

# **PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE**

## **INVESTIGATIONS STAFFING AND DEPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**Prepared By**

**The International Association of Chiefs of Police**



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## I. INVESTIGATIONS OVERVIEW

The investigative function of the Pittsburgh Police Bureau is largely centralized in the Investigations Branch, which is subdivided by units which specialize by crime types. A number of general detectives are assigned to Operations (patrol). A small Intelligence Unit in the Administrative Branch houses investigators.

Investigative staffing, January 2005, totaled 142 sworn and seven clerical assigned in the Investigations Branch, 22 zone detectives assigned to Operations (patrol) and nine sworn staff assigned to the Intelligence Section (Administration), a total of 173. Investigations hosts about 23% of department manpower.

Detectives are appointed after applying for an assignment, interview by a supervisor, and review of work histories. No formal examination, written or oral, is conducted. Detective is an assignment, not a rank.

There is no specific training regiment for new investigators. Generally, new investigators are mentored by either a supervisor or a senior investigator. Suitable courses on relevant subject matter are sought for new hires. Over time, investigators experience external training in addition to department in-service. Recent reductions and/or absence of outside training funds, have severely reduced professional training within the Investigations Branch.

Cases are assigned in one of three ways:

- ❑ Most common, paper reports are sent from Operations (patrol) to the Investigations Branch. Supervisors review reports and assign the cases that they feel should be investigated to an available investigator. This process involves mainly felonies and a few serious misdemeanors. Zone detectives handle all Part I crimes not investigated by Investigations and virtually all Part II crimes. Not all cases are investigated. Formal solvability factors are not used. Supervisors determine which case would profit from investigation.

Intelligence Unit staff manually reviews all paper copies of reports for cases of interest. Zone Commanders read reports and assign them to Zone Detectives based on crime seriousness, patterns, or citizen-generated centers of interest.

- ❑ For serious crimes, investigators may respond directly to a crime scene, shortly after being alerted to the offense, either by monitoring a radio or by direct contract from field officers.

- Complaints by citizens, government officials, or intelligence reports come to unit supervisors' attention and are assigned to investigators for follow up. This process is common for zone investigators who are assigned cases by the zone commander.

Investigators generally work either 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. A Night Felony Squad provides coverage between 12:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

Computerized case management is not employed. Manual and PC-based files (Excel) are utilized in some units. Investigations are recorded in the Bureau's book by individual detectives, in some instances. Each unit is responsible for a monthly case progress report, tracks case assignments and case clearances.

Case review is not governed by policy. Generally, a review occurs if a case is open for 30 days. There are periodic reviews after that. Case files reviewed did not uniformly include follow up reports with five days of assignment or any periodic additional supplemental reporting.

Comprehensive written investigative guidelines do not exist. There are unit orders. Victim and witness interviews are usually audio-taped and summarized in the case chronology. There are a number of interview rooms available. Most interview rooms have videotaping capabilities. Investigative facilities are generally very good.

Investigative information access is limited. While each investigator has access to a computer, or has a computer, the computers do not access department databases, NCIC, or the Pennsylvania Police information system. Information on warrants and wants, arrest histories, name and license checks requires a phone call to the dispatch center.

Cases are closed/cleared by arrests. Cases also may be unfounded. Exceptional clearances are also widely used. In addition, cases can be closed as "unworkable."

Communication among units with the Investigations Branch appear to be acceptable. Communication between Investigations-based detectives and zone detectives or patrol appears sporadic.

A standard evaluation process is employed to assess performance. An additional dimension is added for investigators. Investigators are expected to maintain a clearance rate above the national average for clearances (Uniform Crime Reports) for the crime type they are investigating.

Equipment appears adequate. Each detective is assigned a vehicle. Bullet proof vests, cameras, tape recorders, and binoculars are provided to detectives. Investigators, with approval, can access videotaping equipment, wiretap and other specialty equipment.

The Mobile Crime unit provides excellent forensic support, backed up by the County Coroner's Office. The Coroner's Office also provides crime scene search capabilities in all serious cases, including homicide.

## II. INVESTIGATIONS BRANCH

The organization and staffing of the Branch are displayed in Figure 1. Personnel assigned (January 2005) are:

- 1 Assistant Chief
- 2 Commanders
- 3 Lieutenants
- 15 sergeants
- 121 detectives
- 7 clerical staff

Total: 149

The Investigations Branch accounts for about 18.8% of the sworn officers of the PBP. Administration is staffed by an Assistant Chief and a Clerk-Steno. The Branch is divided into two subunits – Major Cases and Narcotics and Vice. A commander directs each. Each of the subunits is further divided into a number of sections, generally along functional (crime category) lines.

### SECTION 1: MAJOR CASES

Major Cases is directed by a Commander who is assisted by two lieutenants. Each of eight subunits are directed by a sergeant, with the exception of Arson and Auto Theft units which share a sergeant.

Major Cases is responsible for staffing the detective desk, which controls access to the headquarters building and accepts messages and materials for investigators. The detective desk is staffed by four civilian clerks, 24-hours-a-day.

