

2023

INTERNAL AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT





# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Internal Affairs 2023-Annual Report

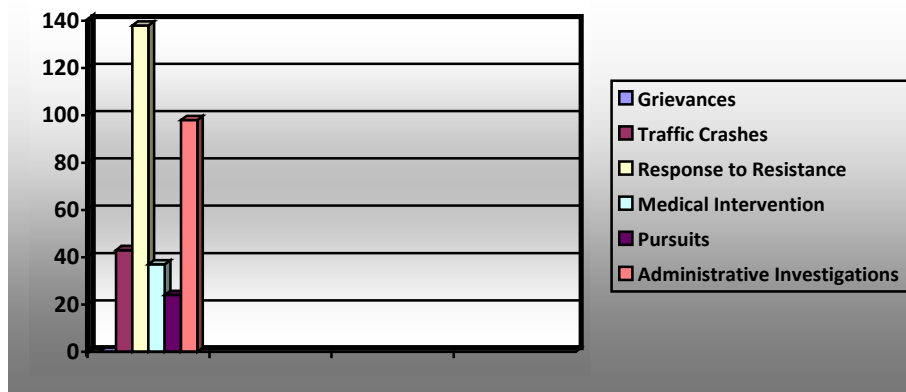
Sheriff Eric Flowers

### Introduction

Pursuant to Agency policy, reviews and statistical reports are compiled concerning a wide variety of incidents involving Agency personnel. The primary categories of incidents are Grievances, Traffic Crashes, Response to Resistance, Medical Intervention, Vehicle Pursuits, Administrative Investigations, and Discipline. Discipline is a subcategory, which is applied in response to noted policy violations of the primary categories, but is also counted as a primary category for reporting and may include discipline for items not otherwise addressed through Internal Affairs assignment. Medical Interventions include instances in which an Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED), Tourniquet, or the deployment of Naloxone (EVZIO) was utilized. These incidents are analyzed to determine trends, or to identify training needs. During 2023, the Internal Affairs Section documented 340 reports, including all aspects of Sheriff's Administration, Department of Law Enforcement and Department of Corrections concerning the below listed areas as follows:

➤ Grievances	00	(8 for 2022)
➤ Traffic Crashes	43	(28 for 2022)
➤ Response to Resistance	138	(118 for 2022)
➤ Medical Intervention	37	(59 for 2022)
➤ Pursuits	24	(22 for 2022)
➤ Administrative Investigations	98	(108 for 2022)

In 2023, 340 reports were generated. This is a 1% decrease from 2022. In 2022, 343 reports were generated. This is a 17% increase from 2021, in which 293 reports were generated.



## **Bias Policing**

There was 1 report of Bias Biased Profiling for the year of 2023.

This complaint was determined to be unfounded and there were no violations of any agency departmental rules, regulations, policies, or procedures.

For the year of 2022, there were no reports of Bias Based Profiling. For the year of 2021, there were no reports of Bias Based Profiling. The relative lack of reports or complaints of bias based profiling is reflective of the training Agency members receive in this area. This includes initial training through the Field Training Program and annual in-service training consisting of the following:

- proactive enforcement tactics
- officer/deputy safety
- courtesy
- cultural diversity
- legal aspects
- laws governing search and seizure
- interpersonal communication skills

The legal aspects of Bias Based Profiling are also an element of the Legal Update portion of annual in-service training. The training programs emphasize the need to respect the rights of all citizens to be free from unreasonable government intrusion or police interaction.

## **Grievances**

There were no Grievances filed for the year of 2023.

For the year of 2022 there were 8 Grievances filed. For the year of 2021 there were 6 Grievances filed.

## **Disciplinary Action Appeals**

There were no Disciplinary Action Appeals filed for the year of 2023.

In the year of 2022, there were 3 Disciplinary Action Appeals filed. In the year of 2021, there was 1 Disciplinary Action Appeal filed.

