



## **Clark County Sheriff's Office**

707 West 13th Street • PO Box 410 • Vancouver, WA 98666 • (360) 397-2366 • Fax (360) 397-2367

---

Chuck E. Atkins, Sheriff

# 2015

# Statistical Report on Internal Affairs Activities

Prepared by

Cmdr. Walter L. "Rusty" Warren

Headquarters Commander

## Unit Composition and Mission

The internal affairs unit is comprised of two sergeants, one from corrections and one from enforcement. The unit reports to the headquarters commander. It is essential that public confidence be maintained in the ability of the sheriff's office to investigate and properly adjudicate service and personnel complaints. Additionally, the sheriff's office has the responsibility to continually review policies, procedures, and the performance of duty by agency personnel. Building and maintaining community trust is the cornerstone of successful policing and law enforcement. The building and maintenance of this trust takes a great deal of continuous effort. The internal affairs unit is charged with these duties, not as a standalone activity, but as one component of a systemic, agency-wide effort at maintaining professional standards. In contributing to these efforts, the internal affairs unit works closely with the human resources, case management, and risk management units and their related efforts as well.

Central to the internal affairs function is the responsibility to investigate complaints in a complete, thorough, objective and fair manner that protects the rights of the employee as well as the public. Any investigation arising from a complaint must be conducted in a fair and impartial manner with truth as its primary objective. The internal affairs unit is the central depository of all complaints filed against the Sheriff's Office or its employees.

The investigation of service or personnel complaints provides accountability to the public for service rendered and for each and every individual employee's actions. This process serves to provide protection for the falsely accused employee, indicate training needs, and facilitate the formulation, evaluation and periodic revision of departmental policies, procedures and training.

Internal affairs performs the central tracking of risk and liability incidents, to include administrative as well as investigative related events. The following chart depicts the broader scope of internal affairs tracked activities within the agency, including non-investigative incidents, comparing 2014 to 2015. The remainder of this report details the investigative rather than administrative review of incidents.

<b>2014-2015 Overall Incident Type</b> (Investigative, administrative and tracking purposes by IA number)			
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Accidental Discharge (Firearm or Taser)	4	7	75%
Animal Incidents (Euthanasia or Destruction)	23	22	-4%
Awards	23	30	30%
Citizen Complaints	20	25	25%
Damage to Vehicles (Ding Log – misc. damage)	7	2	-71%
Discipline (Field reported, not IA investigated)	5	9	80%
Inquiry (Matters referred to IA for review, not investigated)	3	25	733%
Internal Complaints	23	21	-9%
Outside Investigations (Investigative requests by outside agencies)	2	1	-50%
Pursuits (including "attempt to eludes" not pursued)	13	37	185%
Service Complaint	1	5	400%
Use of Force Incidents (Administrative review of all incidents)	341	340	-.3%
Vehicle Accident (Sheriff's Office vehicles)	15	11	-27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Inquiries:** Inquiries increased 733% in 2015. Prior to 2015, issues coming in for inquiry were not routinely entered into IAPro. These issues were kept in a computer or hard file. Many required significant amount of work to determine if there was any investigative merit to the inquiry. In order to fully track the work of the unit and to give a greater measure of accountability to the disposition of such issues, the unit began tracking them in IAPro.

**Pursuits:** Pursuits were up 185% over 2014. However, there were 29 pursuits in 2013 and 75 in 2012. Annually, CALEA requires a pursuit analysis. The 2015 pursuit analysis is not yet complete. During the pursuit analysis, trends will be identified to see if training or policy needs to be adjusted. The following chart shows pursuit trends for the years we've been tracking pursuit reports in IAPro.

