

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

Professional Conduct Review Section

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February 3, 2025

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Annual Report
2024



Professional Conduct Review Section

The mission of the Professional Conduct Review Section is to determine employee compliance with Sheriff's Office written directives in a fair and impartial manner while maintaining the trust and confidence of Sheriff's Office personnel and the citizens and visitors of Seminole County.



Professional Conduct Review Section

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Professional Conduct Review Section

SECTION I

Introduction

The Professional Conduct Review Section's major function is receiving, processing, and investigating administrative complaints made against Sheriff's Office employees. This section conducts all administrative investigations. This report outlines the investigative process and includes an analysis of the personnel complaints investigated during the 2024 calendar year.

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Professional Conduct Review Section

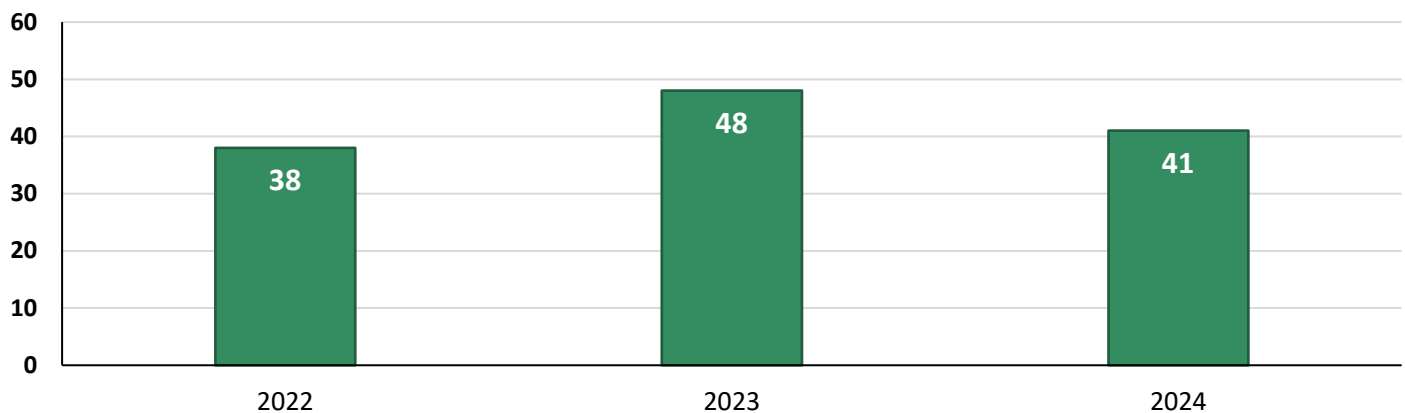
SECTION II

Personnel Complaints

The Professional Conduct Review Section received 41 formal complaints from the public in 2024, 1 of which resulted in a formal investigation. During the same period in 2023, the section received 48 formal complaints from the public, 1 of which resulted in a formal investigation.

This represents a 15% decrease in formal complaints resulting in investigations received by this section.

Formal Complaints
2022 - 2024



Complaints against employees of the Sheriff's Office are classified according to the nature of the complaint. If not resolved informally, they may be categorized as Supervisory Inquiries or Administrative Investigations. There are specific procedures for investigating complaints, which are determined by the seriousness of the allegation(s).

The following information provides the reader with a summary of the complaint process as it applies to Supervisory Inquiries and Administrative Investigations. Also, an analysis of each category is provided to show comparisons based on the cases investigated and the resulting disposition of those cases.

SUPERVISORY INQUIRIES

Supervisory Inquiries are investigations of allegations of discourtesy or other less serious violations of Sheriff's Office policy. They are generally conducted by a supervisor who has received specialized training and has been approved to conduct supervisory inquiries. These cases require limited investigation by the supervisor, who determines whether or not a violation of policy occurred.

If the supervisor determines through investigation that a policy violation occurred and the allegation(s) is sustained, the Sheriff may elect to convene a Disciplinary Review Board. The Board considers the incident and recommends disciplinary action.

If the inquiry establishes that the policy violation is more substantial than originally believed or that it would become too time-consuming for the supervisor to conduct, the Sheriff may order the Professional Conduct Review Section to conduct an administrative investigation.



