



## SPD REPORT

---

# Use of Force by Seattle Police Department Officers in 2010

---

This report provides an overview of force use by Seattle Police Department officers in 2010. This is the fifth full year for which use of force information has been tracked using the AIM database, which allows for more detailed tracking of force use by individual officers. The Report highlights 2010 force use in comparison with 2009, making reference to previous years where possible. Within each section of the Report, key findings are highlighted and fuller discussion is provided in the text as well as in footnotes.

Major findings in the Report are, as follows:

- Use of force incidents were up by 2.6% in 2010, when compared with 2009, but are down by more than one-third when compared with 2006.
- Seattle Police Department Officers use force infrequently. Only 0.12% of all interactions between officers and community members in 2010 resulted in use of force by officers, about the same as in 2009 and 2008, and down from the levels in 2007 and 2006.
- Based upon total arrests (the types of situations where force is most likely to be used), the use of force rate was 2.46%, up from 2.39% in 2009, but down from 2.59% in 2008.
- Most of the force applied by Seattle Police Department officers consists of the use of their own bodies. Hands/arms/elbows and feet/legs/knees constituted 82% of the force used by officers in 2010, up from 78% in 2009 and 75% in 2008.
- Complaints received concerning use of force by Seattle Police Department officers rose by about 30% in 2010, but remain relatively low when compared with national statistics. The rate of complaint for the Department is nearly one-third lower than the average reported for metropolitan police departments by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- In two use of force cases in 2010, accurate diagnoses and quick thinking by SPD officers resulting in saving the lives of the subjects involved.

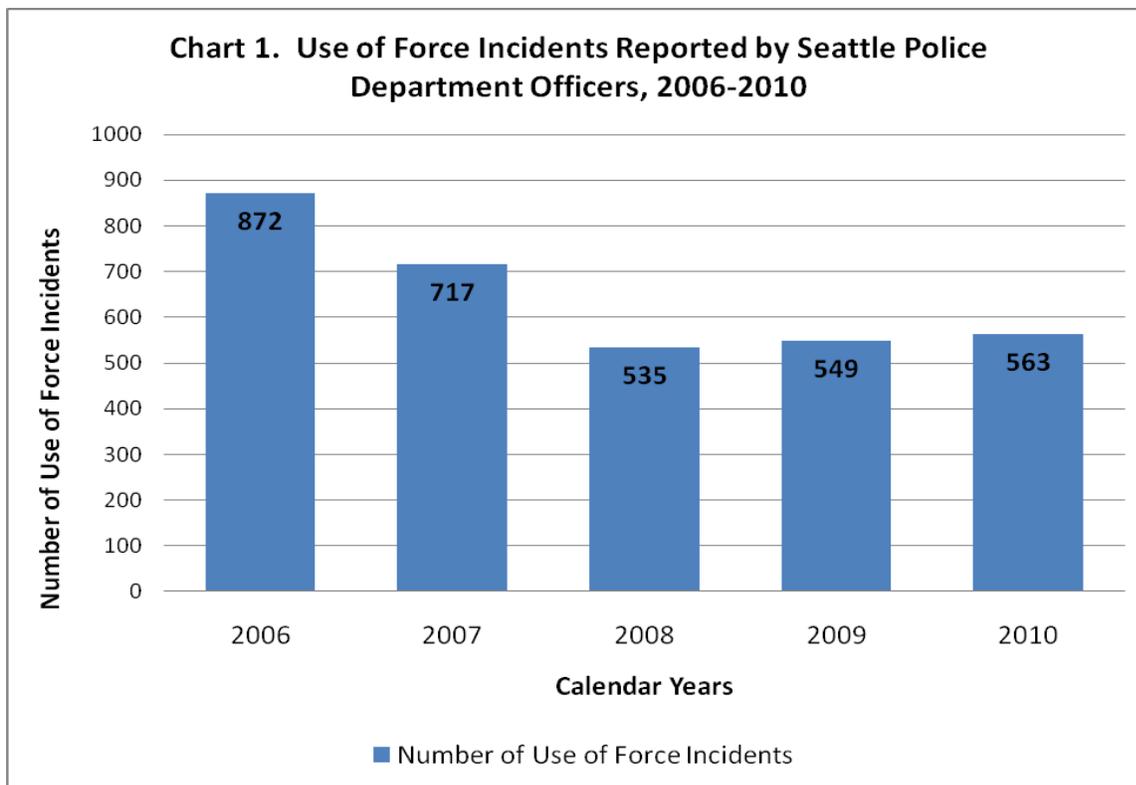
### **Key findings from the use of force report:**

