

CITY OF WASHINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Mission Statement

The Washington Police Department is a dedicated team of professionals, committed to excellence in law enforcement and serving the community with pride; making the City of Washington a safe and enjoyable place to live, work or visit.

Our mission is to encourage community partnerships to solve problems and improve public safety in a manner that is consistent, fair, impartial and transparent.

Chief's Message



It is my privilege to share the 2023 Annual Report of the Washington Police Department.



This document demonstrates the hard work, dedication and professionalism exhibited by the men and women of the Washington Police Department throughout the year as they serve our community.

It includes a wide range of topics including staff recognition and achievements, a statistical review of reported crimes, calls for service, traffic accidents, our community engagement activities and other information to provide stakeholders, community members and local elected officials with valuable insights into the department's work and our impact on public safety.

We try to center our approach to law enforcement around our community engagement activities by having officers participate in the many community events, along with working collaboratively with our local schools and other organizations to have positive interactions with the youth in our community.

I am immensely proud to work with and lead the exceptional team of men and women at the Washington Police Department

I offer my sincere thanks to the Washington community and our elected officials. Your continued support and cooperation is instrumental in allowing us to accomplish our mission.

Our commitment to the safety and well-being of our community remains steadfast as we move forward and work together to address the evolving needs of our growing community.

Thank you for your continued trust.

Regards,

Jim Lester

Jim Lester
Chief of Police

Mission Statement



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Our mission is to encourage community partnerships to solve problems and improve public safety in a manner that is consistent, fair, impartial and transparent.

Teamwork: The Washington Police Department works together in carrying out the mission of our department. Police Department staff are respectful to each other and work collaboratively to solve problems and serve the Washington community.

Professionalism: The Washington Police Department treats the public and our colleagues with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. We understand that our appearance, words and demeanor contribute to the community's confidence in us to do our jobs promptly and efficiently.

Integrity: The Washington Police Department is honest, truthful, and consistent in our words and actions. We are committed to the enforcement of laws and the preservation of order and property to maintain the community's trust.

Advocacy and Empathy: The Washington Police Department has compassion for victims of crime. We have respect for and promote the diversity of the community. We advocate for and collaborate with agencies that provide supportive services for victims, youth and others involved in the criminal justice system.

Accountability: The Washington Police Department takes great pride in being accountable and accessible to the community we serve. The police department staff are expected to serve as role models and leaders within the community.

Communication: The Washington Police Department believes in transparency and recognizes that communication with city leaders, community organizations, citizens and the media are important to maintain the community's confidence in our ability to adequately serve them.

The Police Department



Patrol

Patrol Officers are the most visible members of the Police Department. Officers work rotating 12-hour shifts, providing law enforcement coverage throughout the community 24 / 7 / 365.

Patrol Officers are responsible for responding to calls for service, as well as self-initiated activity for traffic violations and public safety concerns observed while patrolling the city. In addition, to business and residential patrols, officers are encouraged to visit local schools and community events during their shifts.

The Patrol Officer is often the first on scene and the first contact a citizen or victim has with the Police Department. Officers assess the incident, identify persons, provide emergency assistance as needed, secure evidence as necessary, gather information, investigate, and make arrests as needed. Officers are required to file written reports for most incidents.

Patrol Officers in 2023 include K-9 Handler Officer Eric Kephart, Officer Seth Adam, Officer Mia Brdecka, Officer Colton Schneider and Officer Devin Fraise. The Police Department also has assistance from ILEA certified part-time officers: Officer Zach Haworth, Officer Eddie Cardenas, and Officer Ethan Hansen.

New Officers in 2023:

Officer Colton Schneider joined the Police Department in April 2023. Officer Schneider previously worked as a Jail Supervisor at the Washington County Jail and completed his Iowa Law Enforcement Academy training and certification in August 2023.



Officer Devin Fraise joined the Police Department in July 2023. Officer Fraise completed his Iowa Law Enforcement Academy certification training in December 2023. Officer Fraise graduated from Indian Hills Community College and has one year of experience as a Dispatch/Jailer with the Keokuk County Sheriff's Office.