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ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

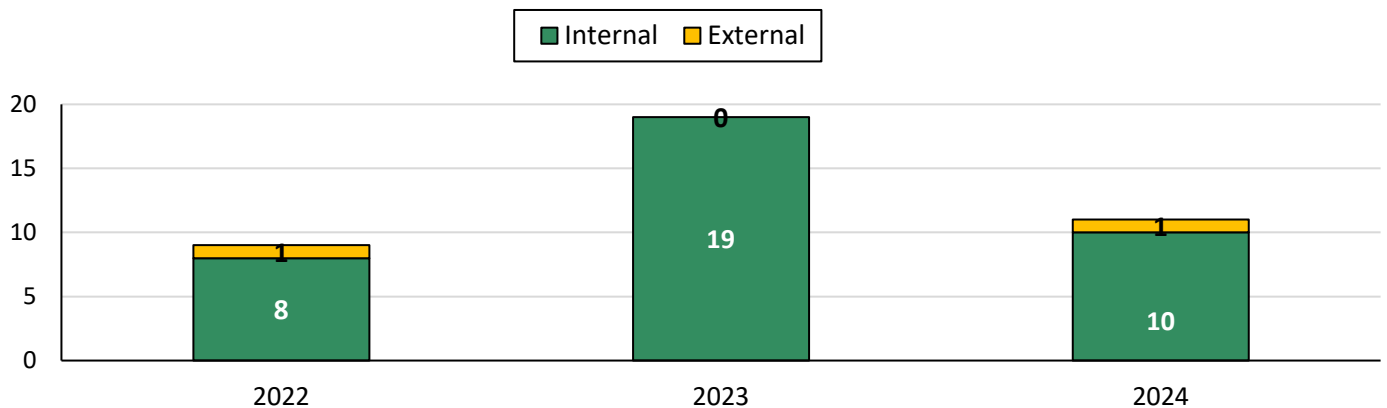
Administrative Investigations are investigations of major violations of Sheriff's Office policies, rules, procedures, or laws. They are investigated by the Professional Conduct Review Section, only at the direction of the Sheriff or, in his absence, a Chief. When the investigation is completed, each allegation is assigned one of the following conclusions: Sustained, Not Sustained, Unfounded, Exonerated, or Policy Failure. The completed investigation is forwarded to the Sheriff for his review and approval. Upon the Sheriff's approval, the investigation becomes a public record. Disciplinary action is at the sole discretion of the Sheriff.

NOTE: The Professional Conduct Review Section is a fact-finding body only and makes no recommendations concerning discipline.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED

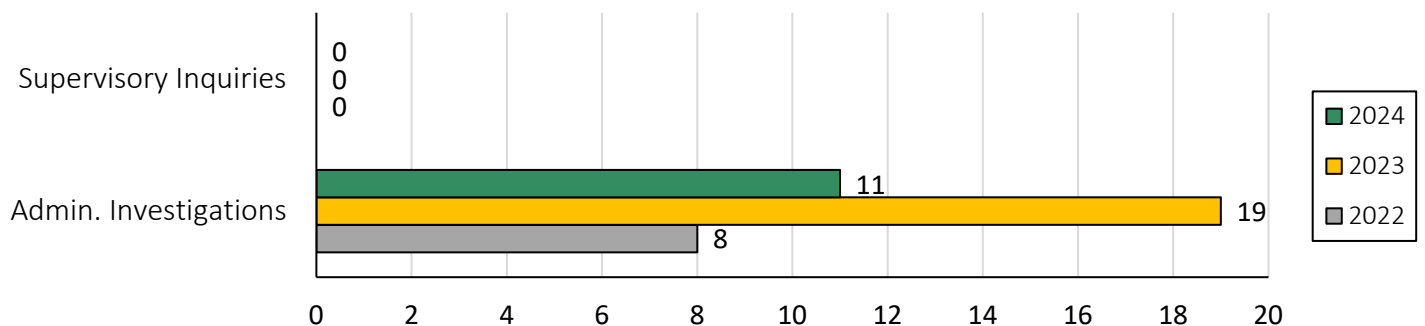
Administrative Investigations and Supervisory inquiries are derived from formal complaints received from the public or internally authorized investigations within the Sheriff's Office. The following graph conveys the number of formal investigations conducted with a distinction between external (public) complaints and internally (agency) authorized investigations.

