the department and her fellow Auxiliary Officers.

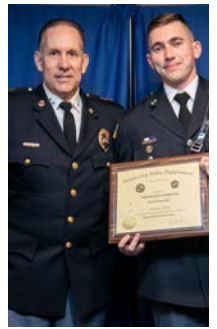
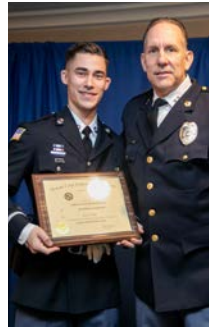
When Colleen is not on her annual trip to Florida, you can spot her representing the Ocean City Police Department in various locations throughout the city.

Promotions

Lieutenant Jeffrey Heiser
Sergeant Shawn Lindsey
Corporal Benjamin Berry

Crime Scene Technicians
Victoria Herbert
Sara Hetherington

Police Officer First Class
Devin Bartrom
Hailie Brumley
Anthony Helias
Terrance Jankouskas
Patrick Keller
Justin Koser
Benjamin Panitch
Daniel Richardson
Ryan Walker
Jessica Wieber



Retirement

Lt. Richard Moreck retired after 42.5 years of service.

One of his most notable achievements is serving as the Commander of the Quick Response Team and a team member since 1982. Lt. Moreck has also served as the department's Firearms Unit Commander, instructor, and armorer. His extensive knowledge of firearms has been passed along to generations of full-time and seasonal police officers.



2023 Changes

OCPD got a New Look

The officers of OCPD have changed their look this year by switching to exterior ballistic vests and dark-colored uniform shirts underneath. Did you know that an officer's duty belt can be quite heavy? Well, it is! However, the new exterior vests allow them to split their tools between their duty belts and vests, which helps to distribute the weight more evenly and reduce hip and lower back pain. Additionally, smaller framed officers may not have enough space on their duty belts to carry all the equipment their departments permit them to carry. So, next time you see an OCPD officer, take a look at all the gear they carry.

Partners Change

In 2023, we welcomed new partners to our team and said goodbye to some of our beloved companions. At the start of the year, we were thrilled to introduce Riptide, a 6-year-old Percheron, to our Mounted Unit.

Sadly, K9 Rocco retired this year after serving the Town of Ocean City for 7 and a half years. However, we're happy to report that Rocco is now enjoying a happy and spoiled life at home with his handler, Cpl. McHugh.

On a happier note, we're excited to welcome K9 Finn to the OCPD team! Finn is a one-year-old Belgian Malinois who brings great energy and enthusiasm to the job. He recently graduated from Shallow Creek Kennels and received certification from the North American Police Work Dog Association. Finn will be teaming up with PFC Schob, and we can't wait to see what they accomplish together!

Our Crime Statistics Look a little Different this Year

Our crime statistics look a little different this year. We now record and report the statistics in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to comply with new federal regulations. We cannot compare years since NIBRS and UCR report crimes differently. With the decriminalization of cannabis (marijuana), we have also seen a noticeable drop in our weapon seizures and CDS arrests.



Maryland Cannabis Reform Act

The Maryland Cannabis Reform Act set forth decriminalization with limitations in 2023. Cannabis, also commonly known as marijuana/weed, became legal in Maryland on July 1, 2023.

The legalization did come with certain limitations.

Possession: Adults 21 years and older can possess up to 1.5 oz of cannabis, up to 12 grams of concentrated cannabis, or cannabis products containing up to 750 mg of delta-9-THC or up to 2 cannabis plants. *Md. Code 5-101, 5-601, & 5-601.1*

Public Use: Cannabis smoking is prohibited in any public place or in any motor vehicle. A public place includes outdoor spaces and indoor spaces open to the public, including parks, streets, sidewalks, bars and restaurants, public transportation, and indoor places of employment. *Md. Code 5-601, Md. Transportation 21-903*

Sharing: Sharing of cannabis with another adult 21 years old or older is allowed. The amount of cannabis shared must not exceed the amount defined as personal use, and no money (or other remuneration) can be exchanged. *Md. Code 5-602, Md. Code 36-1102*

Selling: Only licensed cannabis businesses can sell cannabis. Selling cannabis without a proper license is classified as a criminal misdemeanor. *Md. Code 5-601, 5-602, 5-607, & 36-401*