The Police Department



Investigations

Investigator Brian VanWilligen is the department's criminal investigator and focuses on major cases involving sexual assaults, child abuse, domestic violence, and financial crimes. In addition, Investigator VanWilligen provides case follow-up and assistance for cases initiated by patrol officers, coordinates with the County Attorney's Office, provides assistance to other agencies and works closely with victim advocates from DVIP and RVAP.

The Investigator assists with crime scene processing, death investigation, search warrant preparation, evidence management and patrol duties as necessary.

The Investigations Division works closely with the Washington County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and the Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. Utilizing equipment provided by the ICAC Task Force, Investigator VanWilligen assists with investigations involving cellular phones. The DataPilot was used four times to assist in gathering investigative data.

Investigator VanWilligen also serves as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). He is one of just 120 DREs in the State of Iowa. DREs provide specialized assistance to officers in identifying and classifying individuals into various categories of drug use, including Central Nervous System Stimulants (Methamphetamine), Cannabis and Central Nervous System Depressants (Prescription Medications). During 2023, Investigator VanWilligen conducted eight (8) DRE evaluations.

Administration

The Police Department administrative team handles the hundreds of incident and arrest reports generated by the department each year. In addition, the administrative office processes golf cart permits, parking tickets, record requests, citations, and walk-up window traffic.

Administrative Assistant Rhonda Hill manages the administration office.

The Police Command Staff are also part of the administrative team. The Command Staff consists of Chief Jim Lester, Lieutenant Lyle Hansen, Lieutenant Shamus Altenhofen, Sergeant Jason Chalupa and Sergeant Benjamin Altenhofen. Duties of the command staff include report reviews, scheduling, equipment and patrol unit maintenance and acquisition, evidence and property management, training records, policy development, budget planning and management, and ensures compliance with various programs and agreements. In addition, the Command Staff are also part of patrol and investigations.

Specialty Training



The members of the Police Department have over 150 years of combined public safety experience with a wide range of specialty training and involvement with specialized teams. Several officers provide instructional assistance throughout the year to students at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and various local organizations and businesses.

In 2023, officers received over 800 hours of professional development and in-service training. Training in 2023 included: De-escalation, Implicit Bias, Diverse Communities, Bias Prevention, Hazardous Materials, Hazard Communication, Officer Mental Health Awareness, Taser recertification, CPR/AED recertification, firearms recertification, and Case Law updates.

The Police Department has certified instructors in the following areas:

- Defensive Tactics
- SFST (Standardized Field Sobriety Testing)
- Taser
- Firearms (Handgun, Shotgun, Rifle)
- Crisis Intervention Training (C.I.T.)
- CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events)

Along with certified instructors, the department is also fortunate to have officers trained in the following specialty areas:

- Drug Recognition Expert (DRE)
- Law Enforcement Intelligence Network (LEIN)
- Narcotics Investigations
- Clandestine Lab Investigations
- Field Training Officer Program
- Certified Sniper/Spotter
- SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics)
- Evidence / Property Management
- Domestic Abuse Investigations
- Sexual Assault Investigations
- Child Abuse Investigations
- Crime Scene Photography
- Internet Crimes Against Children Investigations
- DataPilot Cell Phone Extractions
- Glock Armorer
- Rifle Armorer
- Shotgun Armorer

K-9 Team



K-9 Team

The Washington Police Department K-9 Team dedicated over 200 hours to training during 2023.

The K-9 Team participates in monthly training with other regional K-9 Teams and annual certification trials to maintain proficiency in narcotics detection, article/person search and officer protection.



Officer Eric Kephart and K-9 Dex
Department during 2023.

Officer Eric Kephart and K-9 Dex were deployed 14 times in 2023, including 13 for the detection of narcotic odor and one deployment to search for a suspect in a building.

The K-9 Team not only assists in Washington, but also provided assistance to the Washington County

Sheriff's Office, Henry County Sheriff's Office, Iowa County Sheriff's Office and the Pella Police

The K-9 Team trains twice each month with teams from ten other regional law enforcement agencies.

The regional training group also assisted with searches at our local schools as requested.

The K-9 Team general operating expenses are paid with funds received through grants and donations from members of the community.



