

# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & CAREER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL PUBLIC COMPLAINT REPORT

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## 2020



Each and every employee of the Ventura Police Department is responsible for safeguarding the Department's integrity and the rights of all people they encounter. The Department's Professional Standards Unit is tasked with the investigation and oversight of personnel complaints. The Professional Standards Unit reviews and classifies each complaint, which may be forwarded to the appropriate division for investigation or remain with the Professional Standards Unit.

Complaints are typically classified in one of the following two categories:

**Informal-** A matter in which the complaining party is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by a department supervisor of rank greater than the accused employee. Informal complaints are considered minor in nature. Correctable actions are typically handled by the employee's direct supervisor and may consist of verbal or written counseling and/or additional training.

**Formal-** A matter in which the complaining party requests further investigation or which a department supervisor determines that further action is warranted. Formal complaints may be investigated by a department supervisor of rank greater than the accused employee or referred to the Professional Standards Unit depending on the seriousness and complexity of the investigation.

In all cases where a potential crime is alleged, a criminal investigation is conducted, and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office is contacted to determine if criminal charges are warranted. After each formal complaint investigation, the original complainant is notified via certified letter of disposition.

During investigations, statements are taken from the complainant, witnesses, and the subject employee(s). All reasonable leads are investigated. Employee investigations remain confidential until finalized. No participant, including complainants, subject employee(s), investigators, and/or witnesses, will disclose any information regarding the investigation until it is officially concluded. The complexity of the case determines the amount of time needed to complete the investigation.

This report consists of an annual analysis of formal complaints for the year of 2020 and is divided into three (3) categories, as follows:

**Section 1-** Public complaint overview

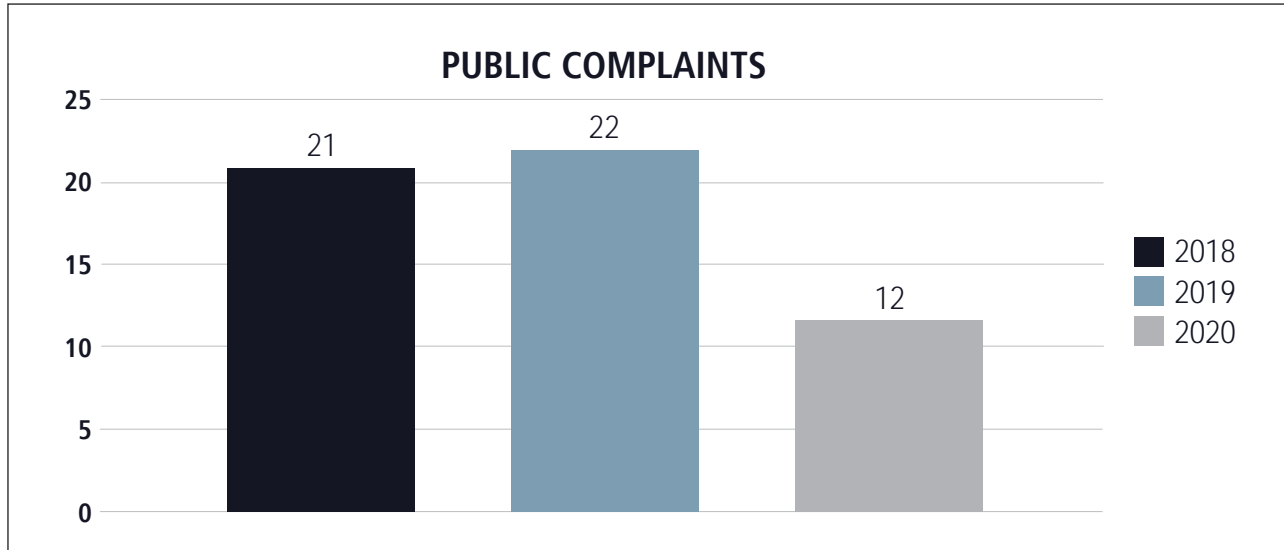
**Section 2-** A breakdown of complaint type

