



2022 Office of Professional Accountability Report

Definitions:

- **Complaint** - Information received from an internal or external source regarding the conduct of a Sheriff's Office employee. All complaints made regarding a member of the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office are accepted and investigated.
- **Internal Complaint** - A complaint originating from a Snohomish County Sheriff's Office employee.
- **External Complaint** - A complaint originating from a non-employee of the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office.
- **Personnel Complaint** - Personnel complaints include an allegation of circumstances describing act(s) or failure(s) to act, that if proven true, would constitute a violation of office policy or of federal, state or local law, policy or rule.
- **Conduct Inquiry** - Conduct Inquiries include inquiries about performance or conduct that, if true, would not violate office policy or federal, state, or local law, policy or rule. Conduct Inquiries also include alleged policy violations which are determined to be de minimis and unintentional.
- **Internal Affairs Investigation** - Misconduct investigations which are significantly complex or involve more serious allegations.
- **Disposition** - Each conduct inquiry, personnel complaint, and internal affairs investigation shall be classified with one of the following dispositions:
 - **Unfounded** - The complainant admits to making a false allegation, the accused employee was not involved in the incident, or the incident did not occur.
 - **Exonerated** - The incident occurred; however, the employee's actions were justified, lawful, and proper.
 - **Non-Sustained**
 - a) Cleared: There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation is false or it is not supported by the facts
 - b) Inconclusive: There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation



SNOHOMISH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY

DIGNITY

COMMITMENT

PRIDE

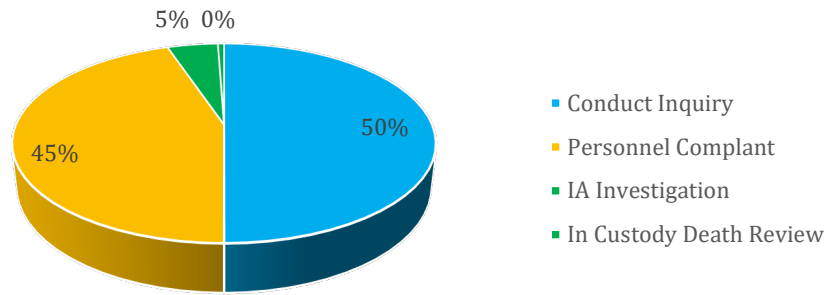
Adam Fortney, Sheriff

- c) The investigation revealed that the employee committed a violation(s) other than the original allegations(s). A new allegation would be alleged, and a finding made.
- o **Sustained** - The allegation is supported by sufficient evidence to indicate that the employee committed one or more of the alleged acts.
- o **Undetermined** - This may involve but is not limited to the following:
 - a) The complainant withdraws the complaint;
 - b) The complainant cannot be located;
 - c) The accused member separates from the Office before the conclusion of the investigation.
- o **Closed** - The investigation was determined to meet criteria for closure as a conduct inquiry. If an allegation were sustained, it would at most result in performance mentoring.



Incident Types investigated or managed by the OPA

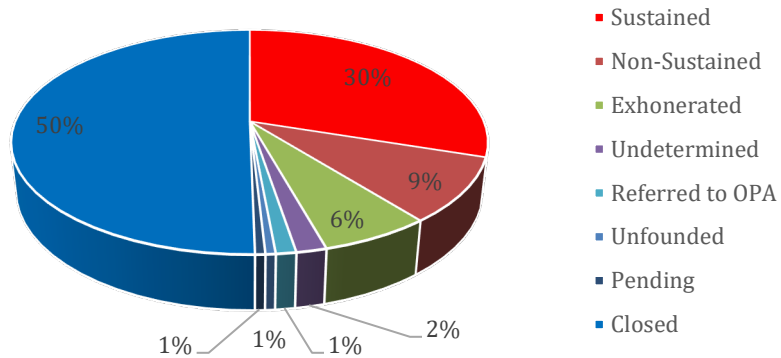
Incident Type



174 – Total

- 87 – Conduct Inquiry
- 78 – Personnel Complaint
- 8 – Internal Affairs Investigation
- 1 - In Custody Death Review

OPA Investigation Findings



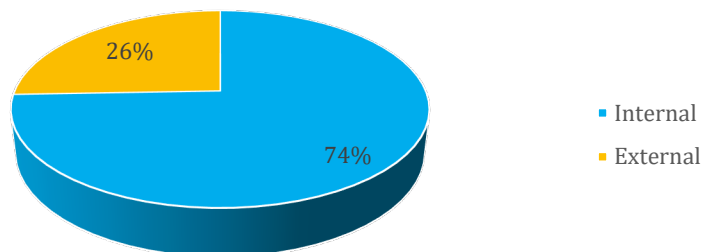
173 – Total

- 52 – Sustained
- 16 – Non-sustained
- 11 – Exonerated
- 3 – Undetermined
- 2 – Referred to OPA
- 1 – Unfounded
- 1 - Pending
- 87 – Closed