Community Engagement



Community engagement is important to the police department, not only are officers active in community events, we have an active presence on Facebook. Our 2023 community engagement highlights included from top left, Officer Brdecka talks with members of a 4-H Club while showing them one of our patrol units; Lt. Altenhofen talks with Middle School students about the dangers of drugs and vaping; community youth interact with officers at the Touch-A-Truck event; Investigator VanWilligen helps members of a Leadership Washington class try out some of our equipment; Sgt. Altenhofen and Officer Brdecka interact with kids at the Kidz Fest event in Central Park; Chief Lester and Pro Tem Youngquist with RVAP and DVIP advocates during Sexual Assault Awareness Month proclamation signing; Officer Kephart and K-9 Dex interact with kids in the park during a Farmer's Market event; Sgt. Chalupa talks with Stewart Elementary students about being a Police Officer; and Lt. Altenhofen and Sgt. Altenhofen visit with youth and other alum at St. James Elementary during a Catholic Schools Week event.

2023 Police Department Activity



The following charts show a summary of the activity and types of offenses the Washington Police Department investigated and responded to during 2023. Calls for Service numbers do not always include requests to return phone calls, assistance provided to other agencies, probation/parole checks or instances when officers are approached while on patrol or at other locations for minor issues or requests for assistance.

2023 Activity Summary

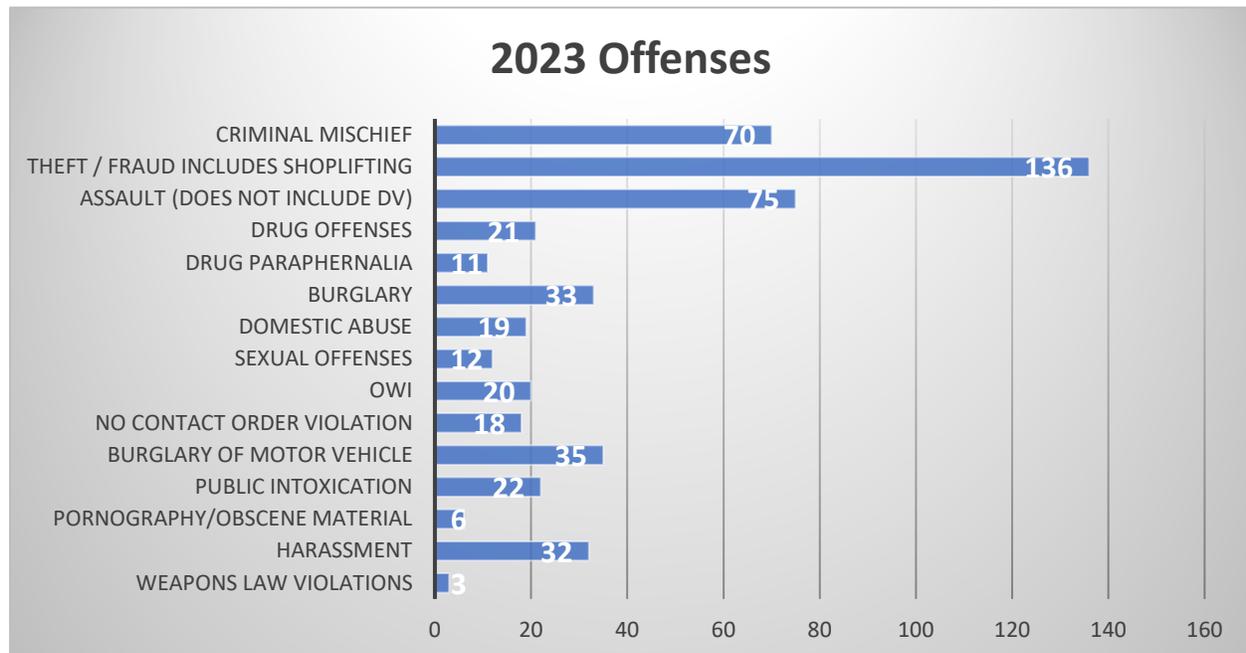
Citations / Warnings	434
Traffic Stops	794
Traffic Accidents	185
Parking Tickets	118
Vehicle Unlocks	327
Arrest Warrants Served	96
Search Warrants Served	38
Calls for Service	5026
Animal Calls	299
Mental Health Responses / Suicidal Subjects	189
Arrests	320
Reportable Incidents	642

2023 Evidence & Property

Total Items on Site	398
2023 Evidence Items	42
Assault Related Items (includes S.A.)	37
Drug Related Items	111
Returned DCI submissions on-site	142
Evidence Items Destroyed in 2023	117

The department participates in the federal Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) program and returned all items that were a part of this program. The LESO program equipment was not deployed during 2023.

