



# 2019 General Investigations Annual Review

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February 1, 2020

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## *Introduction*

This annual review for the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), General Investigations is for the 2019 calendar year. It contains information and data from the Special Victims Unit (SVU) and from the Persons, Property, Financial Crimes Unit (PPFC). The Alamance Narcotics Enforcement Team (ANET), the Gang and Violent Crime Unit (GVCU), and Victim Assistance are also part of CID, but information from those units is contained in alternate annual reports. This report (General Investigations) was prepared to review the operating procedures of the SVU and PPFC to ensure that the best practices are in place for the citizens of Burlington.

## *Purpose*

The primary purpose of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is to follow up on alleged crimes that require specialized knowledge or skill and that take more time to solve than a patrol officer can typically invest during a preliminary investigation. CID investigators typically have both a reactive and proactive function for solving and reducing criminal activity. Much of the CID function is reactive in nature, with most criminal complaints being taken by Patrol or Community Relations Division (CRD) officers. These criminal complaints come to CID in the form of preliminary incident reports where the final disposition of the report is decided by CID supervisors. Most of the cases worked by CID are generated in this manner, but CID also receives cases or complaints directly from social service organizations, schools, the District Attorney's office, other law enforcement agencies, and personal phone calls or visits directly to CID.

The PPFC Unit proactively monitors pawn shops, conduct special operations, and periodically organizes surveillance details in response to on-going criminal information obtained by the Crime Analysis Unit (CAU). The Special Victim's Unit (SVU) also engages in proactive prostitution and human trafficking operations.

## *Overview of the Year*

### *Case Review and Assignment*

All operational components of the Burlington Police Department, including SVU and PPFC, are governed by the policy set by the department as well as standards set through the CALEA accreditation process. The CID supervisors have the primary responsibility for overseeing the assignment and final disposition of cases. Every morning the CID administrative specialist prints off all the preliminary reports completed by officers that have been approved by supervisors. These completed preliminary reports are then divided amongst the SVU, PPFC, and GVCU detectives for review.

After reading the reports, the detectives report to the CID lineup room where they inform the CID sergeants of the relevant details in various reports which ultimately helps each sergeant to decide whether to assign the case for further investigation and to whom. The CID supervisor will determine if the case needs to be assigned back to the reporting officer, a civilian investigator, a detective, or a member of any other specialized unit.

This method of case review has two primary advantages. The first is that it keeps the CID supervisors from having to read every single report, which can be over 100 a day. The second benefit is that it gives the detectives a good idea of the crime trends that are going on and also allows detectives to listen out for names of people they are currently dealing with as well as frequent modus operandi that may be linked to cases they are already assigned.

The reports are assigned by the administrative specialist, using the Investigator Dashboard module of RMS. This RMS digital database allows for the tracking of all the assigned cases and allows detectives to update cases assigned to them. The Investigator Dashboard also allows the supervisor to see, at a glance, how many cases are assigned to each detective and what they are working on. This module is an effective means for oversight and management of cases.

There are four dispositions for closing out cases. The first is Closed/Cleared by Arrest; which is when the offender is identified and arrested for the crime. The second is Exceptionally Cleared; this is when another entity decides that there is no need to continue the investigation. These exceptions include when the victim refuses to cooperate, or the District Attorney's office decides that it is not going to prosecute the case. The third method is called Inactive and occurs when there are no other leads to continue the investigation. These cases are no longer actively being investigated but if additional information or leads come in that can be followed up on it will be re-open. The fourth and final disposition is Unfounded. This occurs once the investigator completes a thorough review of the incident and determines that the alleged incident did not occur, or a crime did not occur.

## *Significant Accomplishments 2019*

### Human Trafficking Grant

The SVU renewed the Human Trafficking Grant for 2019-2020. This grant is administered through the North Carolina Department of Justice in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security. This grant reimburses the department for the salary of two detectives. These detectives are sworn as Homeland Security Task Force Officers (TFO). One of these detectives focuses primarily on Human Trafficking and the other focuses on Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC). In August 2019 the detective that had previously occupied the human trafficking grant position resigned from the department and another BPD detective was assigned the position in October 2019. This grant will continue to reimburse the department until October of 2020.

### Renewed Emphasis on ICAC investigations

As staffing levels in the division improved, our ability to devote more time to conducting proactive ICAC investigations has increased. The investigator assigned successfully initiated several undercover chat investigations. Between August and December of 2019, the investigator launched 6 internet chat investigations that resulted in 1 arrest. In 2019 the investigator investigated 18 ICAC cases that resulted in 22 charges.

### Bait Car Program

PPFC coordinated 2 bait car operations with the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and Nationwide Insurance. This resulted in the development of information of several suspects and the modus operandi of these crimes.

### Successful Homicide Investigations

In 2019 CID investigated 7 homicide scenes with a total of 10 victims. Through a collaborative effort we were able to close all 7 cases. Three of the homicides were domestic violence related, three involved gang related retaliations, and one was a motor vehicle homicide. This is the second year in a row that CID has maintained a 100% clearance rate for homicide investigations.