**Analysis.** Two additional clerical assistants should be provided to Major Cases to track cases, collect personnel related data, and perform routine clerical functions.

### Recommended Staffing:

- 1 Commander
- 2 Lieutenants
- 2 clerical assistants

**Auto Theft/Arson.** This unit, supervised by a sergeant, focuses on two very different crime types. Three detectives address Arson and arson-related cases. All arsons and most arson-related cases are investigated by this unit. Five detectives investigate auto theft and auto theft-related offenses. A small portion of auto thefts are investigated by this unit. The majority are addressed by zone officers and investigators. Grant funds support four positions in this unit.

### Auto Theft Workloads (January through July 2004):

- 90 auto thefts (32% clearance)
- Part II (auto theft-related) 106 (53% clearance)
- Other investigations (59)
  - 28 assist zone and insurance
  - 17 Tow pound investigations
  - 6 garage investigations
  - 8 recovered autos.

Average monthly case load is 2.5 auto thefts, three auto-related crimes and 1.2 other, 6.7 cases in total.

### Arson Workloads (January through July 2005)

- 34 Arsons (76% clearance)
- 20 Criminal Mischief and other Part II offenses (30% clearance)
- 53 Other investigations (suspicious fires)

Average unit monthly workload is five arsons and three criminal mischiefs. Cause and origin investigations average seven cases per month. In many cities, cause and origin are also conducted by the Fire Department. This translates into an average monthly investigator workload of 1.6 arsons, .95 other (Part II) and 2.5 cause and origin investigations for an average monthly investigative load per investigator of 5 cases per month.

There had been discussion concerning transfer of the arson investigative function to the County. The county's General Investigative Unit has three detectives assigned to arson-related investigations and works in conjunction with the Fire Departments for cause and origin, focusing their efforts at finding perpetrators. This squad currently provides that service to all Allegheny County communities except Pittsburgh. The city would reimburse the county for arson investigations. It is anticipated that the equivalent of one investigator's salary and benefits would be saved.

**Analysis.** Arson squad should be staffed by two detectives. This reduced staffing in arson would result in still manageable caseloads. Currently auto thefts investigations caseloads are well within investigations standards. Auto theft staff should remain the same.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 5 detectives auto theft
- 2 detectives arson.

**Burglary.** The burglary unit addresses burglaries and felony theft, mostly burglaries. A number of burglaries not addressed by this unit are investigated by zone investigators.

The unit is supervised by a sergeant and staffed by 15 detectives. One detective is responsible for pawn shop entries, checking pawn shop lists for stolen property, and visiting the shops to check or located property. He also conducts inspections of shop records to ensure compliance with the city ordinances.

### **Burglary Workload (through June)**

- 1,767 Part I Burglary/Theft Investigations (27% clearance rate)
- 10 Part II Investigations (100% clearance rate)

**Analysis.** This is an acceptable case assignment rate of an average of 21.2 cases per month, and due to absences/transfers, a slightly higher caseload may occur. Clerical specialist provides support for pawn detail. Staff size appears appropriate.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 15 detectives
- 1 clerical specialist

**Homicide Unit.** The homicide unit is directed by a sergeant and staffed by 20 investigators. It investigates all homicides, a number of aggravated assaults, all suspicious deaths, suicides (and attempts) and fatal auto accidents. Three officers are assigned to a cold case squad. Minor assaults and some aggravated assaults are left to zone officers/investigators.

Investigations assigned January through July 2004 include:

- 31 homicides (87% clearance)
- 25 aggravated assaults (48% clearance)
- 113 other investigations

Average number of cases assigned is 9.5 per month. It is noted that the county homicide unit handled 39 homicides and 394 cases in 2003 with an assigned investigative (detective) strength of 16.

**Analysis.** Average number of cases assigned is 9.5 per month. Staffing is appropriate and should be maintained.

#### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 20 detectives

**Robbery.** Robbery investigates all commercial robberies. Street robberies or person to person robberies not committed in a commercial establishment are investigated by zone detectives. The unit is directed by a sergeant and staffed by nine investigators. From January to July, this unit investigated 283 robberies, an average of 4.5 cases assigned per month (and achieved a 45% clearance rate).

**Analysis.** This average of 4.5 cases assigned per month is low to moderate caseload. Only about 15% of robberies are being investigated (1,635 robberies reported in 2003). Caseloads should be increased with a larger proportion of reported robberies investigated.

#### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 9 detectives

**Mobile Crime Unit.** This unit conducts crime scene investigations (forensic), collects and processes evidence. One detective in this unit is assigned to investigate

computer crimes. This unit also conducts AFIS checks and fingerprint related analyses. It is staffed by a sergeant and 12 detectives.

From January to July of 2004, 1,894 crime scenes were processed, an average of 5.2 per 24-hour period. In the first seven months of 2004, 2,105 fingerprints were processed, and 146 prints were subject to AFIS analysis. Mobile Crime investigators cover two shifts.

