

LAWRENCE TWP. POLICE DEPARTMENT

2023 Year End Report



Prepared by:

**CHIEF
CHRISTOPHER LONGO**



 CLongo@Lawrencetwp.com

 609-844-7102

 <https://www.lawrencetwp.com/departments/police>

 <https://www.facebook.com/LtwpNJPD/>

Contents

1. Introduction

Page 1

2. Our Mission

Page 3

3. Council Overview

Page 5

4. Crime Stats and Trends

Page 9

5. Personnel

Page 12

6. Patrol Division

Page 15

7. Quakerbridge Mall (QMB)

Page 23

8. Investigations

Page 27

9. Firearms

Page 37

10. Megan's Law

Page 41

11. Internal Affairs

Page 44

12. Accreditation

Page 48

13. Records

Page 51

14. Communications

Page 55

15. Traffic Safety

Page 58

16. K9 Officer

Page 64

17. Message From Chief Longo

Page 68



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

100 YEARS

LAWRENCE TWP. POLICE N.J.

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP POLICE HONOR INTEGRITY KNOWLEDGE MAIDENHEAD TOWNSHIP 1697 NJ

1924 2024

A CENTURY OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY

RANK OFFICER

Police Officer	105	Victoria Corral
Police Officer	106	Richard Scherack
Captain	122	John Santomasi
Police Officer	123	James Kelly
Sergeant	124	John Pustrogan
Police Officer	125	Thomas Wierzbicki
Lieutenant	126	Edward Oleson
3rd Chief	106	Raymond de Brito
Lieutenant	111	Richard Rizzo
Sergeant	118	John M. Kelly
Police Officer	126	John M. Kelly
4th Chief	131	Arthur Neri
Lieutenant	132	Christopher Taber
Detective	116	Clayton Krutz
Police Officer	114	Thomas Walker
Detective	117	Thomas Walker
Police Officer	133	Richard Corral
Police Officer	134	Richard Corral
Captain	136	William Becker
Sergeant	137	William Becker
Detective	138	William Becker
Police Officer	139	Robert Ruffalo
Police Officer	141	Robert Ruffalo
Police Officer	142	Lakshmi Pappas
Police Officer	143	Lakshmi Pappas
Captain	144	Arthur Neri
Lieutenant	145	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	146	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	147	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	148	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	149	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	150	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	151	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	152	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	153	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	154	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	155	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	156	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	157	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	158	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	159	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	160	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	161	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	162	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	163	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	164	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	165	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	166	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	167	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	168	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	169	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	170	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	171	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	172	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	173	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	174	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	175	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	176	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	177	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	178	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	179	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	180	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	181	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	182	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	183	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	184	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	185	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	186	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	187	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	188	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	189	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	190	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	191	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	192	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	193	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	194	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	195	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	196	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	197	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	198	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	199	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	200	Arthur Neri

RANK OFFICER

Police Officer	201	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	202	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	203	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	204	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	205	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	206	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	207	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	208	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	209	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	210	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	211	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	212	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	213	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	214	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	215	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	216	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	217	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	218	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	219	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	220	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	221	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	222	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	223	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	224	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	225	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	226	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	227	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	228	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	229	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	230	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	231	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	232	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	233	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	234	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	235	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	236	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	237	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	238	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	239	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	240	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	241	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	242	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	243	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	244	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	245	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	246	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	247	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	248	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	249	Arthur Neri
Police Officer	250	Arthur Neri



1.) INTRODUCTION

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it is both an honor and responsibility to reflect upon the achievements, challenges, and unwavering commitment of our dedicated law enforcement officers in Lawrence Township.

In the report contained on the following pages, you will find a detailed account of the police department's accomplishments, initiatives, and community engagements during the calendar year of 2023. This report aims to provide transparency and insight into the multifaceted nature of modern policing, acknowledging the complexities and dynamic challenges faced by our department.

Throughout 2023, the members of the Lawrence Township Police Department continued to promote a professional, dedicated and knowledgeable approach to help solve the problems that face our town. This summary of operations is only a small portion of each officer's commitment to the overall service to the community.

The Lawrence Township Police Department is committed to providing exceptional police service to all members and visitors of the Lawrence Township community. The department strives to provide appropriate services, referrals and active enforcement of New Jersey state laws, as well as all Township ordinances. Our goal is to serve our community in a manner that helps improve the quality of life for all.

In 2023 the Lawrence Township Police Department continued to embrace all members of our community, working effectively to complete our mission with the support of our citizens.

The command staff of the department collaborates to review our policies and procedures to ensure that the best possible services are provided to the community we serve. Each year, it is the goal of the department to improve all facets of police operations. There are many areas of importance, including reviewing calls for service, analyzing past critical incidents and keeping abreast of developing criminal trends both locally and nationally that help our department remain on the cutting edge in the field of law enforcement.

Additionally, we extend our gratitude to the Mayor, Township Council, Township Manager, and the Lawrence Township community for their continued support and partnership. In a year marked by unprecedented global challenges, the unity between law enforcement and the community has proven to be an essential foundation for our collective resilience. Through joint efforts and open communication, we have worked towards building a safer and more secure environment for all. A police agency cannot maximize its efforts without the support of the community and governing body. In Lawrence Township, our job is made much easier by having such support.

If anyone has any questions regarding the material presented in this report, please feel free to contact Chief Christopher Longo with your inquiries.

Thank you

Commmand Staff



Chief Christopher Longo



Lt. Michael Whitmore



Capt. Joseph Lech IV



Lt. Shaun Sexton



Lt. Richard Laird



Lt. Kevin Reading

2.) Our Mission



Our Mission

The mission of the Lawrence Township Police Department is to improve the community by practicing problem solving strategies against crime and quality of life issues. We are committed to conducting pro-active policing strategies to reduce crime and the fear of crime in our town. We believe in, and are committed to, developing partnerships within the community to improve the quality of life within Lawrence Township.

Our Vision

The vision of the Lawrence Township Police Department is to work in partnership with the citizens and businesses of our community to uphold the Constitution of the United States, the State of New Jersey and the ordinances of Lawrence Township. We will be pro-active in addressing quality of life issues by utilizing innovative problem solving techniques. We will solicit input from our residents and businesses alike to address all concerns that may arise. We are committed to providing the utmost professionalism and integrity in the services that we provide.

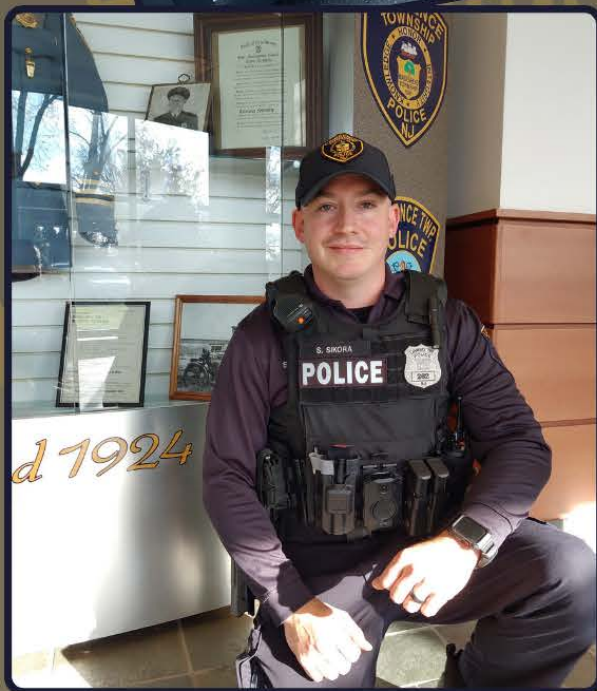
Our Values

Honor-Integrity-Knowledge

Honor: We will honor our police powers. We understand that our police powers are derived from the community in which we serve.

Integrity: We are committed to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct, which are the cornerstones of our profession. We are dedicated to upholding the highest moral and ethical standards.

Knowledge: We will continually strive to maintain a high level of professional development through continuous learning and specialized in-service training.



3.) Council Overview

As with prior years prior, 2023 the men and women of the Lawrence Township Police Department remained on course and continued its professional model of policing.

In an effort to improve the manner in which we interact with those we police, our members conducted non-enforcement events/activities in our community. Some of these events were held either with the assistance of, or in partnership with the Lawrence Twp. Recreation Department. These events/activities included, but were not limited to:

- The Annual “Egg Hunt” was held at Central Park in April. The event was a great success with many township families participating.
- The annual “Trunk or Treat” was held at Lawrence High School in October. We tried a few new things, and we had a record turnout.
- We overhauled and revamped our social media outreach platform. In the modern era of Community Policing, social media helps build the partnership with our community. New social media programs and initiatives have helped foster transparency and has also helped galvanize community involvement/interest.
- Coffee with a Cop was held at Café du Pain at the Lawrence Shopping Center as well as Starbucks on Main St, Lawrenceville. These were collaborative events with our community partners. Members of the police department interacted with many residents who attended.
- The police department cosponsored, with the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge # 209, our first ever car show and food drive. The car show was held in the parking lot of the Lawrence Shopping Center. As a result of the event, hundreds of community members attended, resulting in hundreds of pounds of donated food that was delivered to our partners at HomeFront.
- Members of the police department participated in the 2023 Holiday Tree Lighting event. As part of the event, the police department partnered with Recreation to raise donated toys for “Joey’s Little Angel’s” nonprofit. The event was a great success!

3.) Council Overview

During 2023, the police department had on record, 60 full-time sworn officers, 1 SLEO I Officer, and 5 SLEO III School Officers. Also, in 2023 Officer Lee, Officer Stever and Officer Janoski were promoted to the rank of Sergeant and Sergeant Reading and Sergeant Sexton were promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. We also had 5 retirements, 1 sworn officer resign and 1 civilian property and evidence custodian resign during the 2023 calendar year. The police department hired 7 new police officers during 2023 to replace open positions.

During 2023, the Lawrence Township Police Department initiated or responded to 27,545 calls for service. This is a 3.1% decrease in the number of calls for service compared to 2022 when 28,429 calls for service were answered.

Every law enforcement agency in the State of New Jersey is required to submit monthly crime statistics to the New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The crimes reported to the New Jersey State Police UCR are: Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Assault, Larceny/Theft, Motor Vehicle Thefts and Arson. During 2023, there was a 3.6% decrease in reported UCR crimes in Lawrence Township. There were 502 reported UCR crimes in 2023 compared to 521 reported crimes in 2022. In 2022, there was a 18.5% decrease in UCR crimes when compared to 2021.

The complete statistics on crime in Lawrence Township for the year 2023 can be reviewed in the Uniform Crime Report section of this report *See section 4.) Crime Stats and Trends.

In 2023, the Lawrence Township Police Department continued efforts in deploying officers to locations where traffic incidents most frequently occur. In 2023, there was a decrease in traffic enforcement posts by 26%, from 1,024 posts in 2022 to 754 posts in 2023. Even with the decrease in traffic enforcement posts, there was a 57% increase in non-commercial vehicle stops in 2023 with 2550 stops, compared to 1622 in 2022. Commercial motor vehicle stops increased 338% from 29 in 2022, compared to 127 in 2023.

The police department believes crime in our town can be reduced by arresting potential criminals wanted on outstanding warrants before they have an opportunity to commit a new crime. During the course of 2023, Lawrence Township Police Officers arrested persons wanted on warrants a total of 299 times, which was an increase of 15% from 259 in 2022, and an increase of 84.5% when compared to the 162 warrant arrests in 2021.

3.) Council Overview

Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion and gender. It occurs in couples who are married, dating or living together. It affects people of all socioeconomic and education levels. In 2023, the Lawrence Township Police Department investigated 239 cases of domestic violence, which is a 2.1% increase from the 234 domestic violence cases investigated in 2022. In an effort to assist victims of domestic violence the police department has partnered with Womanspace, who oversees the department's Domestic Violence Victim Response Team (DVVRT). The DVVRT provided informal counselling and referrals to 28 victims of domestic violence in 2022.

The police department continues to work with our community organizations taking an active approach to solving problems that affect us all. During the 2021 calendar year, we began a partnership with the Volunteers of America (VOA) to aid residents in need of help. This assistance could include such things as drug/alcohol counseling, homelessness, mental health issues or financial assistance.

Additionally, we have become an ABLE (Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement) certified police agency through Georgetown University. This certification ensures a commitment by the police department to actively de-escalate and intervene with fellow officers in situations before force needs to be used.

With the support of several community partnerships, the officers of the Lawrence Township Police Department are committed to reducing not only crime, but the fear of crime through active enforcement of our laws, as well as ensuring any quality of life issue that comes to the department's attention is handled promptly and professionally.

