



# Police Department

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CITY OF BURLINGTON

## Complaints/Internal Affairs Summary

David Turner

Lieutenant

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## **OVERVIEW:**

The Burlington Police Department prepares an annual summary of complaints and internal investigations in accordance with Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) standards for Law Enforcement (26.2.5) and Public Safety Communications (1.4.11). While these standards establish minimum requirements intended to ensure accountability and transparency, the department provides information beyond those requirements to offer a more comprehensive understanding of complaint activity and investigative outcomes. This expanded review supports public confidence, informed leadership oversight, and the department's commitment to continuous improvement.

The annual summary serves several purposes. It provides a statistical overview of complaints and Internal Affairs investigations, supports the public's understanding of departmental oversight, and assists command staff in identifying trends in employee conduct. Through analysis of these patterns, the agency can evaluate policies, training practices, and supervisory processes to prevent misconduct, improve investigative efficiency, and strengthen professional standards.

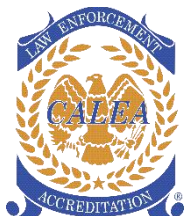
Information regarding the complaint-registration process is readily accessible to employees and the community through the department's website and printed brochures available upon request at the public lobby desk. Employees are directed to proactively assist members of the public in filing complaints when requested. Complaints may be submitted in person, by telephone, or electronically, and anonymous complaints are accepted. All complaints require prompt notification to the affected employees' supervisory chain.

## **Complaint Classifications:**

Currently the Burlington Police Department adheres to a tiered complaint classification model. Upon receiving a new complaint, supervisors will evaluate the allegations to determine the appropriate classification and, based on that classification, confidential dissemination to the proper workspaces. Internal and administrative investigations are conducted separately from any related criminal investigation when applicable.

## **Internal Affairs (IA):**

Allegations involving serious misconduct, criminal behavior, or significant policy violations may be assigned directly to Internal Affairs (IA) for a formal investigation. Internal Affairs investigations are comprehensive fact-finding inquiries conducted by the department's IA investigator or a command-level designee and often will result in the highest form of disciplinary action if sustained. Depending on the nature of the allegations, certain complaints may occasionally be escalated to Internal Affairs for review when the initial investigation reveals new facts that warrant reclassification. Similar in nature to the Class I complaint criteria, IA investigations become necessary when an employee's 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment right conflicts with an agency's ability to investigate misconduct and enforce policy.



The IA delineation from other complaint classifications occurs when questioning an employee centers on policy violations or fitness for duty. Federal law stemming from the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Garrity v. New Jersey* (1967), states "Garrity" protections will attach when the following conditions exist during an internal investigation:



1. The questioning is administrative (employment-related)
2. The employee is compelled to answer (refusing to answer truthfully = termination)
3. There is a realistic possibility of criminal liability

### **Class I:**

Class I complaints allege violations of criminal law, departmental policy/directive violations that, at face value, could warrant immediate termination, or employee code of conduct violations, such as, but not limited to, sexual harassment or hostile work environments. This class complaint at the Chief's discretion may have a shift Lieutenant assigned in lieu of a formal IA investigation.

### **Class II:**

Class II complaints involve less severe allegations, including performance concerns, discourtesy, minor policy violations, or service-related issues, and are generally handled at the immediate supervisory level unless broader misconduct is identified, prompting reclassification.

### **Case Dispositions & Discipline:**

Upon completion, investigations are assigned one of four dispositions:

- **Sustained** – sufficient evidence establishes the conduct occurred and the employee is responsible.
- **Not Sustained** – evidence is inconclusive.
- **Unfounded** – the allegation is false or the conduct did not occur.
- **Exonerated** – the conduct occurred but was lawful, proper, and within policy, or the employee was not involved.

After the investigation has been concluded and a disposition assigned, the file is forwarded up the Chain of Command to the next level of supervision for final approval. When discipline is recommended, the Captain has oversight into prescribing such discipline for Class II complaints and for Class I when termination of an employee is deemed inapplicable. When an investigation is concluded by Internal Affairs, or a Class I complaint is deemed legitimate and sustained, formal discipline or termination is at the Chief/Assistant Chief's discretion.

### **REVIEW OF DATA/FINDINGS:**

During the year in review, the agency saw an increase in complaints received, specifically in the Class I type, with ten (10) cases investigated as Internal Affairs Investigations, showing no increase over 2024. When comparing Class II complaints from 2024 to 2025, there was a 21.7% overall reduction in complaints in 2025, with the number of officers involved reduced by 18%, and the number of overall allegations reported reduced from 69 to 63.

### **Internal Affairs Investigations:**

In 2025, ten (10) Internal Affairs cases involving twelve (12) staff members were conducted, totaling twenty-four (24) allegations. The duty assignments of staff members subjected to investigation included ten (10) police officers, one (1) Burlington Communications staff member, and one (1) Civilian Crash Investigator. Of the Internal Affairs Investigations, four (4) complaints were received from external community members, and the remaining six (6) were generated internally.