**Recommendation.** Squad should be maintained. We further recommend that the detective involved in computer forensic be linked to two additional detectives assigned to a computer crime unit. The computer crimes unit should be assigned to the sergeant in witness protection for supervision (currently that sergeant only supervises 2 detectives).

**Recommended Staffing.**

- 1 sergeant
- 12 detectives

**Night Felony Squad.** This unit operates between 2400 – 800 hours to cover/ investigate crime scenes when other detectives are not available. The unit is staffed by a sergeant and two officers. The sergeant carries a caseload. Night felony detectives conduct preliminary investigations and write an initial follow-up report. As part of their response, they may interview witnesses, supervise crime scene search, and/or attempt an arrest. Generally, all that is produced is a report. These detectives have no further follow-up requirements and do not handle the case again. Cases are turned over to specialized detectives after initial investigation is completed. From January to July 2004, this unit conducted 379 preliminary investigations, an average of 18 cases per month per investigator, fewer than one per work day.

They are summoned to a scene by the Night Field Commander or, based upon the type of event, Communications may automatically notify them. This request is field through the Detective Desk at headquarters. When not responding, they remain in headquarters.

**Analysis.** This unit conducts the initial investigation on a crime occurring in the late night. The following morning the case is turned over to a detective from the appropriate squad. In most departments initial investigations are conducted by patrol officers, whether detectives are available or not. In very serious case detectives are called out. It is our recommendation that this squad be dissolved. Note also, that most PBP officers recently had in-service investigative training. Further, workload does not justify continuation. Availability of trained patrol officers eliminates downsizing as a consideration.

**Recommendation.** Dissolve the Night Felony Squad.

**Witness Protection Unit.** The unit assists and supports witnesses to crimes. The unit is staffed by a sergeant and two detectives. The program was established in 1994 and has handled 512 witnesses since then. Currently, 43 witnesses and their families are in the program. Activities include 24-hour protection, ensuring that witnesses show up for court, providing housing (not secret type) and employment assistance, tracking witnesses who try to leave the area or avoid court subpoenas. Many clients require drug and alcohol dependence treatment which they arrange. They conduct criminal investigations to find witnesses and return them to the city, estimated at less than 20% of activity. The unit does not provide new identities or relocation services, the Marshal's Service does. Some clients end up in the federal program. The District Attorney is involved with case assignment. Major offenses include homicide, drug cases, assaults, gun violence, robbery.

**Analysis.** Appropriate staffing of the unit is difficult to establish. Better workload data is needed to establish appropriate staffing. In most agencies, witness protection responsibilities are generally addressed by the detective unit pursuing the related investigation. Since this is a necessary function, it is our recommendation that the unit be maintained with its current staff and efforts be undertaken to identify daily and weekly workload to justify personnel assigned.

It is further recommended that a 2 detective computer crimes unit be established. This unit should be jointly supervised by the sergeant in charge of witness protection. Two detectives are recommended for computer crimes until case load information can be gathered to determine suitable staffing. Two are recommended to cover leave time so that at least one computer trained detective will be generally available.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 2 detectives (witness protection)
- 2 detectives (cyber crime)

**Sex Assault and Family Crisis.** This unit investigates sexual assaults and related offenses. It is staffed by a sergeant and 11 detectives. From January through July, 2004, investigations numbered 268:

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part I sex assaults                  | 107 (104 rapes) (86% clearance) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part II sex assault related offenses | 159 (81% clearance)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other investigations                 | 2                               |

Detectives assigned to this unit average 3.5 investigations per month.

**Analysis.** Current caseload for Sexual Assault is 3.5 cases per month per investigator. Compared to most departments this is a relatively low case load. Since this unit addresses such important and additional areas as domestic violence and elder abuse, it is our recommendation that the sexual assault unit be maintained at current size and additional investigations be added.

**Family Crisis and Missing Persons Unit.** This unit focuses on child abuse crime. It also addresses domestic violence, Meaghan's Law, hate crime, and crimes against the elderly. A subunit is responsible for missing person investigations, largely computer and telephone follow-up work.

Child abuse is staffed by two detectives. Workload for the first seven months of 2004 was:

- 198 child abuse investigations (83% clearance)

Average case load for child abuse is 14 investigations per month per detective.

**Analysis.** Given the complexities and seriousness of child abuse, we recommend an increase of one detective for child abuse investigations. We would also like to see intensified prevention work and interaction with social services and non-profit advocacy groups.

Missing persons cases are addressed by two detectives. In the first seven months of 2004 missing persons cases totaled:

- 1,062 (88% found)

Missing persons detectives investigate about 76 cases per month, about three per day. Most investigations are restricted to phone and computer work.

**Analysis.** This is a very high investigative level. However, most of their work is office oriented so current caseloads are reasonable.

### **Recommend Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 11 detectives (sexual assaults)
- 3 detectives (child abuse)
- 2 detectives (missing persons)

## SECTION 2: NARCOTICS AND VICE

A Commander directs Narcotics and Vice, assisted by a lieutenant. Narcotics and Vice comprises an administrative unit; the Narcotics Unit, Impact; Weed and Seed Unit; the Firearms Tracking Unit.

