

Louisiana Law Enforcement Accountability Database (LLEAD)

**Report: New Orleans Police Department Use of Force Incident Data (2016–2025)**

June 2026

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## Summary

This report provides a descriptive overview of use-of-force incidents reported by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) from 2016 through 2025. Over this ten-year period, NOPD documented 4,605 use-of-force incidents involving approximately 5,595 individuals subjected to force. The most common types of force were exhibiting a firearm (33.4% of all force applications) and hands-on techniques (22.3%). More than three-quarters of all force applications were classified at the lowest severity level (L1). The majority of citizens were male (84.4%), between 18 and 44 years old (75.2%), and Black (82.1%). Black residents made up 84.3% of individuals subjected to force while representing 54.6% of the parish population—a share well above their population proportion. Most civilians were arrested following the use-of-force encounter (75.0%). Subject injury rates increased over the reporting period, rising from 12.4% in 2016 to 26.7% in 2025. Ninety percent of incidents were found justified upon investigation, while approximately 1.5% were found not justified. This report is based on data obtained from NOPD’s publicly available open data portal; it does not include incidents that may have gone unreported.

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## 1. Executive Summary

The New Orleans Police Department serves Orleans Parish, home to approximately 372,000 residents. NOPD operated under a federal consent decree from 2013 through late 2025, following a Department of Justice investigation that found a pattern of unconstitutional conduct including excessive use of force, discriminatory policing, and inadequate officer accountability. The consent decree required sweeping reforms to NOPD's use-of-force policies, training, supervision, and reporting practices.

This analysis examines use-of-force data published by NOPD on its open data portal. The dataset covers the period from January 2016 through December 2025—a window that spans the majority of consent decree period and allows for observation of trends over a meaningful timeframe. Each record in the dataset represents a single use-of-force incident and includes information about the type and level of force used, the reason force was applied, officer demographics, subject demographics, and whether the subject was injured, hospitalized, or arrested.

Understanding how and when force is used is essential for evaluating police accountability and community safety. This report presents the data descriptively, providing a factual baseline that policymakers, community members, and oversight bodies can use to assess NOPD's use-of-force practices.

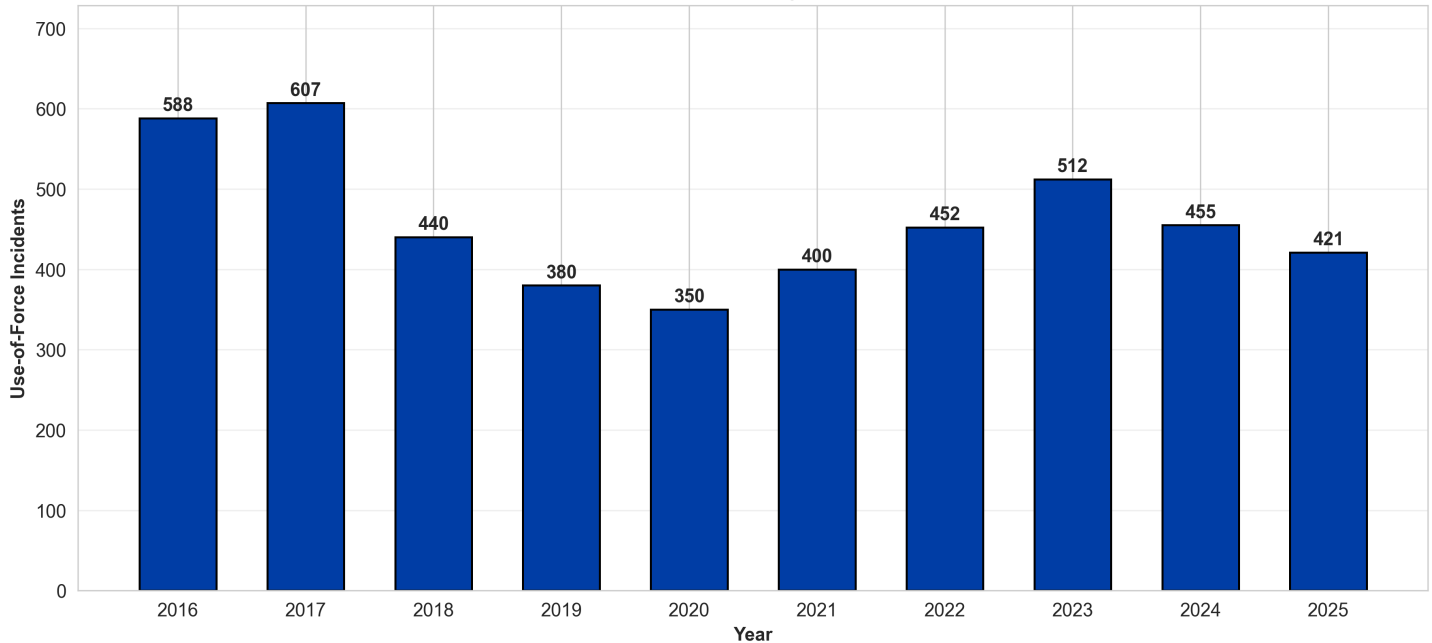
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## 2. Key Findings

### 2.1 Overall Volume & Trends

NOPD reported 4,605 use-of-force incidents between 2016 and 2025, an average of roughly 460 per year. Annual volume varied considerably across the decade. Incidents peaked in 2017 at 607, then declined steadily through 2020, when they reached a low of 350, a drop of 42% from the 2017 peak. This decline coincided with the early years of consent decree implementation and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in 2021, incident counts gradually rose, reaching 512 in 2023 before leveling off at 455 in 2024 and 421 in 2025. Whether the 2016–2020 decline reflects genuine reductions in force usage, changes in reporting standards under the consent decree, or other factors is unclear from the data alone.