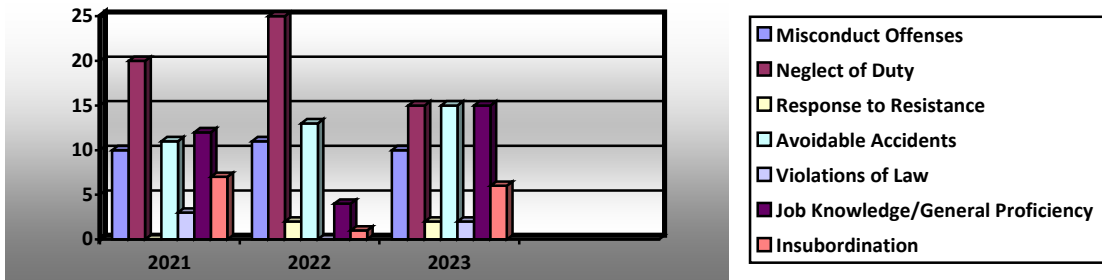
The above appeals notwithstanding, the infrequent occurrences of Disciplinary Appeals in 2023 may be a reflection of, and attributed to, the validity of the Internal Affairs process and the proportionality of discipline imposed as it relates to the seriousness of the violations. The Internal Affairs Unit works closely with supervisors at the Department and Division level to ensure that all disciplinary investigations and discipline imposed at the Division level occurs in a manner that is consistent with policy, procedure and past practices.

**ANALYSIS OF DISCIPLINE ADMINISTERED (AGENCY WIDE)**  
**Discipline by Type**

Offense Type	2021	2022	2023
Misconduct Offenses	10	11	10
Neglect of Duty	20	25	15
Response to Resistance	00	02	02
Avoidable Accidents: <i>Agency Owned Sheriff's Office Vehicles</i>	11	13	15
Violations of the Law	03	00	02
Job Knowledge/General Proficiency	12	04	15
Insubordination	07	01	06

\*The total number of allegations is not the total number of cases. One case may have multiple allegations of misconduct. Cases with sustained allegations may have been initiated in prior years.

The above chart indicates a decrease in disciplinary action administered in the area of Neglect of Duty. Job Knowledge and Insubordination have shown an increase during the reporting year of 2023. Avoidable Accidents have shown a slight increase during the reporting year of 2023. All other areas remain a fairly consistent level of sustained violations with subsequent issuance of discipline within all offense types. Disciplinary Action was administered for 59 sustained instances occurring in 2023. Disciplinary Action was administered for 55 sustained instances occurring in 2022. Disciplinary Action was administered for 45 sustained instances occurring in 2021. In some instances, there were more than one sustained Agency policy violation for the same employee, which may require the issuance of more than one disciplinary action.



### Discipline by Component

Division	2021	2022	2023
Corrections	15	12	10
Civilians	05	03	07
Uniform	25	39	42
Investigations	00	01	00
Civil, Court	00	00	00
Volunteer	00	00	00
Totals	45	55	59

### Breakdown of Disciplinary Action Administered in 2023

Law Enforcement	Amount	Corrections	Amount	Civilian/*Volunteers	Amount	TOTALS
Letters of Counseling	35	Letters of Counseling	08	Letters of Counseling	05	48
Letters of Reprimand	03	Letters of Reprimand	01	Letters of Reprimand	02	06
Suspension 8 Hours	01	Suspension 8 Hours	00	Suspension 8 Hours	00	01
Suspension 16 Hours	01	Suspension 16 Hours	00	Suspension 16 Hours	00	01
Suspension 24 Hours	00	Suspension 24 Hours	01	Suspension 24 Hours	00	01
Suspension 40 Hours	01	Suspension 40 Hours	00	Suspension 40 Hours	00	01
Disciplinary Transfer	00	Disciplinary Transfer	00	Disciplinary Transfer	00	00
Demotion	01	Demotion	00	Demotion	00	01
Termination	00	Termination	00	Termination	00	00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>59</b>

There was an increase with regard to the Disciplinary Actions administered to the Uniform/Law Enforcement. This increase is attributed to the increase in sustained misconduct offenses and avoidable accident violations.

There was a 7% increase from the prior year of 2022, in which 55 Disciplinary Actions were administered. There was a 22% increase from the prior year of 2021, in which 45 Disciplinary Actions were administered.

*\*Note that there can be more than one type of discipline administered in each Incident due to more than one sustained allegation.*

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE EMPLOYEE TRAFFIC  
CRASHES**

There were 43 traffic crashes involving Agency owned Sheriff’s Office vehicles in the year of 2023. Of the 43 traffic crashes, 24 were determined to be unavoidable and 19 were determined to be avoidable.