- Seattle Police Department officers reported using force in 563 separate incidents in 2010, up 2.6% from 549 incidents reported in 2009, but down 35% from the 872 reported incidents in 2006.
- The rate at which SPD officers use force relative to public contacts is very low and was relatively unchanged from that in 2008 and 2009. Only 0.12% of interactions between SPD officers and the public resulted in the use of force.
- Relative to arrests in 2010, the use of force rate was just under 2.5%, the second lowest level in five years. This means that 97.5% of the time in 2010, when SPD officers arrested or cited someone for criminal conduct, no force was used.
- As was the case in the last four years, the force option used most often by SPD officers in 2010 was their own bodies. Eighty-two percent of the force used in 2010 consisted of officers' hands/arms/elbows or feet/legs/knees.
- The total count of force options applied within incidents was up 25% in 2010, when compared with 2009, although the trend varied by the type of force option. Among the more frequently used force options, decreases were most prominent in Taser use (down 30%) and the use of K-9, down 28%; while increases were prominent in the use of OC spray (up 84%) and feet/knees/legs (up 50%).
- Assaults were the most frequent type of incident giving rise to use of force by SPD officers in 2010, comprising 36% of the use of force encounters. The next largest category, drug- and alcohol-related offenses, made up about 11% of the use of force incidents.
- Roughly three-quarters (74%) of those confronting SPD officers in use of force incidents were reported to be impaired, typically by alcohol and/or drugs. The Department's innovative protocol for handling excited delirium cases resulted in saving the lives of two use of force subjects in 2010.
- In general, patterns of force use in the individual SPD precincts are consistent with the force options applied Department-wide.
- The racial/ethnic characteristics of use of force subjects resemble the racial/ethnic characteristics of persons arrested in 2010. With respect to gender, females comprised a larger proportion of arrestees (22%) than use of force subjects (12%) during 2010.
- Complaints about use of force by SPD officers rose between 2009 and 2010 as did allegations within those complaints. Relative to arrests, only 0.38% of arrests in 2010 resulted in a complaint about officers' use of force.
- On an officer-per capita basis, the Department's complaint rate is 31% below the average reported for large metropolitan police agencies and about average for police agencies of any size.

## Total Use of Force Incidents<sup>1</sup>

**Key Finding:** Reported use of force incidents increased by about 3% in 2010, when compared with 2009, but are down 35% compared with 2006.

SPD officers reported using force in 563 incidents in 2010, up 2.6% from the 549 incidents reported in 2009, and the same rate of increase as was shown between 2008 and 2009. Chart 1 shows the number of reported use of force incidents each year from 2006 to 2010. The overall trend in Chart 1 is downward, despite slight increases in the last two years.



Overall, total contacts between SPD officers and the public were up 1% in 2010 compared with 2009. While it may be argued that the larger number of public contacts in 2010 resulted in more situations where officers were called upon to use force, the increase in use of force incidents in 2010 was larger (2.6%) than was the increase in public contacts (1%).

As noted above, the overall trend in Chart 1 is a steady decrease in reported use of force since the peak year of 2006. It should also be noted that the decline in use of force incidents since 2006 (down about 35%) has outpaced the decline in reported major crimes (down 16%) and total public contacts (down 7%), suggesting that other factors may be involved.

<sup>1</sup> Total use of force incidents do not include officer involved shootings, which are handled by the Firearms Review Board. These are profiled briefly in a separate Appendix to this report.

