

# ***CITIZEN COMPLAINT ANALYSIS 2022***



**ROANOKE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
APRIL 2023**

# CITY OF ROANOKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

Operational Directive 52.1.1 states that all complaints and allegations of improper conduct against the agency or its employees, including anonymous complaints, be investigated and specifies:

- » The type of complaint to be investigated by line supervisors.
- » The type of complaints that require an investigation by the Office of Professional Standards.

Operational Directive 52.1.1 also specifies:

- » The Chief of Police will be notified of all complaints received against the Roanoke Department and employees.
- » The Office of Professional Standards shall maintain a record of all complaints against the Department or employees in a secure location to ensure confidentiality.

## TERMS

The following terms are contained throughout this analysis:

### COMPLAINT

A formal accusation made toward the department, an officer or employee. For purposes of this summary report, you can have more than one officer listed in a single complaint.

### JURISDICTION OF COMPLAINANT

Refers to the home address listed by the complainant on the complaint form.

### ALLEGATION

Refers to the act or acts that make up the accusation against an officer or employee. There can be more than one allegation in each complaint.

### DISPOSTION

Per Operational Directive 2.1.31, Disciplinary System and Procedures, any investigation concerning allegations of misconduct shall include, but not limited to, the following conclusions which are known as “dispositions”. They are:

- » **EXONERATED**

The allegation is not supported by facts; the action of the Department or the officer/employee was consistent with Department policy.

» **SUSTAINED**

The allegation is supported, in whole or in part, by credible evidence. The allegation is true; the action of the Department or the officer/employee was inconsistent with Department policy.

» **NOT SUSTAINED**

There is insufficient proof to confirm or refute the allegation.

» **UNFOUNDED**

Either the allegation is demonstrated false or there is no credible evidence to support it.

» **POLICY FAILURE**

The allegation is true; the action of the Department or officer/employee was not governed by existing Department policy.

» **TERMINATION OF INVESTIGATION**

A termination of investigation can occur for the following reasons:

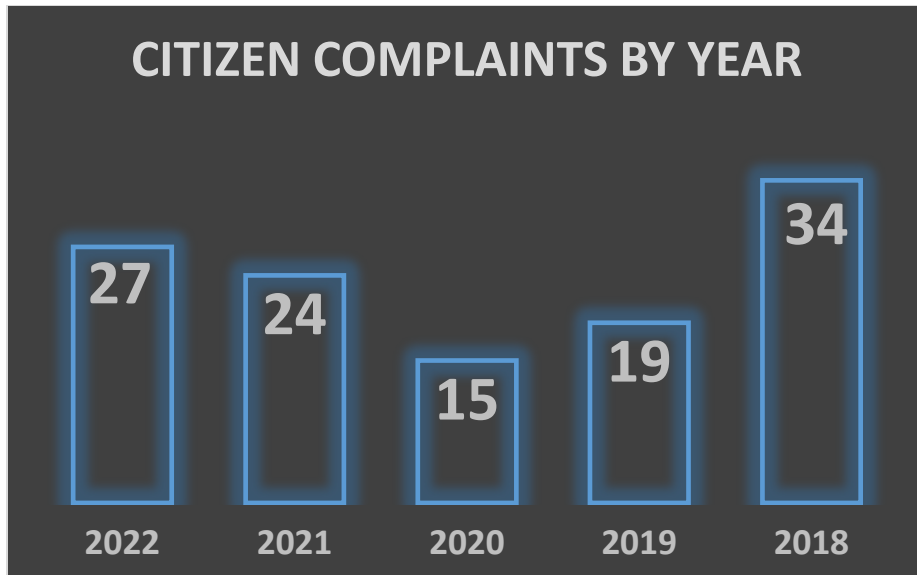
- The investigation is suspended due to a lack of cooperation from the complainant only after multiple attempts are made to contact the complainant including sending of a certified letter.
- The Complainant has stated either verbally or in written format that they no longer wish to pursue the allegations.
- The involved officer is no longer employed by the Roanoke Police Department.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

During the calendar year 2022 there were 27 citizen complaints received by the Roanoke Police Department that included 50 allegations and involved 34 employees. All complaints were investigated in a timely manner and on an individual basis. This report documents a summary of complaints by month, the type of offense that lead to the complaint, the type of allegation, disposition of each allegation, type of discipline, a breakdown of officer assignment, officer tenure and a demographic analysis of the complainant.