**Narcotics and Vice Administration.** Narcotics and Vice Administration processes grant paperwork, manages asset forfeiture, reviews use of force events by unit personnel, and monitors drug seizures. It is staffed by a lieutenant, a sergeant and five detectives.

In addition:

- Detectives work most, if not all, of agency investigations that require surveillance and wiretap. One detective is assigned to DEA
- High profile cases are assigned to Narcotics and Vice Administration detectives
- Investigations involving public officials
- The 3599/unmarked car at each zone is used for undercover investigations, under the supervision of zone commanders. Vehicles bought with asset forfeiture money and seized vehicles are the responsibility of this unit – approximately 30 cars
- This unit keeps track of firearms seizure for the city. (VUFA reports.)

Narcotics and Vice Administration processed the seizure through July of 2004 of \$350,666 in assets. A sergeant and three detectives are assigned to the asset forfeiture effort.

**Analysis.** Given the sensitivity of this function, it is our recommendation that current staffing levels be continued. However, it is strongly recommended that consideration be given to assigning clerical and accounting tasks to civilian staff. Car and tracking of vehicles should also be assigned to civilian employees. Paralegals could be used for some of the seizure work. Law enforcement related workload data is needed to justify current staffing.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 lieutenant
- 1 sergeant
- 5 detectives

**Narcotics and Vice Squad.** This is a traditional narcotics and vice squad. Vice also conducts bar checks, nuisance bar investigations, and searches for gambling devices. Assigned to this unit are two sergeants and 11 detectives (one detective is assigned to DEA). This unit is subdivided into two squads, each under the supervision of a sergeant. One squad works days, the other evenings.

**Squad 1 Workload:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug arrests	182
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous arrests	21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prostitution arrests	54
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gambling	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Citations	1

**Squad 2 Workload:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug arrests	30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous arrests	18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gambling arrests	225
<input type="checkbox"/>	Citations	1

**Analysis.** Units are productive. Undercover buys and the gathering of information, the preparation and service of search warrants is frequently a time consuming process. Such units are needed to curtail vice activities. The units are average just under an average of 8 arrests per month per investigator. Staff units at current level.

**Recommended Staffing**

- 2 sergeants
- 11 detectives

**Impact.** This unit addresses street sales of drugs in high crime/drug areas. This unit focuses on street markets and often utilizes “jump out strategies”. Arrests are largely buy bust, or by observation of sales. Impact is staffed by two sergeants and 17 detectives – two squads each with one sergeant, one with eight and one with nine detectives. Squads work 6:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. or 8:00 p.m. – 4:00 a.m. This unit also serves crime suppression and street crimes purposes.

In the first seven months of 2004 Impact made:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug arrests	509
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous arrests	145

- Prostitution arrests                      1
- Citations    4

This represents just under 100 arrests/events per month, about three per day. With 17 detectives, this is a ratio of about 5.5 arrests per detective per month.

**Analysis.** This unit demonstrates reasonable productivity with 5.5 arrests per detective per month. This is a reasonable productivity standard. Street crime suppression and drug market control are necessary urban crime strategies.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 2 sergeants
- 17 detectives

**Weed and Seed.** This federally-funded unit conducts narcotic-related investigations and operations. It is staffed by a sergeant and four detectives who work designated Weed and See areas - locations with high concentrations of a particular crime (e.g., drugs). Weed and Seed detectives frequently receive assistance from Impact and Narcotics and Vice units. During July of 2004, they have worked only four cases, drug conspiracy cases that average 18 months of investigation. They conduct extended surveillance and tracking of suspects and products, usually resulting in a very large indictment and mass search warrant execution.

**Analysis.** If grant funds are not replenished, transfer responsibility for complex drug distribution cases to the two parallel narcotics units, Impact and Narcotics and Vice. Do not assign replacement detectives.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 4 detectives

**Firearms Tracking Unit.** The FTU conducts follow-up investigations of all guns seized by Pittsburgh Police, in relation to violations of the Uniform Firearms Act (VUFA) as well as seizures resulting from domestics, mental health commitments, and suicides. This unit consists of a sergeant and four detectives with two assigned to the ATF Task Force under grant funding. It follows up or assists on thefts and burglaries that involve guns. A considerable proportion of the work involves computerized tracking of firearms, which is conducted by an ATF-funded clerk for national database checks and detectives for local work. Tracking involves street interviews and investigations to identify the original purchaser and determine whether a straw

purchase occurred. When a straw purchaser is located, other criminal proceedings may take place for drug, firearm, or other crime violations. Most follow-up is street level intensive. The FTU coordinates PIC, a statewide system that clears weapons for return to owners. If a firearm is recovered as a by-product of other investigations and the original owner is identified, he/she must be cleared by PIC prior to the return of the weapon. Other than the ATF-funded national tracking clerk, there are no civilians assigned to this unit.