Throughout 2023, the police department worked tirelessly to ensure quality service to our citizens regardless of the nature of the problem, time of day, weather conditions or other factors uniquely present in each citizen's need for police service.

Moving into 2024, the police department will continue to provide excellent police service to our community. Our dedicated police officers will continue to work to reduce crime/fear of crime, building stronger community ties, and improve in all areas of operation and service.



4.) Crime Stats and Trends

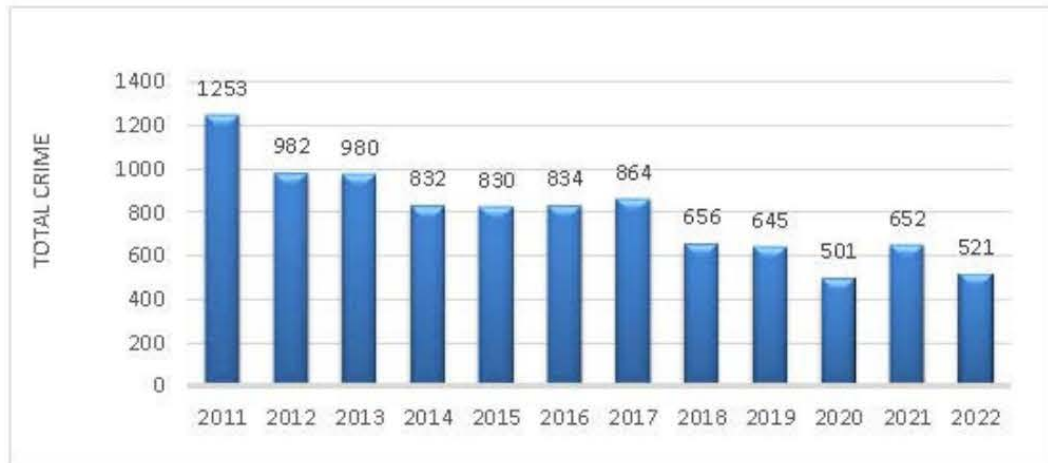
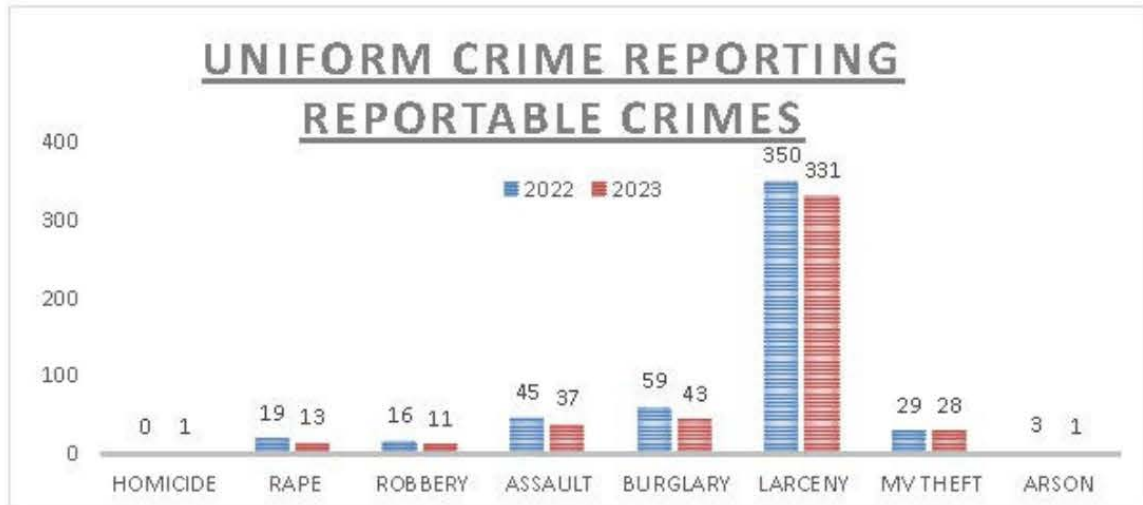
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME STATISTICS

CLASSIFICATION OF OFFENSES (UCR)	Year	Year	% Change
	2022	2023	
HOMICIDE	0	1	100.00%
RAPE	19	13	-31.58%
ROBBERY	16	11	-31.25%
ASSAULT	45	37	-17.78%
BURGLARY	59	43	-27.12%
LARCENY-THEFT (non-shoplifting thefts)	350	331	-5.43%
MV THEFTS	29	28	-3.45%
ARSON	3	1	-66.66%
Total:	521	502	-3.65%

CALLS FOR SERVICE

Accidental Injury	1	3	200%
Alarms	1611	1729	7%
All Other Offenses	74	76	3%
Civil Matter	182	233	28%
Criminal Mischief	66	57	-14%
Disorderly Conduct	9	4	-56%
Disturbances- Domestic	53	57	8%
Disturbances	141	154	9%
Domestic Violence	234	239	2%
DWI	29	29	0%
DV Response Team Assignment	33	28	-15%
Escorts- Prisoner	197	276	40%
Escorts- Other	44	49	11%
Fixed Posts	1585	1295	-18%
Forgery and Counterfeiting	23	16	-30%
Fraud	165	148	-10%
Harassments	175	146	-17%
Hazards (Total)	591	480	-19%
Health (Total)	221	186	-16%
Identity Theft	33	27	-18%
Investigations	71	81	14%
Mental Health	177	213	20%
Liquor Laws	0	0	0%
Mischievous Children	33	30	-9%
Missing Persons	54	59	9%
Narcotic Drug Laws	51	55	8%
Noise Abated (Total)	248	237	-4%
Property Damage (Total)	70	102	46%
Receiving Stolen Property	9	8	-11%
Recovered Property	113	92	-19%
School Posts	740	264	-64%
Sex Offenses	10	7	-30%
Shoplifting	243	373	53%
Suspicious Persons	378	464	23%
Traffic Enforcement	1024	754	-26%
Traffic Stops-Commercial Vehicles	29	127	338%
Traffic Stops	1622	2550	57%
Trespassing	82	39	-52%
Violation of Twp. Ordinance	59	105	78%
Warrant Arrest	259	299	15%
Weapons Offenses	16	12	-25%
Welfare Check	255	232	-9%
Total for above categories:	10833	0	-100%

4.) Crime Stats and Trends





5.) Personnel

During the calendar year 2023, the Lawrence Township Police Department employed sixty (60) Sworn Police Officers, eleven (11) of which were in the Basic Police Academy or in Field Training. In addition, the department employed five (5) Special Law Enforcement Officers assigned to schools, one (1) Administrative Clerk, two (2) Account Clerks, one of which is a part time employee, (1) one Confidential Secretary and one (1) Records Support Technician that manages the Police Property and Evidence function. The majority of these new hires were to replace vacancies created by attrition/retirements or personnel changes. The Police Department is contracted with Motivated Security who provides crossing guard services for the Township. The Police Department has seen a reduction in staff over the course of the past several years as reflected in this report. Positions once held by sworn officers have either been eliminated or are now held by civilian or part time personnel.

During 2023, significant changes to the oversight from the Division of Criminal Justice – Office of the Attorney General occurred. These changes include new Directives and/or significant changes to prior Attorney General Directives. Some examples are the addition of AG Directives regarding Officer Resiliency, “Extreme Risk” Gun Safety, Major Discipline Disclosure, “Statewide Handle with Care” Program, “Arrive First Program” Breathing / Blood flow Restriction Event (BREATH) Team and Procedures for Testing/Tracking/Storage/Retention/ Destruction of Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kits. In addition to these new Directives / Initiatives, there were significant changes to multiple Directives / Initiatives that were already in place. Some examples are changes to the following AG Directives, Use of Force, Internal Affairs, Juvenile Justice Reform, Use of Body Worn Cameras, Public Disclosure of the Identities of Officers Who Commit Serious Disciplinary Violations, and Municipal Court Bench Warrants.

Also during 2023, the Attorney General in collaboration with the Police Training Commission released mandates for the introduction of Police Licensing. Police Licensing took effect on January 1, 2024 which included the licensure of all certified law enforcement officers in the State of New Jersey. The preparation for police licensing was extremely labor-intensive including changes to training mandates, department personnel records and the use & entry into the Police Training Commission’s new ACADIS Licensing Portal.

With the additional oversight, additions & changes to Attorney General Directives, coupled with Police Licensing, the administrative staff of the police department was required to prioritize addressing these changes as required by law. As such, other important administrative responsibilities received less attention.

5.) Personnel

During 2023, State mandated administrative responsibilities continued to increase at a rate that continues to be challenging for our current number of administrative staff. Additionally, our staffing levels have remained mostly unchanged over the past 10 years. This is notwithstanding the fact that the population of Lawrence Twp. has increased by 28.27% since 1990 (25,787 to 33,077 in 2020).

The staffing of the department cannot be reduced to any lower a level without having a negative effect on the police response time to calls for service or the customer service aspect of the department that the residents and taxpayers of Lawrence Township expect and deserve.

Neighboring municipalities have steadily increased their Public Safety personnel levels to address the needs of their communities. A full-time Traffic Unit, Safe Neighborhood Unit, and a fully staffed Training Bureau are areas in which the Lawrence Township Police Department could benefit its officers and the community.

The Department had five retirements in 2023, including two command level officers, Lieutenant Joseph Caloiaro and Lieutenant James Smith along with a Police Detective, an officer designated as the Information and Technology officer and an experienced Traffic Officer.

Due to continuous retirements over the past several years, approximately 52% of the sworn officers have less than three (3) years of experience, 74% of the sworn officers have less than five (5) years of experience and 94% of the sworn officers have less than ten (10) years of experience. While the police department continues to mentor the younger officers as they gain experience, continued training is an essential part of each officer's individual success, as well as for the success of the police department and community.

Looking ahead, the Police Department continues to anticipate a high rate of officers to retire. The five-year projection is that 15 officers will retire, or be eligible to retire in the next 5 years (these projections do not include any officers lost to illness/injury or other reasons for early separation). It takes approximately one year to hire and train new officers. This means that if an officer retires, their replacement will not be ready to work in the capacity of a solo police officer for one year. It is crucial that the Township allow the Department to increase its staffing level well before these retirements occur so we will be able to properly address the needs of our community.



6.) Patrol

In 2023, the Patrol Division was initially commanded by Lieutenant Richard Laird (1st Platoon) and Lieutenant James Smith (2nd Platoon). In February of 2023, Sergeant Shaun Sexton was promoted to Lieutenant and took command of the 2nd Platoon. The Patrol Division commanders are part of the department's command staff and report to the Captain and Chief of Police.

The year started out with thirty-two (32) officers assigned to the Patrol Division along with five patrol sergeants. By the end of the 2023, the patrol division had thirty-one (31) patrol officers. Based on the patrol schedule, workload, and minimum manpower requirements, the optimal staffing level would be forty police officers (40) assigned to the Patrol Division, not including supervisors.

The Patrol Division continued to work a compressed work week schedule, also known as the "Pitman" schedule. On this schedule, officers work a total of seven 12-hour days over a fourteen-day period. The division is comprised of two platoons that alternate days off, each platoon having one "day squad" and one "evening squad". Each squad has anywhere from six to nine officers depending on the current staffing.

Each platoon is currently staffed by three sergeants. One sergeant is assigned to the "day squad" and the other sergeant is assigned to the "evening squad". The third "relief" sergeant works a shift that allows them to split their time between the day shift and the night shift. The relief sergeant also covers the shift when either of the other sergeants are on vacation. Based on the schedule, workload, staffing and inexperience of the patrol division, the optimal number of supervisors would be four sergeants per platoon. The addition of one sergeant per platoon would sufficiently increase the necessary supervision needed by the large percentage of newer officers. In addition to managing newer officers, supervisors are tasked with the increased oversight and responsibilities of patrol supervisors mandated by recent State law.

The Patrol Division lieutenants worked ten hours a day on an administration schedule with a modified rotation of work days and regular days off. This modified schedule allows for weekly command staff meetings to occur which have been essential in achieving a work flow between the command staff with the ever-increasing oversight of law enforcement within the state of New Jersey. This schedule rotation also ensures that each patrol lieutenant spends sufficient time with each platoon squad.

The Patrol Division continued to assign police officers to a steady geographical area (zone) within the Township for an entire year. This is done so officers will become familiar with a particular area of the Township, as well as problems specific to certain neighborhoods. The assignment of an officer to the same zone for a year holds officers more accountable to that area and provides officers with a sense of ownership of their respective zone.