New Orleans Police Department  
Use-of-Force Incidents by Year, 2016–2025



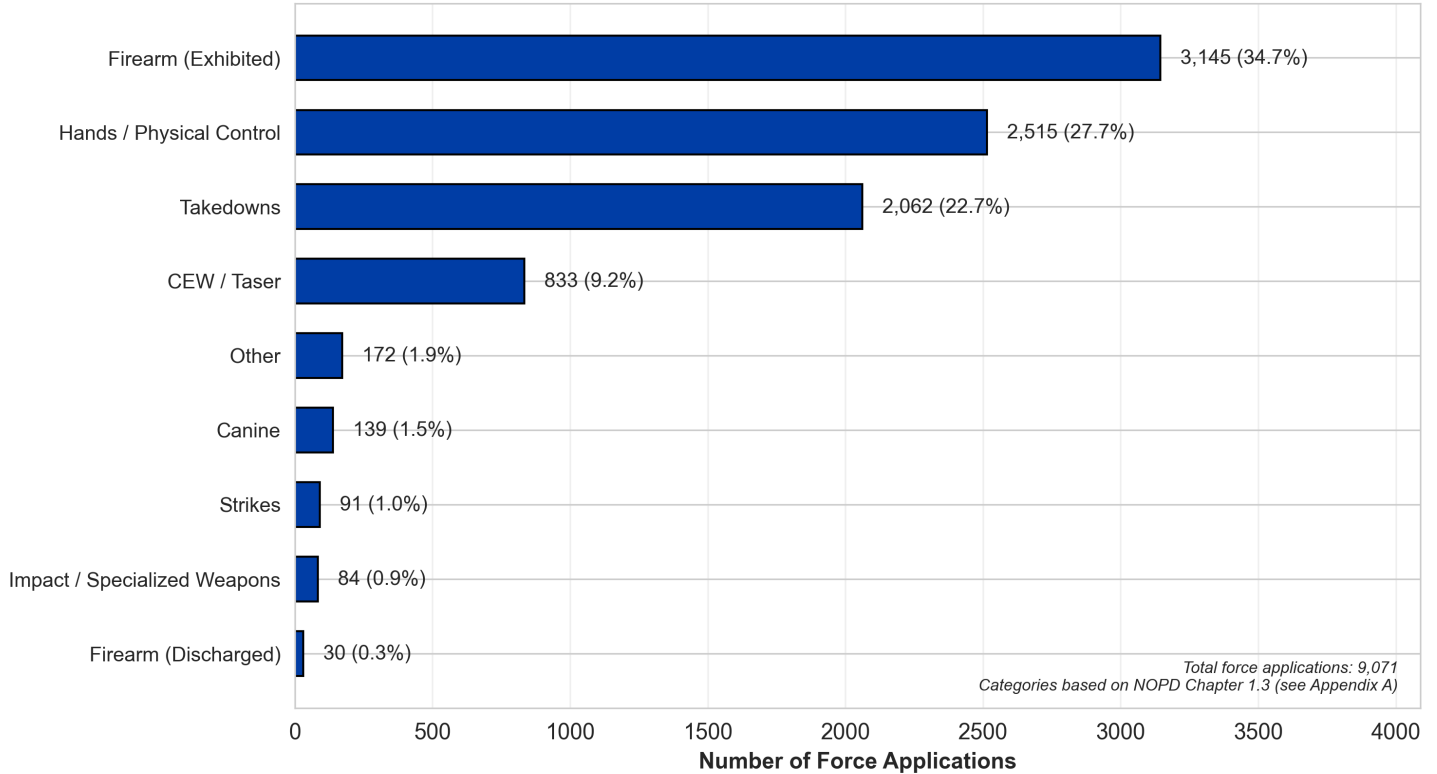
## 2.2 Types of Force Used

Each use-of-force incident can involve multiple officers, and each officer’s force application is recorded separately. Across all incidents, NOPD officers recorded 9,071 individual force applications over the ten-year period. The raw data includes 36 different force type labels. To make these easier to understand, we grouped them into nine categories based on the weapon or technique involved, following the definitions in NOPD’s Operations Manual Chapter 1.3, “Use of Force” (see Methodology, Section 4, for details regarding how categories were constructed; see Appendix A for the full list of which raw data labels fell into each category).

The most common category was exhibiting a firearm (pointing or displaying a weapon without discharging it), which accounted for about one in three force applications (34.7%). Hands-on physical control techniques were the second most common (27.7%). These including bare hands contact, escort techniques, defensive techniques, and force used on handcuffed subjects. Takedowns, whether they resulted in injury, made up nearly 23% of all force applications.

Together, these three categories accounted for 85% of all force used by NOPD officers over the ten-year period. The remaining six categories (CEW/Taser, canine, strikes, impact/specialized weapons, firearm discharges, and other) collectively made up 15%.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Types of Force Used (Grouped by Policy Category), 2016–2025**