### Training

In addition to the mandatory training that each officer receives at the Burlington Police Department, detectives are sent to additional supplemental training. This additional training consists of forensic interviewing, cell phone analytics, gang awareness, drone operation, elder abuse, and advanced assault/death investigation. The additional training is necessary to build

and expand advanced investigative skillsets of CID personnel and meet the needs of other agency components. Two detectives became certified drone operators in 2019.

CID continues to ensure that all SVU detectives are certified in Child Forensic Interviews. The current certification used is known as RADAR, which stands for Recognizing Abuse Disclosure Types and Responding. This interviewing protocol is geared toward interviewing children; however, it is useful in interviewing adults as well. We are also working on getting all SVU detectives certified in RADAR Jr.; which is a certification program to interview children between 3 and 5 years of age. In 2019 four detectives were certified in RADAR Jr. In 2019 SVU detectives conducted 111 Child Forensic interviews at Crossroads Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center.

### *Recap of 2019 Recommendations*

- 1.) Revise the directives of the Burlington Police Department to include the case management and quality control strategies initiated in 2018
  - Monthly review of each patrol case that was cleared by arrest
  - Major case review of all homicide investigations
  - Quarterly review of the caseload of each detective
  - Quarterly SVU counseling Session

**Completed-** The monthly review of patrol Cleared by arrest was revised to only felony crimes. This was done due to the inordinate amount of time it took to review all the cases.

- 2.) Improve the efficiency of the Domestic Violence Offender Accountability (DVOA) process

A review was conducted and found that we were not having success with the program. The lack of success, in the report, was linked to three main factors.

- That we started and stopped the program several times due to staffing issues
- The assigned detective was not permitted to solely dedicate their time and energy to the initiative.
- A third reason (not contained in the review) was a lack of support for the idea from the District Attorney's Office.

**Not completed** due to a lack of commitment from the district attorney's office. We will revisit this in 2020.

- 3.) Utilize the risk-terrain modeling and other work products from the Crime Analysis Unit to systematically address high-risk and high-crime locations
- Coordinate with corporate security and the Burlington Police Department Community Resource Officer for local dollar stores to increase safety measures for employees and customers, particularly through the principles of CPTED.

**Not completed-** This was due to a new Community Resource Officer being assigned and receiving CPTED training. This goal was shared with the Community Relations Division and plans are to collaborate more with them in 2020.

- 4.) Conduct a monthly review of all larceny offenders to evaluate the possible enhancement of the charge to Habitual Misdemeanor Larceny
- Reduce commercial larcenies city-wide, as well as any peripheral crime

**Completed:** The PPFC investigative assistant developed a frequent retail theft offender list and when she found someone who is eligible for habitual misdemeanor larceny, she sends it to the last charging officer for the upgrade of charges. Improvements to this goal will be mentioned in recommendations for 2020.

- 5.) Continue to formalize the CID intelligence gathering and sharing component
- Identify focused patrol offenders and specific locations of criminal activity
  - Develop and implement a standard form to gather information (intelligence) of on-going crime trends
  - Record intelligence information in an electronic database to allow review and analysis

**Not completed.** – This was not accomplished due to the transitioning to a new system called NC4. Officers were being trained on the new software and due to the transitioning period, a plan was not developed. This will be moved to 2020 recommendations.