In the first seven months of 2004, the FTU conducted:

- 220 firearms stolen investigations
- 187 firearms recovered
- 944 guns recovered
- 1,141 firearms traced
- 436 NCIC stolen checks
- 338 pawn checks

Two FTU detectives are assigned to the ATF Violent Crime Impact Team, a multi-agency effort focused on violent criminals within targeted communities. VICT investigates:

- Firearms arrest
- Firearms theft
- All gun store thefts
- Shootings involving a firearm
- All homicides where a firearm is recovered
- Surveillance of local gun shows to determine if “straw purchasers” are present.

**Analysis.** Excellent unit takes a proactive approach to stolen guns. Average caseload of about 8 cases per month is low. However the unit does extensive report reviews and gun tracing as well. Recommend staffing remain stable.

### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 4 detectives
- 1 clerk

### III. CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE

This Research and Planning based operation maintains a centralized criminal intelligence database; collects and disseminates information about criminals and criminal conspiracies; tracks organized crime, street gangs, and drug organizations; and monitors threat groups. At one time, this unit provided dignitary protection, a function now performed by Narcotics and Vice Administration. Current staffing is one sergeant and eight detectives.

Positions are organized by specialties. Detectives specialize in offender reentry, crime analysis, terrorism, gangs, and organized crime. Work is schedule based on assignment and need.

Offender Re-entry, another Intelligence Unit function, involves monitoring the re-entry of former felons into the community; does not “tail” but rather determines employment and addresses to update intelligence files. May seek linkages to current criminal activity and, if found, seeks warrants or return to incarceration.

Workload data is not readily available. Criminal Intelligence maintained a database. Prior to initiation of this study, the database crashed and became un-retrievable. Paper file records exist. There is currently no routine reporting of activity according to unit officers and the Planning Division Commander. Efforts are underway (as of November 3, 2004) to utilize the field daily activity reporting sheet to collect data on the activities of the assigned personnel. A new database has been purchased (Analyst Workbook by I2). It is currently undergoing testing. Once operational, the paper records will be reviewed and current and credible data will be inputted to the new system.

**Analysis.** The intelligence squad is currently assigned to administration. It would be more effective if attached to the Chief’s Office. It is difficult to justify staffing for this unit, since no workload data was available. It is clearly a necessary function. However, staffing should be justified. It is recommended that once workload data is available that this unit be reviewed in terms of its relative productivity and staff size adjust to workload.

#### **Recommended Staffing**

- 1 sergeant
- 8 detectives

#### **IV. ZONE DETECTIVES**

Zone detectives are assigned to the Operations Branch. Four detectives are assigned to each zone, six to Zone 3, totaling 22. Zone detectives report directly to Zone Commanders. They have little formal tie to detectives in the Investigations Branch.

Zone detectives address all Part I crimes that are not investigated by unit detectives and those Part II crimes assigned by Zone commanders for follow up. Zone commanders read all reports, daily, and assign those selected for follow up to either the reporting patrol officer (when a suspect is identified in the report) or to a zone detective. Commercial robberies are investigated by centralized unit detectives, for example, while street and person to person robberies (not committed inside a commercial establishment) are investigated by zone detectives.

Workload statistics are kept in a variety of formats, some in Excel. A total of 348 cases were shown for one zone detective for 2003. We found smaller numbers for 2004. Clearances shown on some reports include a large proportion of "exceptional clearances," higher than we would expect. In the 348 cases mentioned above, 145 or 42% of the cases were cleared "exceptionally." Another 23 cases were cleared "exceptionally by arrest," an unusual clearance, as none were cleared by "arrest." Assuming the "exceptionally cleared by arrest" cases are in fact, cleared by arrest and eliminating the "exceptional" clearance, fewer than 11% are cleared by arrest (203/23). In other zones, cleared by arrest is used.

From a workload standpoint, 348 cases averages to 29 cases a year per investigator (Zone 5), (reasonably close to national standards and higher than that handled by Investigation Branch detectives or those in Allegheny County's General Investigative unit.) A significant number of drug cases are handled by the zone Crime Prevention or Problem Solving officers, who work uniform and old clothes and may call on the detectives to assist. In one zone (2), two of the zone detectives worked a significantly higher number of drug cases, but also indicated little direct coordination with headquarters drug units.