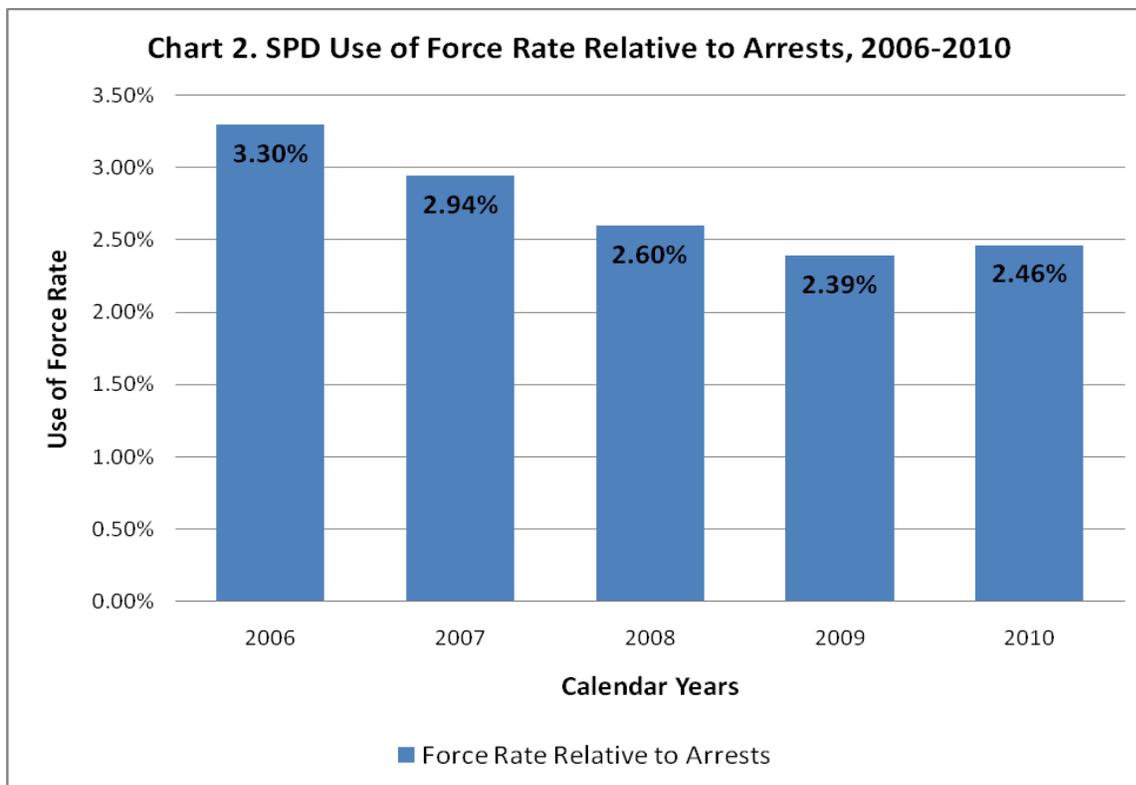
## Use of Force Rate

**Key Finding: The use of force rate remained stable in 2010 when compared with 2009. Only 0.12% of interactions between SPD officers and the public resulted in the use of force.**

The number of reported use of force incidents in 2010 translates to a use of force rate of 0.124 percent relative to total public contacts, compared with 0.122 percent in 2009. The comparable rate in 2006, it was 0.178 percent. To obtain the use of force rate, the total number of use of force incidents is divided by the total number of public contacts involving SPD officers. (Total public contacts equal the sum of dispatched calls, on views, traffic stops and arrests and citations for criminal conduct.) Stated another way, SPD officers did not use force in 99.88% of the interactions they had with members of the public in 2010.

**Key Finding: The SPD use of force rate relative to arrests was about 2.5% in 2010.**

Arrests are generally regarded as the type of public contact where force is most likely to be used by officers. Chart 2 [below] plots the proportion of reported use of force incidents relative to the number of arrests over the past five years.



As can be seen in Chart 2, the reported use of force as a percentage of arrests, though rising slightly in 2010, has trended downward from 3.30% in the peak year of 2006 to the rate of 2.46% of arrests in 2010. Force use relative to arrests is a frequent metric used among police agencies. Benchmarking or making comparisons among departments is difficult, however, because of the varying standards used to determine when force should be reported. The Department's force rate

relative to arrests seems to compare favorably with that of other west coast law enforcement agencies. For example, according to the last published reports, Portland's force rate relative to arrests was 4.2%, while that of San Jose was 3.2%.<sup>2</sup> A recent Milwaukee report, on the other hand, reports a force rate relative to arrests of 1.32%, but in that jurisdiction force is reported only when an injury or complaint of injury occurs.<sup>3</sup>

## Types of Force Used

**Key Finding: SPD officers' own bodies constituted the most frequently chosen force option in 2010, with 82% of the force used consisting of officers' hands/arms/elbows or feet/legs/knees.**

Table A [below] portrays the types of force applied by SPD officers and their frequency of use in the years 2006-2010, making comparisons between 2009 and 2010 in terms of their absolute and relative frequencies. There were 1,460 various types of force used in 2010 within the 563 reported use of force incidents. This averages to about 2.6 types of force used per incident (up from the 2.1 uses in 2009).

In the SPD use of force reporting system, each type of force applied either by a single officer or by multiple officers during an incident is counted. Thus increases in force applied within incidents may reflect the numbers of officers involved. An examination of force incidents with single and multiple officers in 2008 and 2009, for example, showed that 54% of the reported incidents involved force by a single officer, while the balance (46%) had more than one officer. This pattern was reversed in 2010, where 46% of use of force incidents involved a single officer, while in the balance (54%), multiple officers were involved.

The increase in force applied within use of force incidents in 2010, then, may be a reflection of the greater numbers of officers involved in those incidents. The pattern of officer involvement in use of force incidents is also consistent with training on the tactical concept of "contact/cover" that officers received in 2010. The idea behind this concept is that having multiple officers during a suspect contact or arrest changes the dynamics of an incident in beneficial ways that may on the one hand, reduce the need to use force, and on the other hand, may increase the force options available to officers.

While total uses of force shown in Table A were up 25% in 2010 compared with 2009, the change between years varies with the type of force applied. As in previous years, officers in 2010 were most likely to use their extremities in controlling subjects, with "hands/elbows/arms" constituting 61% of the force applied (the same as in 2009) and "feet/knees/legs" constituting 21% of the force applied in use of force incidents (up from 17% in 2009). Together these force options comprised about 82% of the force used by SPD officers in 2010, up from 78% in 2009 and 75% in 2008. Compared with 2006 and 2007, however, the absolute frequency with which

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Use of Force by the Portland Police Bureau – Analysis and Recommendations*, Report of the Force Task Force of the Portland Police Bureau, Spring 2007, at page 4; and *2007 Force Response Report*, San Jose Police Department Report for 2007, [www.sjpd.org](http://www.sjpd.org) at page 6.