2023 Offenses



Crime Reporting – Statistical Data



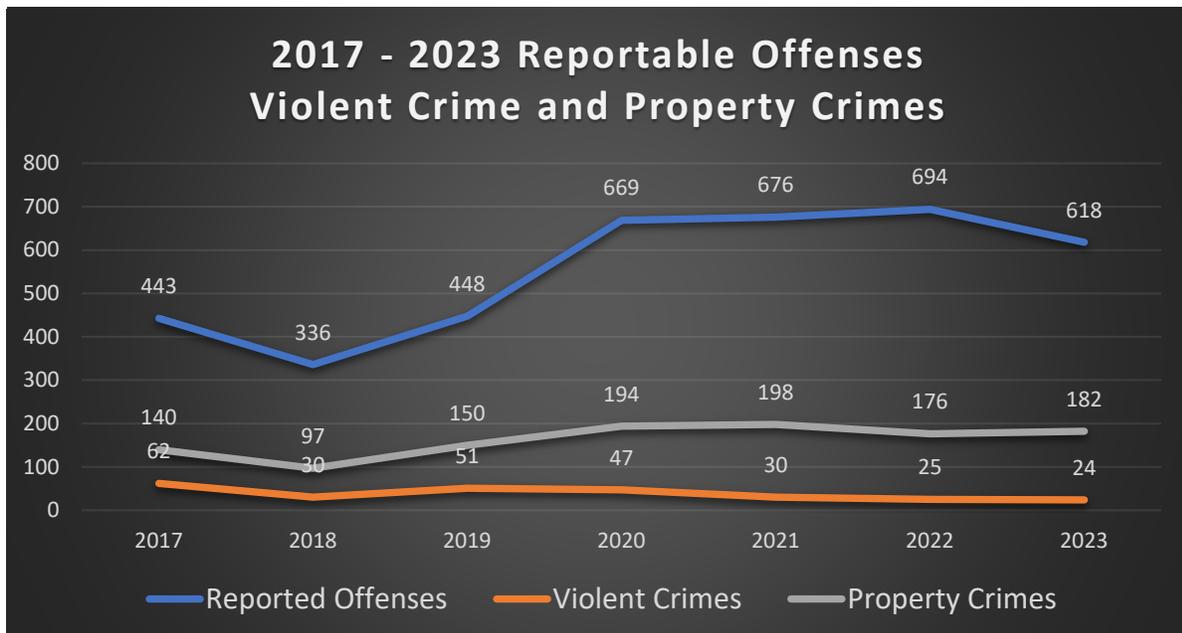
Iowa Code requires law enforcement agencies to report public offenses or delinquent acts that are reported in their jurisdictions. The UCR program’s primary objective is to generate reliable information for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. The data is used across the country for varied research and planning purposes.

The State of Iowa made major changes to their UCR Program reporting system in 2021. One of the major changes involve the classification and coordination of Iowa criminal statutes to align with the definitions of the FBI’s UCR reporting codes. Iowa rules require that agencies submit data with less than 4% error-rate to maintain state certification. The Washington Police Department consistently submits data in compliance with state standards.

The UCR Program uses the National Incident Based Report System (NIBRS) to assist agencies in accurately reporting data on each incident and arrest within their jurisdiction. Using NIBRS, law enforcement agencies report data on each offense and arrest within 24 offense categories made up of 52 specific crimes called Group A offenses. Agencies only report arrest data for an additional 10 Group B offense categories.

In the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes are defined in the UCR Program as those offenses which involve force or threat of force. Property crime includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The object of the theft-type offenses is the taking of money or property, but there is no force or threat of force against the victims. The property crime category includes arson because the offense involves the destruction of property; however, arson victims may be subjected to force.