Table 1									
DETECTIVE ACTIVITY REPORTING EXAMPLE, ZONE 4									
Year To Date	Unfounded	Year To Date	Cases Remaining	Year To Date	Exceptional Cleared	Year To Date	Arrests	Year To Date	Percentage Cleared
<b>Part I Crimes</b>									
81	1	2	2	76	7	28	0	3	100
111	0	1	27	108	5	16	0	19	18
105	1	2	2	100	8	49	1	13	100
99	0	1	27	98	6	20	0	3	22
<b>Part II Crimes</b>									
Year To Date	Unfounded	Year To Date	Cases Remaining	Year To Date	Exceptional Cleared	Year To Date	Arrests	Year To Date	Percentage Cleared
14	0	0	0	14	0	10	0	0	0
38	0	0	7	38	1	2	0	2	14
24	0	1	1	23	3	14	0	2	100
38	0	0	6	38	0	4	0	0	0
<b>YEAR TO DATE PART I AND II ARRESTS</b>									<b>39</b>

## V. ALLEGHENY COUNTY POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

The Allegheny County Police Department (ACPD) provides investigative services to 130+ county municipalities. It does not investigate crimes in Pittsburgh. In jurisdictions with a police agency, ACPD detectives do not have primary authority for investigations. They respond only when requested. Homicides are the exception. While invitation is still required, most municipalities have informally allocated investigative responsibilities to the county. There is no legal basis to require transfer of investigative responsibility to the county police department. UCR reporting of events investigated by the county remain with the originating municipality, eliminating any formal reporting, except for incidents in the parks and at the airport.

The ACPD Investigations Branch, directed by an Assistant Superintendent, is organized as three units:

- Narcotics/Vice
- Homicide
- General Investigations

Total staffing is 58:

- 1 Assistant Superintendent
- 3 lieutenants
- 3 sergeants
- 51 detectives

**Allegheny Narcotic/Vice Section.** A lieutenant commands this unit, staffed by a sergeant and 10 detectives. Detectives work two shifts, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 1 a.m., Monday-Friday, unless they are working a case that requires a different schedule. They also have an on-call arrangement. Detectives focus on street dealing; executing search warrants on conspiracies; have a relationship with both DEA and ATF Task Forces, occasionally serving on these task forces; and vice cases related to sports betting, illegal lotteries, and video pay-off poker machines in bars. They use body wires and surveillance equipment, but not wire taps which are reserved for the District Attorney in Pennsylvania. Narcotics officers try to amass 40 or more warrants before executing them in order to maximize resources.

Case/event data is not maintained. Cases generate from complaints or self-initiation. Arrests reflect caseload, but individual detective workload is not collected or measured.

Year	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Detectives	Arrests Per Detective
1998	1	0	13	382/29
1999	1	1	18	366/20
2000	1	1	16	465/29
2001	1	1	15	345/23
2002	1	1	12	312/26
2003	1	1	13	287/22
2004 (Oct)	1	1	10	282/28

**Homicide Unit.** Staffed by lieutenant, sergeant, and 16 detectives, this unit focuses on homicides and aggravated batteries. Traffic, officer, and arson-related homicides are investigated. Personnel work days (12 detectives) and evenings (four detectives), Monday through Friday. They have two detectives on call during the hours they do not work.

Caseload for 2003 was 395 or 24.6 per detective per year or 2.1 per month. Of these, 127 arrests were made.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>WORKLOAD 2001-2003</b>			
<b>Event</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Homicide	26	33	39
Arson Homicide	5	0	0
Vehicular Homicide	3	3	1
Attempted Homicide	0	0	0
Industrial Accident	1	1	1
Aggravated Assault	38	38	46
Officer Involved	0	5	8
MVA Fatal	31	31	19
MVA-Non-fatal	30	22	23
Accidental Overdose	*	36	28
Accidental Fire	7	8	8
Accidental Other	38	22	15
Suicide	54	67	77
Attempted Suicide	3	7	4
Natural Death	35	37	20
Undetermined/Misc.	37	45	47
Assist	<u>69</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>68</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>Arrests</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>127</b>
* Included in Accidental Other			

Case loads include all deaths as well as assists in various non-homicide deaths and injury cases. Assists account for over 17% of cases handled. Suicides, accidental overdoses, accidental fire, and accidental other accounted for 128 cases in 2003, or 32% of cases investigated.

**General Investigations.** General Investigations, commanded by a lieutenant and staffed by a sergeant and 25 detectives, addresses a variety of crimes including sex assaults, rapes, child abuse, property and personal crimes (not investigated by the other units), credit card and other forgeries, jail related crimes/offenses, and arson. Detectives conduct some crime scene search, and run the fingerprint system. Two detectives are assigned to run the computer and audio-visual labs. Two detectives are assigned to evidence control. These non-investigative assignments makes detective case loads difficult to interpret since the agency does not maintain specific records on

each of the detectives. The numbers do reflect overall unit investigative workload, but not that associated with the additional duties.

<b>Table 4</b>				
<b>WORKLOAD 2002-2004</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Arrests</b>	<b>Detectives</b>	<b>Cases Per Detective Year/Month</b>
2002	1,739	725	25	70/6
2003	1,687	916	25	67/6
2004 (Oct)	1,348	472	25	54/5

Clearance data is not maintained. Clearances are reported by jurisdictions in which incidents occur.

## **VI. OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS**

Investigations nationally vary considerably in their organization. Two major themes distinguish the organization of investigators: generalist versus specialist and centralized versus decentralized.