<sup>3</sup> See Brandl, Steven, *An Analysis of 2009 Use of Force Incidents in the Milwaukee Police Department*, A Report of the Fire and Police Commission, April 30, 2010.

this type of force is being used by officers has declined, down by 18% for hands/elbows/arms since 2006, and down by 13% for feet/knees/legs over that same time period.

The other major force option employed by officers was the Taser, with the probe mode of the device comprising 6% of force uses and the touch mode making up 2% of force uses, for a total of 8% of the force utilized in 2010 (or about half of the 15% frequency of Taser use in 2009). In absolute terms, Taser use has declined steadily since 2006, despite a significant increase in the number of officers deployed with the device. Use of the probe mode of the Taser was 72% lower in 2010 than in 2006, and use of the touch mode was 71% lower in 2010 than in 2006. In this same time period the number of officers equipped with Tasers has increased by 24%.

Two other force types that displayed different and opposite patterns in 2010 were OC/chemical spray and use of K-9. In 2009, when compared with 2008, use of OC/chemical spray declined 30%. In 2010, OC use increased 84% from the level of use in 2009. Use of K-9, on the other hand, was down by 28% in 2010, after having increased by 14% between 2008 and 2009. It should be noted, however, that both these force types are used relatively infrequently overall, with OC/chemical spray comprising 5% of force uses in 2009 and K-9, comprising 1%. Other infrequently used force options that nonetheless showed marked increases in 2010 were batons, up 190% and flashlights, up 129%.

**Table A. Types, Frequency and Relative Frequency of Force Options Employed by SPD Officers in 2010, Compared with 2006 - 2009**

<b>Force Option</b>	<b># of uses in 2006</b>	<b># of uses in 2007</b>	<b># of uses in 2008</b>	<b># of uses in 2009</b>	<b># of uses in 2010</b>	<b>% change from 2009</b>	<b>% of uses in 2010</b>
Baton	6	15	11	10	29	190%	2%
Body Force	4	9	6	2	4	100%	0.3%
Chemical Spray/OC	123	82	54	38	70	84%	5%
Feet/Knees/Legs	346	275	196	200	301	50%	21%
Flashlight	30	27	11	7	16	129%	1%
Hands/Elbows/Arms	1080	846	687	711	889	25%	61%
K-9	34	55	22	25	18	-28%	1%
Taser - Probe Mode	292	218	140	123	82	-33%	6%
Taser - Touch Mode	119	82	53	43	34	-21%	2%
Other	12	17	7	8	17	100%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2046</b>	<b>1626</b>	<b>1187</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>99.6%</b>
Firearm	5	4	2	9	6	-33%	0.4%
<b>Total with Firearms</b>	<b>2051</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>1176</b>	<b>1466</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Firearms are among the least used force options by SPD officers. In 2010 there was a decline in officer-involved shootings, going from nine incidents in 2009 to six incidents in 2010. Three of

the officer-involved shootings resulted in subject fatalities. As can be seen, when firearms use is added to Table A, their prominence among force options is less than one percent. Officer-involved shooting incidents in 2010 are summarized briefly in an appendix to this report.

### Types of Incidents Resulting in Use of Force

**Key Finding: Assaults comprised 36% of the incidents in which officers were called upon to use force in 2009.**

Table B below portrays the types of incidents to which SPD officers responded in 2010, that resulted in the use of force. As can be seen, while a wide variety of incident types are found in the table, the list is dominated by assaults, comprising 36% of the use of force incidents. This is down from 40% in 2009 but up from 34% in 2008 and from 26% in 2007.

As noted in previous reports, the dominance of assault incidents among use of force encounters is understandable to some extent. Persons already engaged in assaultive conduct are probably less averse than others to transfer some of their aggression to officers who arrive on the scene. Among the incident types listed in Table B, the categories of “disturbances including domestic violence,” “robberies” and “person with weapon” are also likely to involve persons engaged in aggressive and threatening conduct. When these incidents are added to the “assaults” category in the Table, half of the incidents where officers used force during 2010 were characterized by interpersonal violence before they even arrived.

**Table B. Types of Incidents Giving Rise to Reported Use of Force  
By SPD Officers in 2010**

[Incident type is based upon the case classification. Incidents are arranged in descending order of frequency.]

Type of Incident	# in 2010	% in 2010
Assaults	205	36%
Drug/Alcohol Offenses	75	13%
Miscellaneous Misdemeanors	42	7%
Disturbances including DV	39	7%
Burglary/Theft/Vehicle Theft	38	7%
Trespass/Suspicious circumstances	36	6%
Robberies	22	4%
Property destruction/damage	19	3%
Person with weapon	18	3%
Warrant Service	18	3%
Mental/suicide calls	17	3%
Traffic, including accidents	11	2%
Other	23	4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100%</b>

As in previous years, drug- and alcohol-related incidents comprise the next largest category of use of force encounters, though they are a distant second to assaults. In these types of incidents, the element of subject impairment undoubtedly influenced the person's behavior toward officers. Mental/suicide calls are similar to drug/alcohol incidents in that regard. When these types of incidents are combined they comprised 16% of the use of force incidents in 2009. [More on subject impairment below.]