The reported outcome for all crashes that occurred during 2023 are as follows:

➤ Careless Driving	08
➤ Animal	01
➤ Equipment Malfunction	01
➤ Failed to Keep in Proper Lane	01
➤ Failure to Yield	05
➤ Following Too Closely	06
➤ Improper Backing	11
➤ Improper Passing	01
➤ Improper Turn	01
➤ Inattentive	05
➤ Ran Off Roadway	01
➤ Ran Red Light	01
➤ Weather Related	01

As a result of the avoidable accidents, some members received Verbal Counseling and/or Letters of Counseling, as well as Remedial Driver’s Training.

In the calendar year of 2023, there were 43 traffic crashes involving Agency owned Sheriff’s Office vehicles.

This is a 54% increase from the previous year of 2022. In the calendar year of 2022, there were 28 traffic crashes involving Agency owned Sheriff’s Office vehicles. This is a 26% decrease from the previous year of 2021. In the calendar year of 2022, there were 28 traffic crashes involving Agency owned Sheriff’s Office vehicles. Of the 28 traffic crashes, 13 were determined to be unavoidable and 15 were determined to be avoidable. In the calendar year of 2021, there were 38 traffic crashes involving Agency owned Sheriff’s Office vehicles. Of the 38, traffic crashes, 19 were determined to be unavoidable and 19 were determined to be avoidable.

**2023 Response to Resistance – Law Enforcement**

During the 2023 reporting year, the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 171,232 events for the Department of Law Enforcement. Of those events (XXXX) (*Pending numbers from transition to NIBRS/FIBRS*) arrests were made and those arrests resulted in 88 Response to Resistance Reports which accounted for (XX%) of the total arrests and a ratio of (XXX) arrests. The percentage of arrest requiring response to resistance has (*pending data*) the previous year of 2022. During the 2022 reporting year, the Indian river County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 167,858 events for the Department of Law Enforcement. Of those events 3680 arrests were made and those arrests resulted in 78 Response to Resistance Reports, which accounted for 2% of the total arrests and a ratio of 1:47 arrests. The percentage of arrest requiring response to resistance has decreased from the previous year of 2021.

During the 2021 reporting year, the Indian river County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 188,596 events for the Department of Law Enforcement. Of those events 3781 arrests were made and those arrests resulted in 76 Response to Resistance Reports, which accounted for 2% of the total arrests and a ratio of 1:50 arrests. The percentage of arrest requiring response to resistance has increased slightly from the previous year of 2020.

<b>Response to Resistance Incidents Compared to Arrests: Law Enforcement</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Total Number of IRCSO Arrests</b>	<b>Number of Response to Resistance</b>	<b>% of Arrests when Response to Resistance is Used</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>2021</b>	3781	76	2%	1:50
<b>2022</b>	3680	78	2%	1:47
<b>2023</b>	*XXXX	88	*X%	*XXX

The following table provides a statistical breakdown of Department of Law Enforcement Response to Resistance techniques used by members of the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office for the years of 2021, 2022 and 2023.

*\*Note The arrest data fields are pending data from the transition to NIBRS/FIBRS.*

**Response to Resistance by Lethal or Less-Lethal Type for Department of Law Enforcement**

<b>Force Type</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021 Percentage</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2022 Percentage</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023 Percentage</b>
<b>Physical: Hands On</b>	19	25%	22	28%	13	15%
<b>Chemical: OC Spray / Pepper Ball</b>	03	4%	05	6%	04	4%
<b>Impact Weapon</b>	05	7%	00	00	00	00
<b>PIT</b>	N/A	00	N/A	00	15	17%
<b>VIT</b>	N/A	00	N/A	00	17	19%
<b>K-9</b>	10	13%	20	26%	12	14%
<b>Taser</b>	36	47%	26	33%	27	31%
<b>Firearm</b>	03	4%	05	7%	00	00
<b>Total Incidents</b>	76	100%	78	100%	88	100%

With regard to the Law Enforcement use of response to resistance reports for the year of 2023, chemical/pepper ball is comparable to the year of 2022. Physical Hands On as well as the utilization of the K-9 has shown a decreased compared to the previous year of 2022. The total percentage of arrests requiring response to resistance by Law Enforcement has increased by 13% in the year of 2023. The Taser remains the preferred non-lethal weapon of choice and during the year of 2023, this has shown a nominal increase from the year of 2022. During the year of 2022, the use of Taser has shown a decreased by 28%, from the year of 2021.