**Section 3-** A breakdown of the investigation findings

## SECTION 1:

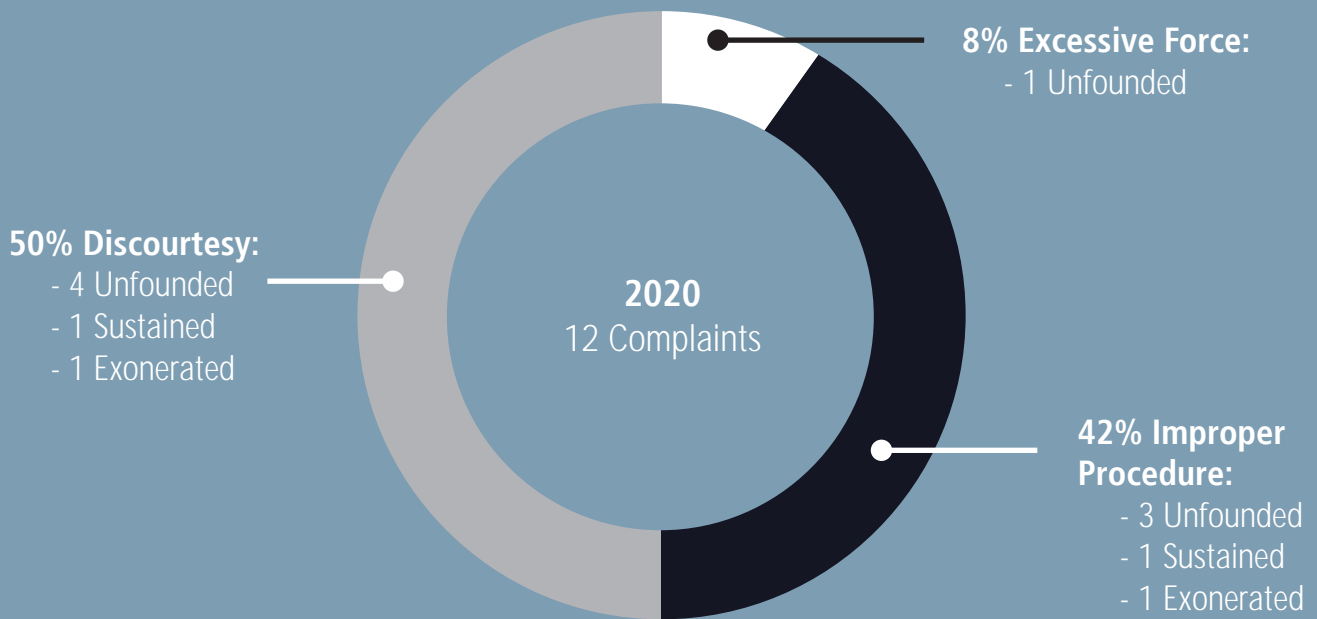
A member of the public can file a formal complaint by letter, telephone, or in person at any time at the Ventura Police Department Headquarters, located at 1425 Dowell Drive, Ventura, CA, 93003. The complaint can be taken by the Front Desk, a police supervisor, the Watch Commander, or made directly to the Professional Standards Unit. Every formal complaint against an employee of the Ventura Police Department is documented and thoroughly investigated pursuant to Department policy.

In 2020, there were 12 formal public complaints, compared to 2019 and 2018, which had 22 complaints and 21 complaints, respectively.



## SECTION 2:

Breakdown of type of complaint in 2020.



### **SECTION 3:**

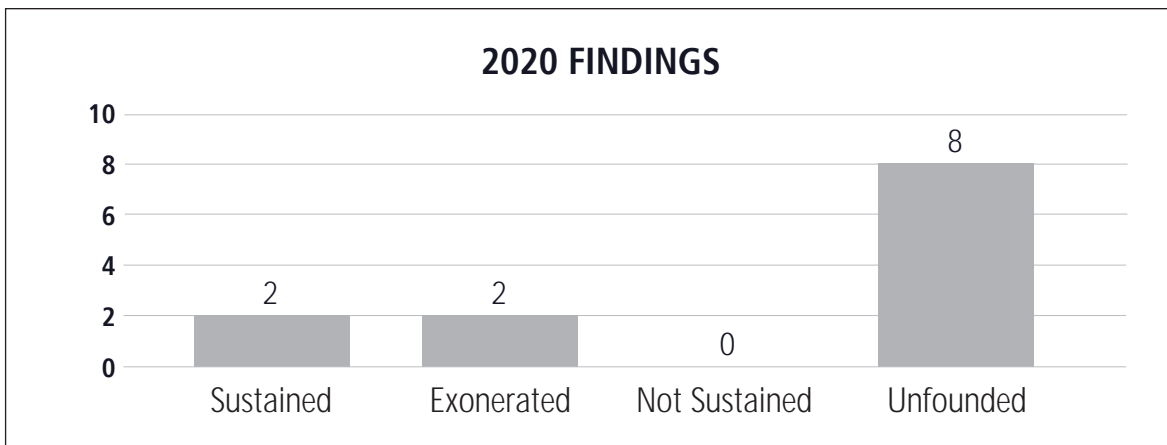
At the conclusion of a complaint investigation, the complainant is notified via certified letter of the investigation result. If an investigation discloses misconduct or improper job performance which was not alleged in the original complaint, the investigator will take appropriate action with regard to any additional allegations. The possible findings are:

**Sustained-** When the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to establish that the act occurred and that it constituted misconduct.

**Exonerated-** When the investigation discloses that the alleged act occurred, but that the act was justified, lawful and/or proper.

**Not Sustained-** When the investigation discloses that there is insufficient evidence to sustain the complaint or to fully exonerate the employee.

**Unfounded-** When the investigation discloses that the alleged act(s) did not occur or did not involve department personnel. Complaints which are determined to be frivolous will fall within the classification of unfounded (Penal Code 832.5(c)).



\* Once the investigation is completed, the number of findings may change.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The Ventura Police Department takes seriously all complaints regarding the service provided by the Department and the conduct of its members. It is the policy of this Department to ensure that the community can report misconduct without concern for reprisal or retaliation. We are committed to continuous improvement through on-going training and education of our staff. The Department uses advanced technology, such as Body-Worn Cameras and Computer Aided Dispatch, as a means of enhancing our accountability and transparency with the community that we serve.