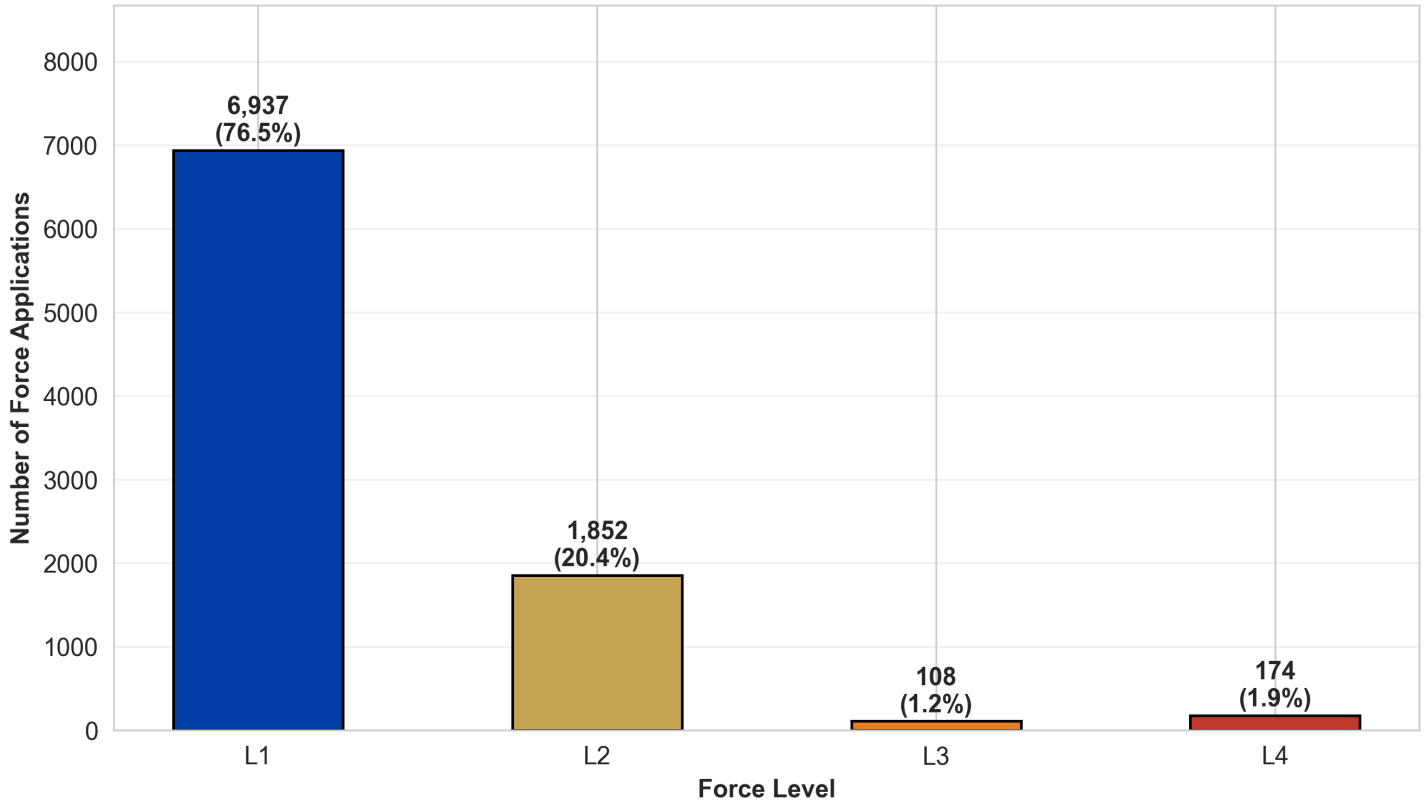


## 2.3 Force Levels

NOPD classifies each force application into one of four severity levels. Level 1 (L1) includes lower-level actions such as exhibiting a firearm, using hands-on techniques, or escort holds. Level 2 (L2) includes intermediate force such as CEW (Taser) deployment, takedowns, and forceful physical contact resulting in injury. Level 3 (L3) involves more significant force such as strikes to the head. Level 4 (L4) includes the highest-severity force such as discharging a firearm or deploying impact weapons.

This chart shows how force applications break down across the four levels. The overwhelming majority of force, more than three out of four applications, were reported as Level 1.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Force Level Distribution, 2016–2025**



*L1 = Exhibited weapon, hands | L2 = CEW/Taser, takedowns  
L3 = Head strikes | L4 = Firearm discharge, impact weapons*

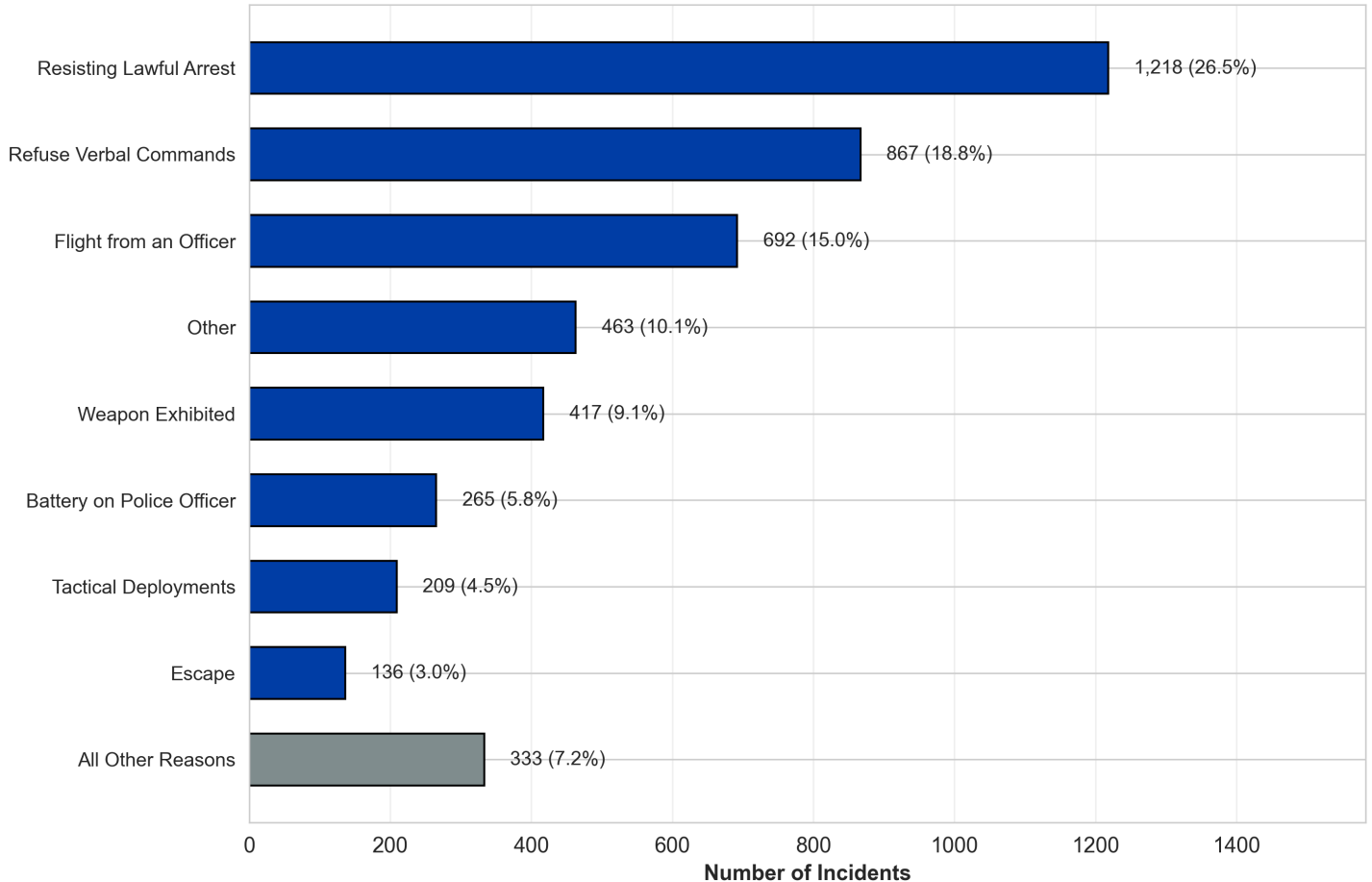
L3 and L4 force, combined, accounted for 282 applications (3.1%) across the ten-year period. While this is a small share of the total, these are the most consequential force actions. They include firearm discharges, head strikes, and deployments of impact munitions, and each one warrants careful review.

## 2.4 Use of Force Reasons

Officers documented the reason force was applied in each incident. The most commonly cited reasons were resisting lawful arrest (26.5%), refusing verbal commands (18.8%), and flight from an officer (15.0%). Together, these three reasons accounted for about 60% of all incidents.