Pursuits per year since tracked in IAPro			
2012	2013	2014	2015
75	29	13	37

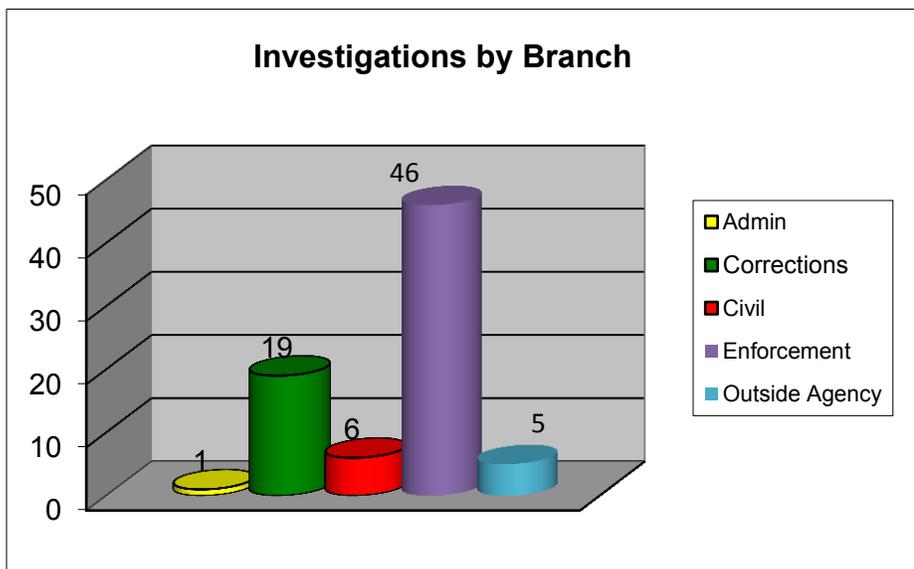
**Service Complaints:** A service complaint is a complaint that is directed at the Sheriff's Office service, rather than at a specific deputy. Complaints determined to be service in nature shall be investigated with the intent of ascertaining whether or not there are any departmental adjustments and/or corrections necessary. For 2015, service complaints were up 400%. The small number of service complaints received each year allows even small changes in numbers to create large changes in percentage points. In 2013, there were 4 service complaints. In 2014, there was 1 and in 2015, there were 5. The 5 year average is just around 3. While the 400% move looks large, in reality the number of service complaints is not significantly out of the norm.

**Investigations:**

In 2015, the internal affairs function completed 77 investigations and inquiries. This compares to 68 in 2014. This is an increase of 13%. Included in the investigation count were citizen complaints, inquiries, internal complaints, outside investigations and service complaints. Details on investigations by branch, type and finding are provided in the pages to follow.

**Investigations by Branch:**

The following chart represents the breakdown of cases investigated in each branch in 2015.

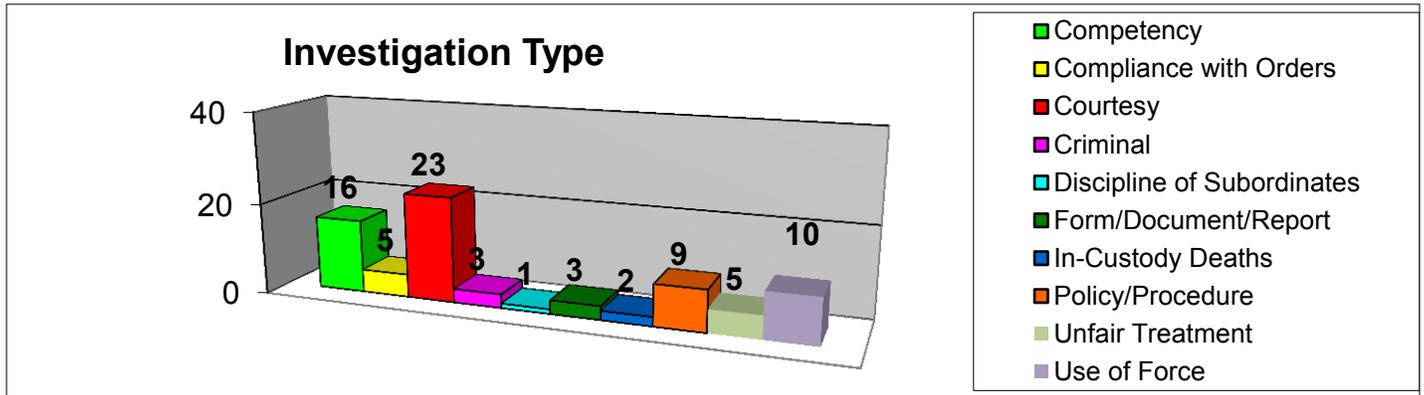


The majority of the investigations completed occurred in the enforcement branch. This is consistent with historical trends, and is primarily due to the number and nature of contacts that enforcement deputies have with citizens. Contacts typically occur in response to 911 calls or deputy initiated activity such as traffic stops or the questioning of suspicious persons. Contacts occur in rapidly developing, fluid exchanges in an uncertain and possibly dangerous context. Despite that, deputies are expected to be professional, courteous, and skilled in the performance of their duties.