6.) Patrol

Each platoon has officers trained and certified as Alcotest Operators (DUI), Evidence Technicians, Field Training officers, Radar Operators, Human Law Enforcement Officers, bicycle officers, and Patrol Rifle Operators.

The department also has officers who are licensed by the FAA as Remote Pilots who can fly the department's small unmanned aircraft systems, better known as drones.

The department also has a motorcycle unit that is deployed as needed and for special events and community events. Certified Motor Officers are required to complete an intensive 80-hour training program held at the Philadelphia Police Department Highway Motorcycle "Wheel" School.

The Patrol Division handled the vast majority of the 27,545 calls for service received or initiated by the department in 2023. This is a decrease of 884 calls for service compared to 2022. This change represents a decrease of approximately 3.1% when compared to total calls for service in 2022.

The department made 1026 more traffic stops in 2023 than in 2022, an approximate 62% increase. Motor vehicle crashes increased from 1174 to 1193, an approximate 1.6% increase.

Patrol Division officers also respond to investigations relating to violations of township ordinances and the land use ordinance. There were 105 investigations of ordinance violations in 2023, which included illegal dumping, snow removal violations, noise violations, false alarm activations and unregistered vehicles on private property. This constitutes an increase of 78% from 2022. Violations of Township Ordinances are investigated by patrol officers and township code enforcement officers.

To investigate many of these situations, patrol officers often had to interact with other township departments in the interest of providing the best possible service to the residents and merchants of Lawrence Township. The Lawrence Township Health Department, Recreation Department, Code Enforcement, Public Works, Engineering and Planning Department, Tax Office, and Municipal Court have all provided support, cooperation and assistance in the efforts of our department. Federal, state and county agencies have also been utilized by the Police Department to provide service to residents.

The police department is tasked with providing school crossing guards for all the designated school crossing areas within the township. This task is outsourced to a third-party entity, "Motivated Security". The township has 17 school crossing posts located throughout the Township that need to be staffed during the school year. Due to staffing issues with the private vendor, officers are still needed to cover these school posts occasionally when the vendor is unable to staff specific school posts.

6.) Patrol

Compared to 2022-2023 school year, the amount of school crossing posts covered by the patrol officers decreased from 740 posts to 264 posts (64% decrease). This is still above the net zero school posts expected to be handled by patrol officers, as the third-party entity is expected to prevent patrol officers from being assigned to school posts. The decrease in police officers covering school posts between 2022-2023 was achieved as a result of an active intervention by the police administration with the vendor and the police department's demand for better accountability. The vendor understands how much of a strain having police officers cover school posts puts on the day-to-day patrol operations. As school posts vary in time, posts last between two and four hours per day, per post. Police officers assigned to school posts are not authorized to leave the post for any reason, thus lowering police officer manpower available for emergency calls for service when officers are covering school posts.

During 2023, the department investigated 55 incidents involving various types of illegal drugs. These drugs ranged from illegally obtained prescription pills, heroin, cocaine and other illegal narcotics. This represents an increase of 1% from 2022.

A majority of the incidents involving illegal drugs were self-initiated by officers through motor vehicle stops and stops of suspicious persons. The majority of the investigations ended in the arrest of suspects and the issuing of criminal complaints against them.

The Patrol Division investigated 29 incidents of driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled dangerous substance, compared to 28 in 2022. Every time an intoxicated driver is removed from the street, there exists a strong possibility that motor vehicle crashes were prevented and innocent lives were saved.

Each platoon within the Patrol Division had an assigned traffic officer or traffic enforcement officer in 2023. The ultimate goal of this is to increase traffic safety by reducing the number of motor vehicle crashes through enforcement of traffic law violations. Another effect of this is the reduction of crime. Studies have shown that proactive traffic enforcement causes downward trends in criminal activities in specific target areas. With the Township growing every year and the expected increase in traffic, it would be beneficial for the township to explore adding additional officers to the Patrol Division to create a dedicated Traffic Unit. This units would strictly focus on traffic related issues and have proven effective across the country.

The Lawrence Township Municipal Court sessions are held via the virtual court hearing system. During in-person court sessions, two (2) armed court attendants handle municipal court security. The armed court attendants are responsible for security inside the court room and assist civilian attendants with exterior security issues when necessary. The armed court attendants are hired through a private third-party entity.

6.) Patrol

The armed court attendants continued to help the court staff, the municipal prosecutor, and police officers in the preparation of cases for court. The creation of the armed court attendant positions continues to be a great asset to the Patrol Division. It enables supervisors to reassign officers who were previously responsible for handling court room security, to street patrol and other assignments that better serve the public. Lieutenant Shaun Sexton was the designated court liaison and worked with the court staff to schedule officers for their court appearances.

Domestic Violence increased by approximately 2% in 2023, compared to 2022. There were 239 Domestic Violence incidents in 2023 and 234 reported in 2022. Domestic Disturbances increased in 2023 to 57 a slight increase from the 53 reported in 2022 which was an increase of .07 percent. In 2023 the Domestic Violence Victim Response Team (DVVRT) continued to address the needs of domestic violence victims and those impacted by domestic violence. In some instances, virtual or telephonic meetings took place. Lawrence Township Police Department's DVVRT is part of the consolidated Mercer County regional teams. The team is coordinated, trained, and administered by staff at WomanSpace. The Central Regional Team includes members from Lawrence and Princeton Townships. The team members meet on a regular basis to discuss team issues and receive in-service training. In 2023, the Central Region DVVRT responded to 28 calls for their services in Lawrence Township, a 15% decrease from 2022.

Along with an increase in domestic violence calls, mental health calls increased by 20%, as well as, suicide and suicide attempts increased by 25%. The police department is actively working with Volunteers of America, Capital Health Crisis, as well as implementing recently issued Attorney General Guidelines/Directive addressing this issue.

Lawrence Township police officers took part in numerous hours of mandatory training in firearms, domestic violence, pursuits, resiliency, use of force and de-escalation. All officers were also recertified in CPR in 2023.

The Department hosted the annual National Night Out gathering as well as a Trunk-or-Treat event at Lawrence High School. These events were a great success and attracted the largest turnout since the inception. Additional community outreach events, such as Coffee with a Cop, the first annual Car Show & holiday food drive were also conducted.

6.) Patrol

Below are some examples of the excellent police work done by members of the Patrol Division in 2023:

On September 29, 2023 at 02:25 am, midnight officers responded to a commercial business on Rt. 1 to investigate a person attempting to break into the building. The suspect had fled prior to the arrival of patrol and was unable to be located that night. A few days later on, Oct 4, 2023 at 12:56 am, the same midnight officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in close proximity to where the previous attempted burglary had occurred.

The officers responding to this incident recognized some suspicious indications that this suspicious vehicle might have been related to the prior attempted burglary. By using sound investigative methods, officers were able to establish probable cause to conclude that the male stopped during this suspicious vehicle call, was in fact the same suspect from the attempted burglary. The male was arrested and evidence was obtained to confirm this male was the burglar from the previous night.

On October 6, 2023, at approximately 1:10am, Sgt. Stever was on patrol in the area of the United States Post Office (Circle Branch) located at 2601 Brunswick Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ and observed a suspicious silver sedan parked in the area. Sgt. Stever contacted the occupants of the vehicle. The on-scene investigation revealed the occupants were in possession of various opened pieces of mail and checks/money order in multiple victim's names within the vehicle.

Further investigation, revealed evidence of a burglary to the mailbox at the Post Office. Sgt. Stever and assisting Lawrence Township Police Officers ultimately arrested and charged the two (2) occupants with burglary, theft and trafficking of personal identifying information.

On July 8, 2023 at approximately 5:08pm, Lawrence Township Police officers responded to the parking lot of Halo Farm (970 Spruce St. Lawrenceville, NJ) for a report of a hit-and-run motor vehicle crash involving a pedestrian struck by a vehicle. Officers located the victim in the parking lot of Halo Farm with multiple injuries. Investigating officers determined that prior to the crash, the victim had been engaged in a verbal dispute with another male.

The suspect male then sat in his car and waited for the victim and the victim's girlfriend. As they entered the parking lot of Halo Farm, the suspect drove his vehicle at a high rate of speed striking the victim and nearly missing the victim's girlfriend. Patrol officers that responded to this incident were able to assist in stabilizing the patient and gathering critical information that lead to the arrest of a suspect for intentionally striking the victim with a vehicle.

6.) Patrol

On June 26, 2023 at approximately 10:15am, Lawrence Township Police Officers responded to Rider University for a report of a man that was shot with an unknown projectile. Officers interviewed the victim who stated that while he was walking on campus, a car drove past him and fired an unknown weapon towards him. The victim stated that he was struck by a projectile on his right temple causing minor pain and discomfort. The suspect vehicle and occupants were located a short time later on campus.

During the investigation, a plastic camouflage toy gun that fires water filled projectiles was recovered. Additionally, a BB gun and extendable baton were also recovered. The suspect was arrested on-scene and charged with Simple Assault, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon on an Education Institute, and Possession of a Weapon for Unlawful Purposes.

On May 1, 2023 at approximately 1:00 pm, the Lawrence Township Police Department responded to the 1700 block of Brunswick Pike (area of Haveson Ave) for a report of several juveniles loitering in the area. One of the juveniles was reported to have displayed a handgun.

It was quickly determined that the group of juveniles had entered a nearby home and became somewhat uncooperative with police. Parents / guardians of the juveniles, including the homeowner, were contacted and arrived on-scene. As the result of a thorough on-scene investigation, two handguns were recovered including a large capacity magazine.

A 17-year-old juvenile male from Philadelphia, PA was arrested and charged with two counts of unlawful possession of a weapon (2nd degree), 2 counts of an untraceable firearm (2nd degree) and possession of a large capacity magazine (4th degree). The arrested juvenile was lodged at Middlesex County Youth Detention Center pending a court hearing.

On February 21, 2023, Lawrence Township Police Department and other emergency services responded to the impact of an EF2 (Cat: Strong 111-135mph winds) Tornado that touched down in Lawrence Twp. NJ at **approximately 1535 hours**. The tornado damage closed Rt. 1 in all directions near the D&R Canal. Responding patrol officers had to quickly remedy the road closure by establishing detours and directing the heavy volume of traffic away from the impacted area. The Tornado path also caused significant damage to the Lawrence Square Village residences.