About 9% of incidents were prompted by a subject exhibiting a weapon, and roughly 6% involved battery on a police officer, situations that represent a higher threat level. The large proportion of lower-level reasons (refusal to comply, verbal resistance) is consistent with the finding that most force applications fell at Level 1.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Reasons for Use of Force, 2016–2025**

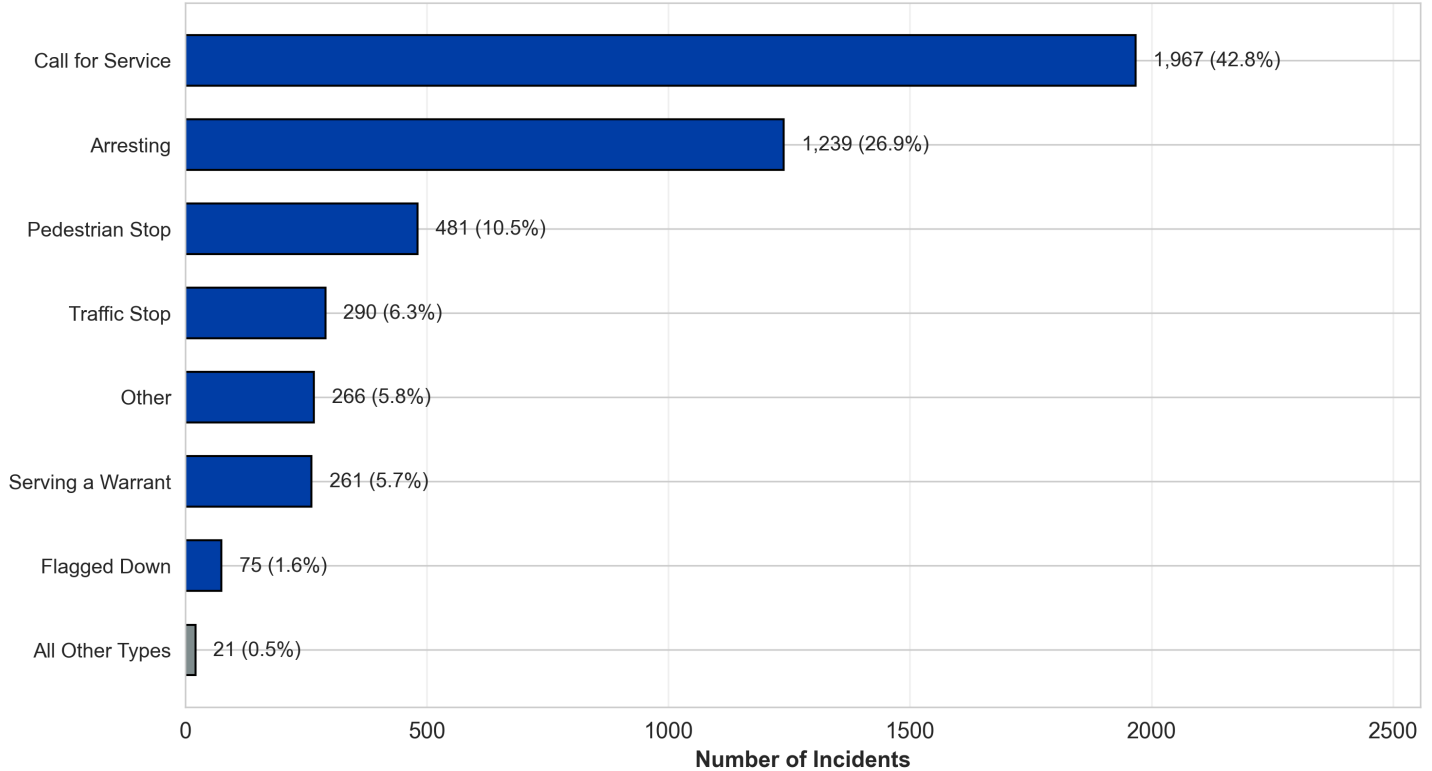


## 2.5 Service Type at Time of Incident

This section examines what type of police activity was underway when force was used. The most common context was a call for service (a community member requesting police assistance), which accounted for nearly 43% of force incidents. The second most common was during an arrest (26.9%), followed by pedestrian stops (10.5%) and traffic stops (6.3%).

Calls for service include welfare checks, domestic disturbances, mental health crises, and other situations where a community member has asked for help. The fact that they represent the largest single category suggests that a significant portion of force occurs in reactive, unplanned encounters rather than proactive enforcement activities.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Service Type at Time of Force Incident, 2016–2025**



## 2.6 Who Was Subjected to Force

**1. Gender:** The majority of subjects were male (84.4%), while women accounted for 14.0% of subjects. This gender split remained consistent across all ten years.

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	4,721	84.4%
Female	785	14.0%
Unknown/Other	89	1.6%

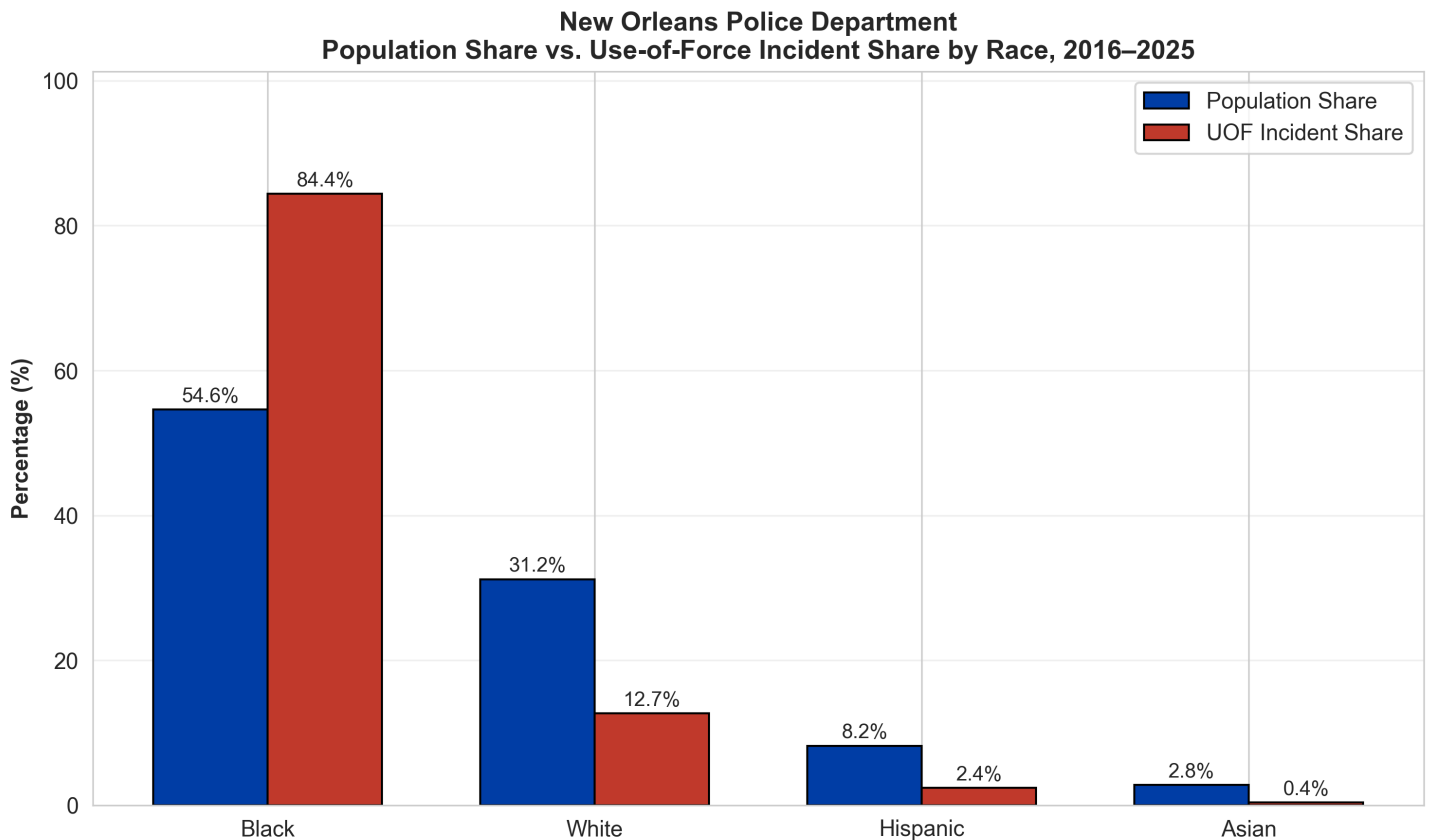
**2. Race & Ethnicity:** Among all 5,595 subjects, Black residents accounted for 82.1% of individuals subjected to force, while White residents accounted for 12.4%. Hispanic residents made up 2.4%, and all other racial groups combined represented less than 1%. Race/ethnicity data was missing or unknown for 143 individuals (2.6%).