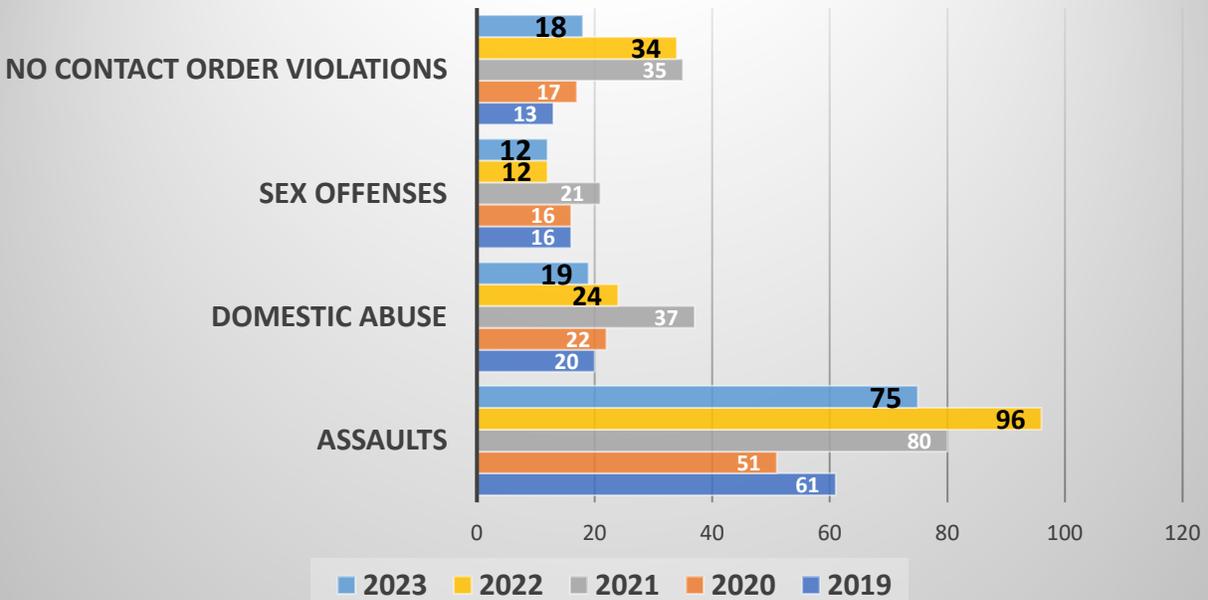
The following tables / charts contain data from our local Records Management System.



