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An Internationally
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March 3rd, 2025

TO: Sheriff Steven A. Hall, St. Mary's County, Maryland

SUBJECT: Analysis of Officer Use of Force for 2024

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office recognizes and respects the value of human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone or any group of people. Vesting deputies with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires consistent monitoring, evaluation, and a careful balancing of public and governmental interests. The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office implements a comprehensive and robust set of policies and procedures addressing officer Use of Force, Taser deployment(s), Control Devices, and other specialized equipment utilization. These policies and procedures, in concert with Federal and State law, guide all officer Use of Force incidents.

The following is an analysis of the Use of Force incidents reported by deputy sheriffs of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office during the period of January 1st, 2024, through December 31st, 2024. Data for this analysis was derived from the collection of the Use of Force reports completed by deputies and reviewed by supervision. Agency policy and Maryland law require that deputies immediately notify a supervisor when force is utilized and complete a Use of Force report by the end of their shift. Once reviewed by supervisory personnel, these reports are forwarded to the Office of Professional Responsibilities (OPR) for further evaluation and potential investigation, if necessary. Following OPR's review a final determination is made whether the force utilized by the deputy was justified.

Sheriff's Office Use of Force Policy 300.1.1 defines "*Force*" as "*The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents, or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained.*"

In 2024, the Sheriff's Office handled 74,911 calls for service. Calls for service include any request(s) for police assistance originating from the public as well as self-initiated events made by deputy sheriffs. There were 224 calls for service (these figures do not include Correctional employee's Use of Force) that involved a Use of Force application(s) by one or more deputies. This includes Show of Force incidents wherein the deputy pointed a firearm or Taser at a person without discharging the device and the person complied with the officer's commands. The above data equates to force being utilized by deputy sheriffs once every 334 calls for service or .3%

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The percentages of the total Use of Force Incidents showing the most common reasons for deputies using force are as follows:

| | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Effect an Arrest | 62% | 57% | 58% | 63% |
| • Emergency Petition | 29% | 33% | 34% | 34% |

The percentages of the total Use of Force incidents where a citizen or officer made any complaint of injury(s) are as follows:

| | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Citizens Injured | 13% | 3% | 4% | 16% |
| • Officer Injured | 1.5% | <1% | 8% | 10% |

In 2022 the Sheriff's Office implemented a system to categorize uses of force (for post-force reporting only) on three different levels: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3, and those levels continued to be utilized throughout 2024. Level 1 is the category used for minor uses of force (ie: wrist lock, escort hold, carry) which have the lowest risk of injury. Level 2 is for uses of force and less lethal options (i.e.: knee strike(s), takedown(s), Taser, and chemical agents) with a higher risk of injury or involving any complaint of injury to the force recipient. Level 3 is utilized for any force that results in death, has the risk of causing death, or the discharge of any firearms towards a person. In 2024, 88.24% of force-type applications were Level 1, 11.76% were Level 2, and 0% were identified as Level 3 (derived from the force types provided below).

The following statistics indicate the percentage of the total uses of force incidents (224) compared to the demographic breakdown of the citizens when force was applied by the deputies:

| | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| White Males | 17.77% | 23% | 27% | 26% |
| White Females | 16.53% | 17% | 14% | 17% |
| Black Males | 44.21% | 42% | 33% | 36% |
| Black Females | 16.53% | 15% | 22% | 18% |
| Hispanic Males | 2.89% | 3% | >2% | 2% |
| Hispanic Females | .41% | 0% | >1% | <1% |
| Other Males | .41% | 0% | 0% | <1% |
| Other Females | 1.25% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