The following chart lists the IA investigations completed during this year's review, with file numbers in the left margin and case dispositions on the right.

2025 Internal Affairs Investigations		
IA2025-001	Sexual Harassment / Improper Supervision / Failure of Policy	Sustained
IA2025-002	Attendance / Improper Supervision / Incompetence	Sustained
IA2025-003	Incompetence / Code of Conduct / Attendance	Sustained
IA2025-004	Criminal DWI / Code of Conduct	Sustained
IA2025-005	Code of Conduct / Unprofessionalism	Sustained
IA2025-006	Excessive UOF -3	Unfounded
IA2025-007	Criminal DV -2 / Code of Conduct -1	Sustained
IA2025-008	Incompetence / Code of Conduct / Excessive UOF	Exonerated
IA2025-009*	Computer Misuse	Not Sustained
IA2025-010	Code of Conduct	Sustained

\*Represents Burlington Communications IA

In reviewing the IA cases where alleged misconduct was found to have occurred, the subsequent disciplinary actions documented: two (2) were terminated (1 officer / 1-CCI), two officers resigned from the agency in lieu of termination, and four (4) officers were placed on 6-month administrative probation and days off without pay.

#### **Class I Complaints:**

In 2025, twelve (12) Class I cases involving twenty-one (21) staff members were conducted, totaling fifty-four (54) allegations. The duty assignments of staff members subjected to investigation were all sworn police officers, and all complaints were generated externally by community members.

2025 Class I Complaints		
CI2025-001	Unprof/Discrimination/Improp. S&S/False Arrest/Fail Policy/Inatt Detail	Exonerated
CI2025-002	Excess. UOF / Biased-Base Policing / Driving	Exonerated
CI2025-003	Discrimination - 4 / Excessive UOF	Unfounded
CI2025-004	Code of Conduct-1 / Criminal Charge - 1	Sustained
CI2025-005	Incompetence -2 / Biased Based Policing -2 / policy failure-1	Sustained
CI2025-006	Improper Search - 2 / Injured Person - 2	Exonerated
CI2025-007	Failure of Policy / Imp. S&S	Not Sustained
CI2025-008	Excess. UOF / Unprofessional / Neglect of Duty/ Code of Conduct	Not Sustained
CI2025-009	False Arrest (Occurred in 2022 -Officer no longer employed)	Sustained
CI2025-010	False Arrest x2 / Excessive UOF	Not Sustained
CI2025-011	Sex. Harr/Negligence/Bias Policing/Excess UOF/ Unprof.	Unfounded
CI2025-012	Criminal Intimidation	Unfounded

In reviewing the Class I cases where alleged misconduct was found to have occurred the subsequent disciplinary actions were documented: one (1) Officer separated from the agency in lieu of termination(*same employee in IA2025-004*), two (2) officers received Letter of Counseling (LOC), and in CI2025-009- this case occurred in 2022, that employee had previously separated from the agency before this complaint was received; therefore no discipline can be issued.

#### **Class II Complaints:**

In 2025, approximately thirty-five (35) Class II cases involving forty-seven (47) staff members were conducted, totaling sixty-three (63) allegations. The duty assignments of staff members subjected to investigation were all sworn police officers, except for two (2) Communications staff members and one (1) Civilian Crash Investigator. Of the complaints received, twenty-eight (28) were generated externally by community members, and seven (7) were generated internally by employees.

In reviewing the Class II dispositions, eight (8) out of the thirty-five total complaints were sustained, with ten (10) officers receiving various forms of discipline ranging from verbal counseling to receiving a written Letter of Counseling (LOC). Regardless of disciplinary actions received, these events are documented in the Guardian Tracking software for review by current supervision.

2025 Class 2 Complaints	Dispositions
Unprofessional / Improper Search	Unfounded
Policy Failure / Incompetence	Exonerated
Policy failure / Improper supervision	Sustained
Attendance	Sustained
False Arrest	Sustained
Driving Behavior	Unfounded
Unprofessional	Exonerated
Neglect of Duty	Not Sustained
Intimidation	Unfounded
*Unprofessionalism	Sustained
*Improper Supervision	Not Sustained
Unprofessionalism	Sustained
Driving Behavior	Not Sustained
Unprofessionalism	Not Sustained
Unprofessionalism/Incompetence	Unfounded
Incompetence	Exonerated
Unprofessionalism / Incompetence	Exonerated
Unprofessionalism / Incompetence	Exonerated
Incompetence	Unfounded
Insubordination / Incompetence	Sustained
Improper Supervision	Not Sustained
Improper Search & Seizure / Unprofessionalism	Unfounded
Unprofessionalism	Not Sustained
Policy Failure / Incompetence	Not Sustained
Unprofessionalism / Driving Behavior / Improper Search & Seizure	Not Sustained
Incompetence x2 / Unprofessionalism-1	Unfounded
Dishonesty	Exonerated
Unprofessionalism	Not Sustained
Unprofessionalism	Sustained
Code of Conduct	Unfounded
Unprofessionalism	Unfounded
Bias-Bas Pol/Incompetence/Unprofessionalism	Unfounded
Inattention to Detail	Sustained

Unprofessionalism /Improper Search & Seizure x2	Unfounded
Driving Behavior	Unfounded

*\*Represents the Burlington Communications Center Class II Complaint*

**Overall BCC Statistical Summary:**

IA Complaints are steady at low levels, with four (4) over a three-year period, and Class I had zero occurrences, and Class II had seven (7) complaints, nearly two-thirds of all complaints, and drove most of the fluctuation. For the years 2025 vs 2024, there was an overall 50% decrease. With low numbers, there are no statistically significant trends, and no specific KPIs for BCC members.