Growing: Adults 21 years and older can grow up to two (2) cannabis plants. Plants must be out of public view and secured so they are not accessible to unauthorized individuals. No more than two (2) plants per residence, regardless of the number of adults residing there. *Md. Code 5-601.2*

To learn more about the Maryland Cannabis Reform Act, you can visit the Maryland Cannabis Administration website at <https://mmcc.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>



1980 marijuana find led to arrests

Maryland Coast Press June 25, 1982

2 convicted of drug smuggling

By MARK GUIDERA

A Federal District Court jury returned guilty verdicts late Wednesday against two men indicted earlier this year in connection with a large scale drug smuggling operation which was cracked when authorities found a marijuana-laden boat aground in the Synepuxent Bay near Ocean City.

Assistant U.S. State's Attorney David Irwin said the two men, Parker Hardiman, of Columbia, S.C. and Mike Verthaler, of Fort Pierce, Fla., now face maximum sentences of five years in jail and up to a \$5,000 fine. Both men were convicted by the jury of conspiracy to import marijuana into the United States, according to Irwin, who prosecuted the case.

The jury, comprised of eight men and four women, deliberated for over two hours before returning at 9:30 Wednesday night with the two guilty verdicts.

An important link in the government's case against the two men was the testimony of John Wilson, of South Carolina, who authorities say was one of three crew members aboard the sailing vessel, the "Green Sea," found by the Coast Guard floundering in the Synepuxent Bay June 28, 1980.

The boat, according to an indictment returned this past March charging 14 men with involvement in the smuggling operation, was found by authorities loaded with 5,280 pounds of marijuana.

Irwin said Wilson testified during the trial that he and the other two crew members sailed the boat from Montego Bay, Jamaica to a point near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay where they were to unload the marijuana onto another vessel.

The boat was loaded, Wilson testified, in Jamaica by Hardiman, Verthaler and a group of Rastafarians, a Jamaican religious cult.

The crew was forced to sail the "Green Sea" up the Chesapeake Bay and into Ocean City waters when the other boat failed to rendezvous with the "Green Sea" which later began experiencing engine trouble.

The crew anchored the vessel in the Synepuxent Bay then went ashore to seek engine materials in Ocean City, Wilson testified, according to Irwin. While the boat was unattended, Coast Guard authorities boarded it and found the illegal cargo.

That find, Drug Enforcement Administration authorities said, led agents to crack one of the resort marijuana—Page 5

Resort marijuana find results in convictions

Continued from Page 2

the largest marijuana drug smuggling operations ever conducted along the East Coast.

The smuggling operation, according to the indictment, began in 1977 and continued through December, 1980. According to DEA officials, the operation successfully smuggled more than 21,000 pounds of marijuana into the U.S. Many of the drop off points were along the Maryland shoreline, particularly along the Chesapeake Bay.

The investigation was in part aided by Ocean City Police

Irwin said one of the crew members of the "Green Sea," Charles Burke, the captain of the boat, still remains at large. The other crew member, John Emerson, of South Carolina, will not be brought to trial, Irwin said, because he provided important information about the drug smuggling operation to government authorities.

A total of 14 persons were indicted in the case and criminal violations were filed against seven others. A total of 12 persons have already been

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

What is the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)?

The National Incident-Based Reporting System, or NIBRS, was implemented to improve the overall quality of crime data collected by law enforcement. It captures details on each single crime incident—as well as on separate offenses within the same incident. In 2021, the historic Summary Reporting System (SRS) data collection was phased out, which collected more limited information than the more robust NIBRS.

Why did OCPD change to NIBRS?

Law enforcement agencies nationwide—including OCPD—have been transitioning to NIBRS reporting due to a Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) mandate. The FBI has made nationwide implementation of NIBRS a top priority because NIBRS can provide more useful statistics to promote constructive discussion, measured planning, and informed policing.

What is the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program?

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program generates reliable statistics for use in law enforcement. It also provides information for students of criminal justice, researchers, the media, and the public. The program has been providing crime statistics since 1930. In 2021, the UCR Program retired the Summary Reporting System (SRS) and transitioned to NIBRS-only data collection. These are the Part-one crimes that have been reported in previous OCPD Annual Reports.

What impact will NIBRS have on crime statistics?