## **COMPLAINTS**

The Roanoke Police Department had 107,312 citizen contacts in the year 2022. Of those contacts, only 27 resulted in a citizen filing a complaint against police officers of the department. The total number of complaints rose by 13%, from 24 to 27, compared to those in 2021. Overall, the number of complaints in 2022 is slightly above the five-year average of complaints (24) for the five previous years.



### COMPLAINTS BY MONTH

For the year 2022, the month of July had the most complaints of any other month during the year. There were five citizen complaints during July 2022. The number of complaints rose in six months of the year and decreased or remained the same in the remaining six months compared to the previous year. There does not appear to be any apparent statistical relevance between when the complaint was received and the overall number of complaints for the year.

MONTH	2022	CHANGE	2021	CHANGE	2020
JAN	1	-2	3	+1	2
FEB	3	+1	2	+2	0
MAR	2	-1	3	+2	1
APR	3	+2	1	0	1
MAY	4	+1	3	+2	1
JUN	3	+3	0	-2	2
JUL	5	+3	2	+2	0
AUG	2	0	2	0	2
SEP	1	-1	2	+2	0
OCT	2	-2	4	+1	3
NOV	1	+1	0	-1	1
DEC	1	-1	2	+1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>20</b>

## SERVICE TYPE FOR ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

In the City of Roanoke during 2022, there were 100,376 calls for service, 6,187 traffic stops and 749 officer initiated events totaling 107,312 citizen contacts by Roanoke Police Department personnel. The vast majority of all citizen contacts by police officers has always been as the result of a dispatched call for service. Consequently, the primary service type that results in a citizen complaint has historically been in a response to a call for service. The calendar year 2022 was no different.

In 2022, 94% of all citizen contacts were the result of a dispatched call for service. 37% of all citizen complaints in 2022 (10 of 27 or 37%) of total citizen complaints resulted from a dispatched call for service. The number of citizen complaints that resulted from calls for service was nearly identical from 2021 to 2022 with only an increase of 1 complaint over the previous year. Traffic stops were the only other service type that resulted in a large increase or decrease over 2021 from 0 to four. However, this is probably related to the decrease in traffic stops overall during the COVID-19 pandemic occurring in 2020 and 2021.

SERVICE TYPE	2022	CHANGE	2021	CHANGE	2020
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION	4	3	1	1	2
CALL FOR SERVICE	10	-1	11	-5	6
DRUG INVESTIGATION	0	0	0	1	1
FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION	1	1	0	0	0
NONE	0	-3	3	-1	2
PUBLIC SERVICE	0	-3	3	-3	0
RESTRAINING	1	1	0	0	0
SCHOOL INCIDENT	1	1	0	0	0
SELF-INITIATED CALL	1	0	1	0	1
TELESERVICE	1	1	0	0	0
TRAFFIC CONTROL	0	0	0	1	1
TRAFFIC STOP	4	4	0	2	2
WANTED SUBJECT	2	-3	5	-5	0
WARRANT SERVICE	2	2	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>15</b>

## ALLEGATION TYPE

There were 50 allegations made in the 27 complaints received by the department in 2022. The most common allegation against officers in 2022 was for Unsatisfactory Performance (Rules and Regulations, #036R) which is only one more than in 2021. The number of complaints for courtesy against staff saw the biggest decrease during 2022 which would indicate that officers have developed communication techniques that gain rapport with citizens they come in contact with.

The largest increase in complaint allegations by citizens in 2022 was for the use of force and discrimination. Each of those categories saw four additional allegations compared to the previous year. Of note, none of these allegations were sustained against any officer. Any allegation of excessive force by citizens is always presented to the Disciplinary Review Board which is made up of community volunteers and Command Staff members. In 2022, after review of each of these allegations, the Disciplinary Review Board and Chief of Police determined that no officer acted outside of policy or departmental procedures.

ALLEGATION	2022	2021	2020
004R - PERSONAL CONDUCT	0	7	1
013R - BADGE/IDENTIFICATION	0	1	0
014R-PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATORY CONDUCT	4	0	1
018R - ARREST SEARCH AND SEIZURE	1	0	9
022R - DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS	0	1	1
028R - COURTESY	6	14	9
036R - UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE	9	8	1
OD 1.2.1 - AUTHORITY	0	2	0
OD 2.1.22 - USE OF FORCE	7	3	7
OD 2.4.2 - PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATORY CONDUCT	4	0	0
OD 41.2.2 - VEHICLE OPERATION	0	0	1
OD 41.3.13 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE	1	0	0
OD 41.3.9 ENTER DWELLING TO MAKE ARREST	1	0	0
OD 41.4.2 ANIMAL PROTECTION UNIT	0	0	2
OD 44.2.1 JUVENILE PROCEDURES	1	0	0
OD 63.1.1 ACCIDENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	2	0	0
OD 82.1.3 - INCIDENT REPORTS	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>32</b>



# INVESTIGATION ANALYSIS

## ALLEGATION DISPOSITIONS

In 2022, there were 13 more allegations of policy violations against officers by members of the community than in 2021. However, while department staff have traditionally overwhelmingly been exonerated of allegations made in complaints, for the first time, there were no sustained policy violations against any department employees in 2022.