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There were 808 force types reported being applied by deputies in 2024. Each Use of Force incident (224 calls for service in 2024) may include multiple separate force types being utilized and may involve more than one officer applying force. For example, during an arrest, if a deputy utilized an escort hold, transitioned to an arm bar takedown, and then restrained the force recipient's shoulders during the handcuffing process, the incident would involve three (3) separate force types by the involved deputy. Below is a statistical breakdown of the force types used during 2024:

| <u>Force Type</u> | <u>Count</u> | <u>Percent of Total</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Arm Bar | 27 | 3.34% |
| Arm Bar Take Down | 19 | 2.35% |
| Arm Control | 0 | 0% |
| Asp/Baton | 1 | .12% |
| Carry | 56 | 6.94% |
| Common Peroneal Strike | 1 | .12% |
| Def Tec 40mm | 0 | 0% |
| Emergency Response Belt | 0 | 0% |
| Escort hold | 122 | 15.11% |
| FN 303 | 0 | 0% |
| Forearm Strike | 0 | 0% |
| Grab – Below Neckline | 87 | 10.77% |
| Hand push | 60 | 7.43% |
| Hand Restrain | 88 | 10.89% |
| Hand Strike | 2 | .25% |
| Handgun Discharge | 0 | 0% |
| Handgun Pointed Only | 30 | 3.71% |
| Head Control | 19 | 2.35% |
| Kick | 0 | 0% |
| Knee Strike | 3 | .37% |
| Leg Sweep | 8 | .99% |
| OC Spray | 1 | .12% |
| Palm Heel Strike | 1 | .12% |
| Pressure Point | 14 | 1.7% |
| Punch | 0 | 0% |
| Restraint/Shoulders | 18 | 2.24% |
| Rifle Discharge | 0 | 0% |
| Rifle Pointed Only | 8 | .99% |
| Sage | 0 | 0% |
| Secured Legs | 53 | 6.56% |
| Secured wrist | 113 | 13.99% |
| Tackle | 20 | 2.48% |
| Taser Deployment | 6 | .74% |
| Taser Pointed Only | 23 | 2.85% |
| Wrist Lock | 28 | 3.47% |
| Total | 808 | |

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A review of the aforementioned data reveals that Escort Holds, Grabs – Below Neckline, Hand Restrains, and Secured Wrist force applications were the most common force types utilized by deputies in 2024. Notably, 2024 saw 6 Taser deployments during the calendar year, a decrease from 2023's 11 total Taser deployments.

In 2024 K-9 handlers deployed their K9 partners during 247 various K-9 utilizations. These K-9 deployments included K-9s being utilized during vehicle scans, building scans/searches, and special/large event scans/searches (i.e.: high school graduations and the St. Mary's County Fair, etc.). Notably, there were no instances where a K-9 was utilized/deployed (released from their lead) in an attempt to physically apprehend a suspect (bite apprehension). During four (4) instances, K-9s were deployed (released from their leads) pursuant to building search or scan incidents. Of the 247 K-9 utilizations during 2024, the predominant uses involved both vehicle and building scans conducted in furtherance of detecting illegal narcotics. Importantly, 2024 saw an increase of 37 K-9 utilizations compared to 2023, marking a 14.98% increase in the use of Sheriff's Office K-9 teams during the year.

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is committed to fostering strong community partnerships and ensuring accountability through comprehensive policies and procedures governing Use of Force, Taser deployment, control devices, and other specialized equipment. These policies, aligned with both Federal and State law, serve as the foundation for all Use of Force incidents by office personnel, ensuring that officer actions remain consistent with legal and ethical standards.

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office personnel prioritize the use of de-escalation techniques during citizen interactions, implementing them when safe and practicable. This commitment is reinforced through ongoing training initiatives, including ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics), Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), and ongoing In-Service Training seminars which aid in equipping officers with the skills necessary to effectively manage high-stress encounters/tense encounters while prioritizing public and officer safety.


Notably, all complaints concerning the application or usage of force by a deputy sheriff are promptly investigated by the Sheriff's Office's Office of Professional Responsibilities (OPR) and forwarded to the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee (ACC). The ACC is a civilian board, which is not supervised or managed by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, that reviews complaints against personnel in accordance with Maryland Public Safety Article 3-101. In 2024, the St. Mary's County ACC reviewed several complaints wherein force techniques were applied during the incident. There were zero instances where Deputies were found to have utilized excessive force during their contact with the force recipient.


Joshua Krum #260
Lieutenant
Office of Professional Responsibilities

Agree

(☒) Yes () No, see indorsement.

Major:



Date 3-3-25

(☒) Yes () No, see indorsement.

Sheriff:



Date 3-3-25