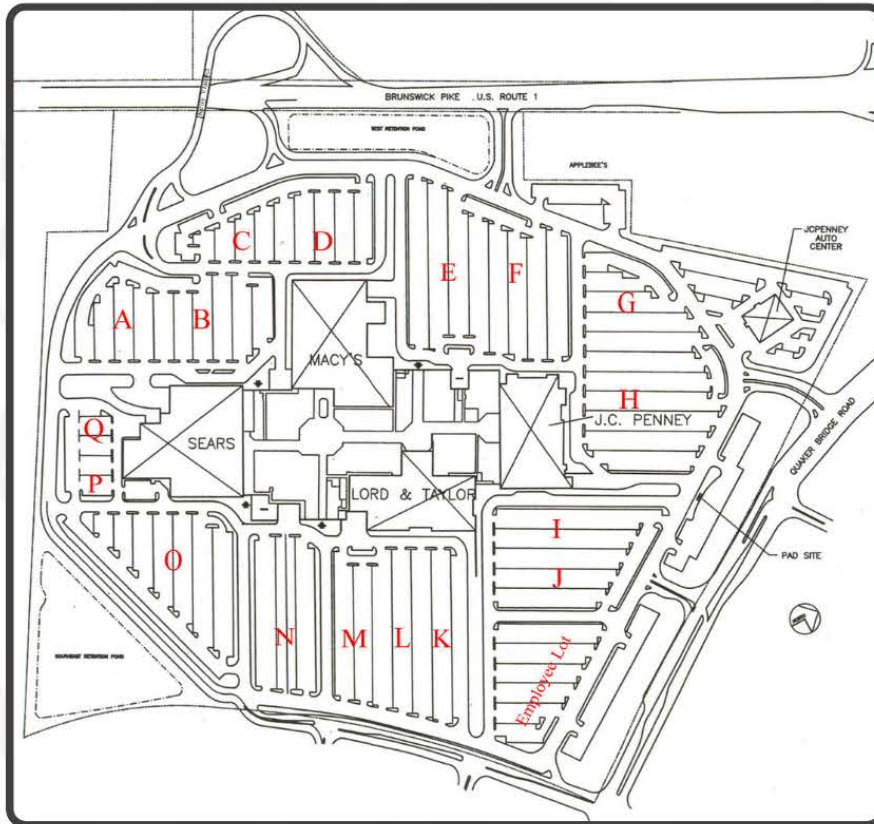
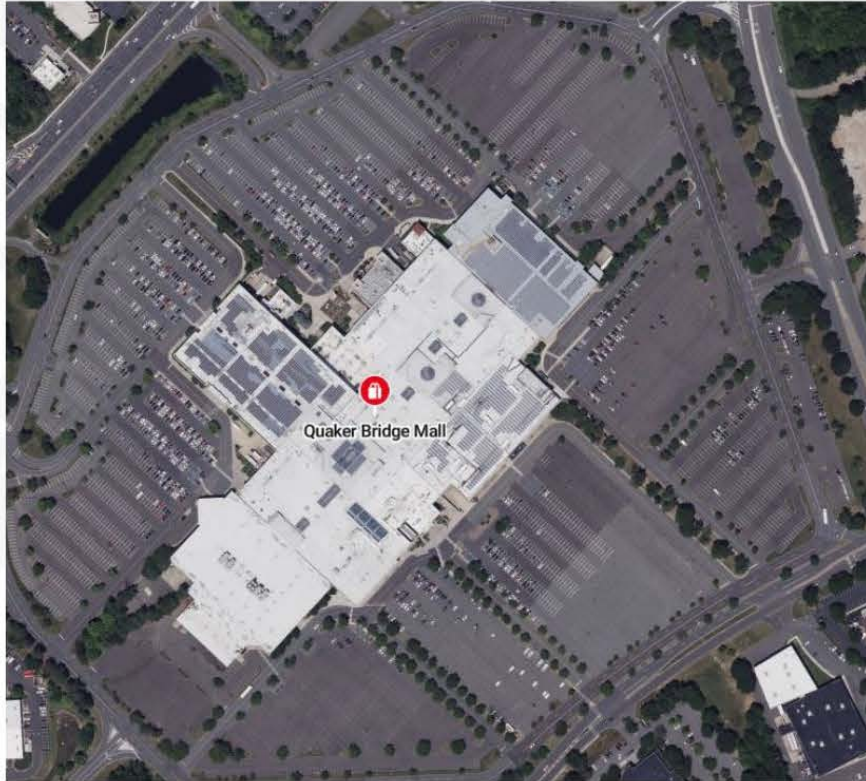
At Lawrence Square Village, Lawrence Township Police Department was tasked with joint search and rescue operations with Lawrence Township Fire Department, to ensure no residents were entrapped, address unsafe structure hazards, secure the scene, provide traffic control, address media outlets, provide resources for displaced persons, and collaborate with property management.

6.) Patrol

This event required great coordination of resources and agencies. Working with non-profits such as the American Red Cross and Volunteers of America were essential in the efforts to assist those that had been displaced.



7.) Quakerbridge Mall (QBM)



7.) Quakerbridge Mall (QBM)

QUAKER BRIDGE MALL SUBSTATION

In February 1993, the Township of Lawrence and management team of the Quaker Bridge Mall signed an agreement to provide a permanent police presence at the Quaker Bridge Mall. Mall management agreed to reimburse the Township for the cost of a full-time police sergeant at the mall. This agreement has remained in effect since its inception.

The Quaker Bridge Mall has over 90 stores and is considered one of the largest malls in New Jersey with over one million square feet of retail space. The Quaker Bridge Mall is considered a premier shopping destination and has the ability to draw a significant crowd of patrons on a daily basis, adding to its on-site population.

In 2023, the Quaker Bridge Mall continued its contractual agreement with the police department and funded a position dedicated solely to the Quaker Bridge Mall. In the past, this position used to be a sergeant. In 2013, the police department began permanently assigning police officers to the mall. In previous years there were two police officers assigned to the Investigation Division, QBM bureau, and they were assigned to rotate weekly providing the mall with at least 40 hours of coverage each week. In January of 2022 the mall was staffed by one police officer due to manpower constraints.

In January of 2023, due to continued manpower constraints Lawrence Township Police Officer Derek Paul was assigned to the Quaker Bridge Mall Bureau as an Officer in Charge. While acting as the officer in charge of the substation, Officer Paul was responsible for handling calls for service, investigating criminal activity, and preparing criminal complaints. Officer Paul also responded to motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, disturbances and handled other requests. Officer Paul handled a majority of investigations that occurred at the mall and followed them through to prosecution. The incidents that occurred at the mall while the officers were not on duty were assigned to Officer Paul for follow up.

Officer Paul as well as other officers assisted mall security in enforcing code of conduct violations, as well as trespassing violations on mall property. These combined efforts have resulted in a significant increase in safety for patrons and employees.

7.) Quakerbridge Mall (QBM)

The Quaker Bridge Mall Bureau officer works closely with mall management and their security representatives. Meetings are regularly held with mall management and security. The meetings allow us to review past practices, brainstorm new ideas and implement new security measures to make the mall a safer place. In addition, Officer Paul also has a working relationship with the loss prevention officers employed by the mall's two major department stores. The mall officer and Quaker Bridge Mall staff also hold meetings where the employees from the businesses at the mall are invited to attend. At these meetings the mall officer will discuss current crime trends, active shooter response and training in regards to identifying counterfeit currency.

In 2023, there were a total of 802 calls for service at the Quaker Bridge Mall, as compared to 864 calls for service in 2022.

A total of 168 criminal offenses were reported at Quaker Bridge Mall in 2023. This is a 33% decrease in reported crime at the mall, when compared to 253 criminal offenses reported in 2022. In addition, 121 adults and 41 juveniles were arrested at the mall for various criminal offenses in 2023. There were three auto thefts reported at the mall during 2023.

Although the retail environment is continuing to change, the police department looks forward to continuing our customer service oriented policing style of law enforcement at the Quaker Bridge Mall in 2023 and for many years to come.



8.) Investigations

INVESTIGATION DIVISION

In 2023, the Investigation Division was comprised of the Detective Bureau, Juvenile Bureau, Property and Evidence Bureau, the Quaker Bridge Mall Bureau and School Resource Officer / Special Law Enforcement Officer (SLEO III) Programs. A Lieutenant was the commander of the division. A Detective Sergeant was the supervisor of the division.

In 2023, the Detective Bureau was comprised of one (1) part-time account clerk, four (4) general assignment detectives and an Intelligence Officer. The Juvenile Bureau was comprised of one (1) juvenile detective. The Property and Evidence Bureau was comprised of one property/evidence officer and one (1) civilian employee. The Quaker Bridge Mall Bureau was comprised of one (1) police officer. There was one School Resource Officer and five (5) Special Law Enforcement Officers.

ADMINISTRATION

The commander of the Investigation Division in 2023 was Lieutenant Kevin Reading. In addition to supervision of all Investigation Division employees, the commander of the Investigation Division served as the Drug Task Force Coordinator, Megan's Law Coordinator, Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Officer, Public Information Officer and Supervisor of the Evidence/Property Management Bureau. The Division Commander was also responsible for the annual investigation of Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) licenses, new ABC applications, annual inspections of towing contractors, and new towing license applicants. Throughout the year, inspections are performed on establishments that serve alcoholic beverages to ensure compliance with the law and Township ordinance. Towing inspections are conducted on approved towing agencies throughout the year to ensure proper compliance.

Detective Sergeant Daniel Gladney was assigned to the Investigation Division in September 2023 and is the direct supervisor of the detectives and other Investigation Division personnel. Detective Sergeant Daniel Gladney also assists Lieutenant Reading with the daily operations of the Investigative Division along with many other assigned tasks.

The part-time Account Clerk assigned to the Detective Bureau prepared 217 criminal cases that were presented to the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office in 2023, as compared to 141 criminal cases that were presented to the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office in 2022.

8.) Investigations

A total of 730 vehicles were towed by Lawrence Township Police Officers due to motor vehicle crashes, disabled vehicles, and traffic and criminal offenses in 2023 as compared to 695 vehicles in 2022. Of these 730 vehicles, 44 were not claimed by their owners and had to be investigated against liens, re-titled and then exposed for sale at auction. These duties and other clerical tasks were performed in the past by detectives.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT DETECTIVES

The general assignment detectives in 2023 were Sean Kerins, James Steimle, Paulina Way and Dean Sawasky.

General Assignment Detectives handle a variety of criminal offenses and serve in an on-call capacity every fifth week. During the detective's on-call week, they are required to be available after-hours to respond and investigate serious crimes that require the expertise of a detective. Each detective has specialized training in areas such as arson, sex crimes, computerized voice stress analysis, counter-terrorism, homicide investigation, fraud, financial crimes, interviewing, human trafficking and hostage negotiations. Throughout 2023, the general assignment detectives handled 246 cases.

The clearance rate of cases for the general assignment detectives in 2023 was 53%. Cases are considered cleared when they have been solved. To be considered cleared, the cases can be categorized as Cleared, which is when the suspect has been identified and complaints have been signed; Exceptionally Cleared, which is when the suspect has been identified but for some reason no complaint has been signed by an officer (such as the offender committed suicide, victim declines prosecution, etc.); Unfounded, which is when it is discovered that no crime occurred; and Closed, which is when a case that is not a crime is solved (such as a missing person is located). The 47% of the cases that were not cleared remain Open and currently under investigation, or they are classified as Inactive. A case remains Inactive until further information, leads, witnesses and/or evidence is located.

8.) Investigations

The following incidents are examples of some investigations conducted by the General Assignment Detectives in 2023:

- On May 1, 2023, at 1258 hours, Lawrence Township Police Officers were dispatched to the 1700 block of Brunswick Pike on a report of several individuals in possession of a handgun. On scene investigation by detectives and patrol officers led to the recovery of two (2) semi-automatic handguns without serial numbers, one (1) large capacity extended magazine, and ammunition. The suspect was ultimately taken into custody and charged accordingly.
- On May 5, 2023 at 1503 hours, Lawrence Township police officers responded to Lannigan Avenue on a report of a residential burglary that occurred during daytime hours. Assorted jewelry and electronics had been stolen from the home. After a thorough investigation, Detective James Steimle and Detective Paulina Way identified the suspect vehicle and developed two (2) suspects. The suspect vehicle was subsequently located and search warrant was obtained and executed. The two (2) suspects were located and ultimately taken into custody and charged accordingly.
- During 2023, the Investigations Division identified a pattern of checks being stolen from the Mail and used in fraud incidents in the New York/New Jersey region. Detectives identified specifically targeted US Postal Mailboxes (in Lawrence Township), which were being targeted for burglaries over holiday weekends. On July 17, 2023, at approximately 0240Hrs, Detective Dean Sawasky interrupted 2 individuals engaged in an attempted “Fishing” burglary of a US Postal Mailbox in the parking lot of 2601 Brunswick Circle in Lawrence Township. Detective Sawasky was able to conduct a motor vehicle stop on the suspect vehicle and apprehend one suspect. The vehicle in question was impounded and a search warrant was obtained and executed. The second suspect was subsequently identified during follow up investigation. Both suspects were charged accordingly.
- On July 31, 2023, at 0723 hours, Lawrence Township police officers responded to Enterprise Avenue in Lawrence Township on a report of a commercial burglary where copper fittings and electrical wire were stolen. Detective James Steimle was assigned to conduct a follow up investigation into the burglary and theft. During the course of the follow up investigation, Detective Steimle identified two (2) responsible for the burglary who were subsequently taken into custody and charged accordingly.

8.) Investigations

- On September 29, 2023, at approximately 0225Hrs, Lawrence Township Police Officers responded to a report of a male pulling on a door(s) on the 3100 block of Brunswick Pike in Lawrence Township. Investigation revealed the business had been burglarized and various computer equipment had been stolen. During the course of the follow up investigation by Detective Sean Kerins, a suspect and suspect vehicle had been developed. The suspect vehicle was impounded and a search warrant was obtained and executed where stolen property was recovered. The suspect was subsequently taken into custody and charged accordingly.

TASK FORCE PARTICIPATION

Violent Crime continues to be a major concern in our society. These types of crimes and the criminals that commit them do not recognize jurisdictional borders. The Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, who is the head law enforcement agency in Mercer County, has spearheaded several task forces to address violent crime concerns within the County. The Lawrence Township Police Department firmly believes that participating in the regional task forces is beneficial in combatting crime in an effort to keep our town and its citizens safe.

While no Lawrence Township Police Officers / Detectives were assigned long term to a Mercer County Task Force in 2023, officers did assist with various Task Force investigations that involved persons of interest within Lawrence Township. Detective Steimle continues to assist the Mercer County Prosecutors Office Computer Crimes Unit and a regular basis with forensic extractions of cell phones.