Outside investigations include direct requests from outside agencies to investigate an incident within their agency, and also citizens attempting to complain about another agency to our office. It typically takes a little research to find out that our agency was not involved, and the individuals are referred to the correct agency and the case is closed.

**Investigations by Type:**

The chart below is a comprehensive look at the types of internal affairs related investigations completed in 2015.



Beginning in 2015, in order to increase the accuracy of statistics, the investigations type chart used the type categories found in IAPro. Vehicle crashes were removed from the chart since internal affairs does not usually investigate patrol vehicle crashes. Such crashes are investigated by a patrol sergeant, the traffic unit, or an outside agency. Traffic crash trends will be shown in following charts.

Also removed was the category of accidental discharges. These incidents are investigated by the first line supervisor but are tracked in IAPro and BlueTeam. Accidental discharge trends will be shown in following charts.

A breakdown of the types of investigations indicates that the three largest categories of incidents investigated were courtesy, competency, and use of force. Courtesy complaints are most often described as rudeness or impatience on the part of the employee while performing their duties. Competency complaints are typically related to the performance of an employee’s duties in a lawful, responsible and timely manner. These differ from courtesy complaints in that competency complaints often involve a perceived unwillingness or inability to perform duties properly; or performance that is outside agency policy or standard procedure. Use of Force complaints can be external, being brought to our attention by an outside source, usually a citizen. A use of force complaint can also be internal, being brought to our attention by an employee, usually a supervisor.

**Courtesy Complaints** – Of the 23 complaints of courtesy, only three were sustained. 87% of courtesy complaints had findings of exonerated, not-sustained, unfounded or other disposition.

**Competency Complaints** – Of the 16 complaints of competency, 11 were from enforcement, 4 from corrections and 1 from support. 10 were internal complaints, and 6 were from citizens. 6 were sustained. There are 3 still pending disposition. The remaining 7 had findings of exonerated, not-sustained, unfounded or other disposition.

**Use of Force Complaints** – Of the 10 use of force complaints investigated, 3 were from corrections and 7 from enforcement. 4 complaints were sustained and 6 had findings of exonerated, not-sustained, unfounded or other disposition.

**Criminal Conduct** - There were 3 allegations of criminal conduct the IA unit investigated in 2015; compared with 3 such allegations in 2014 and 5 in 2013. The allegations of 2015 had 1 each coming from enforcement, corrections and an outside agency. Both of the CCSO incidents were the result of off duty conduct. One resulted in no criminal filing, but was sustained at the administrative level. It is awaiting discipline. The other is pending criminal charges. The subject officer is on administrative leave. The third was an investigation for an outside agency into the conduct of one of its employees.

**Bias Based Policing** - A review of Clark County Sheriff’s Office citizen complaints; use of force reports; street checks (FIs); drug seizures; and supervisory concerns received or investigated during 2015 have revealed one incident related to either bias based profiling or racially based harassment by deputies or staff of the sheriff’s office.