Formal Investigations



Analysis of Investigations

	2023	2024	CHANGE
Administrative Investigations	19	11	-42%
Supervisory Inquiries	0	0	0%
Total Number of Investigations	19	11	-42%



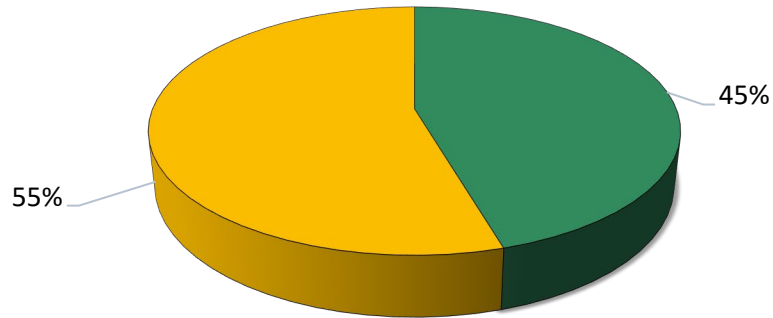


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Service Related Investigations



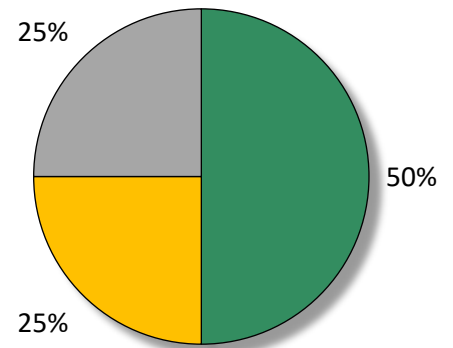
Service Related	5
Non-Service Related	6
Total	11



EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Enforcement	6	50%
Corrections	3	25%
Civilian	3	25%
Total Number of Employees Investigated*	12	100%

* Some investigations involved multiple employees, and some employees were the subjects of multiple investigations.



DIGITAL VIDEO EVIDENCE

In 2024, there were 10 formal investigations that involved the use of digital video evidence.

In-Car Camera (SCSO)	0
In-Car Camera (Outside Agency)	0
Body Worn Camera (SCSO)	2
Body Worn Camera (Outside Agency)	5
Security Video (SCSO)	5
Security Video (Outside Agency)	0
Security Video (Other)	2

In four cases, video evidence was used to sustain violations, in one case to exonerate the employee, and in two cases, video evidence did not influence the findings.

This represents no change from 2023, when 4 investigations were resolved through video evidence.



Professional Conduct Review Section

AGENCY PRACTICES

Recommendations for changes to agency practices were made in 2 formal investigations.

PC-24-0001

The Professional Conduct Review Section offers for consideration an addition to current policy reflecting the added capabilities of cell phone technology and acceptable uses. Current policy does not outline acceptable uses of video call functionality while at a Sheriff's Office incident. Specifically, cell phones have the ability to conduct a video call to another party, not at a scene. While this may prove beneficial for other Sheriff's Office employees who need to know and/or see what is occurring in real-time, the policy does not prohibit an employee from contacting a member of the public, digitally inviting them into a crime scene or confidential investigation.

Therefore, the Professional Conduct Review Section offers a recommendation to either General Order #45 – Information Systems and Services, and/or, General Order #69 – Preliminary and Follow-Up Investigations:

Employees are prohibited from taking any photos or videos and distributing them to any person not directly involved with an investigation. Additionally, employees are prohibited from conducting any live video calls with any person not directly involved with an investigation, to include other employees or members of the public.

PC-24-0010

The Professional Conduct Review Section offers for consideration several additions or modifications to policy.

Corrections P & P 08.13 – Critical Response Team, states the supervisors of the CRT are responsible to develop and maintain specific SOPs concerning the operations of the CRT dependent on applicable tasks and objectives. At the time of this incident, SOPs for the CRT were in draft form and not applicable to CRT functions. More importantly, the Professional Conduct Review Section has determined the CRT, and the JEPCF administration, has failed to properly develop and maintain SOPs for the unit, and only recognized this shortfall when a complaint was made to the SCSO regarding their actions. The Professional Conduct Review Section recommends the CRT develop and adopt applicable SOPs for the CRT as soon as possible, with clarification and approval to meet necessary accreditation standards, if any.

The Professional Conduct Review section also recommends the CRT, along with JEPCF administration, decide whether the CRT activation memo is a necessary document for each incident, or if the CAFE and BlueTeam reports could serve in its place. If the activation memo is to be a required document, the Professional Conduct Review Section recommends an amendment to P&P 08.13 outlining the need for the activation memo, as well as the required content of such memo. Additionally, it was learned during the investigation there was a perceived need for this memorandum to satisfy an existing accreditation standard, however, no such proof of standard exists.