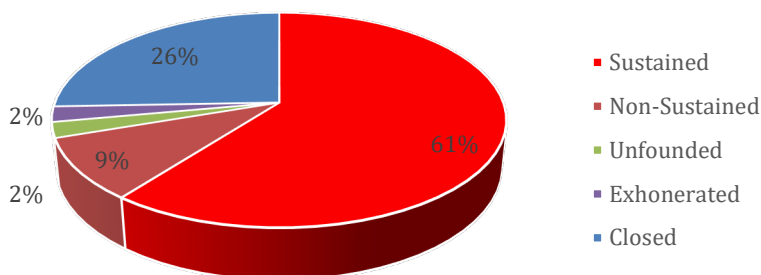
Snohomish County Corrections and Corrections Support Staff

Complaint Source



43 – Total
32 – Internal
11 - External

Complaint Finding



26 – Sustained
4 – Non-sustained
1 – Unfounded
1 – Exonerated
0 – Undetermined
11 – Closed

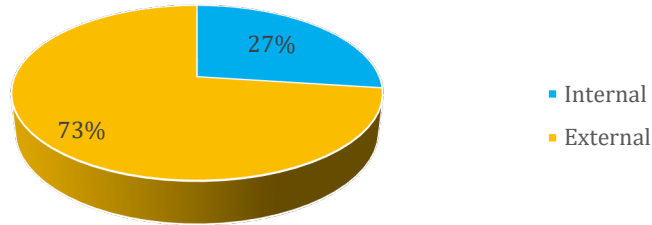
Internal Investigations

4 – Total
3 – Sustained
1 – Non-sustained



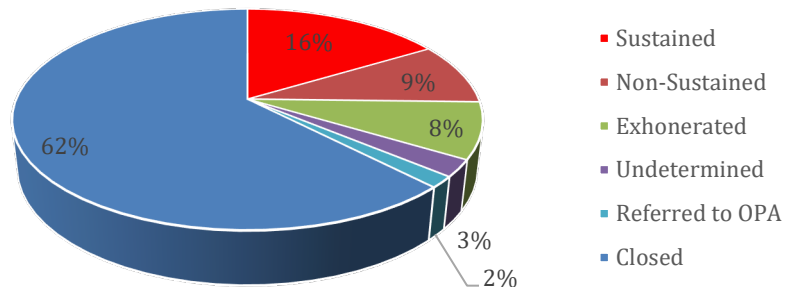
Snohomish County Law Enforcement and LE Support Staff

Complaint Source



122 – Total
33 – Internal
89 – External

Complaint Finding



20 – Sustained
11 – Non-sustained
10 – Exonerated
3 – Undetermined
2 – Referred to OPA
0 – Unfounded
76 – Closed

Law Enforcement Internal Investigations

4 – Total
3 – Sustained
0 – Non-sustained
1 – Pending



Overall Trends

58% of the 2022 complaints originated from an external source as opposed to 62% in 2021.

Top three allegations arising from External Complaints in 2022:

1. Affirmatively Promoting a Positive Public Image – 34%
2. Displaying Competent Performance and Achieving Competent Performance Results- 17%
3. Observance of Criminal and Civil Laws – 17%

Top three allegations arising from Internal Complaints in 2022:

1. Knowing, Observing and Obeying all Written Directives, Policies and Procedures - 23%
2. Use and Care of Office Property and Equipment (vehicle collisions) – 13%
3. Displaying Competent Performance and Achieving Competent Performance Results – 12%

Analysis

- Overall in 2022 there were 100 complaints received from external sources as opposed to 106 in 2021, which equates to a 5.7% decrease in citizen complaints.
- Total Corrections complaints in 2022 = 47 (29 in 2021 - 62% increase)
- Total Law Enforcement complaints in 2022 = 126 (158 in 2021 – 20% decrease)
- In Custody Death Reviews 2022 = 1 (1 in 2021 – no change)

The increase in Corrections complaints may be attributed in part to a more robust reporting expectation placed upon the corrections staff regarding minor incidents. That change took place in the LE branch in 2021 causing a similar spike in the documentation of complaints. In 2021, at the direction of Sheriff Fortney as a part of his push toward transparency and accountability, the OPA began a process which requires all complaints regarding Sheriff's Office employee conduct be documented. This has resulted in a much more robust reporting of incidents to our office, and improved service to our community. That change began in 2022 for our Corrections group. Prior to Sheriff Fortney's focus on transparency low level inquiries made by the public were handled informally by supervisors, and generally not documented.