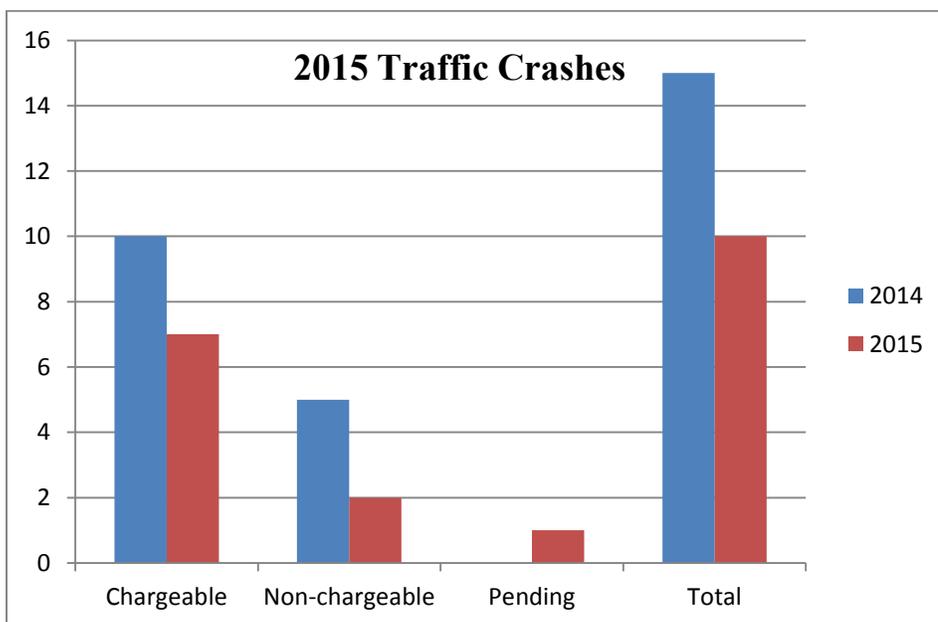
The one incident was a citizen complaint (CC15-002) in which a citizen, going through the west entrance of the courthouse, was required to remove her head covering due to a handheld magnetometer alert. The citizen alleged cultural insensitivity. The allegation was investigated and the personnel involved were exonerated. The personnel involved followed standard guidelines and procedures when encountering a magnetometer alert. No indications of racial or religious harassment were found.

New recruits receive bias-based policing related training in their orientation and also at the basic law enforcement academy. Clark County Sheriff’s employees also receive bias-based policing instruction as in-service training.

The Clark County Sheriff’s Office maintains policies prohibiting conduct related to racial discrimination, profiling or harassment. A review of the current policy showed it to be adequate to establishing the sheriff’s office commitment to prevent bias based policing.

**Vehicle Crashes:**

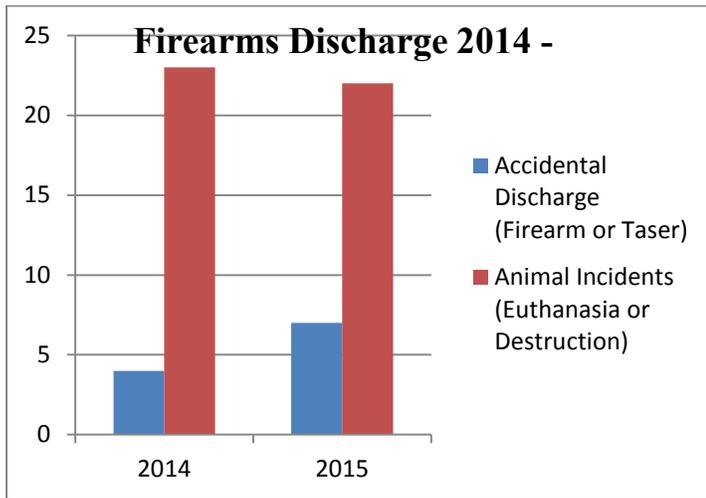
The following chart compares 2014 – 2015 traffic crashes as reported by first line supervisors.



Traffic crashes are down 33% from 2014.

## **Firearms Discharges:**

The following chart compares accidental discharges and animal incidents between 2014 and 2015. Accidental discharges are up 75%. Of the 7 incidents reported, 6 were accidental Taser discharges, and 1 was an accidental firearms discharge.



## **Complaint Conclusion/Resolution:**

An investigation concludes with a “finding”. Findings are typically made at the supervisory level for minor complaints, and at the branch chief and/or sheriff’s level for major complaints.