### **Subject Impairment in Use of Force Incidents**

**Key Finding: Nearly three out of every four persons that officers confronted in use of force incidents in 2010 were impaired and noted impairments were up 24%.**

Persons who are impaired by drugs, alcohol or mental illness often exercise poor judgment not only in terms of the lawfulness of their conduct, but also in terms of their behavior toward officers. It is not surprising, then, that many of the officers' use of force encounters involve persons suffering from impairments. In fact, lack of impairment seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Of the use of force incidents reported in 2010 by SPD officers, only 154 (26%) involved subjects who showed no sign of being impaired.

Table C [below] displays the types of impairments that use of force subjects exhibited or admitted to in 2010. Overall, noted impairments were up 24% compared with 2009. As can be seen in Table C, impairments related to drug and alcohol use were dominant among persons involved in use of force encounters with officers in 2010. In incidents where subjects were impaired, officers either noted possible drug or alcohol intoxication or that subjects smelled of alcohol, or subjects admitted drug or alcohol use during the encounter, more than half the time. The rest of the time subjects gave evidence of impairment through their speech, conduct, ideation or bearing.

**Table C. Types of Subject Impairment in SPD Use of Force Incidents, 2010**

[More than one type of impairment may be noted for each subject. Impairments are listed in order of frequency of mention.]

<b>Type of Impairment Noted by Officer/Admitted by Subject</b>	<b># of times noted in 2010</b>
Possible intoxication (drugs or alcohol)	271
Subject smelled of alcohol	207
Rambling/incoherent speech	177
Subject admitted drug/alcohol use	176
Possible mental illness/delusional/suicidal	148
Slurred speech	127
Poor balance	87
Subject admitted not using prescribed meds	12
<b>Total Impairments Noted or Admitted</b>	<b>1,359</b>

## Injuries to Officers and Subjects in Use of Force Incidents

**Key Finding: Injuries sustained in use of force incidents by both officers and subjects are generally minor in nature as evidenced by the level of treatment received.**

In 2006 the Department undertook a special study of injuries sustained in reported use of force incidents. This study required reading every use of force report and coding injury information for separate analysis. The internal study was later replicated and validated by a team of medical researchers from the University of Washington Emergency Medicine Department.<sup>4</sup> Both studies confirmed a relatively low injury profile in SPD use of force incidents.

At the time this study was included in the 2006 use of force report, it was noted that such an effort could not be easily duplicated each year without changes to the use of force reporting forms. Since that time the changes that have been made in the SPD reporting form provide more accessible injury-related information in terms of when injuries to subjects occur and how they were handled. However, because of the wide range of possible responses, the specific nature of injuries to both officers and subjects remains a free form field. The information presented below, then, is based upon the pre-coded information obtained from reporting forms.

In the course of the reported use of force incidents in 2010, 114 officers and 435 subjects either complained about or exhibited signs of injury. Among subjects, about 24% of the injuries were either self-inflicted or the result of events or activities that had occurred prior to police involvement. A profile of the remaining subject injuries, as well as of officer injuries, based upon how they were treated, is presented in Table D below.

**Table D. Treatment Outcomes for Officer and Subject Injuries in 2010 SPD Use of Force Incidents**

<b>Treatment Outcome</b>	<b>% of Officers</b>	<b>% of Subjects</b>
No treatment/self treatment/treatment refused	69%	36%
EMS treatment on site	30%	44%*
Hospital treatment/admission	1%	8%
Mental health treatment/admission	--	4%
Other/unknown	--	8%

\*Includes Taser incidents where EMS response is part of the required protocol.

As can be seen in Table D, most injuries sustained by officers as well as subjects were either so minor as to require no treatment or self-handling, or were addressed on site by medics. In the case of officers, virtually all injuries in 2010 use of force incidents were handled in either of these ways. For subjects, the proportion of injuries handled in this manner was 80%. The balance of use of force subjects' injuries were treated at a hospital. This includes both medical and psychiatric treatment. While it is not possible to be sure without knowing the precise nature of

<sup>4</sup> See Strote, Jared, et.al, "Use of Force by Law Enforcement: An Evaluation of Safety and Injury," *Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection, and Critical Care*, 69:5, November 2010.

the injuries in these cases, it is logical to conclude that the injuries were more serious, or at least could not be easily determined on site. In light of the high levels of subject impairment in 2010 use of force incidents, however, this injury profile is relatively low. In national studies, the injury rate in general use of force incidents is around 40% for both officers and subjects, but is believed to be much higher among subjects who are violent or mentally ill and actively resist officers.<sup>5</sup>

### **When Police Use of Force Saves a Life**

**Key Finding: Accurate diagnoses of the situations confronting them and quick thinking by SPD officers saved the lives of two subjects in 2010, who were in the throes of excited delirium.**