**2023 Response to Resistance – Corrections:**

During the 2023 reporting year, 4461 inmates were processed through the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Corrections Department. There were 50 Response to Resistance incidents documented in the Corrections Department, which accounted for 1.12% and a ratio of 1:89 inmates.

The total percentage of incidents requiring response to resistance has increased by 25%.

During the 2022 reporting year, 4305 inmates were processed through the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Corrections Department. There were 40 Response to Resistance incidents documented in the Corrections Department, which accounted for 0.93% and a ratio of 1:107 inmates. The total percentage of incidents requiring response to resistance has increased by 0.68%. This is a marginal increase. During the 2021 reporting year, 4276 inmates were processed through the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Corrections Department. There were 36 Response to Resistance incidents documented in the Corrections Department, which accounted for 0.84% and a ratio of 1:100 inmates. The total percentage of incidents requiring response to resistance has decreased by 14% from the previous year of 2020.

<b>Response to Resistance Incidents Compared to Arrests: Corrections</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Total Number of Inmates Processed</b>	<b>Number of Response to Resistance</b>	<b>% of Arrests when Response to Resistance is Used</b>	<b>Ratio of UOF instances per population</b>
<b>2021</b>	4276	36	0.84%	1:100
<b>2022</b>	4305	40	0.93%	1:107
<b>2023</b>	4461	50	1.12%	1:89

The following table provides a statistical breakdown of Department of Corrections Response to Resistance techniques used by members of the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office for the years of 2021, 2022, and 2023.

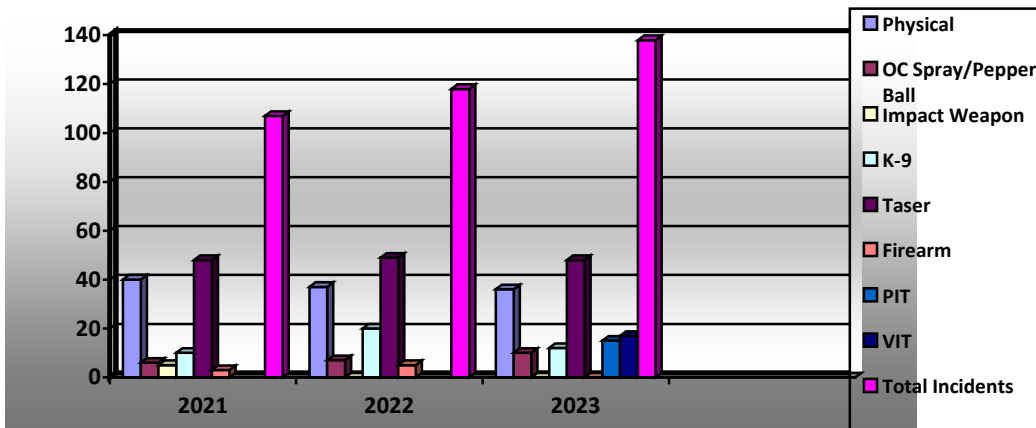
<b>Response to Resistance by Lethal or Less-Lethal Type for Department of Corrections</b>						
<b>Force Type</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021 Percentage</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2022 Percentage</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023 Percentage</b>
<b>Physical: Hands On</b>	21	58%	15	38%	23	45%
<b>Chemical: OC Spray</b>	03	9%	02	5%	06	12%
<b>Impact Weapon</b>	00	N/A	00	N/A	01	2%
<b>K-9</b>	00	N/A	00	N/A	00	N/A
<b>Taser</b>	12	33%	23	57%	21	41%
<b>Firearm</b>	00	N/A	00	N/A	00	N/A
<b>Restraint Chair</b>	05	N/A	14	N/A	10	N/A
<b>Totals Incidents</b>	36	100%	40	100%	50	100%



With regard to the Corrections use of response to resistance, the Chemical spray usage and physical response to resistance has shown an increase for the year of 2023 from the prior year of 2022. The utilization of the Taser has shown a 1% decrease for the year of 2023 from the prior year of 2022. This is a nominal decrease. The utilization of physical force has shown a 53% increase for the year of 2023 from the prior year of 2022. The utilization of physical force has shown a 29% decrease during the year of 2022, compared to the previous year of 2021. The Taser has shown a 92% increase during the year of 2022, compared to the previous year of 2021. The fluctuations with inmate population and more inmates who enter the facility dealing with substance abuse and mental health issues can be a contributing factor to the rise and fall in the use of the Physical/Hands-on force and Taser use within the Corrections facility during the year of 2021. The total percentage of arrests requiring response to resistance have increased by 25% with the previous year of 2022.