Investigative findings generally fall into one of five classifications (some instances may result in another type of case closing, such as resignation of an employee, or withdrawal of a complaint prior to completion of an investigation):

- **UNFOUNDED:** Any complaint where the investigation indicates the act or acts complained of did not occur or failed to involve sheriff’s personnel.
- **EXONERATED:** Any complaint where acts did occur and were justified, lawful and proper.
- **NOT SUSTAINED:** The investigation fails to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegations made in the complaint.
- **SUSTAINED:** The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly establish the allegation made in the complaint.
- **NOT INVOLVED:** The investigation establishes that the affected employee was not involved in the alleged incident.

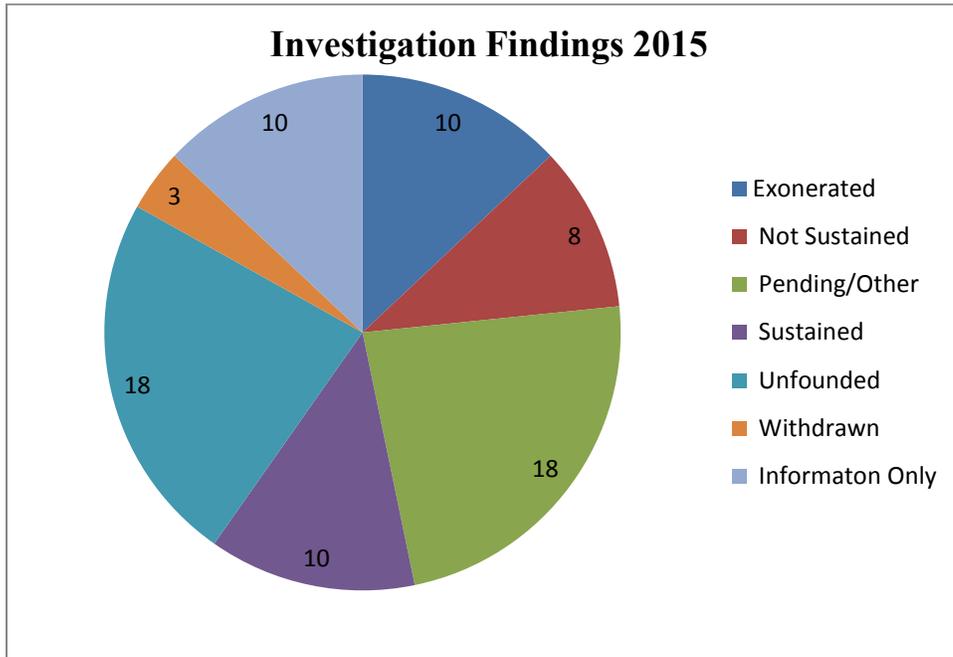
In addition, all employee-involved vehicle crashes are investigated and have one of two findings:

- **CHARGEABLE:** The investigation establishes that the employee was substantially at fault in an automobile crash.
- **NON-CHARGEABLE:** The investigation establishes that the employee was not substantially at fault in an automobile crash.

Vehicle incidents resulting in a minor scratch or dent (with no necessary repair), or damage incidents in which it is determined that the assigned employee driver was not involved, are recorded and tracked for administrative purposes in a “ding log”.