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Black	4,596	82.1%

White	693	12.4%
Unknown	143	2.6%
Hispanic	132	2.4%
Asian	24	0.4%
Other	7	0.1%

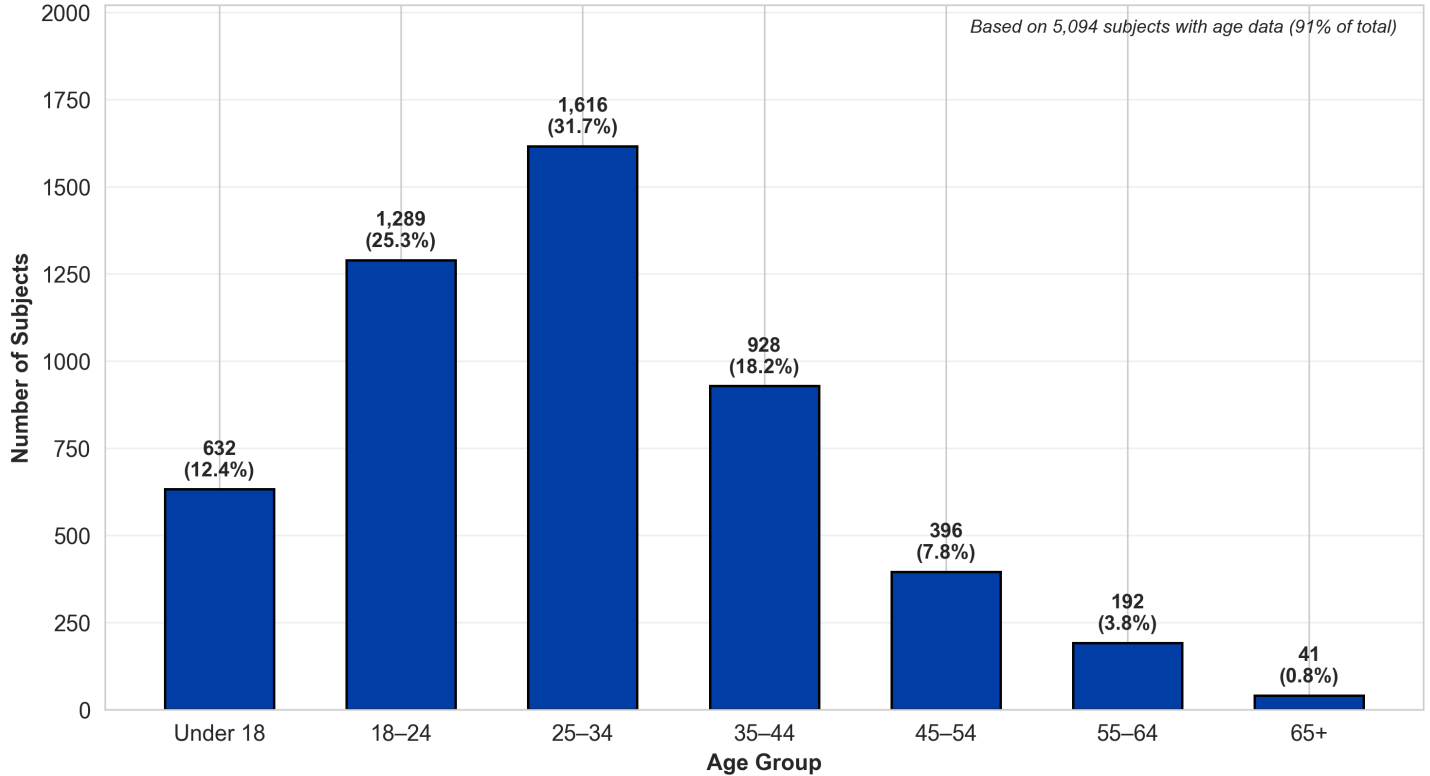
To understand whether any group’s share of use-of-force incidents is higher or lower than its share of the population, we compared these figures to Orleans Parish demographics from the U.S. Census Bureau. A disparity ratio compares a group’s share of force incidents to its share of the parish population. A value above 1.0 means the group's share of force incidents is higher than its share of the population; below 1.0 means it is lower.

Black residents made up 54.6% of Orleans Parish's population, but 84.3% of individuals subjected to force, a disparity ratio of 1.54. Their share of force incidents was about one and a half times their share of the population. White residents, by contrast, made up 31.2% of the population but only 12.7% of force subjects (ratio of 0.41). Hispanic and Asian residents were also well below their population shares.



**3. Age:** Among the 5,097 subjects with age data available (91.1% of the total), the median age was 28 years old and the mean was 30 years. More than half of subjects (57.0%) were between 18 and 34, with the 25–34 age group representing the single largest share (31.7%). About 12% of subjects were minors under 18.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Age Distribution of Subjects in Use-of-Force Incidents, 2016–2025**



Age data was unavailable for approximately 9% of subjects, a data gap that is worth noting but is substantially smaller than is typical for law enforcement datasets.