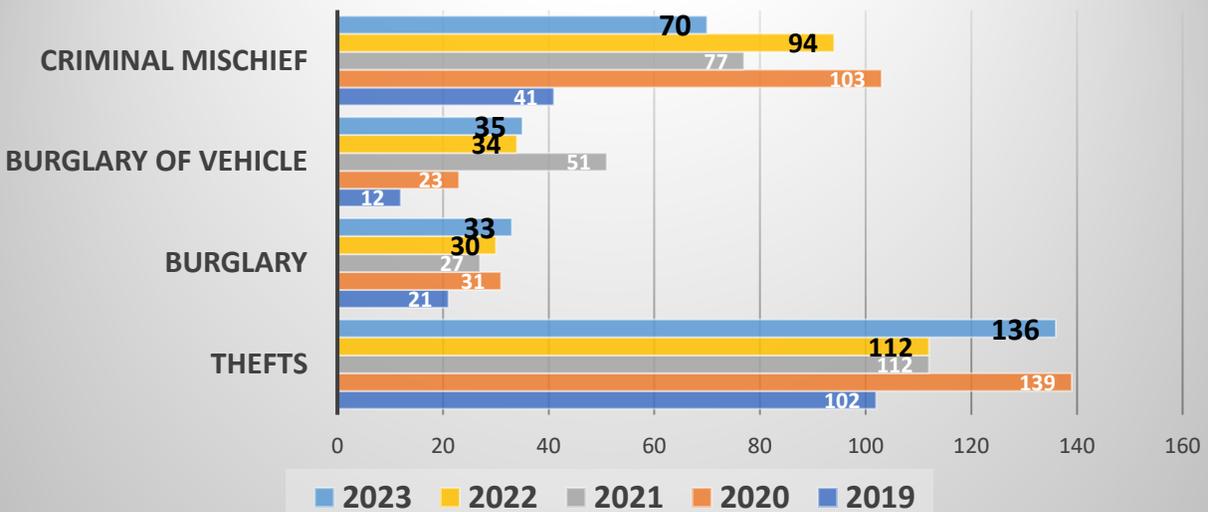
Police Department Statistics



Crimes Against Persons



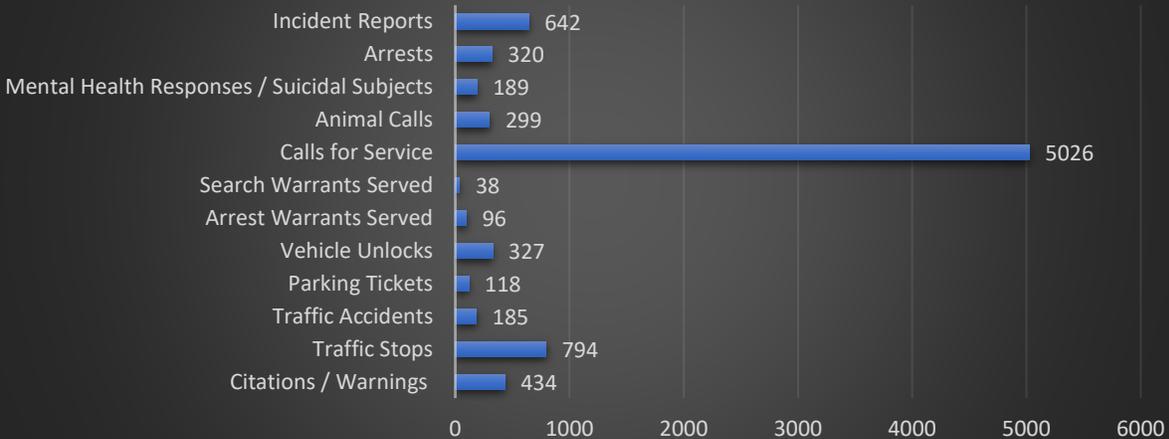
Property Crimes



Police Department Statistics



2023 Police Department Activity Summary

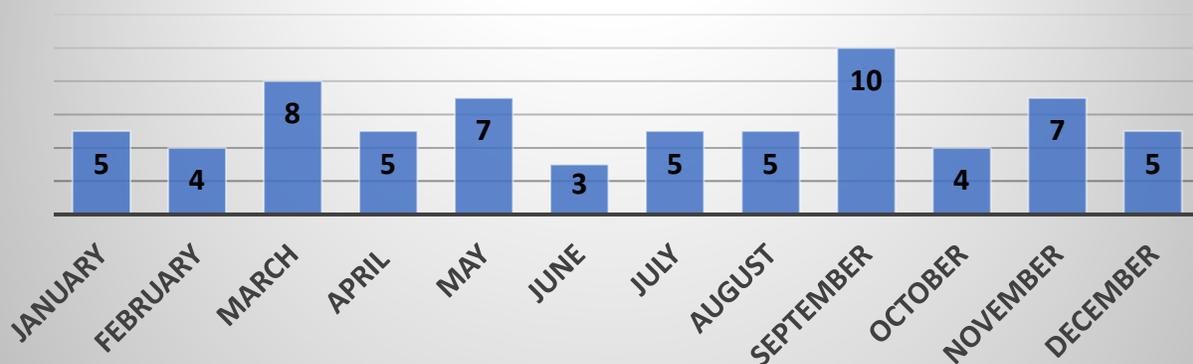


2023 Motor Vehicle Accidents

Total Reported	185
State DOT Reports	68
Property Damage	46
Possible Injury	11
Minor Injury	8
Serious Injury	3
Fatality	0

An Iowa DOT reportable accident is an accident that results in a personal injury or death or one that results in more than \$1,500 damage.

DOT Reportable Accidents By Month



2023 Officer of the Year



Officer of the Year: Lieutenant Shamus Altenhofen



The Washington Police Department is pleased to announce Lieutenant Shamus Altenhofen as the department's 2023 Officer of the Year.