*\*Data in the Restraint Chair field data, due to its use in conjunction with a response to resistance, will populate. There were ten (10) response to resistance instances, which required the added utilization of the restraint chair. There were ninety-six use of restraint chairs (non-force related).*

**Response to Resistance Totals of Lethal and Less-Lethal to Include Law Enforcement and Corrections**



During the 2023 reporting year, members of the Indian River County Sheriff’s office utilized response to resistance on 138 occasions including both Law Enforcement and Corrections, when a response to resistance was required to make a lawful arrest or contain a violent individual. This is a 17% increase from the prior year of 2022. During the 2022 reporting year, members of the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office utilized response to resistance on 118 occasions including both Law Enforcement and Corrections, when a response to resistance was required to make a lawful arrest or to contain a violent individual. This is a 10% increase from the prior year of 2021.

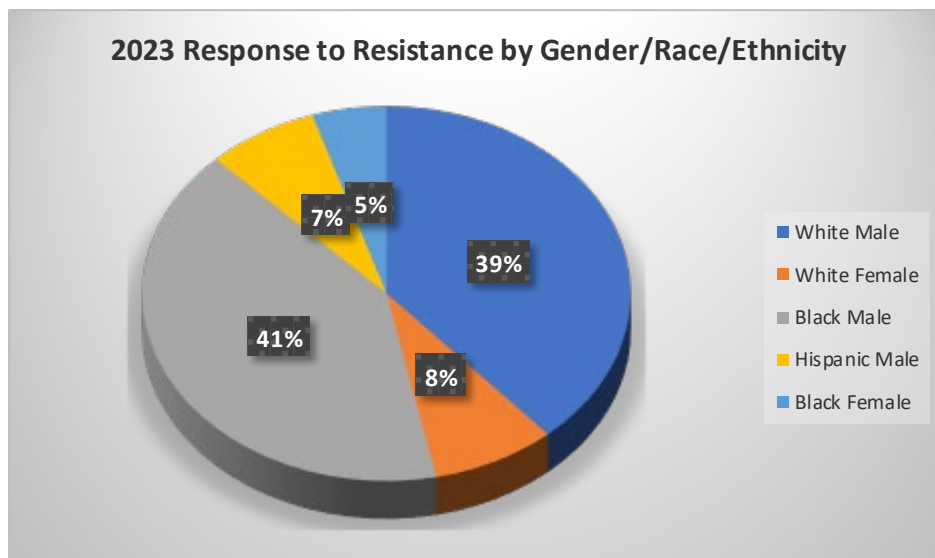
The Agency provides ongoing training for all members in various methods for responses to resistance that may be utilized when affecting an arrest, detaining a violent individual, defending oneself or another, as well as de-escalation techniques. The Indian River County Sheriff’s Office authorizes several types of responses to resistance in order to give members the tools necessary to overcome resistance with the most minimal amount of force. The Internal Affairs Unit conducts ongoing reviews of each reported response to resistance incident to determine if the response to resistance gives rise to any training issues that need addressing.

A response to resistance that appears to fall outside of departmental policy and procedures would result in further Administrative Investigation. The frequency of Response to Resistance incidents will increase and decrease from year to year. There is no way to anticipate how frequently Response to Resistance incidents will occur.

With regard to the shift data reflecting response to resistance incidents utilized by Law Enforcement, the Charlie 18:00 to 06:00 shift has the highest recorded incidents. This can be attributed to many factors including the given timeframe of occurrences (predominately Friday/Saturday evenings and nights). It is generally recognized that drug/alcohol use increases during these times which is evidenced by an elevated number of citizens frequenting alcohol-serving establishments, or consuming recreational drugs or alcohol at their residences. These issues increase the likelihood of officers encountering violent, intoxicated, confrontational, or armed offenders. Offenders exhibiting these variables are more frequently inclined to resist, fight, or flee from officers, which causes the Law Enforcement members to utilize a variety of levels of force to maintain control of these situations. In the previous year of 2022, Charlie 18:00 to 06:00 shift had the highest recorded incidents. In the previous year of 2021, B4 shift 18:00 to 06:00 had the highest recorded incidents.