## 2.7 Disposition & Investigation Outcomes

NOPD investigates each use-of-force incident and assigns a disposition reflecting its conclusion. The vast majority of incidents (90.4%) were found justified. An additional 7.1% were found justified but flagged with policy violations or training concerns. Only 71 incidents (1.5%) across the ten-year period were found not justified.

Disposition Category	Count	Percentage
Justified	4,163	90.4%
Justified with Concerns	325	7.1%
Not Justified	71	1.5%
Other	24	0.5%
Pending	19	0.4%

The “Justified with Concerns” category includes incidents that were deemed justified force but where officers were found to have violated a policy or needed additional training. This distinction is notable: about one in fourteen investigated force incidents revealed some procedural or policy issue even when the force itself was considered justified.

Note: The dataset uses two different naming conventions over time. Earlier records (primarily 2016) use “Use Of Force Authorized” and “Use Of Force Not Authorized,” while later records use “UOF Justified” and “UOF Not Justified.” These were combined into the simplified categories above.

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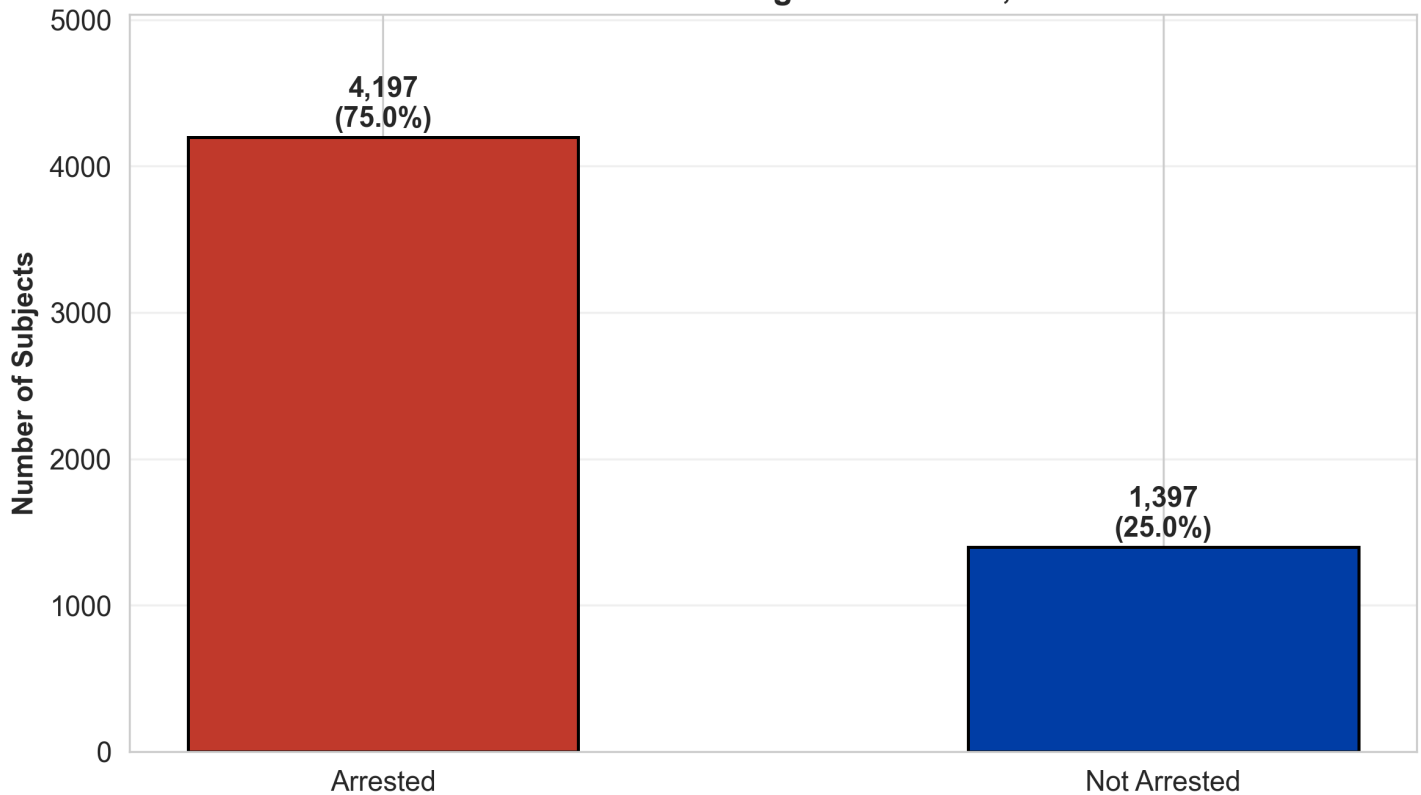
## **2.8 Arrest Outcomes**

Of the 5,594 subjects with arrest data, 4,197 (75.0%) were arrested following a force incident, while 1,397 (25.0%) were not arrested.

Arrest rates varied somewhat by year, ranging from 68.5% in 2021 to 80.7% in 2023. The high overall arrest rate likely reflects the fact that the most common reason for force was resisting arrest, a situation that by definition involves an arrest. This is a meaningful difference from agencies where force is more commonly used in non-arrest contexts like welfare checks or mental health calls.

Arrest rates also varied by race: 77.3% for Black subjects, 70.5% for Hispanic subjects, and 68.4% for White subjects.