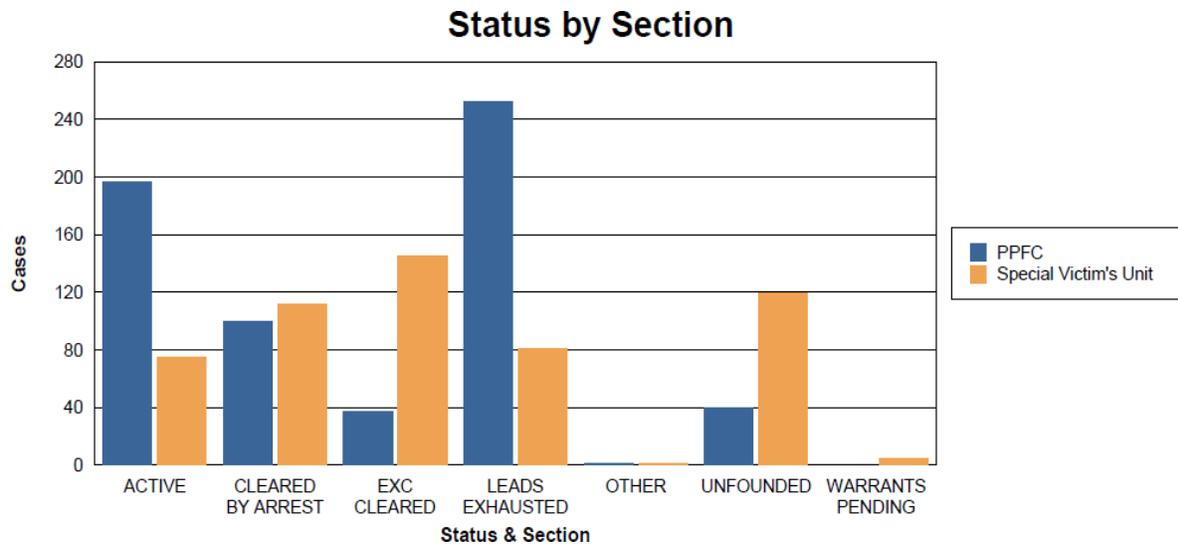
## *Report Data*

### *Statistics for Units*

In 2019, 8,918 cases were reviewed by the Criminal Investigations Division. 537 cases were assigned to the SVU and 627 were assigned to PPFC. 3,295 were assigned to other investigative units within the agency or closed by arrest at the initial time of report by patrol. The remaining 4,459 cases were inactivated due to a lack of solvability factors to a review of the initial investigation or the supplemental follow-ups.

On average each detective was assigned 77 cases in 2019 and maintained an average case load of approximately 30 cases at any given time. The case assignments are from a strict calendar year, but may include cases where new information was developed from a previous year that may be assigned to investigate in the present year. Members of the two units completed 1,601 supplemental reports collectively in 2019.

Case dispositions for the 2019 year are illustrated in the graph below.



Assigned Cases and Clearances  
2019

	Total	PPFC	Special Victim's Unit	Others
<b>Total Assigned</b>	4,459	627	537	3,295
<b>ACTIVE</b>	619	197	75	347
<b>CLEARED BY ARREST</b>	1,175	100	112	963
<b>EXC CLEARED</b>	327	37	145	145
<b>LEADS EXHAUSTED</b>	1,162	252	81	829
<b>UNFOUNDED</b>	1,159	40	119	1,000
<b>WARRANTS PENDING</b>	15	0	4	11
<b>OTHER</b>	2	1	1	0

\* Others = GVCU, VA, CRD and Patrol personnel.

## Findings

### Division Structure and Staffing

CID is currently allotted 17 sworn detectives, with 8 assigned to SVU, 5 assigned to PPFC, 4 assigned to GVCU. All three units are assigned a specific sergeant. Currently there is 1 detective opening in SVU and 1 detective opening in PPFC.

### Divisional Organization breakdown

Division Captain

General Investigations Lieutenant

CID Administrative Specialist

Part-Time Civilian Investigative Assistants-(2)

### Special Victims Unit-assignments

- Sergeant
- Homeland Security Task Force ICAC Detective
- Homeland Security Task Force Human Trafficking Detective
- High-risk Juvenile Detective
- DV/Abuse/Sex Assault Detectives- (5)

### Person, Property, and Financial Crimes Unit-assignments

- Sergeant
- Fraud Investigator
- Motor Vehicle Detective
- Organized Retail Theft Detective
- Special Person Crimes
- Residential/Commercial Break in Detective

Detectives in CID and the supervisors work an on-call rotation which allows for more availability after hours and on weekends upon request to assist other divisions in the police department.

While on-call, detectives work 5 pm to 2 am, which helps reduce response time and it also saves the city overtime for call-out situations. There are two detectives on-call at any given time; with one detective from SVU and the other from PPFC or GVCU. There are currently 7 on-call teams, which means the detectives are on call once every 7 weeks. The lieutenant for CID as well as the sergeants from SVU, PPFC, and GVCU all take turns being the on-call supervisor and cover on-call once every 4 weeks.

### *Policy and Procedure Review*

The General Investigations Policy (05-01) was reviewed in 2019. During the review of this policy, current practice and operations were modified but the policy is still in revision.

### *Recommendations for 2020*

- 1.) Revise the Directives of the Burlington Police Department to include the case management and quality control strategies that were initiated in 2018. The below practices have been in place since 2018 but have not been added to the policy.
  - a. Major case review of all homicide investigations
  - b. Quarterly review of the caseload of each detective
  - c. Quarterly SVU counseling session
  
- 2.) Continue to formalize CID intelligence gathering and sharing component.
  - a. Identify focused patrol offenders and specific locations of criminal activity
  - b. Increase collaboration with the CAU and formulate a systematic approach to identify and address frequent offenders
  - c. Collaborate with the Patrol Division, Community Relations Division, and Crime Analysis Unit to collect, share, and combat criminal activity
  
- 3.) Rewrite the BPD offender accountability program to develop a new program that will improve the sustainability and overall effectiveness, with the goal of targeting high risk, repeat DV offenders.
  
- 4.) Reassign SVU detective to the Family Justice Center (FJC)
  - a. In order to build upon the relationships we already have with partner agencies such as: DSS and Family Abuse Services.
  - b. Improve the overall level of service we can provide to domestic violence victims. Having a true “one stop shop” for victims of domestic violence.

5.) Bait Car Program

- a. Obtain a vehicle and equipment to develop a bait car program in cooperation with the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and Nationwide Insurance.