It is expected that using NIBRS to collect crime data will result in an increase in the number of reported crimes, as it provides a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of crime. NIBRS collects more detailed information about each crime than the traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS) used to. For instance, SRS only requires recording the most severe offense that occurred during an incident, while NIBRS captures information about all offenses that were committed. This means that NIBRS is more likely to identify multiple crimes that might have gone unreported using other reporting systems.

However, it is important to note that Ocean City's NIBRS statistics may not be directly comparable to those of other jurisdictions due to the transient nature of the resort.

In 2023, over 57% of reported crimes occurred during the summer months of June, July, and August, which aligns with the seasonal spike in population.

NIBRS Reporting

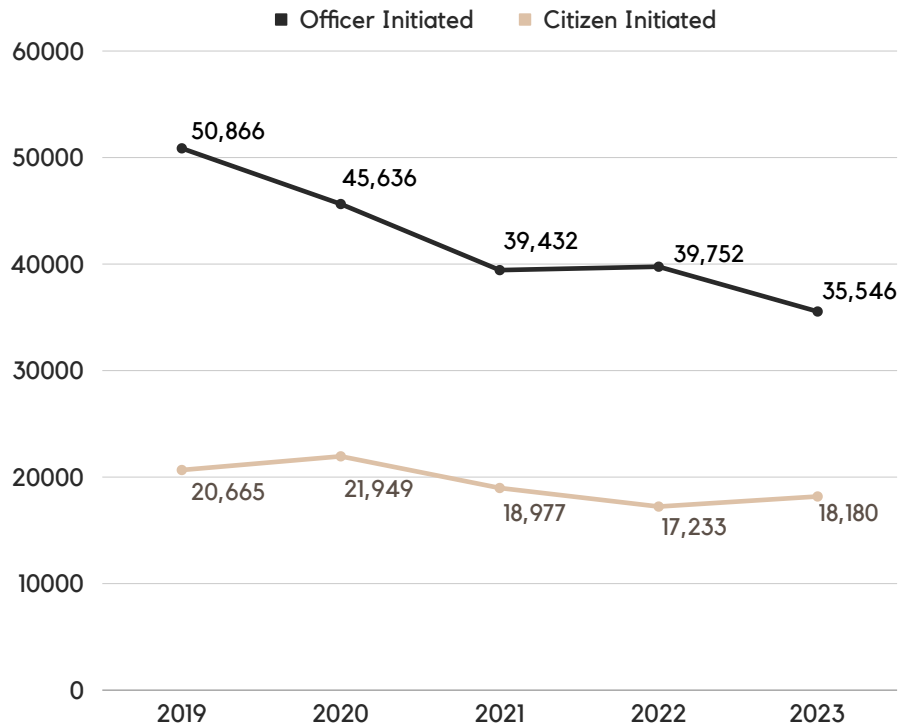
| CATEGORY | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | Total |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Homicide</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Sex Offenses</i> | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 15 | 21 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 68 |
| <i>Robbery</i> | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| <i>Aggravated Assault</i> | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 12 | 15 | 7 | 5 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 112 |
| <i>Simple Assault</i> | 22 | 12 | 24 | 28 | 58 | 130 | 140 | 80 | 5 | 31 | 14 | 15 | 559 |
| <i>Burglary</i> | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 17 | 11 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 88 |
| <i>Larceny/Theft</i> | 22 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 33 | 129 | 97 | 91 | 31 | 19 | 8 | 16 | 510 |
| <i>Motor Vehicle Theft</i> | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 35 |
| Animal Cruelty | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arson | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bribery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Counterfeiting/Forgery | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Destruction of Property | 11 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 25 | 44 | 7 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 137 |
| Drug Offenses | 38 | 47 | 40 | 54 | 51 | 198 | 36 | 29 | 17 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 532 |
| Embezzlememt | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Extortion/Blackmail | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Fraud Offenses | 11 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 21 | 8 | 13 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 106 |
| Fugitive Offenses | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Gambling Offenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Human Trafficking Offenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kidnapping | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pornography | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Prostitution Offenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stolen Property Offenses | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Weapon Law Violations | 9 | 10 | 18 | 12 | 20 | 56 | 41 | 15 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 207 |
| Group B Offenses | 132 | 143 | 193 | 195 | 395 | 926 | 865 | 589 | 278 | 144 | 68 | 90 | 4018 |
| TOTAL | 269 | 263 | 330 | 334 | 621 | 1562 | 1233 | 879 | 424 | 230 | 111 | 145 | 6401 |

Note: Bold italics denote crimes that Uniform Crime Reporting tracked as Part 1 Crimes in previous annual reports.