**New Orleans Police Department  
Arrest Outcomes Following Use of Force, 2016–2025**



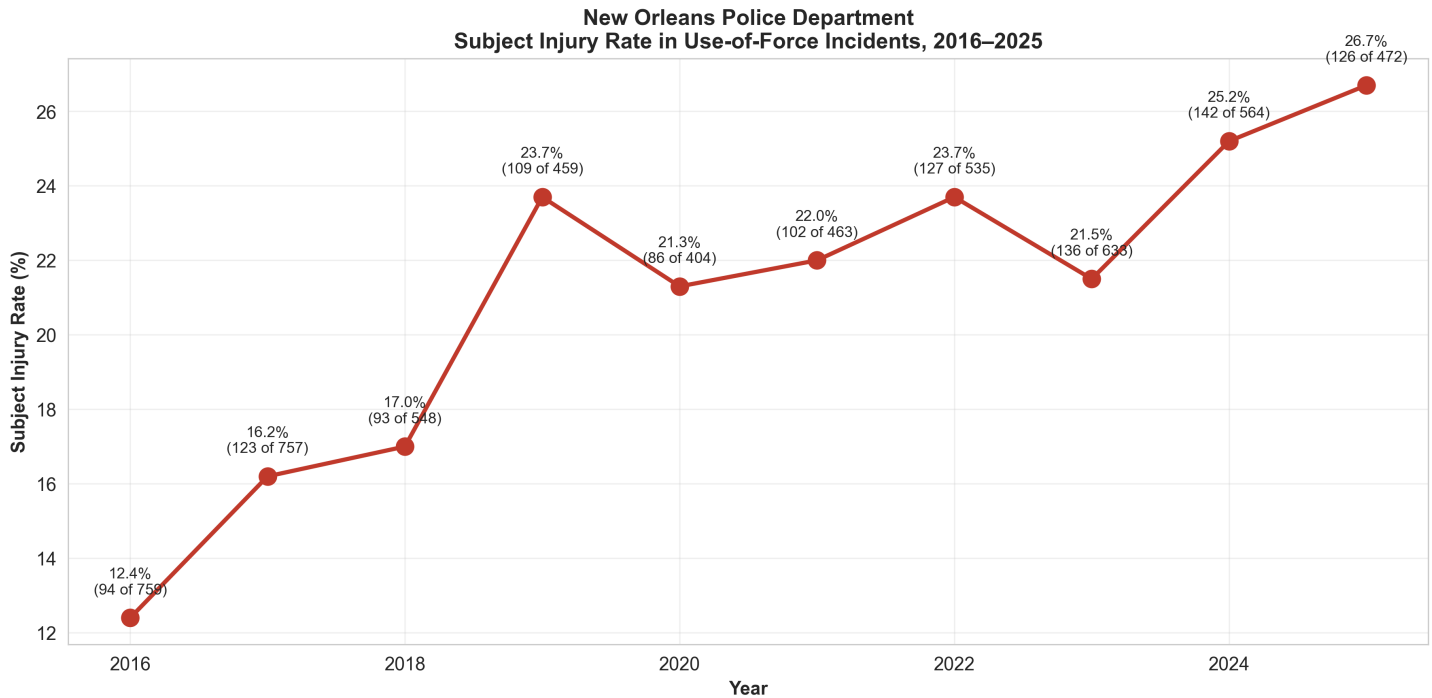
**2.9 Subject Injuries & Hospitalizations**

Across the full reporting period, 1,138 subjects (20.3%) were documented as having been injured during a use-of-force encounter. A larger number, 1,963 subjects (35.1%), were recorded as having been taken to a hospital, though hospitalization can occur for reasons beyond force-related injuries, including medical evaluations following Taser deployment, pre-existing conditions, or mental health assessments.

Outcome	Count	Percentage
Injured	1,138	20.3%
Not Injured	4,456	79.7%
Hospitalized	1,963	35.1%
Not Hospitalized	3,631	64.9%

Subject injury rates increased over the reporting period, rising from 12.4% in 2016 to 26.7% in 2025. This upward trend is notable and stands in contrast to the declining injury rates observed in some other Louisiana agencies over similar periods. Whether the increase reflects changes in the types of encounters officers face,

shifts in reporting practices, changes in the types of force used, or other factors cannot be determined from the data alone.



### 3. Conclusion: What the Data Suggests

This summary of New Orleans Police Department use-of-force data from 2016 through 2025 reveals several patterns.

**Incident volume declined then rebounded.** Use-of-force incidents fell by 42% between 2017 and 2020, then gradually climbed back through 2023 before leveling off.

**Force is predominantly low-level.** More than three-quarters of all force applications were classified at Level 1, the lowest severity. The single most common force category, exhibiting a firearm without discharging it, accounted for about one in three force applications, while hands-on physical control and takedowns together made up another half. Actual firearm discharges were rare (30 across ten years). Higher-severity force (L3 and L4) represented about 3% of all force actions across the decade.

**Most force occurred during calls for service and arrests.** Calls for service accounted for 43% of force incidents and arrests accounted for 27%. Proactive enforcement activities such as pedestrian and traffic stops made up a smaller share (about 17% combined).

**Citizens subjected to force were disproportionately Black.** Black residents represented 82.1% of individuals subjected to force while comprising 54.6% of the parish population. This disparity is smaller than in some other jurisdictions when measured as a ratio (1.54), in part because Orleans Parish has a majority-Black population. However, the absolute share (more than four out of five subjects) is striking and warrants deeper examination. White, Hispanic, and Asian residents were all well below their population shares.

**Most citizens subjected to force were young men.** More than 84% of subjects were male, and more than half were between 18 and 34 years old. About 12% were minors under 18.

**Three-quarters of subjects were arrested.** This is a notably high arrest rate, and it likely reflects the fact that the most common reason for force was resisting arrest.

**Injury rates have been rising.** Subject injury rates more than doubled over the reporting period, from 12.4% in 2016 to 26.7% in 2025. This upward trend is a concerning signal that warrants investigation, whether the increase reflects changes in encounter types, reporting practices, or actual changes in force outcomes.

**The overwhelming majority of incidents were found justified.** Over 90% of investigations concluded that force was justified, with only 1.5% found not justified. An additional 7% were justified but noted policy violations or training gaps, suggesting that even within the “justified” category, there are areas for improvement.

**Data limitations:** This analysis relies on data published by NOPD on its open data portal. We cannot independently verify the completeness or accuracy of these records. The dataset captures what officers report; incidents involving unreported force are by definition not included.

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## 4. Methodology

**1. Data Source:** Use-of-force incident records were obtained from the New Orleans Police Department’s publicly available open data portal. The dataset was downloaded on March 4, 2026, and contained 4,671 records.

**2. Data Filtering:** Records were filtered to incidents occurring between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2025. This excluded 66 records from 2026 (partial year through February 23, 2026), yielding 4,605 incidents for analysis.

**3. Data Structure & Duplication:** The raw dataset uses a wide format where each row represents one incident identified by a unique PIB File Number. When an incident involves multiple subjects or multiple officers, their attributes are encoded as pipe-delimited values within a single cell (e.g., “Black | White | Black” in the Subject Ethnicity field). Two separate explosion processes were applied:

- **Citizen-Level Dataset:** Citizen fields (gender, ethnicity, age, build, height, injured, hospitalized, arrested) were split by the “|” delimiter, producing one row per subject per incident. This yielded

5,595 subject-level records from 4,605 incidents. Of these, 86.8% of incidents involved a single subject, 8.6% involved two subjects, and 4.6% involved three or more.

- **Officer-Action-Level Dataset:** Officer and force fields (force type, force level, officer demographics, force effectiveness) were split similarly, producing one row per officer force action per incident. This yielded 9,071 officer-action records. Of incidents, 49.3% involved a single officer action, 27.1% involved two, and 23.6% involved three or more.

