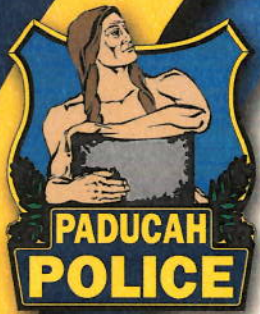


BRIAN G. LAIRD
CHIEF OF POLICE
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ACCREDITED SINCE 2004

June 17, 2020

Many of you that know me personally understand I tend to spend less time talking and more time listening. The past few weeks, I have been intentionally seeking out members of our community to hear what questions and concerns they have about the Paducah Police Department. What I heard was the need to share information about our policies, training and our commitment to community policing. I hope you will take a few minutes to learn more about your police department.

Before I discuss our policies, it is important to mention that the Paducah Police Department has been an accredited law enforcement agency since 2004. You may wonder, why is this important? Being accredited is voluntary, but something we believe is important for our community. The accreditation process involves an outside review of our policies and procedures to make sure we are following the recommended best practices. The PPD received re-accreditation in July 2019.

Use of Force

When and how our officers use force is covered in our "Response to Resistance" policy. The policy includes a physical force continuum and requires officers to use the minimum amount of force necessary to gain control of an incident. Also included in the Response to Resistance policy is the requirement for officers to complete a report when force is used beyond normal handcuffing or when an officer points a firearm at another person. These reports go through the Chain of Command for review and approval to determine if the officer followed policy and law, with final approval from the Chief of Police.

How often officers use force is something we are transparent about, and we have provided that information in our annual report for many years. In 2019, officers made 2,291 arrests and used force above normal handcuffing in 49 encounters. We were very fortunate there were no serious injuries to a citizen or officer. Of the force encounters, 63% were white and 76% were male.

One of the greatest concerns I have heard involves the use of choke holds. PPD policy is very clear: *"Officers shall not use any type of choke hold or restraint on an individual's neck unless the officer reasonably believes the individual is an immediate threat to cause serious physical injury or death to the officer or another person, and the officer has no other reasonable means available to control the individual."* This type of action is the equivalent of using deadly force and is only permitted when the use of deadly force would be justified.

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Body Cameras

The Paducah Police Department began using in-car camera systems in 1998 and started a body-worn camera (BWC) program in 2015. We continue to use both types of camera systems and last year began upgrading the outdated in-car systems. Every patrol officer, detective, and supervisor has a body camera assigned to them. The only officers not assigned a body camera are myself and the two assistant chiefs. Our policy states the camera should be on in nearly all circumstances including: traffic stops, contact with juveniles, alarm calls, vehicles searches and hostile or violent situations.

We are constantly looking for ways we can do better, which is one of the reasons our supervisors conduct quality assurance reviews. Every year, our officers have a minimum of six videos randomly reviewed. Supervisors follow an in-depth checklist to make sure the officer followed all laws and policies, along with making sure their actions adhere to our core values. In addition to the randomly chosen videos, all incidents involving the use of force and any critical incident are also reviewed. I highlight this because I think it is extremely important for the community to know we are constantly evaluating ourselves and our actions for accountability and improvement, and to provide the highest quality of service.

Hiring Standards

The Kentucky Law Enforcement Council has established minimum pre-employment standards that must be met before a new officer can attend the police academy. Paducah Police policy mirrors these standards, which include: medical exam, drug screen, fingerprint check, in-depth background investigation (which includes a credit check), polygraph exam and a psychological exam. Each officer is also required to sign a "Code of Ethics." We believe the selection of police officers is extremely important and strive to hire the most qualified candidates.

Training

Kentucky law requires each officer complete a 40-hour in-service training each year after they complete the police academy. We believe training, beyond the state mandate, is extremely important, which is why we have a full-time training officer. Our officers typically average between 80 and 100 hours of training each year. So far this year, despite the challenges created by COVID-19, we have completed training on CPR/First Aid, verbal de-escalation, firearms, and driving.

Annually, our officers complete scenario-based training focused on de-escalation tactics and proper use of force. This gives us the opportunity to evaluate confidence and skill level, and to make mistakes in a training environment, not out on the street. I believe very strongly in this type of training, which is why I worked with the Paducah Police Foundation in 2019 to raise more than \$100,000 to purchase an interactive training simulator for the police department. The simulator was ordered in early 2020 and should be fully operational by mid-summer, allowing our officers to train more often in the most critical areas of policing.

Some of the other relevant trainings our officers receive include: crisis intervention, diminished capacity, autism awareness, defensive tactics, non-lethal options, stress and wellness for officers and many refresher courses/updates. We have also brought in a U.S. Attorney and FBI Special Agent to provide our officers with training specifically related to Civil Rights laws. Additionally, our officers receive firearms training twice a year and re-certify each year on using a Taser. The firearm and Taser trainings both include a refresher on the use of deadly force.

Unique to the Paducah Police Department is the Cultural Leadership Academy. Now in its fifth year, the CLA was created in partnership with Murray State University to educate our officers in the area of cultural diversity. The curriculum focuses on intercultural leadership, social

intelligence and nonverbal communication, ethical practices in the community, and community interaction. The main goal is for officers to enhance and develop their cultural competence.

Leadership is a key component to maintaining a high-quality police agency. Recognizing the importance of leadership, all of our supervisors are required to have supervisory level leadership training upon being promoted. Our sergeants attend a three-week Academy of Police Supervision and our captains attend a Criminal Justice Executive Development program, both sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training. The top levels of leadership have each attended long term training programs through either the Southern Police Institute in Louisville or the FBI National Academy.

Community policing

The Paducah Police Department adopted the philosophy of community policing several years ago and we consistently work to build stronger relationships with the citizens we serve. We do this by engaging citizens of all ages and having a full-time Community Resource Officer to develop and coordinate community outreach programs. Because of the relationships developed by our Community Resource Officer, our officers have been able to be "stand-in" dads at father/daughter dances, deliver lunches during the summer, share the dangers of social media to more than 3,000 students, attend birthday parties and give safety presentation to more than 350 community members. These are just a few examples of how we connect with the community. Take a look at our Facebook page to see more.

Last year our officers initiated more than 6,300 community engagement contacts while on patrol. We teach DARE in the elementary schools, created a new program in 2019 at Paducah Middle School, and received a grant earlier this month to hire three officers so we could start a school resource officer program. Since 2002, we have held an annual Citizens Police Academy to provide citizens with a greater understanding of the police department. During 2019, more than 120 citizens participated in the department's ride-along program. This allowed them the opportunity to have a front seat view of how their police department operates.

Everything we do is centered on our five core values of Professionalism, Respect, Accountability, Integrity, and Communication. Each officer is expected to carry out their duties with these values in mind, even when it may not be reciprocated to them. When we fall short, we expect to be held accountable for our actions.

I encourage you to learn more about the Paducah Police Department. Please take a look at our Facebook page and our 2019 annual report, which is available on the City of Paducah website (paducahky.gov). If you want to learn even more, schedule a ride-along anytime or join the Citizens Police Academy later this year.

In closing, I want to re-affirm to the community that members of the Paducah Police Department condemn unnecessary and excessive use of force, and any form of bias-based policing. I will continue to participate in community discussions related to racism and other issues that impact our citizens and police officers.

Chief Brian Laird