During 2023, Lawrence Township Officers / Detectives assisted the following Task Forces and agencies, Mercer County Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC), Mercer County Special Investigations / Narcotics Unit (SIU), Mercer County Homicide Task Force (HTF), Mercer County Shooting Response Team (SRT), United States Marshal's Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), New Jersey State Police, United States Secret Service, New Jersey Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness, and the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice.

Lawrence Township Police Department has been dedicated in assisting regional task forces. Participation and assistance to the task force units is beneficial to building working relationships with outside agencies and is an important factor in combatting crime within our community.

8.) Investigations

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Detective Sean Kerins is the Lawrence Township Police Department Intelligence Officer and is assigned to the Investigation Division. Detective Kerins investigates complex criminal activity such as narcotics distribution, prostitution, human trafficking and homeland security related cases. Prostitution is often linked to Human Trafficking and organized crime groups in New Jersey and surrounding states. Detective Kerins gathers intelligence through his vast network of sources and investigates criminal activity throughout Lawrence Township. He has built partnerships with Federal, State, County and local law enforcement agencies. Due to the complexity of the criminal activity that Detective Kerins investigates, many of these cases involve multiple jurisdictions. As such, Detective Kerins works closely with the Mercer County Narcotics Task Force, Mercer County Prosecutors Office, Department of Homeland Security, Division of Criminal Justice, New Jersey State Police, and many other agencies during his investigations. The positive working relationships between Lawrence Township, the Mercer County Prosecutors office and many other agencies continue to provide a multidisciplinary effort to combat criminal activity in Lawrence Township.

Due to the shortage of manpower in the Detective Bureau, Detective Kerins has also assumed the role of a general assignment detective, in addition to his responsibilities as the Intelligence Officer. As a general assignment detective, Detective Kerins handles cases assigned to him by the Investigation Division supervisors.

PROPERTY & EVIDENCE OFFICER

During 2023, the property custodian was Records Support Technician Christopher Quaste and Police Officer Shawn Sudol. Technician Christopher Quaste retired and was replaced by Marc Poveromo in September 2023. The property custodian is responsible for the maintenance and legal disposal of all property and evidence received by the department.

Civilian Technician Quaste's exceptional ability to multi task has assisted the Investigative Division with functioning in an efficient manner throughout 2023. The property room and evidence aspect is an essential part of the Investigative Division and Records Division.

8.) Investigations

Using the B.E.A.S.T (Bar-coded Evidence, Analysis, Statistics and Tracking) computer system, the Department collected 3,804 pieces of property and evidence during 2023, which is a decrease of 1 piece collected in 2022.

Of the total amount of evidence taken in 2023, 238 pieces involved narcotics or narcotics paraphernalia a decrease of 3 items from 2022.

A total of 641 pieces of evidence/property were destroyed or returned to owners during 2023, a decrease of 447 pieces from 2022's statistics. The majority of the items destroyed in 2023 were firearms/weapons and large sized items creating free space in the property room.

A total of 108 pieces of evidence were submitted to the New Jersey State Police laboratory for analysis in 2023, a decrease of 27 pieces from 2022's statistics.

There continued to be a high volume of requests for digital media from the Mercer County Prosecutors Office, specifically the need for Body Worn Camera Footage. In 2023, 850 submittals of digital media were made to the Mercer County Prosecutors Office, a decrease of 157 submittals from 2022. The presence of Digital media continues to increase its importance during court and prosecution processes. The time that is spent uploading required digital media files, in addition to the other responsibilities continues to illustrate the importance of the property and evidence officer.

JUVENILE BUREAU

Detective Suzanne Girard is the department's only Juvenile Detective for the year of 2023.

Juvenile Bureau Detectives are assigned all criminal and noncriminal investigations involving juveniles that occur within Lawrence Township. The Juvenile Bureau investigated 55 cases in 2023. The clearance rate of cases handled by the Juvenile Officer was 56% in 2023.

The Juvenile Detective remains active in being visible and building relationships with both students and staff in the public and private schools located within Lawrence Township. Our presence, in the schools has established a positive working relationship with the administrators and faculty members to ensure a safe learning environment for the children of Lawrence Township.

8.) Investigations

The Juvenile Detective took an active role with the children who attended the Lawrence Township Safety Town Program. The Safety Town program was offered by the recreation department during the last week of June and first week of July. The program was held outdoors at Ben Franklin School and Village Park.

Detective Girard is also assigned as the Megan's Law officer. In this assignment, all sex offenders required to register by law must report to Detective Girard, who also coordinates notification and exchange of information with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AND SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Police Officer Steven Austin was assigned to Lawrence High School S.R.O. position. Officer Austin has continued to build relationships with the young adults who attend Lawrence High School and bridge the gap between law enforcement, the students and staff. Officer Austin quickly established a connection with the students by promoting a sense of mutual trust and respect. Officer Austin has been a remarkable role model for the students.

Special Law Enforcement Officer Class III (SLEO III) is a newer category of security within New Jersey school systems as of 2018. They are armed, retired law enforcement officers who previously served as fully trained, full-time officers in New Jersey. They are hired with the purpose of maintaining a visible police presence in schools and helping to keep students and staff safe from outside threats.

Lawrence Township Council, Lawrence Township Police Department and the Lawrence Board of Education worked as partners to fund our SLEO III officer program. During 2021, there were SLEO III officers assigned to Lawrence Middle School, Lawrence Intermediate School, Notre Dame High School and our Elementary Schools.

During the 2023 school year the Lawrence Township Police Department had five (5) Special Law Enforcement Officers (SLEO), Fredrick Doldy, Michael Cseremsak, George Henderson and Christopher Jackson. SLEO Doldy was assigned to Lawrence Middle School, and is a retired Lawrence Township Police Department Sergeant. SLEO Michael Cseremsak was assigned to the Lawrence Intermediate School, and is a retired Hopewell Township Police Department Sergeant. George Henderson was assigned to the elementary schools, and is a retired Mercer County Sheriffs Officer and Thomas Brophy was also assigned to the elementary schools and is a retired Trenton Police Detective. Christopher Jackson was assigned to Notre Dame High School, and is a retired East Windsor Police Department Lieutenant. These officers work closely with school administrators and faculty to ensure a safe learning environment.

8.) Investigations

The ability to have a SLEO officer in every school has afforded the department to develop personal relationships with staff and students. The presence of the SLEO officers in each school also provides the opportunity for instant communication and coordination between law enforcement and school staff in the event of an emergency situation.

COMMUNITY NARCOTIC INITIATIVES

PROJECT MEDICINE DROP

During 2023, the Lawrence Township Police Department continued to participate in “Project Medicine Drop”. Project Medicine Drop is a program offered in conjunction with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs that allows citizens to dispose of unused, expired or unwanted medications 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Lawrence Township Police Department has conveniently installed a drop box in the lobby of the Police and Courts Building. Citizens are urged to dispose of their unwanted medication in the drop box to prevent them from falling into the hands of those who might make them available for abuse, and to prevent them from being flushed into the water supply or thrown into the trash where they could contaminate the environment. In 2023 the Lawrence Township Police Department collected 644 pounds of medications in our drop box which is an 8% decrease from 2022.

The program has existed since January of 2014, and in that time 7,158 pounds of medications have been collected and properly destroyed. The program is ongoing and citizens are urged to clean out their medicine cabinets and dispose of their unwanted medications in our drop box.

NALOXONE (NARCAN)

There has been an increase in Opioid deaths in New Jersey due to the high potency of Heroin and Fentanyl. Lawrence Township Police Department continues to work diligently on the drug abuse that affects members of our community. This includes working with local, county, state and federal agencies to eradicate drugs in our communities.

The Mercer County Prosecutors Office, in conjunction with Capital Health Systems supplied the drug Naloxone, more specifically the brand name Narcan, to be carried in all Lawrence Township Police vehicles. Narcan reverses the effect of an opioid overdose and saves lives.

8.) Investigations

In 2023, Lawrence Township Police Officers administered Narcan 33 times to patients suffering from drug overdose, compared to 13 times Narcan was administered in 2022. In 2023, the Lawrence Police Department responded to 36 incidents of drug overdose, which is an increase of 71% from 17 incidents in 2022. During 2023, there were 6 suspected fatal drug overdoses in Lawrence Township.

OVERDOSE PROTECTION ACT

Narcotics addiction touches families in many communities. Narcotics addiction has no boundaries and can affect every culture. Lawmakers enacted the Overdose Protection Act to help individuals with narcotic addictions to get medical treatment when an overdose occurs. The Overdose Protection Act protects the patient and those that take an active role in obtaining help for the patient, from being charged criminally. Anyone that suspects a friend or family member is experiencing an overdose should call 9-1-1 immediately without fear of arrest.

MENTAL HEALTH

In 2021, NJ Attorney General Platkin piloted an initiative called “Arrive Together”. This initiative was intended to pair law enforcement officers, trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, with a mental health worker to respond to mental health related calls for service.

A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed to have our police department partner with the NJ Attorney General’s Office, the Mercer County Prosecutors Office and Capital Health Crisis to participate in the Arrive Together Program.

The purpose of this program is to make referrals of individuals with mental health issues. Capital Health Crisis will provide professional follow up services with the individuals in an effort to lower the potential for future police interactions. This program provides the means for those with mental health issues to receive professional services.



9.) Firearms

The Department has completed its 2023 Firearms Qualifications. Please find listed below the qualification courses that were conducted.

QUARTERLY PATROL RIFLE TRAINING: March 21st through March 28th.

Sixteen (16) Lawrence Township Police Officers who had qualified with Patrol Rifles in the Fall of 2023 completed the quarterly patrol rifle familiarization course.

SPRING / SUMMER 2023 FIREARMS QUALIFICATION: May 31st through June 30th:

Fifty-five (55) Lawrence Township Police Officers, Four (4) Class 3 SLEO and one (1) armed municipal court attendant successfully completed the below listed firearms qualification in accordance with the NJ Attorney General's Directive on Law Enforcement Firearms Training, Mercer County Prosecutor's Office Uniform Firearms Policy and Lawrence Township Police Department General Orders.

COURSES OF FIRE:

1. Handgun Qualification Course #1
2. Handgun Qualification Course #2
3. Handgun Night Qualification Course
4. SS Qualification Course
5. SS Night Qualification Course
6. Patrol Rifle Qualification Course (ARQC)
7. Patrol Rifle Night Qualification Course

WEAPONS:

1. Make: Glock semi-automatic .40 cal. Pistol, Model: 22 and 27
2. Make: Remington shotgun, Model: 11-87
3. Make: Sig Sauer, Model: 516, .223 Rifle
4. Off-duty weapons as approved by General Order, Chief of Police, and Supervising Firearm Instructor.

AMMUNITION:

1. Service load .40 cal.: Make: Federal 180 grain, HST JHP (Pistol)
2. Equivalent load .40 cal.: Make: Federal American Eagle 180 grain, FMJ (Pistol)
3. Shotgun load 12 gauge 2 ¾": Make: Federal Slug
4. Rifle load .223, Make: Federal 55 grain Hi Shok (Rifle)
5. Equivalent load .223, Make: Federal American Eagle 55 grain (Rifle)
6. Off-duty loads of various calibers and bullet weights as approved by General Order, Chief of Police and Supervising Firearms Instructor

9.) Firearms

QUARTERLY PATROL RIFLE TRAINING: September 2023

Fifteen (15) Lawrence Township Police Officers who had qualified with Patrol Rifles in the Spring of 2023 completed the quarterly patrol rifle familiarization.

FALL 2023 FIREARMS QUALIFICATION: November 1st through December 2nd:

Fifty-one (55) Lawrence Township Police Officers, Four (4) Class 3 and one (1) armed municipal court attendant successfully completed the below listed firearms qualification in accordance with the NJ Attorney General's Directive on Law Enforcement Firearms Training, Mercer County Prosecutor's Office Uniform Firearms Policy and Lawrence Township Police Department General Orders. Handguns were also transitioned from Glock 22 .40 cal. to Glock 45 9mm during this range session.