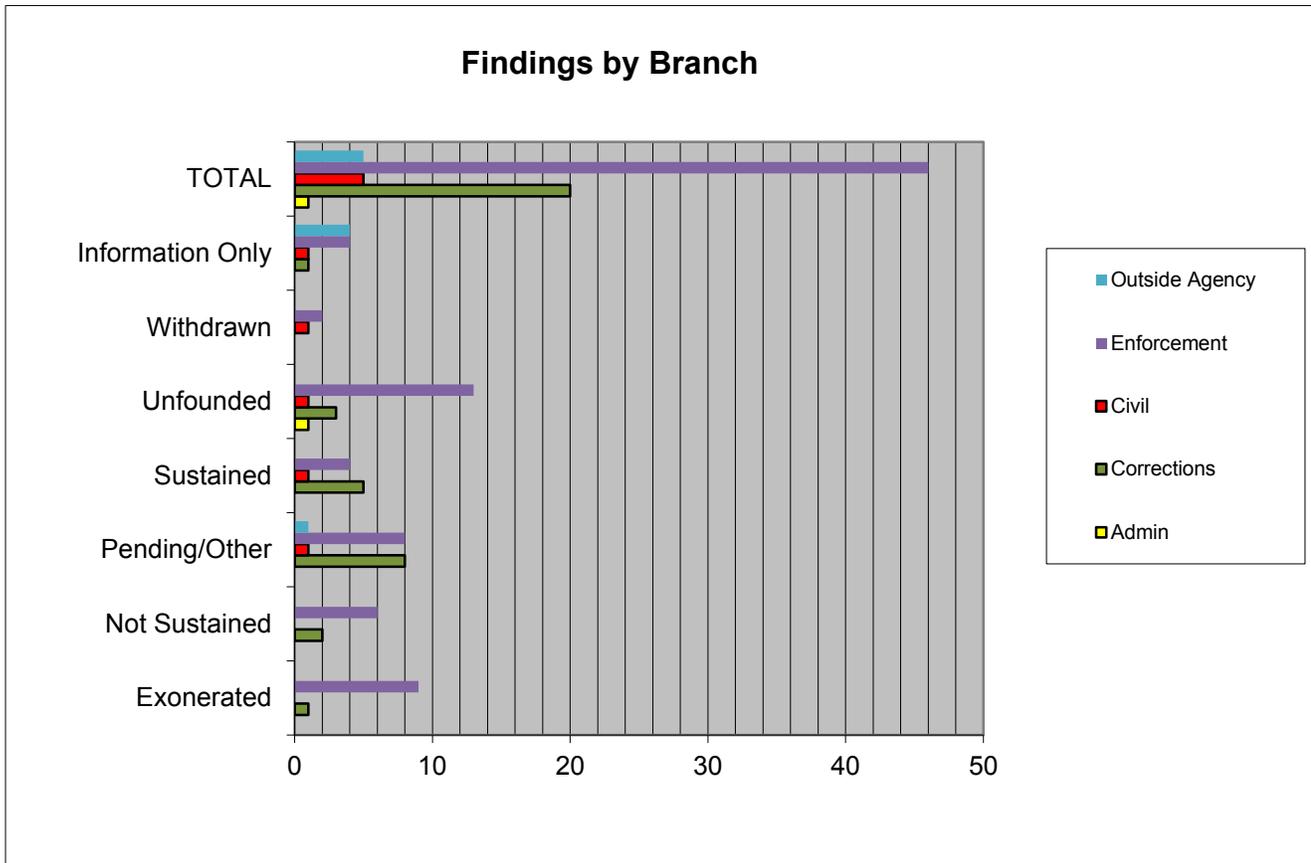
**Findings for 2015:**

The following two charts show the findings made in the 77 investigations conducted in 2015, followed by a breakdown of the investigation findings by branch.

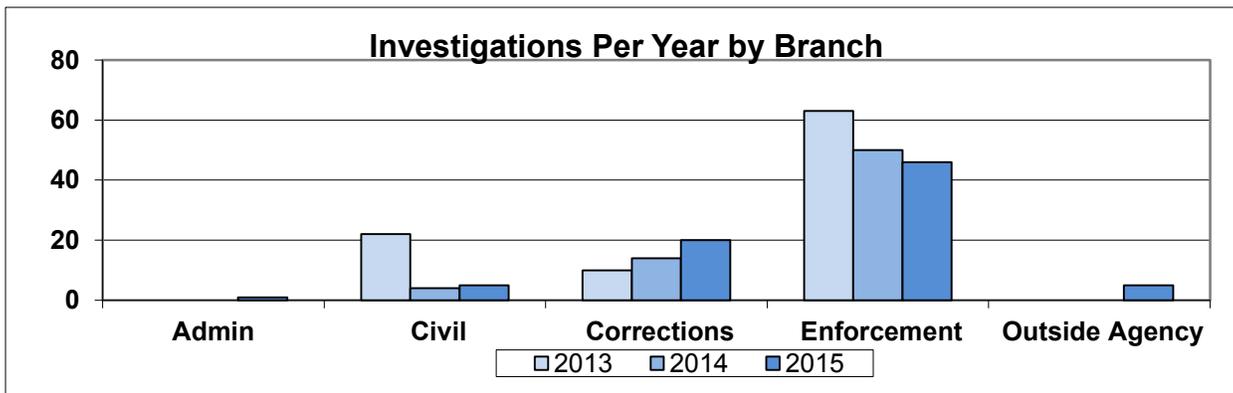


The graphic above shows that the largest number of findings was in the pending/other and unfounded categories. The pending/other category is for those investigations in which a finding has not yet been entered or there was another alternate outcome. Exonerated, sustained and information only findings each had 10 occurrences. Sustained made up 10% of the findings in 2015. This is down from 2014 which showed 35% sustained findings and 2013 which showed 20% sustained findings.