**4. Counting Methodology:** Volume and trend counts (Section 2.1) use the raw incident count (4,605). Force type and force level counts (Sections 2.2–2.3) use the officer-action-level dataset (9,071 applications), since each officer’s force action is recorded separately. Demographic, arrest, and injury counts (Sections 2.6–2.9) use the subject-level dataset (5,595 subjects). Use-of-force reasons, service types, and disposition counts (Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.7) use the raw incident count, as these fields are recorded per incident.

**5. Age Data:** Subject age was converted to numeric values. Entries of zero or negative values were treated as missing (data entry errors). Age data was available for 91.1% of subject records.

**6. Race/Ethnicity Data:** “Race-Unknown” values were recoded to “Unknown.” Lowercase variants were standardized. For disparity analysis, unknown/missing race entries were excluded from the denominator when calculating UOF incident shares but are included in all descriptive counts.

**7. Population Data:** Parish population figures for disparity analysis come from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020–2024 5-Year Estimates, retrieved via the Census API. Orleans Parish total population: 371,853. Racial breakdown: White 115,882 (31.2%), Black 203,053 (54.6%), Hispanic 30,425 (8.2%), Asian 10,406 (2.8%).

**8. Force Type Grouping:** The raw dataset contains 36 distinct force type labels, many of which describe variants of the same weapon or technique (for example, there are six different CEW/Taser labels and four different baton labels). To present these data more clearly, we grouped the 36 raw values into nine categories based on the weapon or technique involved. Groupings follow the definitions in NOPD's Operations Manual Chapter 1.3, “Use of Force” (effective December 6, 2015; revised October 2, 2022). Specifically:

- **Firearm (Exhibited)** includes pointing a firearm, rifle, or shotgun at a person (Policy p.5, L1).
- **Firearm (Discharged)** includes all critical firearm and rifle discharges (Policy p.5, L4).
- **Hands / Physical Control** includes bare-hands contact, hands with injury, escort techniques, defensive techniques, and force on handcuffed subjects (Policy p.9, Sec.21c–d: “contact controls” and “compliance techniques”).
- **Takedowns** includes takedowns with and without injury (Policy p.5: no-injury takedowns are L1; takedowns with injury are L2).
- **CEW / Taser** includes all CEW (Conducted Energy Weapon) deployments, CEW exhibited/laser, and older "TEW" labels (Policy p.5, L2; Policy p.9, Sec.21e).
- **Strikes** includes head strikes with and without a weapon (Policy p.5, L3).

- **Impact / Specialized Weapons** includes batons, PR-24 strikes and non-strikes, non-traditional impact weapons, gas dispersants, and distraction devices (Policy p.9, Sec.21g; Policy p.11, Sec.33).
- **Canine** includes canine deployments with no bite, with bite, and with contact (Policy p.2 and p.5: L3 for contact, L4 for bites).
- **Other** includes neck holds, vehicle pursuits with injury, vehicle as weapon, and unspecified “Other” entries.

Force level (L1–L4) was not used as the basis for grouping because a single technique can be classified at different levels depending on context and outcome. The force level is analyzed separately in Section 2.3. The table showing which raw data labels map to each grouped category is provided in Appendix A.

**9. Disposition Harmonization:** Earlier records (primarily 2016) use the labels “Use Of Force Authorized” and “Use Of Force Not Authorized,” while later records use “UOF Justified” and “UOF Not Justified.” For analysis, “Use Of Force Authorized” was grouped with “UOF Justified” as “Justified,” and “Use Of Force Not Authorized” was grouped with “UOF Not Justified” as “Not Justified.” Dispositions noting policy violations or training concerns were grouped as “Justified with Concerns.”

**10. Data Limitations:** All data is published by NOPD and has not been independently verified. The dataset does not include contextual information about specific circumstances of each encounter. The pipe-delimited encoding of multiple subjects and officers introduces the possibility of positional misalignment in rare cases with complex multi-party incidents.

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## 5. References

1. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020–2024 5-Year Estimates, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. Retrieved via Census API, March 2026.
2. Louisiana legislation requiring standardized use-of-force reporting by law enforcement agencies: LA Rev Stat § 40:2554 (2025)
3. New Orleans Police Department, Use of Force Incidents dataset. Retrieved from NOPD open data portal, March 4, 2026.
4. New Orleans Police Department, Operations Manual, Chapter 1.3: Use of Force. Effective December 6, 2015; revised October 2, 2022. Retrieved from <https://nola.gov/nola/media/NOPD/Policies/Chapter-1-3-Use-of-Force-Effective-10-2-2022.pdf>, March 2026.

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*This report was produced by Innocence & Justice Louisiana as part of the Louisiana Law Enforcement Accountability Database (LLEAD). For more information, visit [llead.co](<https://llead.co>).*

## 6. Appendix A

The table below shows how raw force type values provided in the NOPD dataset were grouped and standardized for analysis.

<b>Grouped Category</b>	<b>Original Value in Data</b>	<b>Count</b>
CEW / Taser	CEW Deployment	501
CEW / Taser	CEW Exhibited/Laser	268
CEW / Taser	CEW	33
CEW / Taser	- TEW Deployment (Taser	14
CEW / Taser	- TEW Deployment (Taser	12
CEW / Taser	- TEW (Taser 10)	5
Canine	Canine (No Bite)	117
Canine	Canine (Bite)	20
Canine	Canine (Contact)	2
Firearm (Discharged)	Firearm (Discharged)	28
Firearm (Discharged)	Rifle (Discharged)	2
Firearm (Exhibited)	Firearm (Exhibited)	3027
Firearm (Exhibited)	Rifle (Pointed)	115
Firearm (Exhibited)	Shotgun (Pointed)	3
Hands / Physical Control	Hands	2022
Hands / Physical Control	Force (Escort Tech)	293
Hands / Physical Control	- Hands (with injury)	134
Hands / Physical Control	Handcuffed Subject	34
Hands / Physical Control	Force (Defense Tech)	32
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Distraction Device	24
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Gas Dispersant	21
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Baton (non-strike)	15
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Baton/PR-24 (Strike)	8
Impact / Specialized Weapons	NonTrad Impact Weapon	8
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Baton/PR-24(NonStrk)	6
Impact / Specialized Weapons	Baton/PR-24 (Miss)	2
Other	Other	138
Other	VehPursuits w/Injury	14
Other	Force (Neck Holds)	11
Other	Vehicle as Weapon	7
Other	VehPursuits w/Injury	2
Strikes	Head Strike (No Wep)	90
Strikes	Head Strike (Weapon)	1
Takedowns	Takedown (no injury)	1098
Takedowns	Force (Take Down)	676
Takedowns	Takedown (w/injury)	288