COURSES OF FIRE:

1. Handgun Qualification Course #1
2. Handgun Qualification Course #2
3. Handgun Night Qualification Course
4. SS Qualification Course
5. SS Night Qualification Course
6. Patrol Rifle Qualification Course (ARQC)
7. Patrol Rifle Night Qualification Course

WEAPONS:

1. Make: Glock semi-automatic .40 cal. Pistol, Model: 22 and 27
2. Make: Glock semi-automatic 9mm Pistol, Model: 45
3. Make: Remington shotgun, Model: 11-87
4. Make: Sig Sauer, Model: 516, .223 Rifle
5. Off-duty weapons as approved by General Order, Chief of Police, and Supervising Firearm Instructor

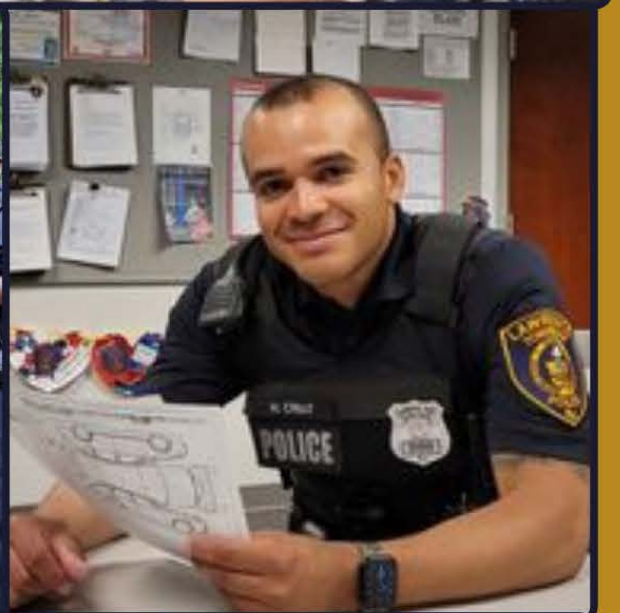
AMMUNITION:

1. Service load .40 cal.: Make: Federal 180 grain, HST JHP (Pistol)
2. Service load 9mm: Make: Federal 124 Grain, HST JHP (Pistol)
3. Equivalent load .40 cal.: Make: Federal American Eagle 180 grain, FMJ (Pistol)
4. Equivalent load 9 mm: Make: Federal American Eagle 124 grain, FMJ (Pistol)
5. Shotgun load 12 gauge 2 ¾": Make: Federal Rifled Slug
6. Rifle load .223, Make: Federal 55 grain Hi Shok (Rifle)
7. Equivalent load .223, Make: Federal American Eagle 55 grain (Rifle)
8. Off-duty loads of various calibers and bullet weights as approved by General Order, Chief of Police and Supervising Firearms Instructor

9.) Firearms

IN SERVICE VEHICULAR PURSUIT AND USE OF FORCE TRAINING:

All officers successfully completed the biannual In-Service Use of Force and Vehicular Pursuit Policy training as directed in the NJ Attorney General's guidelines.



10.) Megans Law



MEGAN KANKA

A seven-year-old girl from Hamilton, NJ who was raped and murdered by her neighbor in 1994. Her parents fought to have a law passed that would inform communities of sex offenders living among them. "Megan's Law" was passed within months of her murder and was later adopted by numerous other states.

10.) Megans Law

Offender Registration

Megan's Law provides for a central registry of sex offenders and a community notification procedure that requires county prosecutors to place offenders into one of three categories based on the risk of re-offense by the offender. Those categories are as follows:

Tier 1 is used when determined that the risk of re-offense is low. Notification is to law enforcement personnel only.

Tier 2 is used when determined that the risk of re-offense is moderate. Notification is to law enforcement agencies, community organizations, agencies and groups that have registered with the county prosecutor's office. All local educational institutions, licensed day care centers and summer camps that are likely to encounter the offender are notified.

Tier 3 is used when determined that the risk of re-offense is high. In addition to the notifications in Tier 2, members of the public who are likely to encounter the offender are also notified.

In accordance with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, the Investigation Division of the Lawrence Township Police Department follows the firm guidelines for registration of Megan's Law violators. It is the Investigation Division's obligation to fingerprint, photograph, track, and maintain meticulous files on these offenders. The Investigation Division conducts random inspections on Megan's Law offenders to ensure no violations are being committed. This information is regularly reported to the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office. The Investigation Division also maintains a master registration book that includes documentation of offenders from other municipalities in addition to offenders in our town.

The Investigation Division of the Lawrence Township Police Department processed registrations for (21) Sex Offenders in 2023. Over the course of the year, the actual number of registrants being tracked fluctuates. This is due to sex offenders moving, committing a criminal offense, being incarcerated or dying. As of December 31, 2023, there are currently (18) sex offenders being tracked by the Lawrence Township Police Department. Of the registrants being tracked at the end of 2022, (11) are Tier #1 and (7) are Tier #2.



11.) Internal Affairs

The goal of the Lawrence Township Police Department is to provide the most professional police services possible to the citizens of Lawrence Township and the State of New Jersey. Honesty and integrity are paramount to this goal. The mission of the Internal Affairs Unit is to fully and impartially investigate all complaints about police officer conduct.

The Administrative Division is comprised of the Professional Standards Bureau and the Records Bureau. The Professional Standards Bureau is comprised of the Internal Affairs Unit and the Accreditation unit. During 2023, Lt. Michael Whitmore was Administrative Division Commander and supervised the Internal Affairs Unit.

Police procedure mandates that complaints about police officer misconduct be accepted 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Complaints are accepted from all persons regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or handicap. Complaints are also accepted from juveniles, arrested persons, and other law enforcement organizations. In addition, complaints can be received in-person, by telephone, mail, email, or anonymously.

Complaints received about police officer misconduct are generally broken down into nine categories. These categories include any allegations of committing of the following:

- 1.Criminal activity*
- 2.Excessive force*
- 3.Improper arrest*
- 4.Improper entry*
- 5.Improper search*
- 6.Differential treatment*
- 7.Serious rule infractions*
- 8.Minor rule infractions*
- 9.Demeanor*

All complaints are investigated fully using a variety of investigative techniques. Minor complaints are sometime handled by the officer's division commander. Most cases are investigated by the Internal Affairs Unit.

11.) Internal Affairs

During 2023, the Internal Affairs Unit received 26 complaints about officer conduct. Those complaints are broken down into the following categories: four complaints for demeanor, thirteen for other rule violations, one for excessive force, one alleging criminal violations, and one complaint for differential treatment. Five incidents were found to be procedural questions and documented as such. It should be noted that some complaints may include multiple officers.

During 2023, a total of 20 investigations were completed with a disposition. As of the end of 2023, 23 cases are still under investigation or pending review from other agencies (includes cases open from previous years).

Type of Complaint	Sustained	Exonerated	Not Sustained	Unfounded	Admin. Closed	Total Dispositions
Excessive Force		1				1
Improper Arrest						
Improper Entry						
Improper Search						
Other Criminal violation			1			1
Differential Treatment		1				1
Demeanor		4				4
Domestic Violence						
Other Rule Infraction	13					13
TOTAL	13	6	1			20

In accordance with the New Jersey Attorney General's Guidelines on Internal Affairs, police agencies are required to publicly report when an officer has received a fine or suspension of five days or more. During 2023, two Lawrence Township Officers received final disposition for a suspension of five days or more, and one officer resigned during an internal affairs investigation.

The Internal Affairs Unit reviews each use of force incident that occurs to ensure proper levels of force were utilized by the officers. In 2023 Lawrence Township Police Officers arrested 714 individuals for various crimes and offenses. Of these 714 arrests, officers only had to use force on 22 occasions (3.08%). The 22 use of force incidents includes 42 officer filed use of force reports.

The department is now also required to record when officers point their firearm at a suspect (recorded as a "show of force"). In 2023, there were 8 "show of force" incidents in which 9 officers pointed their firearm at a potential threat.

11.) Internal Affairs

Physical force involves contact with a subject beyond that which is generally utilized to affect an arrest. Examples include wrestling a resisting subject to the ground, using wrist locks or arm locks, striking with the hands or feet, or other similar methods of hand-to-hand confrontation. Each of the 22 use of incidents involved some type of physical force.

Two of the incidents required the officers to use mechanical force. Mechanical force involves the use of some device or substance, other than a firearm, to overcome a subject's resistance. Examples include the use of a baton or other object, canine physical contact with a subject, or chemical or natural agent. Both of the mechanical force incidents involved the use of O.C "pepper spray".

None of the incidents required the use of deadly force. Deadly force is force which a law enforcement officer uses with the purpose of causing, or creates a substantial risk of causing, death or serious bodily harm. Significantly, there were no serious injuries sustained by any arrestee during any of the use of force incidents.

Total Number use of force incidents:	22
Total number of persons against whom force was used:	22
Total number of incidents involving officer use of physical force:	22
Total number of incidents involving officer use of mechanical force:	2
Total number of incidents involving officer use of deadly force:	0

Another function of the Internal Affairs Unit is to conduct random drug testing of sworn police personnel at least twice in a calendar year. During these drug tests, officer names are randomly selected and an impromptu drug test is conducted.

The department conducted three random drug tests in 2023, one of which was a carryover test from 2022. All of the officers tested negative for any use of illegal drugs during the first two tests. The third drug test was conducted in December and is currently at the lab pending results. No officers were tested under the suspicion of using illegal drugs.

In conclusion, the Internal Affairs Unit strives to ensure all complaints brought to the attention of the department will be investigated fully and impartially. The utilization of the Axon in-car video cameras and the Axon body worn cameras has assisted in the investigation of the majority of the complaints.

The internal affairs unit is involved in all aspects of the department, and in turn, the information gained from complaints and investigations is used to train officers, review procedures, and plan for the future.



12.) Accreditation

ACCREDITATION UNIT

The Lawrence Township Police Department is an accredited agency through the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. Lt. Michael Whitmore is currently the accreditation manager.

Accreditation is an ongoing process whereas the department must continue to show proof of compliance and undergo a rigorous assessment every three years. The NJSACOP accreditation program is built around 112 standards that are spread over five chapters.

Our department received its initial accreditation in 2016, and then was unanimously approved by the commission for our first re-accreditation status in March of 2020. The department completed its second re-accreditation assessment and on-site visit in December of 2022 and obtained our second re-accreditation at the March 2023 commission hearing.

An accreditation program has long been recognized as a means of maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. Accreditation is the certification by an independent reviewing authority that an entity has met specific requirements and prescribed standards. Schools, universities, and hospitals are some of the most well-known organizations that are required to maintain accreditation.

Law enforcement agencies in New Jersey can attain accredited status through the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is a progressive and time proven way of helping law enforcement agencies calculate and improve their overall performances.

Participating agencies conduct a thorough self-analysis to determine how existing operations can be adapted to meet these objectives. When the procedures are in place, a team of trained assessors verify that applicable standards have been successfully implemented. Accreditation status represents a significant professional achievement for a law enforcement agency. Accreditation acknowledges the implementation of policies and procedures that are conceptually sound and operationally effective.

The accreditation standards provide norms against which agency performance can be measured and monitored over time. Accreditation provides the agency with a continuous flow of Commission distributed information about exemplary policies, procedures, and projects. Accreditation provides objective measures to justify decisions related to budget requests and personnel policies.

12.) Accreditation

Accreditation serves as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of the agency's programs and services. The services provided are defined, and uniformity of service is assured. Accreditation streamlines operations, providing more consistency and more effective deployment of agency manpower.

Accreditation requires that agency policies and procedures are in written form and are available to all agency personnel at all times. Accreditation assures employees that every aspect of the agency's personnel system is in accord with professional standards, and that the system is both fair and equitable.

The agency is compelled to operate within specific guidelines. It is accountable to the Commission. The agency must stay in compliance with the standards set forth by the Commission in order to retain its accreditation. The morale of the agency is enhanced by increasing the employees' confidence in the effectiveness and efficiency of their own agency. Operations become more streamlined and consistent.

Accreditation policies address officer safety issues and provide for adequate training and equipment of the officers. Accreditation is a coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, excellence and competence. Employees take pride in their agency, knowing that it represents the very best in law enforcement.





13.) Records

The Administrative Division is comprised of the Professional Standards Bureau and the Records Bureau. Lt. Michael Whitmore was the Administrative Division Commander and oversaw the Records Bureau with professional staff member Kathy Catogge as the Records Bureau supervisor.

At the beginning of 2023, the Records Bureau was staffed by three full-time professional staff members, Kathy Catogge, Mary Martinette, and Jennifer Thomas. The additional position was added to assist with variety of records related issues, most notably due to the increase of expungement orders received from the courts.

In June of 2023, the bureau was reorganized when Jennifer Thomas was transferred to assist the Engineering, Planning, and Zoning departments in town hall. Lynn Ficci was then hired as a part time clerk.

Many duties fall under the control of the Records Bureau. The records clerks handle proper filing of investigation, operations, arrests, juvenile custody, and vehicle reports. The Records Bureau also processes all records requests including OPRA, common law, and discovery requests.