Lieutenant Altenhofen has served with the Washington Police Department since May 2010 and graduated from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in December 2010. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in July 2020. He is the department's rifle armorer and has instructor certifications in firearms and CIT (Crisis Intervention Training).

He has excelled in balancing the roles of administration and patrol, showcasing his versatility and adaptability. For the past several years, Lieutenant Altenhofen has managed the police department schedule, making sure staffing levels are sufficient while at the same time ensuring that the officers get the vacation and time-off requested to spend with their families. Lieutenant Altenhofen has gone above and beyond normal duties by filling shifts himself for well over a year to help alleviate overtime for other officers. While his days off are sometimes filled with work related calls, his conscientiousness and commitment to serve helps maintain the efficiency of department operations.

Lieutenant Altenhofen exhibits professionalism and genuine care when dealing with members of the community and staff. He is not just a leader, but works with and beside other officers; this past year he led the department by having the reporting role in 87 of the 124 incident reports he was involved in.

Lieutenant Altenhofen is well respected by his peers and is a great advocate for the Washington community and the men and women who serve with him.

Lieutenant Altenhofen's integrity, compassion and commitment makes him an exemplary role model for his peers and an asset to our community.

Commendations



Investigator Brian VanWilligen



Investigator Brian VanWilligen is awarded a Commendation for his exceptional investigative work throughout the year and for his more than ten years of service as a Drug Recognition Expert.

Investigator VanWilligen is tasked with investigating some of the most serious crimes reported to the department and his exemplary dedication, professionalism and expertise has contributed significantly to the successful resolution of several serious crimes; allowing victims a sense of closure and resulting in prison sentences for defendants resulting in a safer community.

A recent letter from the Iowa State Drug Recognition Expert Program Coordinator, Todd Olmstead, expressed his utmost gratitude for Investigator VanWilligen's commitment to the program and the collective mission of keeping impaired drivers off the road. The letter included a letter from the International Association of Chiefs of Police Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) Program Manager acknowledging Investigator VanWilligen's outstanding career milestone and his commitment to the DRE program.

In addition to his DRE certification, Investigator VanWilligen is also a Standardized Field Sobriety Test Instructor and provides training to our department and often assists with training at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.

Investigator VanWilligen's commitment to excellence reflects positively on our department and exemplifies the high standards we strive to uphold.

Sergeant Benjamin Altenhofen



Sergeant Benjamin Altenhofen is awarded a Commendation for his outstanding service as a Field Training Officer. He built the department's field training program from the ground up and during 2023, led the field training of three new police officers.

Sergeant Altenhofen's calm and caring demeanor, consistent display of integrity and dedication to community service, serves as an inspiration to the new officers under his mentorship and sets a commendable example to all members of our department.

Sergeant Altenhofen's dedication, professionalism and commitment to the training and safety of new officers has contributed to the success of the officers and has had a lasting and positive impact as these officers begin their careers of service.

Sergeant Altenhofen is commended for his unwavering commitment to excellence and his dedication to the betterment of our department and the community.

Commendations



Rookie of the Year: Officer Mia Brdecka



Officer Mia Brdecka is awarded the Washington Police Department's inaugural Rookie of the Year Award for her demonstration of exceptional performance and contribution to the department in her first year of service as a certified officer.

Officer Brdecka has exceeded expectations and shown a commitment of service to our community. She has demonstrated excellent problem-solving and decision-making skills in the performance of her duties. She led the department with her involvement in 125 reportable incidents in 2023.

Officer Brdecka exhibited a high level of professionalism and compassion in response to a serious domestic violence incident early in 2023. After completing the arrest process, Officer Brdecka spent several hours following up with the victim, including assisting the victim in obtaining follow-up medical care. Her care and concern were appreciated by the victim and reflected positively on Officer Brdecka and the department.

Officer Brdecka is professional in her interactions with members of the community, and she displays a proactive approach to law enforcement, taking initiative to engage with the community, especially students, and fostering positive relationships while promoting community policing.

Officer Brdecka has quickly become an invaluable asset to our team, and she is commended for her demonstration of dedication and professionalism in her representation of the department and the community.