Over the years as the Department has been tracking subject impairment in use of force incidents and especially in less lethal option encounters, both the frequency and complexity of such impairments have been growing. The previously-cited study by the University of Washington Medical School found that use of force subjects encountered by SPD officers in 2006 were more impaired than officers had estimated and the subjects' impairments were the result of multiple substances, mental illnesses or a combination of both.<sup>6</sup>

In their use of force documentation, officers in the field have been noting subjects who have exhibited superhuman strength, insensitivity to pain, violence or attraction to glass/lights/reflection, sweating/hot to touch, making guttural or animal noises, extreme aggression, hallucinations/paranoia, and inappropriate or no clothing. This constellation of symptoms and behaviors has previously been identified as a condition called "excited delirium," and persons suffering from the condition are in a medical/physiological emergency that, if left untreated, will result in death.<sup>7</sup>

Concerned that officers be well-equipped to identify and address excited delirium cases, the Department began working five years ago with the Seattle Fire Department and the Emergency Medical personnel at Harborview Hospital to develop a protocol for handling such subjects. In 2009, a section was added to the SPD Procedures and Tactics manual dealing with excited delirium and alerting personnel from the 9-1-1 call taker to officers and supervisors in the field on the appropriate response when confronted with a person exhibiting such symptoms. This protocol is widely regarded as the most innovative of its kind in the US and perhaps the world. The protocol stresses the life safety issues involved and the importance of handling the medical emergency before any relevant criminal consequences of subject behaviors are addressed.

Taser officers, who may be specifically called to the scene in an excited delirium case, have received training on the protocol in annual recertification and new user classes. The reason Taser officers may be called is that excited delirium subjects will vigorously fight efforts to assist them, meaning that officers will often need to take action to subdue these subjects before they

---

<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth Adams, "What We Know About Police Use of Force," and Mark A. Henriquez, "IACP National Database Project on Police Use of Force," in *Use of Force by Police, Overview of National and Local Data*, Washington, DC: NIJ, October 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Strote, et.al, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> See "American College of Emergency Physicians Recognizes Excited Delirium Syndrome," in *Emergency Medicine News*, October 2009.

can receive the medical help they need. Increasingly law enforcement experts and those in the emergency medical field are viewing the incapacitating effects of the Taser as the quickest and most effective means of controlling these subjects.<sup>8</sup>

The heightened sensitivity of SPD personnel has paid off. During 2010, just over 30 potential cases of excited delirium were identified by officers.<sup>9</sup> In one of these cases, the subject was not breathing when officers arrived. Upon arrival, the officers' immediate diagnosis and quick thinking resulted in medical personnel being called to the scene to administer life saving resuscitation to the subject. In the other case, a violent subject lost vital signs after a struggle with officers, but was brought back through immediate administration of CPR by SPD officers. Police use of force is not typically thought of as life-saving, but in these cases it was.

### Use of Force by Precinct

**Key Finding:** In general the pattern of force use in each precinct in 2010 mirrored that of the Department as a whole.

Table E [below] portrays the force options employed in each precinct in 2010. As can be seen, officers in every precinct were most apt to use their bodies as the primary force option, with hands/elbows/arms and feet/knees/legs constituting the largest categories of force use in every precinct. The next most frequent type of force used in every precinct was the Taser, usually in the probe mode.

Two force options show different use patterns among the precincts. These are chemical spray/OC, which was used with greatest frequency in West Precinct, and batons and flashlights, used more often in the South and Southwest Precincts during 2010 than in the other precincts.

**Table E. Types of Force Used in Each SPD Precinct, 2010**

Force Option	# of uses in North	# of uses in West	# of uses in East	# of uses in South	# uses in Southwest	Total Uses for Force Option
Baton	3	3	3	18	7	34
Body Force	1	0	0	0	3	4
Chemical Spray/OC	7	49	2	6	6	70
Feet/Knees/Legs	29	97	30	102	36	294
Flashlight	2	1	0	8	5	16
Hands/Elbows/Arms	167	260	140	215	101	883
K-9	5	2	6	4	1	18
Taser – Probe Mode	12	31	10	18	9	80
Taser – Touch Mode	5	15	5	6	2	33
Other	2	5	2	4	1	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1,447*</b>

\*Total is smaller than all uses reported in Table A, because some applications of force were out of the city.

<sup>8</sup> See NIJ Special Report, *Study of Deaths Following Electro Muscular Disruption*, NCJ 233432, May 2011.

<sup>9</sup> In the last two and one half years, 70 cases of excited delirium have been identified by officers.

## Race/Ethnicity and Gender of Use of Force Subjects

**Key Finding: The racial/ethnic characteristics of use of force subjects resembled the racial/ethnic characteristics of arrestees in 2010. With respect to gender, women were more prominent as arrestees than as use of force subjects.**

The racial/ethnic breakdown of subjects in use of force incidents is depicted in Table F [below], together with the proportion of arrestees in the same racial/ethnic groups. These proportionate representations are shown together because uses of force are most likely in the course of arrests.