The issue of generalist versus specialist has strong advocates on each side of the issue. The debate revolves around costs and communications. Specialization produces greater expertise in a particular area of investigation. This is particularly critical in areas such as white collar, computer crime, or homicide. The downside is that specialization often costs more. It is more difficult to adjust/match personnel to workload, which tends to fluctuate. Specialization tends to result in more narrowly focused and more numerous units reduce the flow of information from investigator to investigator.

The caseloads found within the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police’s Investigations Branch seem to bear this theory out. Of particular interest are two specialized units that are not found in most departments. They are the Witness Protection Unit and the Firearms Tracing Unit. In addition, there is an intelligence-focused investigative unit located within the Administrative Branch, Research and Planning Unit, which is highly unusual. There is little data available to support its staffing or activities of the Intelligence Unit. In general, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police can be described as relatively specialized in its investigative function.

Centralization versus decentralization is a debate that also draws strong opinions. Centralization generally leads to tighter controls, more direction, and often a more

professional product. The downside of centralization is that contact is lost with street officers, the key players in initial crime scene inquiries and reservoirs of valuable information. Zone-based detectives also tend to have better local ties and information resources.

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police is highly centralized in its organization of investigations, with the exception of the limited number of district investigators. Not surprisingly, patrol officers and zone detectives note a “disconnect” between Investigation Branch investigators and Operations (patrol) personnel. Further, investigations at this level appear to be less coordinated with broader department operations.

**Proportion of Investigators.** The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police is heavily invested in Investigations. Currently 186 of its sworn personnel are assigned to varied aspects of investigation. The majority are sited within the Investigations Branch (156), with 22 in patrol and eight assigned to the Administrative Branch. This is a little over 20% of the sworn contingent assigned to the investigations function.

There is no commonly accepted standard regarding staffing of the investigation function. Compared to national averages for investigative staffing, PBP investigative staffing appears somewhat higher. Horvath et al. (2001), in a survey of investigator staffing, found an average percentage of 16% of sworn personnel assigned to the investigative function. (F. Horvath et al., 2001 A National Survey of Police Policies and Practices Regarding the Criminal Investigation Process, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, November 2001)

**Case Selection: Solvability Practice.** Investigative units vary nationally as to the proportion of crimes assigned to investigators for follow-up investigations. Some departments require investigators to at least review and contact the victim in all felony cases. There are departments that even require at least a minimal follow up for many misdemeanors. Most departments, however, review case reports for information that may assist in solving a case. In a number of departments, this review process is formalized by a number of rules often called solvability factors. Other departments utilize an informal review process.

Not all crimes are investigated by Pittsburgh’s investigators. This is common practice among police agencies. Departments either use formal or informal solvability factors to identify cases that should receive further investigation. There are no established solvability factors used by the Pittsburgh police investigators to determine which cases should be investigated. At the zone level, commanders review and make decisions about follow-up. Each commander interviewed has different criteria. Criteria, however, are based more upon community concerns rather than case solvability. This

leads to perception-based decision making, but is consistent with community policing principles.

The proportion of crimes investigated varies by crime type (unit). All homicides are assigned for follow-up. Most strong arm street robberies are generally not assigned for follow up. Only a small proportion of burglaries and thefts are investigated. Very few misdemeanors are assigned follow-up. In choosing which cases to investigate, the Investigations Branch uses informal reviews, generally by supervisors, to determine which cases are to be assigned to an investigator.

**Caseloads.** There are no national standards for caseloads. Caseloads for very serious crimes, such as homicide and kidnapping, are, generally, relatively low. Homicide caseloads range from two to 15 cases a year per investigator. For most other crimes, caseloads commonly vary from 20-30 cases per month. Some agencies assign as many as 70 property crimes a month. For most crimes, the most common caseload is 20-30 per month (based on a review of 11 large agencies caseload reports). Agencies reviewed included San Francisco Police Department, San Diego Police Department, San Jose Police Department, Oakland Police Department, Indianapolis Police Department, Phoenix Police Department, Corpus Christi Police Department, Gary Indiana Police Department, Cleveland Police Department, Chandler, Arizona, Police Department, and the Buffalo Police Department.)

In comparison, caseloads for units within Pittsburgh’s Investigations Branch are relatively modest. Caseloads vary from the Sexual Assault cases load of 3.5 cases per month to Burglary’s 17.5 to 20 cases per month.

**Clearances.** Pittsburgh’s clearance rates vary by offense. In every instance, clearance rates are well above national average especially for departments serving similar population.

Table 5

PBP CLEARANCES

YTD 2004

PART I OFFENSES YTD - CITY WIDE	TOTAL REPORTED OFFENSES		PERCENTAGE CHANGE	TOTAL	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE
	2003	2004		CLEARED 2003	CLEARED 2004	CLEARED 2003	CLEARED 2004
HOMICIDE	52	30	-42%	32	29	62%	97%
FORCIBLE RAPE	107	82	-23%	73	65	68%	79%
ROBBERY	1180	1231	4%	386	447	33%	36%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	1352	1573	16%	729	886	54%	56%
BURGLARY	2342	2393	2%	473	618	20%	26%
LARCENY-THEFT	7779	7428	-5%	1348	1319	17%	18%
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	1769	1836	4%	231	306	13%	17%
ARSON	79	70	-11%	22	18	28%	26%
TOTAL PART I OFFENSES	14660	14643	0%	3294	3688	22%	25%

These numbers derived from the 10/07/04 PL935 run extracted by CIS from the C.R.I.M.E.S. system.