In 2023, 3,465 reports (offense, operation, crash, arrest, field interview) were filed by police officers. This is a 2.3% increase from the 3,384 reports that were filed in 2022. In addition to these reports, 289 reports were submitted by citizens via the Citizens Online Police Reporting System or Coplogic for short. Coplogic is accessed from the Lawrence Township website and is available for citizens to report incidents that are non-emergent in nature. Once the online report is submitted, a police officer reviews it and determines what additional action is necessary.

Each day the Records Bureau clerks handle numerous requests for reports. Requests generally consist of citizens asking for a motor vehicle crash report or investigation report. During 2023, the Records Bureau handled 889 requests for motor vehicle crash and investigation reports. These requests include persons walking up to the Records window, requests by phone, fax, email and, those handled by mail.

Another significant portion of the records clerks' daily assignment consists of processing attorney discovery requests. In 2023, the Records Bureau handled discovery requests on 402 traffic cases, 317 criminal cases, for a total of 719 discovery requests. This represents an almost 16% increase in discovery requests from 2022.

13.) Records

All subpoenas issued for officers through the Mercer County Superior Court, Lawrence Township Municipal Court or other jurisdictions are initially handled by Records Bureau staff.

In 2023, 118 subpoenas were reviewed and logged. They were then transferred to either the Patrol or Investigation Divisions to be served on officers for a variety of court cases.

The Records Bureau staff continues to conduct general background investigations for other police departments, law enforcement agencies and the various branches of the United States military services. The Records Bureau conducted an estimated 5 to 10 background investigations per week. In 2023, Records Bureau staff completed 17 letters of good conduct and processed the expungement of 531 records at the direction of the Mercer County Superior Court. The expungement of records increased in 2023 by 15%. The increase from 2021 to 2022 was 161%.

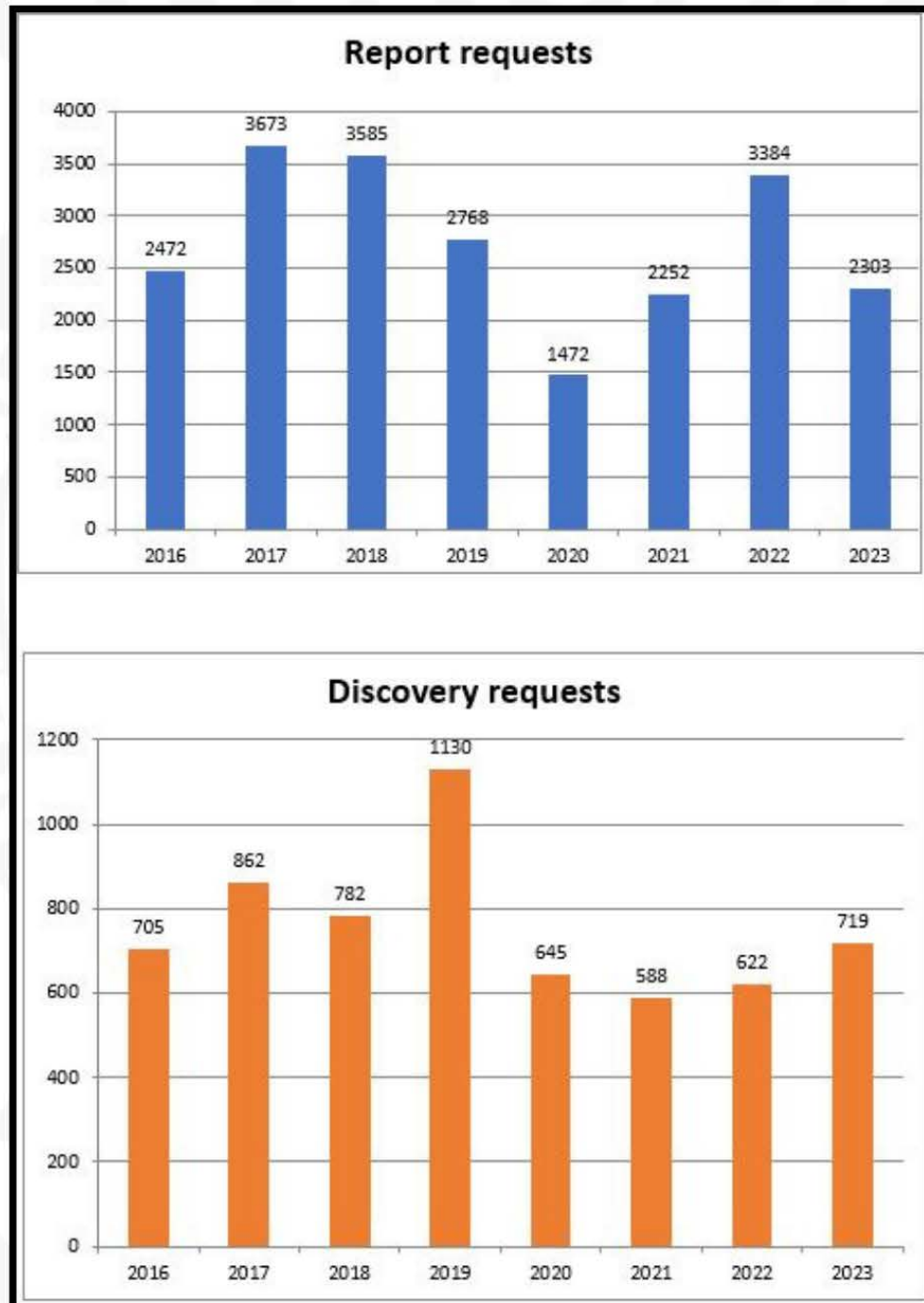
In 2019, the department entered into an agreement with LexisNexis to utilize their eCrash system. The eCrash system enables records clerks to electronically transfer completed crash reports to the eCrash system at the same time the reports are being uploaded to the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The reports are then available to citizens and insurance companies through the eCrash website for a nominal fee, a portion of which is paid to the Township. Use of the eCrash system comes at no cost to the Township, and has increased the efficiency of the Records Bureau and the convenience to the public. In 2023, 1,514 crash reports were purchased through the eCrash system, thereby reducing the number of individual requests that records clerks needed to fulfill throughout the year.

The clerks of the Lawrence Township Police Records Bureau are responsible for compiling the court agenda for each court session held in municipal court. This process includes obtaining offense reports, summonses and other data that the municipal prosecutor will need for the preparation of each case. Court was held three days per week, with additional special sessions held on a regular basis. The majority of the court docket requires the services of the Records Bureau to "pull" the applicable records for each court case being heard. Once completed, the records must all be re-filed.

Since 2017, the Records Bureau has been utilizing a paperless records system. Records personnel no longer print and file every report and store them on a shelf. All reports are kept in our computerized records management system which tracks and stores records for court, OPRA, and discovery requests.

13.) Records

In conclusion, the Lawrence Township Police Records Bureau continues to provide the citizens of the Township, County and State with efficient record keeping and timely disbursement of all police related information.





14.) Communications

CALLS FOR SERVICE

As mentioned earlier in this report, 27,545 calls for service were generated in 2023, which represented a 3.1% decrease from the 28,429 calls for service in 2022. During the course of 2023, there were 12,912 answered 9-1-1 calls. There was an average of 1,076 9-1-1 calls per month. This is a 10.4 % decrease from the average monthly number of 9-1-1 calls answered in 2022. There were 1,429 abandoned 9-1-1 calls in 2023. There was an average of 119 abandoned 9-1-1 calls per month. This is a 58.7% increase from the average monthly number of abandoned 9-1-1 calls received in 2022.

This type of call occurs when the caller hangs up prior to the communications operator answering. Each of these calls must be investigated, as some abandoned 9-1-1 calls are requests for service, but the caller had to hang up prior to speaking with the police department.

The Lawrence Township Police Department received 1,729 calls reporting alarm activations in 2023; an increase of 6.9% compared to 2022. Alarm activations may solely require a police response (burglar alarm), or also require the fire department (fire alarms) and EMS (medical alarms).

There were 300 NCIC entries made in 2023. This is an increase of 112% from the 144 NCIC entries made in 2022. Additionally, there were 7 NICB entries. An NICB entry is made when a vehicle is recovered and towed by the Police Department, but the owner of the vehicle could not be notified.

2023 COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS

TYPE	2022	2023	DIFFERENCE	% CHANGE
CALLS FOR SERVICE	28,429	27,545	884	-3.1%
9-1-1 EMERGENCY CALLS	14,428	12,912	1,516	-10.4%
9-1-1 ABANDONED CALLS	900	1,429	529	58.7%
ALARMS (BURGLAR, FIRE, HOLDUP, ETC.)	1,611	1,729	118	6.9%
NCIC ALARM ENTRIES	141	300	159	112%

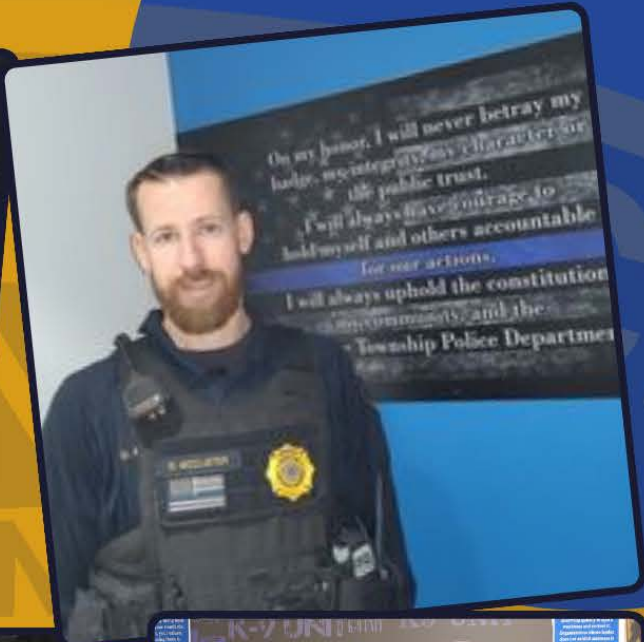
** This change is based on monthly averages*

14.) Communications

Captain Joseph Lech is the liaison to the IXP Corporation and has general oversight of communications operations. Training and policy reviews are conducted by Sergeant Matthew Grossi, who is assigned as the department's NCIC/CJIS Officer, which assures the integrity of computer crime files as required by federal and state standards. The on-duty Lawrence Township Police Department shift commander retains the authority to direct the communication operators in their daily activities.

The Lawrence Township Police Department has agreements with Mercer County regarding the dispatching of fire and emergency medical service calls. When calls for service regarding requests for fire or emergency medical services are received in the Lawrence Township Police Department Communication Center, they are answered by IXP Corporation communication operators who then forward the calls to Mercer County Central Communications for the dispatching of fire and emergency medical services. The IXP Corporation communication operator then dispatches police personnel to the scene.

Mercer County Central Communications can coordinate fire and hazmat apparatus and mutual aid fire companies, as well as the response of emergency medical personnel, especially mutual aid resources, more effectively than Lawrence Township Police communications operators alone. These actions free the communications operator to direct the police response.



15.) Traffic Safety

TRAFFIC BUREAU

Throughout the year, the police department continued to work toward staffing the vacant Traffic Bureau. Some of the responsibilities of the Traffic Bureau were assigned to Captain Joseph Lech IV during 2023. The police department will continue to work towards assigning an officer to fill the much-needed Traffic Safety Officer position and staff the Traffic Bureau.

The police department has two platoons and each platoon has historically had an advanced traffic crash investigator assigned. These officers investigate motor vehicle crashes, conduct motor vehicle enforcement, and assist with other duties as directed. Due to retirements, the police department is working toward reestablishing the

The Traffic Bureau specializes in assessing the traffic needs of the township. This includes timely deployment of officers based on crash data and traffic complaints. The Traffic Safety Officer also works with contractors and transportation departments as well as the Lawrence Township Engineering Office to develop, review, and inspect temporary traffic control zones for any work occurring on a roadway to ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic. The Traffic Safety Officer also coordinates with the Lawrence Township Board of Education to evaluate and assess the traffic safety needs of the district.

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

In 2021, the Township outsourced school crossing guard services to a third-party company, Motivated Security. In 2023, Motivated Security provided crossing guard services which included staffing, management and daily operations relating to all aspects of providing safe school crossings for student walkers. The police department maintains several officers certified to teach the NJ Safe Routes to School Crossing Guard curriculum. Prior to the beginning of the new school year, Lawrence Township Police Department provides the mandatory certification training for all crossing guards, as well as mid-school year refresher training.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH STATISTICS – 2023

Traffic crashes increased from 1,174 in 2022 to 1193 in 2023. The majority of collisions were same direction (rear end) crashes (359). The most common contributing factor causing the crashes was driver inattention (59%). Within the 1,193 crashes that occurred in 2023, 205 resulted in reported injuries, a 30 % reduction when compared to 2022. During 2023 there were 18 crashes involving pedestrians and 4 crashes involving bicyclists.