**Table F. Racial/Ethnic Composition of SPD Use of Force Subjects and Arrestees, 2010**

[Only cases where race/ethnicity were known are included.]

Racial/Ethnic Group	Percentage of Use of Force Subjects in Group in 2010	Percentage of Total Arrestees in Group in 2010
Caucasian	46%	52%
African American	41%	38%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	6%
Native American	3%	3%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	4%*

\*Hispanic/Latino origin is captured separately from race in arrest data.

As can be seen in Table F, the relative prominence of each racial/ethnic group among arrestees and among use of force subjects is roughly similar. A comparison of force subjects with arrestees reveals that Caucasians and persons of Hispanic/Latino origin are underrepresented as use of force subjects relative to their representation as arrestees. African Americans, on the other hand, are slightly overrepresented as use of force subjects relative to their presence among arrestees. Compared with 2009, Caucasians increased in prominence as a proportion both of arrestees and of use of force subjects during 2010.

With respect to gender, women comprised about one fifth (22%) of arrestees in 2010, but only 12% of the subjects in use of force incidents, the same proportions as in 2009. The gender representation in arrests and use of force incidents has been stable over the past four years.

## Review of Force Applications

**Key Finding: Complaints about use of force by SPD officers are relatively infrequent. The Department's complaint rate in 2010 is about one-third lower than 31% that of large metropolitan police agencies.**

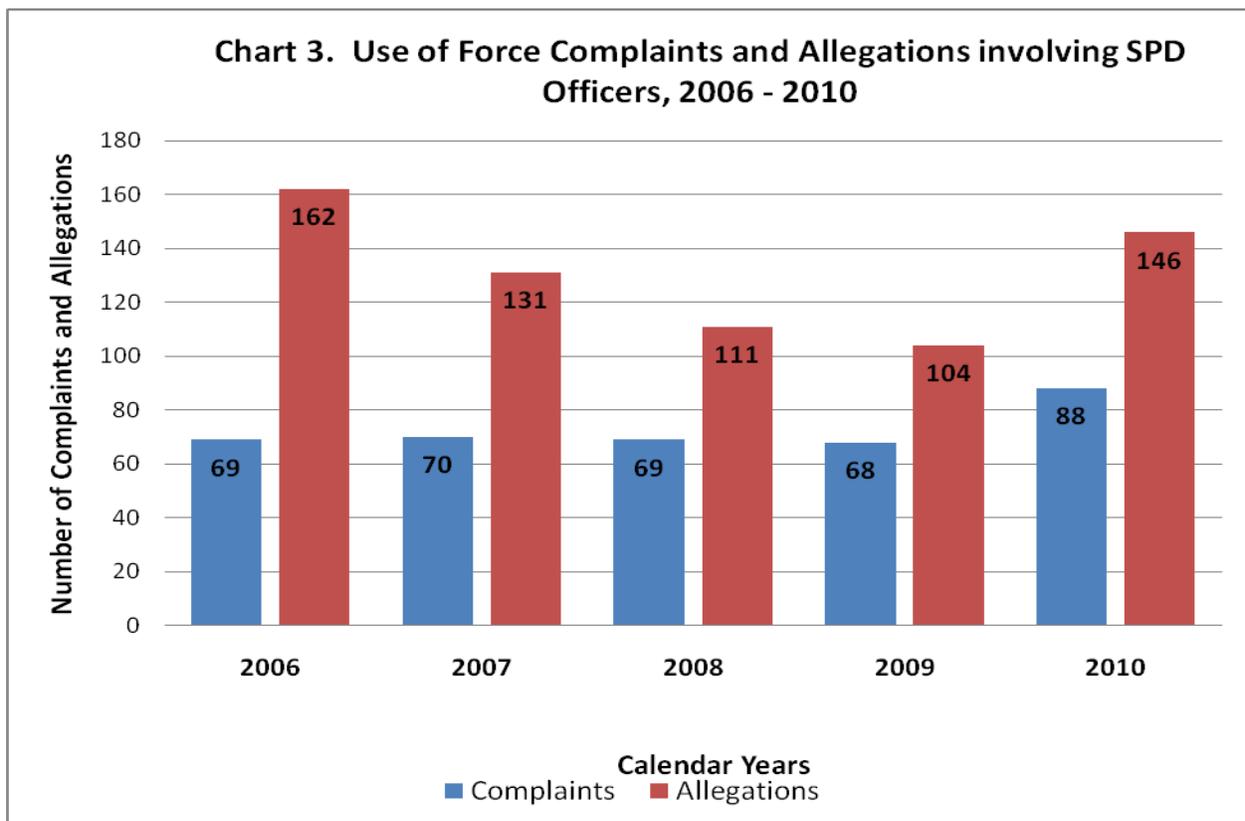
The Department's use of force reporting system provides ongoing review of force applications by officers. Specific circumstances, however, may result in additional scrutiny. Such circumstances include whenever an officer is involved in a significant use of force, for example, when a firearm is used or when a force situation culminates in serious injuries to the subject,

victims or officers. In these situations, the incident is reviewed not only by the officer's chain of command, but also by the Department's Command Staff.