With regard to the shift data reflecting response to resistance incidents utilized by Corrections Bureau staff, the Charlie 18:00 to 06:00 shift has the highest recorded incidents. This can be attributed Law Enforcement conducting more arrests during these time frames involving offenders who are committing traffic violations, responding to calls for service in which offenders are violent, under the influence of drugs or alcohol and those offenders acting aggressive and hostile upon their arrival to the Indian River County Jail, during and after the booking process. These offenders are often inclined to offer resistance, cause disturbances, and are often going through a detoxification period, which requires the Correction members to utilize different levels of force to take control of these situations.

*\*Note that there can be more than one type of force used in each Incident; therefore, the total number of Force types may exceed the total number of Use of Force Incidents as well as some instances where more than one deputy may be involved and be required to utilize varying levels of force on one subject.*



The above graph reflects the year 2023 Response to Resistance by race, gender and ethnicity. Response to Resistance incidents occurring involved 39% Caucasian males, 41% African-American males, 8% Caucasian females, 5% African-American females and 7% of the reports involved Hispanic males.

The Indian River County population estimates are currently 167,352 with a growth rate of 1.6% in the past year according to the most recent United States census data. Of this population estimate in relation to the above graph, 86.6% are Caucasian, 9.2% are African-American, 2.0% are Two or More Races, 1.8% are Asian, 1.8% are Some Other Race, 0.5% are Native American, and 0.01% are Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

**Discharge(s) of a Firearm**

During the 2023 reporting year, there were no incidents where a firearm was utilized. During the 2022 reporting year, there were 5 incidents where a firearm was utilized and each use was consistent with Agency policy and procedure. During the 2021 report year, there were 3 incidents where a firearm was utilized and each use was consistent with Agency policy and procedure.

The low usage of firearms is attributed to the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office training in several types of response to resistance. This provides members the tools needed to overcome resistance with the most minimal amount of force necessary as well as training in de-escalation techniques as it relates to responding to resistance.

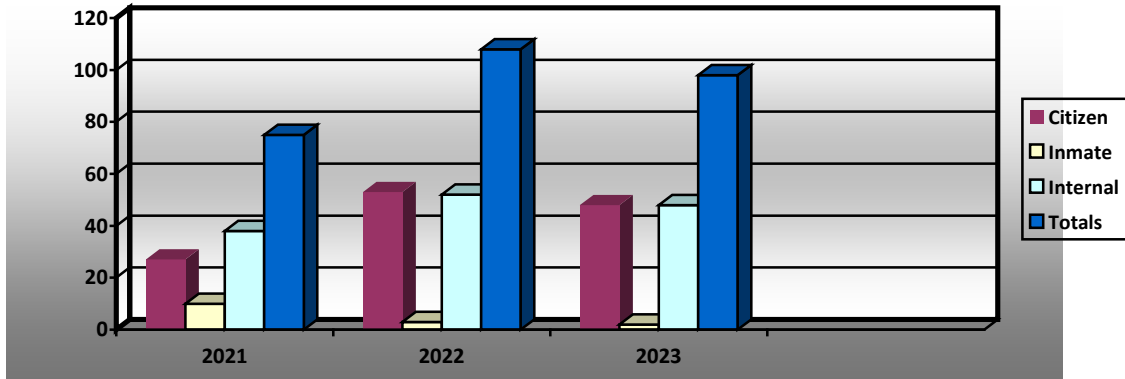
**Vehicular Pursuits**

During the year of 2023, there were 24 vehicular pursuits.

**Administrative Investigations**

During the year of 2023, there were a total of 98 Administrative Investigations.