\* The Total Reported Offenses consists of only reported offenses for the listed year and does not include the Unfounded Cases. The Total Cleared includes offenses cleared from previous years.

Part 1 Offenses YTD City Wide	Total Reported Offenses Pittsburgh 2004 thru September	Percentage Cleared Pittsburgh 2004 thru September	Cleared Nationally 2003	Cleared Cities Over 250,000 (2003)
Homicide	30	97%	62.4%	60.1%
Forcible Rape	82	79%	44.0%	47.8%
Robbery	1,231	36%	26.3%	23.0%
Aggravated Assault	1,573	56%	55.9%	50.6%
Burglary	2,342	26%	13.1%	11.0%
Larceny Theft	7,779	18%	18.0%	14.2%
M. V. Theft	1,769	17%	13.1%	10.1%
Arson	79	26%	16.7%	10.9%

Some of the variance in categories may be a result of aggressive use of “exceptional” clearances. A review of rape statistics through July 2004, for example, found more than half of the clearances were a result of exceptional clearances - clearances that do not involve an arrest. On the other hand, a more modest 10% of clearances of robberies during this period were due to exceptions.

PBP data indicate a clearance rate that exceeds those of police agencies in its population class. Exactly how much more efficient is open to debate in some crime categories due to aggressive use of exceptional clearances. The PBP does appear to be solving crimes at a high rate. This is an important finding.

**Merger Opportunity.** If one totals the investigative manpower among the city, county and district attorney investigative units, there appears to be over 266 (190 city, 50 with the county and 26 with the District Attorney’s unit) investigators engaged in criminal investigations of one type or another within Allegheny County.

Throughout the study, the issue of transfer of assets or consolidation has been omnipresent. In one case, there has been talk about transfer of the city detectives to the county and subsequently the transfer of all assets under the DA’s plan. In addition, there has been piecemeal transfer of communications, crime scene search, and other suggestions of various assets back and forth. The issue remains of how to effectively configure the law enforcement assets and specifically those of the investigative function without reducing service levels, creating breaches between the street officers and investigators, or confusing the focus of investigations.

Consideration should be given to consolidating of the investigative function within the city police department, and eventual creation of a metro-county law enforcement agency with responsibility for all first responder actions within the city and unincorporated areas of the county, along with investigative responsibility for all areas of the county. Municipalities would then have to reimburse the agency for the investigative services provided. Costs for such a preliminary joining of the investigative function and subsequent broader consolidation have not been calculated.

Rationale for initial merging of the investigative function within the city are enumerated in our report *Criminal Investigations in Allegheny County*. They include:

- ❑ **Coverage and Public Service.** Research and experience demonstrates conclusively that linking victims and witnesses with investigators as quickly as possible increases case closures and reduces further victimization. Currently, the County does not regularly field investigators on Saturdays and Sundays, at weekday levels, if at all. Combining staffs would allow for weekend coverage.
- ❑ **Information Pooling.** Combining investigator knowledge and information bases, such as they are, should enhance scope and quality of investigations information assets across the country.
- ❑ **Resource Flexibility.** With enhanced staff capacity, investigations managers will have greater flexibility to “move resources in response to changing needs, more saturated gang or drug response, for example.
- ❑ **Supervision, Training, and Mentoring Upgrades.** The County Police appear to be understaffed at the investigations supervisor level. We note for example, two supervisors (lieutenant and sergeant) for 26 General Assignment detectives. A 1-13 ratio is not desirable. Fusing County and PPB supervision could reduce this ratio to a more manageable and desirable level. We believe the PPB has sufficient capacity to stretch supervisory ratios.
- ❑ **Performance Management and Measurement Systems Migration.** The PPB employs a COMPSTAT-style investigations management and performance measurement system. We believe that broader application, to all investigators in the County, would increase effectiveness and productivity – produce a more favorable outcome – investment ratio.
- ❑ **Economies of Scale.** Data from the PPB and the County Police indicate several pockets of modest caseloads, establishing a potential for some combining and reduction in staffing, modest in nature. Supervisory levels

offer little, due to stretched ratios in ACPD. Economies may well be available in: evidence processing, collection, storage, and retrieval; crime scene investigations; purchasing; and clerical support. Non-line staff can usually absorb workload.

The DA has proposed a consolidated investigative force under his leadership that will encompass all investigative responsibility for Allegheny County. This proposal includes a staffing model of 175 detectives, which is significantly lower than the current three agency staffing. While there is no way to determine if this is the correct staffing level (due to inconsistencies or absence of adequate effectiveness and workload data), the differences between the current staffing levels, what workload data is present, and some apparent duplication of effort, some consolidation is the correct path to take.