The Department also uses a protocol, begun in 2006, to track uses of force as part of an Early Intervention System. The purpose is to identify officers who might be in need of additional training in how to handle or prevent force encounters, based upon an officer's involvement in seven or more use of force situations within a six-month period. In 2010, eighteen such reviews took place, compared with seven reviews in 2009, eight in 2008, and 23 in 2007.

The filing of a citizen or internal complaint is another circumstance that may bring additional scrutiny to an officer's use of force. Chart C [below] depicts the number of force complaints, and allegations within those complaints, received in the past five years<sup>10</sup>.

As can be seen in Chart C, after four years of relative stability, use of force complaints rose 29% in 2010. Allegations within these complaints were also up, by 39%. Despite this increase in 2010, the trend in allegations since 2006 had been downward, by about 10%.



Based upon the 88 complaints received, the Department's complaint rate per 100 authorized officers was 6.62 in 2010, up from 5.31 in 2009 and 5.40 in 2008. While a higher complaint rate than has been seen in recent years, it is 31% lower than the national use of force complaint rate of

<sup>10</sup> One complaint may contain several allegations if more than one officer or more than one complainant is involved in the incident.

9.5 per 100 officers for metropolitan police departments and at the level as the use of force complaint rate in police agencies of any size, as reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.<sup>11</sup>

**Key Finding: Use of force complaints in 2010 rose relative to arrests and incidents, as well as number of in-service sworn officers.**

As with use of force incidents, it is useful to put complaints about use of force in context. Table G [below] presents arrests, use of force incidents, complaints, and in-service sworn officers for the past eight years; and then displays use of force complaints in relation to arrests, use of force reports and number of in-service sworn officers.

As can be seen in the orange row in Table G, use of force complaints had hovered around one third of one percent of total arrests for the past seven years, but rose above that in 2010 to 0.38%. This is the highest proportion in the eight-year period depicted in the Table.

With respect to total use of force incidents (the green row in Table G), about one in every 6.4 use of force incidents in 2010 resulted in a complaint. This is up from one in every eight incidents in 2009.

**Table G. Arrests, Use of Force Incidents and Complaints, and Number of In-Service SPD Officers, 2003 – 2010**

<b>Comparative Factor</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Arrests	27522	25679	25127	26549	24382	20608	22983	22883
Use of Force Reports	784	751	751	872	717	535	549	563
Use of Force Complaints	99	79	90	69	70	69	68	88
No of sworn in-service	1187	1167	1176	1196	1204	1213	1280	1289
Complaints as % of arrests	0.36%	0.31%	0.36%	0.26%	0.29%	0.33%	0.30%	0.38%
Complaints as % of reports	12.6%	10.5%	11.9%	7.9%	9.8%	12.9%	12.4%	15.6%
Complaints as % of sworn	8.3%	6.8%	7.6%	5.8%	5.8%	5.7%	5.3%	6.8%

Relative to the number of in-service sworn officers (the light grey line in Table G), the complaint rate had been in decline from 2003 through 2006 and remained stable from 2006 through 2009. In 2010 the complaint rate relative to in-service officers returned to the level in 2004.

In spite of the increase in complaints seen in 2010, complaints about SPD officers' use of force, like use of force incidents themselves, remain relatively infrequent regardless of the basis for comparison used.

<sup>11</sup> See *Citizen Complaints about Police Use of Force*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, NCJ 210296, Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, June 2006.

**Appendix  
SPD Officer-Involved Shootings in 2010**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Shooting</b>	<b>Narrative of Encounter</b>
5/20/10	Non Fatal	Officers on a mental call out were confronted by a suspect armed with a rifle. In the course of the incident, three rounds were fired at the subject.
8/16/10	Fatal	Subject had been involved in a domestic violence incident but had left scene. Officers went to his work site to arrest him. He fought with officers and produced a .22 caliber pistol. Officer fired his weapon, fatally injuring the subject.
8/30/10	Fatal	Officer observed subject carrying knife, carving on something. Officer ordered subject to drop knife and when he did not respond to commands, officer opened fire, striking and fatally wounding the subject.
9/3/10	Non fatal	Possible suicide subject confronted officers armed with an AK assault rifle. When ordered to drop the rifle, the subject refused and opened fire on officers. They returned fire, wounding the subject.
11/22/10	Fatal	Subject was found slumped over the steering wheel of a vehicle. When contacted, subject held a gun to his own head. On arrival of officers, subject put vehicle in reverse and slowly raised and lowered his weapon. Officers fired on subject, who was declared dead at the scene.
12/7/10	Non fatal	Patrol officers responded to a call of a man with a gun on city street. Confronted by subject, officer fired his duty weapon, striking the subject.