The following graph shows the types of findings by branch for 2015.



The graph below shows the number of investigation per branch, comparing the last three years.



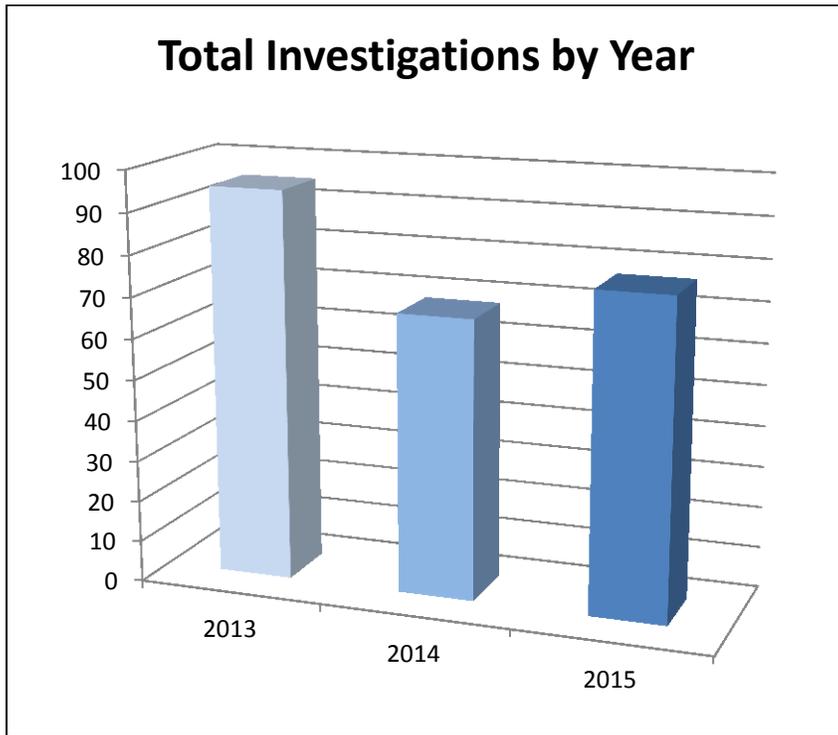
When comparing 2015 with the previous two years, the enforcement branch shows a decrease in the total number of investigations each year, which is a continuing trend. The civil and corrections branches both had increases for 2015. This is the second year of increased investigations for the corrections branch.

The enforcement branch continues to have a higher number of cases overall, which is entirely consistent with historical trends. This can be explained again, by the enforcement branch's high call volume and the number and/or nature of citizen contacts as compared to the other branches. In addition, the use of the Blue Team system by supervisors helps to ensure that increasingly accurate data is being collected and recorded with

regards to the nature and number of incidents, complaints, and related investigations. The use of this field reporting tool also improves upon the timeliness of reporting and completion of field level investigations.

It is important that efforts continue at monitoring the accurate reporting from the field of complaints against staff. This ensures statistical relevance and the related collection of data for tracking of trends; but more importantly, such a disciplined effort serves the function of creating and maintaining transparency, building upon the trust this agency has earned from the citizens we serve.

The chart below indicates the overall number of internal affairs related investigations over a three year period.



2015 reverses a two year trend of fewer investigations per year, growing from 68 to 77 investigations.

**Summary:**

This statistical report on the activities of the internal affairs unit demonstrates the number and types of complaints and investigations for 2015. These efforts are the result of an on-going commitment to fairly and objectively investigate all personnel or service complaints, in order to guard the public's trust in our agency and our personnel.