SOURCE	Citizen	Inmate	Internal Complaints (Supervisory, Employee, etc.)	Totals
2023	48	2	48	98
2022	53	3	52	108
2021	27	10	38	75

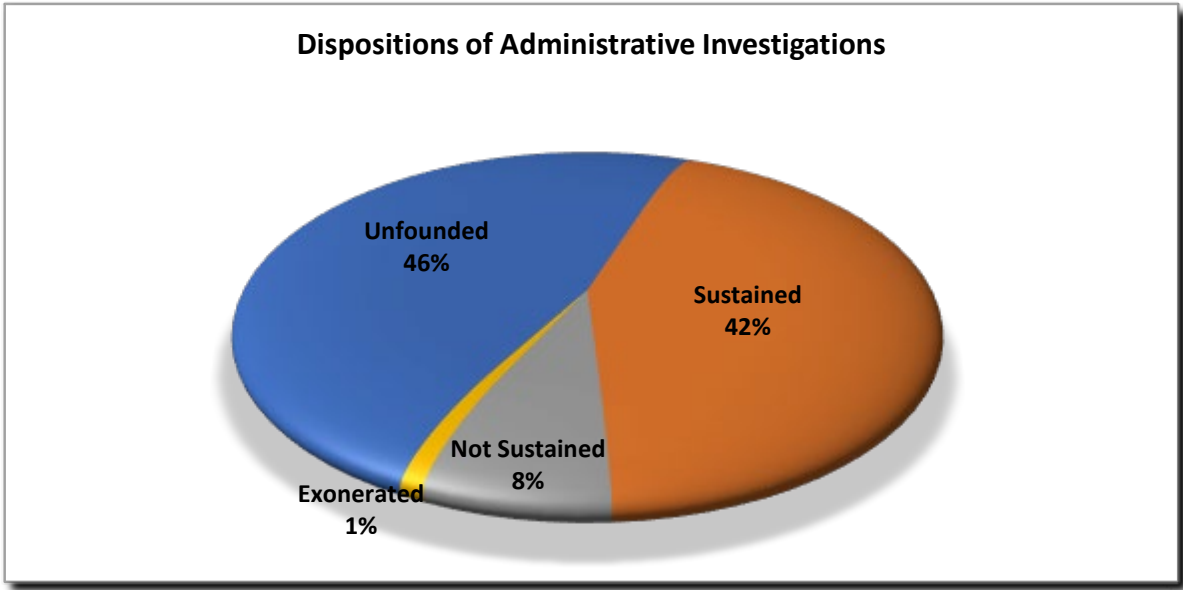


### ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS HANDLED BY COMPONENT

Component	2021	2022	2023
LE Operations	30	38	26
Internal Affairs	32	35	34
Corrections	13	26	3
Investigations	01	05	01
Support Services	00	00	00
Judicial Services	01	00	00
Communications	00	00	00
Bureau of Administration	01	02	04
Sheriff's Admin.	01	02	03

The dispositions of those cases are as follows:

Disposition	2021	2022	2023
Unfounded	34	58	46
Sustained	35	46	42
Not Sustained	06	04	08
Exonerated	00	00	01
<i>Employee Resigned Prior to Completion of Investigation; however, allegations were Sustained</i>	<i>03*</i> <i>Number is included in Sustained Disposition*</i>	<i>03*</i> <i>Number is included in Sustained Disposition*</i>	<i>02*</i> <i>Number is included in Sustained Disposition*</i>
			**1 Cases Open



A majority of the complaints originated from citizens (or supervisors) regarding employee conduct ranging from unprofessional conduct, courtesy, general proficiency, missed assignments, and neglect of duty offenses. Of the 98 Administrative Investigations, 46% resulted in the allegations being Unfounded, 42% Sustained, 1% Exonerated, and 8% Not Sustained. There was a 9% decrease in the overall complaints received in 2023 from the previous year of 2022. There was a 44% increase in the number of overall complaints received in 2022 from the previous year of 2021.

During the 2023 reporting year, the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 171,232 calls for service. This is a 2% increase in calls for service from the previous year of 2022. During the 2022 reporting year, the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 167,858 calls for service. This is a 11% decrease in calls for service from the previous year of 2021. During the 2021 reporting year, the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) recorded, 188,956 calls for service. This is a 29% decrease in calls for service from the previous year of 2020.

The mission of the Internal Affairs Unit is to strive to protect the public trust and to maintain the integrity and accountability of the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office. Internal Affairs is essential in building and maintaining mutual trust and respect between agencies and the public. The Indian River County Sheriff’s Office works to provide the community with effective, efficient and courteous services. The policy of the Internal Affairs Unit is to vigorously investigate and review all instances of alleged misconduct through, fair, and objective investigations. Into the upcoming year of 2024, we will diligently analyze Administrative Investigations and other Internal Affairs data to ensure compliance with departmental policies and procedures.