ALLEGATION DISPOSTION	2022	%	2021	%	2020	%
Exonerated	50	100%	30	81%	18	56%
Terminated	0	0%	3	8%	5	16%
Sustained	0	0%	4	11%	5	16%
Unfounded	0	0%	0	0%	4	13%
Not Sustained	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>		<b>37</b>		<b>32</b>	

## TERMINATED INVESTIGATIONS

A terminated investigation typically results when the citizen who filed the complaint becomes uncooperative or unavailable during the investigation or an officer leaves the department before completion of the investigation.

Before a complaint can be filed as a terminated investigation due to non-contact, the assigned investigator will attempt to contact the complainant at least three times before a certified letter is sent. The letter instructs the complainant to contact the investigator within five days after receiving the letter. If there is no attempt by the complainant to contact the investigator then the case is filed as terminated. The case can be reopened at a later date if the complainant contacts the Professional Standards Unit.

In 2022 no complaints made by citizens were terminated for any reason.

## DISCIPLINE

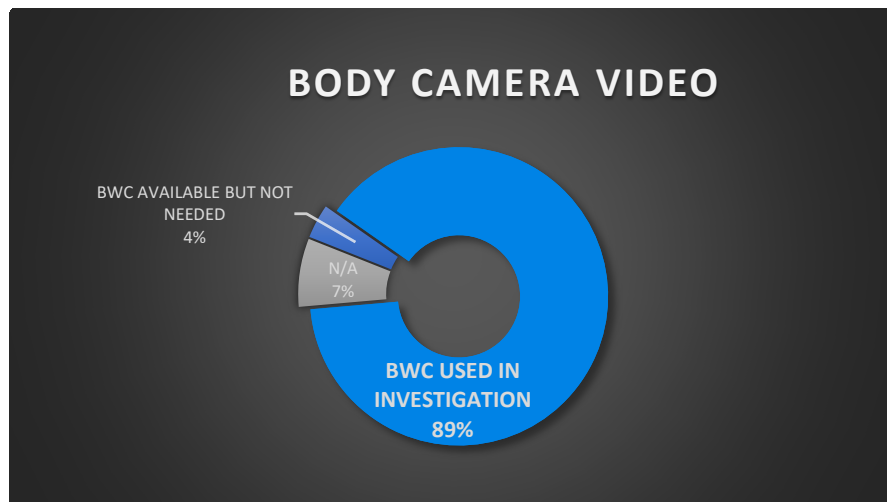
All allegations against officers from citizen complaints in 2022 were exonerated. No discipline was needed for officers since there were no sustained allegations. This is down from 4 sustained allegations in 2021 and 2 in 2020.

DISCIPLINE	2022	2021	2020
COUNSELING	0	0	0

<b>ORAL REPRIMAND</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WRITTEN REPRIMAND</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SUSPENSION</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ALLOWED RESIGNATION</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TERMINATION</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TRAINING</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

## BODY WORN CAMERA VIDEO

The use of body camera video in citizen complaint investigations exonerated 89% of all allegations made against officers of the Roanoke Police Department in 2022. Body worn camera usage was available and assisted in the investigations of nearly all the citizen complaint investigations for 2022. Of the 27 citizen complaints, 24 investigations actively utilized the review of body worn camera to determine the outcome of the allegations that had been made. One complaint had body worn camera video available but it was not needed to make a disposition determination and in two complaints body worn camera video would never have been available based on the nature of the complaint.



## COMPLAINANT

### COMPLAINANT DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022, of the 29 complainants, 15 were males and 14 were females. Of the males, one was Hispanic, eight were black males and six were white males which is nearly identical to 2021. The number of black males filing complaints against officers has remained statistically similar for the past three years.

Of the female complainants, six were black females, five were white females and one was a Hispanic female. The biggest increase in any demographic category of complainants was the number of black females who made complaints in 2022 which rose from 3 to 6. Additionally, for the first time in several years, the number of female complaints was nearly equal to the number of male complainants in 2022. Traditionally, there have been far more male complainants than females.