** UCR coded it as Criminal Homicide and Forcible Rape. NIBRS codes it as Homicide and Sexual Offenses.

Calls for Service

A call for service is generated for nearly anything that an officer does while on duty. This can include a traffic stop, residential security check, lost child, or a major criminal event just to name a few. Criminal and non-criminal incidents are documented equally.



| CATEGORY | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Officer Initiated | 1879 | 1919 | 2153 | 1917 | 3576 | 6774 | 5292 | 3778 | 2746 | 2258 | 1575 | 1679 | 35,546 |
| Citizen Initiated | 585 | 492 | 768 | 1008 | 1770 | 3296 | 3827 | 2672 | 1678 | 925 | 590 | 569 | 18,180 |
| Total | 2464 | 2411 | 2921 | 2925 | 5346 | 10070 | 9119 | 6450 | 4424 | 3183 | 2165 | 2248 | 53,726 |

The number of calls for service listed in this chart does not include business checks. The total number of calls for service, including business checks, was **62,323**.



The Public Safety Communications Center opened in 1994.

Traffic Stops & Collisions

| Traffic Enforcement | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|
| CATEGORY | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | TOTAL |
| Traffic Citations | 233 | 338 | 511 | 414 | 975 | 1019 | 1053 | 809 | 511 | 652 | 268 | 544 | 7,327 |
| Traffic Warnings | 362 | 399 | 606 | 432 | 707 | 899 | 713 | 572 | 799 | 659 | 279 | 401 | 6,828 |
| DUI Arrests | 15 | 21 | 27 | 14 | 42 | 46 | 43 | 32 | 27 | 11 | 8 | 24 | 310 |

*According to National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)



1971



2023

| Reportable Traffic Collisions | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Year | Total | Fatal |
| 2019 | 566 | 3 |
| 2020 | 526 | 1 |
| 2021 | 571 | 0 |
| 2022 | 520 | 2 |
| 2023 | 469 | 0 |

| Pedestrian Collisions | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| Year | Total | Fatal |
| 2019 | 21 | 1 |
| 2020 | 25 | 1 |
| 2021 | 22 | 0 |
| 2022 | 27 | 2 |
| 2023 | 25 | 0 |

| Scooter Collisions | | |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| Year | Total | Fatal |
| 2019 | 27 | 0 |
| 2020 | 55 | 0 |
| 2021 | 25 | 0 |
| 2022 | 24 | 0 |
| 2023 | 20 | 0 |

| Bicycle Collisions | | |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| Year | Total | Fatal |
| 2019 | 32 | 0 |
| 2020 | 8 | 0 |
| 2021 | 17 | 0 |
| 2022 | 14 | 0 |
| 2023 | 19 | 0 |

Arrests & Citations

| Custodial Arrests & Criminal Citations | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Year | Custodial Arrests | Criminal Citations |
| 2019 | 2,256 | 93 |
| 2020 | 2,272 | 84 |
| 2021 | 2,843 | 91 |
| 2022 | 2,178 | 73 |
| 2023 | 1,944 | 79 |

*According to National Incident-Based Reporting System

| Weapons & Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS) | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|
| Year | Weapon Arrests | CDS Arrests |
| 2019 | 46 | 561 |
| 2020 | 54 | 474 |
| 2021 | 286 | 413 |
| 2022 | 300 | 216 |
| 2023* | 171 | 127 |

*According to National Incident-Based Reporting System
Cannabis became legal in 2023

| Custodial Arrests & Criminal Citations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|
| CATEGORY | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | TOTAL |
| Custodial Arrests | 76 | 76 | 107 | 88 | 191 | 487 | 340 | 219 | 149 | 98 | 49 | 64 | 1,944 |
| Criminal Citations | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 29 | 16 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 79 |

| Civil Citations | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Year | Total |
| Alcohol | 354 |
| Marijuana < 10 grams | 43 |
| Smoking | 120 |
| Public Urination | 28 |
| Skateboard/Bicycle | 17 |
| Noise | 5 |
| Taxi | 12 |
| Overall Civil Citations | 657 |



