



2013 Menlo Park Police Department Crime Statistics and Citizen Complaints

The 2013 year closed with the City of Menlo Park ending the year with a slight overall increase in crime (3%). Crime reports are broken down into categories of violent crime and property crimes.

Homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assaults are categories of violent crimes and we are pleased to report there were no homicides during 2013. Robberies decreased 22%, however 32 people were the victims of aggravated assaults (23% increase from 2012).

Burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson are categories of property crime. Burglaries were up 9% in 2013 (180 cases), which contributed to the 3% increase of overall crime. There was no statistical change in the number of larcenies (434) and auto thefts (28) compared to 2012.

Social media and press releases were utilized throughout 2013 to encourage residents to lock their homes and cars and to keep personal items out of view. The education of the public to help prevent burglaries and larcenies is an ongoing priority for the police department.

How we serve you is also critically important, and for the first time we are reporting the outcome of complaints filed against our personnel. As the Chief of the Menlo Park Police Department, I feel our personnel provide outstanding service throughout the city. With that said, the Menlo Park Police Department received 28 citizen complaints out of 41,983 officer contacts in 2013. When reviewing personnel complaints, it is important to look at the number and types of calls for service law enforcement officers respond to within the evaluated time period.

It is inevitable that with 41,983 public contacts that there are going to be situations that a member of the public is not satisfied with and has justification to file a complaint based on the service received. The number one complaint filed was for discourtesy or rude behavior displayed by an officer (eight complaints). Out of the 30 citizen complaints filed, five (5) were sustained (16.6%), 11 were exonerated (37%), and two (2) were unfounded. Additionally, 20% of the complaints were withdrawn (by the person who filed the complaint) before the investigation was completed.

A sustained finding of a complaint means that an internal investigation was conducted and the evidence indicated that the complaint was founded. Two of the founded complaints were for being discourteous, one for conduct unbecoming, and two for neglecting to carry out an assignment. For a complaint to be exonerated there must be proof that the officer's actions were consistent with department policies and protocols, and this occurs quite frequently since we require our officers to wear audio and video recorders. For a complaint to be determined

unfounded it must be demonstrated that the alleged actions did not occur or did not involve our personnel.

Law enforcement officers come into contact with the public in several manners to include response to calls received by the public safety dispatch center, flag downs by a citizen, and officer initiated activities (which range from traffic and pedestrian stops). Not all calls for service result in reports taken or the issuance of citations. Officers use discretion, experience, knowledge of laws/policies, and their communication skills to resolve situations.

The calls for service do not reflect the frequent number of walk-ins to the police lobby front counter and phone calls where professional staff ranging from records and parking to the administration provide services to the public (i.e. police report copies, vehicle releases, parking enforcement/permits, media inquiries, property/evidence, etc.). Out of these thousands of interactions, only two complaints were filed.

With all this factored into the equation, 30 complaints per year are acceptable numbers but we will always work toward bringing this number to zero!