MALES	2022	2021	2020	FEMALES	2022	2021	2020
B	8	7	7	B	6	3	2
W	6	7	3	W	5	6	4
H	1	1	0	H	1	0	0
TOTAL	15	15	26	OTHER/UNK	2	0	0
				TOTAL	14	9	6

## COMPLAINANT JURISDICTION

The 27 complaints filed in 2022 were from both residents of the City of Roanoke and non-residents. Of those complainants, the majority (21 of 27) resided within the City of Roanoke. One complainant was a transient and five resided outside the City of Roanoke in other jurisdictions.

Of the 21 complaints that were filed from a resident of the City of Roanoke, Northwest residents filed 13 complaints which was the most of any other quadrant in the city. This was a notable increase that more than doubled over the number of complaints from Northwest in 2021.

ASSIGNMENT	2022	2021	2020
ROANOKE-NE	2	4	1
ROANOKE-NW	13	5	10
ROANOKE-SE	1	6	0
ROANOKE-SW	5	2	3
TRANSIENT/UNKNOWN	1	3	0
OTHER JURISDICTION	5	4	2
TOTAL	27	24	16

## INVOLVED STAFF

In 2022, 34 police officers with the Roanoke Police Department were named in the 27 citizen complaints. Of those 34 officers, 12 officers had more than one complaint against them during 2022. One officer was the subject of 4 citizen complaints during 2022, however, each of those

investigations were presented to the Disciplinary Review Board which found along with Chief Roman no wrong doing or policy violations on behalf of the officer.

A large majority (59%) of all department employees that were involved in a citizen complaint during 2022 have been employed by the department between 5 and 10 years.

YEARS OF SERVICE	TOTAL	%
<5 YEARS	8	24%
5-10	20	59%
10+	6	18%

Half of all police officers that were involved in a citizen complaint in 2022 were under the age of 30. Younger officers with fewer years of service have historically received a majority of citizen complaints. One explanation for this tendency is that younger officers with fewer years of training and experience often have less mature conflict resolution skills than their counterparts who are older and have more experience in dealing with citizens.

OFFICER AGE	TOTAL	%
<30	26	50%
30-40	12	22%
40+	6	18%

## ASSIGNMENT

Of the 34 staff members who received a complaint in 2022, an overwhelming number, 27, were assigned to Patrol. This is not surprising when you take into account that patrol functions account for the majority of community contacts within the department.

There does not appear to be any correlation that can be related to which patrol platoon an officer is assigned to in regards to the number of citizen complaints. While Alpha Platoon had the lowest citizen complaints in 2022, they had the highest the previous year. Consequently, Bravo Platoon had the highest number of complaints in 2022 but the lowest in 2021.

ASSIGNMENT	2022	2021	2020
PATROL-ALPHA	3	10	8
PATROL-BRAVO	9	3	0
PATROL-CHARLIE	8	5	9
PATROL-DELTA	7	7	2
COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM	1	1	4

<b>INVESTIGATIONS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RECORDS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COMMAND STAFF &amp; PSU</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TRAINING ACADEMY</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>

## **CONCLUSION**

There were 27 citizen complaints filed with the Roanoke Police Department in 2022 involving 34 police officers. While this number reflects a 13% growth there were in actuality only 3 additional complaints from the previous year.

The number of citizen complaints field with the department during 2022 was just a tiny fraction of the 107,312 citizen contacts the department had for the year. Of over 107,312 citizen contacts made by officers 2022, only 27 resulted in a complaint by a citizen which is approximately .03% of all citizen contacts. In 2022, only one citizen complaint was made for approximately every 3,975 citizen contacts by officers. These numbers indicate that officers are communicating effectively, using de-escalation techniques and building strong rapport with the citizens of Roanoke.

Tenure and age continue to be the most significant factor in complaints against officers. Officers with less than ten years of service made up 86% of all complaints in 2022. Officers under the age of 30 made up half of all citizen complaints in 2022. These statistics support the importance of retaining experienced officers in the department. Younger officers with fewer years of service may not have developed communication techniques that gain rapport with citizens they come in contact with, a skill that is often only matured with experience.

For the first time, there were no sustained citizen complaint allegations against the Roanoke Police Department during 2022. The utilization of body worn cameras by officers was instrumental in the resolution of these investigations. Nearly all complaints were exonerated based upon investigations that included the use of body camera video.

These statistics clearly demonstrate the exceptional work being done by the officers and staff of the Roanoke Police Department in especially difficult times for law enforcement personnel. These findings should be used as a barometer of the relationship between the Police Department and the citizens in the City of Roanoke.