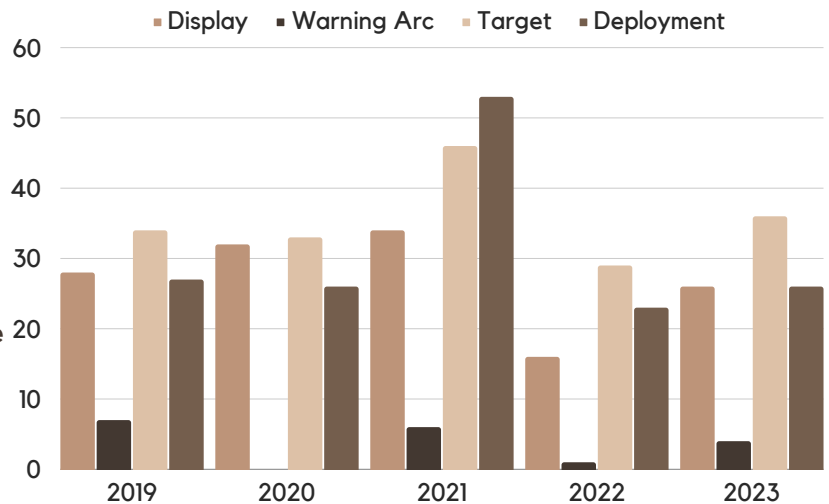
Taser Use & Assaults on Officers

In 2022, OCPD upgraded to the Taser 7, a conducted electrical weapon (C.E.W). The Taser 7 links to the Axon body-worn cameras. Once the officer pulls the Taser from the holster and activates it, it will turn on all nearby Axon body-worn cameras. This will provide an accurate account and transparency in use-of-force situations.

In many cases, more than one C.E.W. use may occur during an incident. For example, an officer may display his/her C.E.W. in order to gain compliance but if the suspect refuses to cooperate, the officer may deploy his/her C.E.W. This one incident counts as a "Display" and a "Deployment".

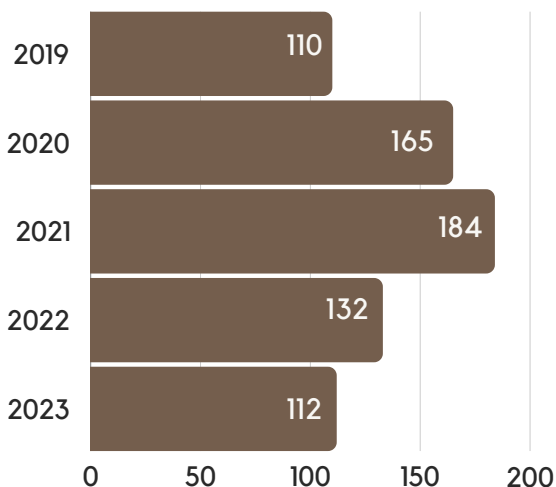
- **Display:** C.E.W. is removed from the holster, not aimed at the suspect. This is done simply to make the device visible to the suspect.
- **Warning Arc:** C.E.W. is removed from the holster, and the officer engages the noise of the electrical charge to get the suspect's attention.
- **Target:** C.E.W. is aimed at the suspect, with the lasers clearly indicating where probes will hit the suspect if the officer were to activate the device.
- **Deployment:** C.E.W. was deployed in order to gain compliance. Deployment involves the probes entering the suspect's body, in addition, to drive stuns.
 - *Note: Deployment includes probes entering the suspect's body, as well as drive stuns. Drive stuns involve the officer having to press his/her C.E.W. against the suspect's body and deploy the electrical charge manually.*

Taser Use



| CATEGORY | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Display | 28 | 32 | 34 | 16 | 26 |
| Warning Arc | 7 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| Target | 34 | 33 | 46 | 29 | 36 |
| Deployment | 27 | 26 | 53 | 23 | 26 |

Number of Officers Assaulted



Assaults on Officers

In 2023, OCPD officers were assaulted a total of 112 times. Eleven of these resulted in an injury to the officer.

This shows just how dangerous the job of a police officer can be. Assaults may be in the form of physical or non-physical violence and may or may not result in injury to the officer involved.

Contact Us



OCPD NON-EMERGENCY
410-723-6610



OCPD DISPATCH CENTER
410-723-6600

ANONYMOUS



CRIME TIP HOTLINE
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crimetips@oceancitymd.gov

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Photo credit: The OCPD 100-year Anniversary book, former OCPD employees and volunteers, community members on Facebook, and Chris Parypa Photography and Erik Larson Photography.

Thank you!