YEAR	IA	Class I	Class II
2023	1	0	1
2024	2	0	4
2025	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI's):**

The selection of both leading and lagging Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the Internal Affairs annual report is intended to evaluate not only outcomes, but also the organizational behaviors that produce them. A healthy Internal Affairs system is characterized by a moderate level of complaint intake, a low rate of sustained allegations, timely completion of investigations, documented supervisory engagement, and early-intervention indicators that prevent repeat misconduct.

**2025 Leading KPI's:**

**Focus Area:** Sustained Complaint Rate

- **Objective:** Reduce the percentage of complaints resulting in sustained findings
- **Target:** Sustained Complaints should be 20% or less
- **Result:** In 2025 overall, sustained complaints were down 14%, but the target was not achieved.

**2025 Lagging KPI's:**



- Although total allegations doubled in 2025, reaching 141 as reflected in the illustration above, only 25% were sustained, compared with 39% of allegations sustained in 2024, when the total number of allegations was

approximately half as many. This 14% reduction in sustained allegations during the year under review, despite a significant increase in total reported allegations, is noteworthy.

- This KPI-driven data suggests the presence of a healthy internal affairs and complaint review system. The increase in reported allegations may reflect growing community trust in the department's transparency and its commitment to internal accountability. The decline in sustained allegations over the three-year period appears to be the result of several contributing factors, including the agency's response to identified training deficiencies and needs, increased supervisory engagement through counseling, and the consistent application of strong accountability measures.

## **2026 Leading KPI Recommendations**

- **Objective:** Reduce and prevent sustained allegations from exceeding 20% of the total number of reported allegations.
- **Target:** Develop and deliver mandatory in-service training for all sworn staff focused on de-escalation and scenario-based decision-making to improve performance, enhance judgment in critical incidents, and reduce the likelihood of sustained allegations.

## **2025 OPERATIONAL REVIEW:**

### **Review of Training and Equipment:**

There is no official training or requirement to review in this annual review. The only specialized equipment is IA Pro and Blue Team software that is utilized by supervisors to document complaints and other data sets the agency chooses to record within these programs. These mentioned programs remain unchanged from the previous year.

### **Policy/Procedure Review:**

The current policies and procedures were reviewed, and there were minor changes in 2025.

- BPD Policy 1010- Personnel Complaints & Discipline
- BPD Procedure 1009- Personnel Complaints and Progressive Discipline Procedures.

Changes in 2025 are directed towards the efficiency in which complaints are completed. Moving forward, Internal Investigations should be completed within fourteen (14) working days. If this is not feasible, then a written extension request must be made and approved by the Chief or his designee.

Complaint records are stored under administrative rights in IA Pro, where the Chief of Police and his designee have control. These records are securely stored separately from the central personnel for confidentiality.

### **Fiscal Component:**

The contract with Blue Team/IA Pro will continue into 2026 as an appropriate means of receiving, drafting, and managing the complaints received by the agency. The annual fee for Blue Team/IA Pro is approximately \$2,754.

### **Supervision Review:**

The Assistant Chief oversees the distribution of investigative workload, assigning cases to Lieutenants or Captains as appropriate. In addition, the Assistant Chief evaluates investigative outcomes to identify

patterns of conduct, potential policy concerns, and training needs, allowing the agency to proactively address issues and improve organizational performance. The assigned investigator of any IA, while directly supervised by the Assistant Chiefs, has direct access to the Chief of Police for consultation and direction if needed.

### **Operational Effectiveness**

The agency's overall Internal Affairs operational effectiveness remains strong. Only one complaint required carry-over into 2026, and that case was atypical as the complaint was submitted after the employee involved had already separated from the department. Aside from this rare circumstance, investigations were handled within expected reporting and review processes, demonstrating the unit's ability to manage caseloads efficiently and maintain the timely resolution of complaints.

Current policy and the department's use of IAPro and BlueTeam for complaint intake, documentation, investigation, and accountability are appropriate and functioning as intended. However, greater consistency in daily system use and stricter adherence to investigative timelines would further improve efficiency and defensibility. To support this improvement, agency-wide refresher training for supervisors—particularly with the recent promotion of less tenured personnel to ranks such as sergeant and lieutenant is recommended. Reinforcing supervisory responsibilities, documentation standards, and investigative timelines will enhance organizational consistency and strengthen the overall effectiveness of the Internal Affairs process.