The Professional Conduct Review Section also recommends updating training procedures for the CRT regarding cell extraction entry procedures and the use of a Taser in lieu of a full team entry. It was apparent that due to the cell's limited size and the number of deputies on top of Cannon, voluntary submission would not have been easily detected by the CRT.



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SECTION III

Supervisory Inquiries

There were no Supervisory Inquiries conducted during the 2024 calendar year

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Professional Conduct Review Section

SECTION IV

Administrative Investigations

The following is an analysis of Administrative Investigations conducted during the 2024 calendar year. This information is based upon 11 investigations that were analyzed for Violations Charged, Findings, and Disciplinary Actions.

Sheriff's Office Administrative Investigations:	11
Total Number of Alleged Violations/Charges Investigated:	30
Total Number of Employees Investigated:	12
Deputy Sheriff Involved Shootings:	1
Dangerous Animal Shootings:	0

** Some investigations involved multiple employees.*

VIOLATIONS CHARGED

Of the 30 alleged violations of Sheriff's Office written directives investigated by the Professional Conduct Review Section, the following table shows the types and percentages of alleged misconduct.

VIOLATION	TOTAL	%
Conduct Unbecoming*	8	26%
False Statements & Reports*	5	16%
Knowledge/Obedience of Laws*	5	16%
Carelessness*	4	13%
Association/Fraternization with Criminals	1	3%
Conduct Toward Supervisor/Subordinates & Peers	2	6%
Social Media Conduct*	1	3%
Weapons Policy	1	3%
BWC Procedures	1	3%
Response to Resistance	2	6%

** One employee accounted for 6 (20%) total alleged violations.*

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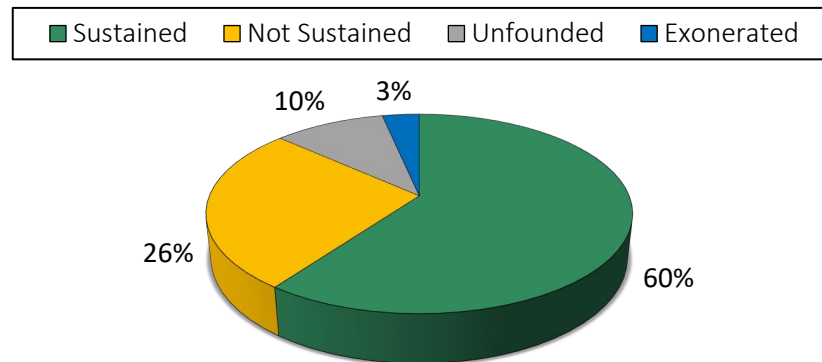


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FINDINGS

Of the 30 alleged violations of Sheriff's Office policies and procedures investigated by Professional Standards, the table below provides a comparison, by category, of the findings assigned to each of the alleged violations investigated.

Sustained	18
Not Sustained	8
Unfounded	3
Exonerated	1



** One employee accounted for 6 (20%) total Sustained violations.*

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The following disciplinary actions were taken as a result of the 18 sustained policy violations, involving 12 employees, the following disciplinary actions were taken. The table below provides a comparison, by category, of the numbers and percentages of the resulting disciplinary actions.

DISCIPLINE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Written Reprimand	2	11%
Suspension	1	5%
Demotion	0	0%
Resignation	2	11%
Termination	4	22%

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SECTION V

Telecommunications

During the 2024 calendar year, there were 0 Administrative Investigations involving personnel assigned to the Telecommunications Division.

**Required by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, the organization that oversees accreditation of the Telecommunication Section.*

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Professional Conduct Review Section

SECTION VI

Biased Policing Review

Pursuant to the requirement as set forth in General Order #48, VII, there were no investigations related to possible biased policing processed through the Professional Conduct Review Section during the calendar year 2024.

The written policy states in part:

In order to protect the dignity of all persons, biased policing by Sheriff's Office personnel is totally unacceptable and is considered prohibited conduct.

Sheriff's Office objectives include protecting the public by enforcing the law in a fair and impartial manner, recognizing both the statutory and judicial limitations of authority, while protecting the rights of all persons. To this end, enforcement action, including, but not limited to traffic stops, field contacts (stop and frisk), arrests, searches and seizures, the application of force, and asset seizure and forfeiture efforts shall be based solely on law and articulable facts and not on any other characteristics as defined in General Order #48, IV.A.

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Professional Standards Division will conduct an administrative review of the agency's practices and any citizen concerns regarding biased policing during the previous year. The review shall summarize any biased policing complaints, including the findings.

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