15.) Traffic Safety

In 2023, there were two crash fatalities, which is the same number of fatal crashes that occurred in 2022.

The location with the single highest number of intersection crashes was Brunswick Pike at Franklin Corner Road/Bakers Basin Road, with 85 crashes (this includes Northbound and Southbound sides of the intersection). The second highest intersection crash location was the Brunswick Circle, with 56 crashes. This includes all intersections of the circle. The third highest intersection crash location was Brunswick Pike at the Kelly Via Duct with 44 crashes.

The roadways with the highest total number of crashes were Brunswick Pike with 390 crashes and Lawrence Road with 131 crashes. Police officers are directed to conduct traffic enforcement activities in these areas to help prevent future crashes.

The Lawrence Township Police department is committed to keeping the roadways safe. In 2023 we assisted neighboring agencies with traffic control from motor vehicle crashes that occurred on our bordering roads or Interstate 295 on 77 different occasions. Vehicles that become mechanically disabled can be a serious hazard. In 2022 we assisted 410 motorists experiencing car trouble. In 2023 the total was 376

<u>Comparative Statistics 2022 / 2023</u>		
<i>Total Crash Reports</i>	Year 2022 - 1174	Year 2023 - 1193
Crashes with Injuries	Year 2022 - 295	Year 2023 - 205
Pedestrian Involved	Year 2022 - 13	Year 2023 - 18
Bicyclist Involved	Year 2022 - 7	Year 2023 - 4
Fatalities	Year 2022 - 2	Year 2023 - 2
Assist outside Agency	Year 2022 - 48	Year 2023 - 77
Disabled Vehicles	Year 2022 - 410	Year 2023 - 376

15.) Traffic Safety

2023 Highest Motor Vehicle Crash Locations at Intersections

Brunswick Pike at Franklin Corner Road/Bakers Basin Road	85
Brunswick Pike at Kelly via duct	44
Trenton Freeway at Whitehead Road	41
Bakers Basin at Brunswick Pike	34
Brunswick Pike at 295	32
Brunswick Pike at Quakerbridge Road	22
Whitehead Circle at Brunswick Pike/ Whitehead Road	22
Brunswick Circle at Lawrence Road	19
Lawrence Road at Brunswick Circle	19
Greenburg Road at bakers Basin Road	18

2023 Highest Motor Vehicle Crash Roadways

Brunswick Pike	390
Lawrence Road	131
Quakerbridge Road	79
Princeton Pike	76
Trenton Freeway	58

15.) Traffic Safety

2023 Highest Motor Vehicle Crash Roadways **Continued**

Princeton Avenue	53
Franklin corner Road	43
Brunswick Circle	38
Bakers basin Road	27
Spruce Street	19

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

The total number of motor vehicle summonses issued by the officers was 3,309 for 2023. 2022 - 2897

Additionally, during 2023, officers apprehended 29 intoxicated drivers traveling on the roadways of Lawrence Township. In 2022, there were 31 cases of intoxicated drivers.

During 2022, Officers conducted 1,024 documented traffic enforcement posts. In 2023, 723 traffic enforcement posts were conducted. Traffic enforcement posts create a visual deterrence when motorists observe conspicuously placed marked police vehicles. Traffic enforcement posts target high crash areas and locations where there are a high volume of motor vehicle violations. There is a direct correlation between increased traffic enforcement posts and the decrease of motor vehicle crashes / violations in those specifically targeted areas.

In 2022 Lawrence Township Police tallied 1,622 traffic stops, and 2,250 in 2023.

(628 more traffic stops then 2022)

15.) Traffic Safety

During 2023, the Traffic Bureau continued to have Patrol Officers certified in the use of RADAR for speeding enforcement. There are also Officers certified in the use of LIDAR to combat speeding violations. LIDAR is a speed monitoring device that works using laser technology as opposed to traditional RADAR.

The Traffic Bureau also conducted numerous traffic surveys in 2023. The results of the surveys are shared with the township engineer's office for needs evaluation for traffic calming devices or engineering changes. The results are also used to direct motor vehicle enforcement activities by the police officers.



16.) K-9

CANINE UNIT

The Lawrence Township Police Department has maintained a Canine Unit since September of 2004 when the department received a Homeland Security grant to purchase an explosive detection canine. Since that time, the Canine Program has expanded to include six K9's (past and present) certified in narcotic detection and patrol duties such as building searches, missing persons, article searches, and criminal apprehension. Currently, Detective James Steimle #227 is assigned as the department's canine handler for K9 "Brix" (#6), a seven-year-old German Shepherd.

In 2023 K9 Brix continued his certifications as a narcotic detection and patrol canine. Over the course of the year, Detective Steimle and K9 Brix completed over 100 hours of training during mandatory in-service training days. The K9 team also spent countless hours training on their own during training sessions which included, obedience training, scent work, tracking/trailing, and criminal apprehension tactics.

The Lawrence Township K9 Unit completed 22 deployments in 2023. These deployments included multiple vehicles searches, searches for missing parties, and assisting outside agencies and organizations with searches for both people and narcotics. The K9 team also performed demonstrations of the K9's abilities for several schools and organizations including the Ben Franklin Elementary School, Lawrenceville Elementary School, Little Explorers Polish American Daycare Center, and the Ambassador Banquet and Catering "The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity" event. These events continue to provide an excellent opportunity for community outreach and allow the K9 Unit to demonstrate the wide range of capabilities which the dog and handler team possess.

Notable Calls for Service:

Case: 23-3663

On February 15, 2023, K9 Brix was called to assist East Windsor Police on a traffic stop in which the operator and passenger were denying consent to search their vehicle. K9 Brix was deployed on the vehicle and provided a positive indication for the odor of narcotics on the driver's door. A search of the vehicle was conducted and no contraband was located. The female driver was ultimately taken into custody and searched at East Windsor police headquarters. The search revealed 111 plastic baggies of heroin and 63 plastic baggies of cocaine concealed on her person.

16.) K-9

Case: 23-6659

On March 28, 2023, K9 Brix was called to assist Trenton Police on a traffic stop. The driver and passenger of the vehicle were observed conducting a hand to hand transaction in an alleyway. K9 Brix was deployed on the vehicle and provided a positive indication for the presence of a narcotic odor on the passenger door. A search of the vehicle was conducted and located on the passenger seat was 52 decks of suspected heroin and 2 vials containing suspected cocaine.

Case: 23-10207

On May 11, 2023, K9 Brix was called to assist Trenton Police detectives on a traffic stop in which the operator was not granting consent. K9 Brix was deployed on the vehicle and provided a positive indication for the presence of a narcotic odor. A search of the vehicle was conducted and inside of a fanny pack located on the driver's seat was a loaded defaced firearm. Additionally, detectives discovered a plastic bag full of rice, located on the rear seat. Inside of the bag was a small amount of suspected heroin. The driver of the vehicle attempted to use the rice to conceal the odor of the narcotics inside, but K9 Brix was still able to detect the odor.

Case: 23-21241

On October 03, 2023, K9 Brix was called to assist Trenton Police Anti-Crime Unit on a traffic stop. The driver of a rental vehicle was denying a consent to search the car. K9 Brix was deployed on the vehicle and provided a positive indication for the presence of a narcotic odor on the trunk of the vehicle. A search of the rental vehicle was conducted and inside of a plastic bag in the center console was 692 decks of suspected heroin. The driver and passenger were arrested for the distribution of narcotics.



In Memoriam

We would like to take this opportunity to remember one of our friends and partners who we lost in 2023. “Ty” one of our retired K-9's, was a member of the Lawrence Township Police Department from 2015-2020. He graduated from the New Jersey State Police K-9 Academy and served as a patrol and explosive detection K9. He was also a member of the “New Jersey State Police Task and Render Safe Force.” Throughout his years, he had criminal apprehensions throughout Mercer County. He retired in 2020.

Ty was loved by his best friend, partner and handler Officer Ron Buchanan (retired) as well as Officer Buchanan’s family. Ty was steadfast, faithful, diligent and absolutely loyal to Officer Buchanan and the job.

Ty, thank you for your selfless service to the members of the Lawrence Township Community.

We miss you.





17.) Chief Longo's Message

A message from the Chief, Christopher Longo:

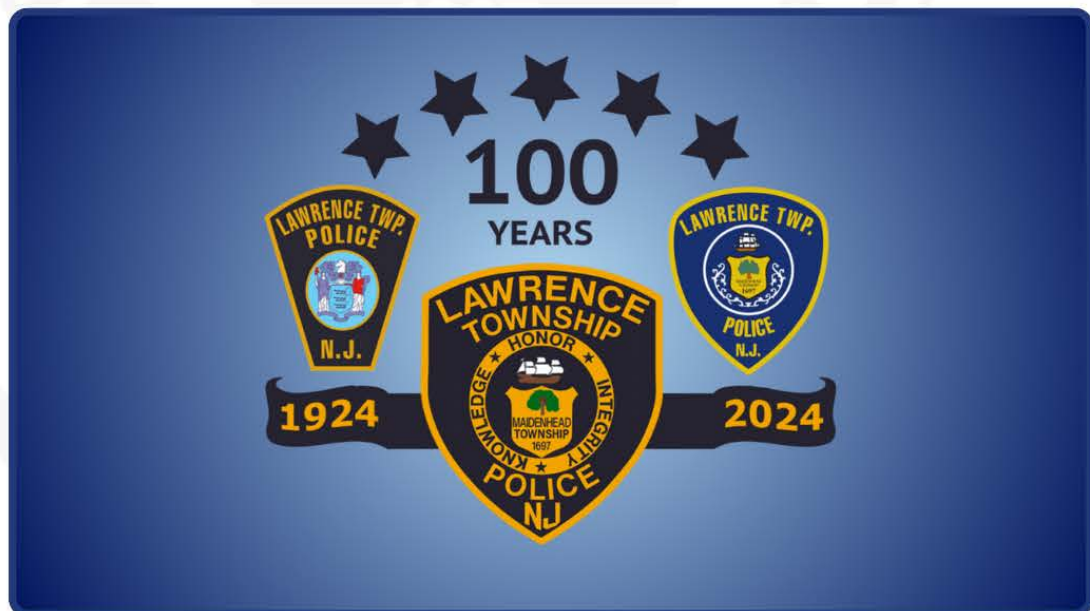
In the 1924, the "Lawrence Township Committee" realized the need for a police department dedicated solely to the residents and community of Lawrence Township. Subsequently, on February 23, 1924, Joseph Leland Hopkins was named Lawrence's Township's first Chief of Police. Chief Hopkins was provided with a motorcycle for transportation and patrol duties. He and six other officers would work a ten-hour day, seven days a week. They were also expected to be on call 24 hours a day.

As I write these words, I cannot help but reflect on how Chief Hopkins envisioned our agency 100 years hence his time. A lot has changed since 1924. The size of our department has gone from a handful of officers to well over 60. We are now in our 5th police HQ building. We have gone from one police motorcycle to a fleet of over 20 vehicles and motorcycles and we have had 8 Police Chiefs! Intersecting with these thoughts are how I envision our department and my successors during the next 100 years. If history is any indication of the future, I rest easy knowing some things will never change.

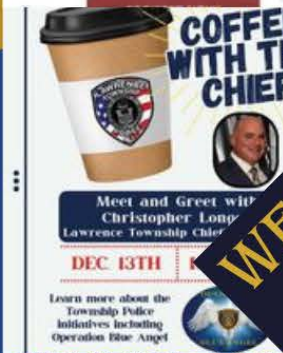
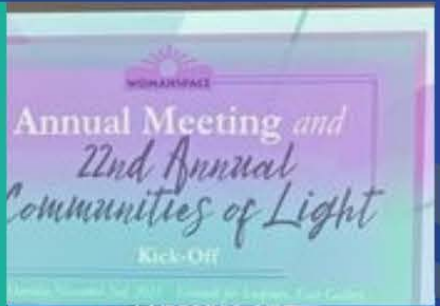
In fact, there are several things that have remained constant throughout our history. Specifically; Our mission, the quality and caliber of our Officers and the partnership our agency has with the community. These three things remain unmoved and under my command, they will remain the core of our agency. Happy New Year to all!

At your service,

Christopher Longo, Chief of Police







WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN 2024!!