



Union Township Police Department



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Police

CHIEF

Anthony J. Rees



To the Board of Trustees,

I am pleased to present the Union Township Police Department's annual report for the year 2024. Union Township continues to be an area of growth both in the residential and commercial sectors. However, crime in Union Township continues to trend downward. 2024 saw a decrease of 11 percent in overall crime from 2023 and an 8 percent decrease in theft-related incidents. Through traffic safety intervention and high visibility enforcement by our officers on our public roadways, traffic accidents saw a decrease of 14 percent, and OVI-related offenses decreased 4 percent in 2024.

We continue to be aware of and work towards positive public perception and complete accountability in the eyes of the community and look for and embrace new technology as a way of making the township a safer place to live. Through various grants and funding, the police department was able to purchase fifteen FLOCK traffic cameras positioned in various locations throughout the township. These cameras have assisted investigators in solving crime and capturing violent offenders. The police department is also working in conjunction with several businesses in the township to purchase additional cameras. FLOCK cameras have been an invaluable asset to police departments all over the country and have already paid dividends here in Union Township, assisting our detectives in solving several high-profile crimes. The police department continues to add to our Police K-9 program. In addition to K-9 Nya, who is one of the first working police dogs to be introduced to and work full time in an Ohio school district, we also added K-9 Rip to our roster in 2024. K-9 Rip is a dual-purpose German Shepard trained in tracking and narcotics detection.

In May of 2024, Safewise, a public safety media outlet, named Union Township the safest community in Ohio among municipalities with over 50,000 residents. The outlet cited victims of violent crime ratios in Union Township at .06 per one thousand residents and victims of property crime ratios at 10.9 per one thousand. The Safewise study gave further credence to our officers working hard to maintain a high quality of life for our residents. Both the police department and the Communications Center were again reaccredited nationally in 2024 by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), marking the tenth accreditation the police department has achieved since 1990. The police department has maintained almost all public outreach programs, including citizen police academy, women's self-defense, child gun safety, police night out, security assessments, robbery response talks, and citizen ride-along. These programs are offered at no cost to the public, are well attended, and are instructed by our officers, who incorporate them into their regular duties. The men and women of the Police

Department will continue to foster a relationship of genuine mutual respect with the community and remain committed to serving the public and striving towards the department's goal of making the township a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chief Anthony Rees, M.P.A. CLEE

Crimes Reported, Traffic Enforcement, & Calls for Service

2024

2024 Crimes Reported, Traffic Enforcement, and Calls for Service

Crimes Reported***	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Part 1 UCR													
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape	0	2	4	1	2	3	1	4	2	2	0	0	21
Robbery	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Assault	5	8	8	15	11	2	6	2	4	12	9	5	87
Burglary/B&E	3	5	5	5	6	6	1	6	4	5	12	2	60
Theft/Larceny	65	55	68	64	66	74	66	60	82	62	50	66	778
Auto Theft/Unauthorized Use	2	3	5	2	4	4	2	5	7	8	2	3	47
Arson	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Domestic Violence	10	7	10	6	11	11	9	11	11	2	14	13	115
Total	85	80	101	93	102	101	85	88	111	91	87	90	1114

Other Non-UCR/General*	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
DUI	7	7	10	18	16	16	12	11	10	11	17	16	151
All Other Offenses	196	164	186	192	166	198	164	186	161	167	141	167	2088
All Other Non Offenses	795	731	790	837	849	767	715	734	777	833	691	800	9319
Total													11558
Total Crimes Reports	998	902	986	1047	1031	981	891	931	948	1011	849	983	12672

Traffic Enforcement**	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Citations	208	198	217	242	220	221	202	210	217	222	184	249	2590
Warnings	641	571	651	609	543	503	467	545	558	501	490	504	6583
Traffic Stops	849	759	851	792	757	712	646	756	747	704	630	706	8909
Traffic Crashes	76	69	66	89	94	69	75	79	95	95	93	119	1019
Traffic Crashes on Private	19	12	17	11	21	19	8	21	18	13	20	19	198
Total Calls for Service	5830	5082	5577	5356	5358	4994	4976	5171	5457	5568	4914	5092	63375

*includes all non-UCR and other non-criminal information reports.

Administrative STAFF



Chief Anthony Rees is a veteran police officer with over 26 years of experience, serving all with Union Township. He possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Northern Kentucky University. Chief Rees is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute and a Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE)



Lt. David Combs Commands the Operations Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 26 years of experience, serving all with the Union Township Police Department. He has served as a police officer, investigator, and Patrol Sergeant prior to being promoted to Lieutenant. Lt. Combs possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Wilmington College. Lt. Combs is a Certified Polygraph Examiner, a graduate of the Southern Police Institute, and a Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE).



Lt. Scott Blankenship Commands the Investigative/Administrative Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 30 years of experience and has 26 years with the Union Township Police Department. He has served as a police officer, investigator, patrol sergeant, and the investigative commander prior to being promoted to Lieutenant in February 2015. Lt. Blankenship is also a certified polygraph examiner and a graduate of the Southern Police Institute.

Administrative

STAFF



Lt. Josh Hines commands the Professional Standards Bureau. He is a veteran police officer with 17 years of experience, serving all with Union Township. Prior to his promotion to lieutenant in 2022, Lt. Hines served as a police officer, detective, and investigative sergeant. Lt. Hines possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Northern Kentucky University and is a graduate of the Administrative Officer Course at the University of Louisville's Southern Police Institute. Aside from Lt. Hines' duties within the department, he proudly serves on the Benefits Committee for The Shield, which is an organization dedicated to serving the families of officers critically injured or killed in the line of duty within Ohio counties of Clermont, Hamilton, Butler, and Warren counties.

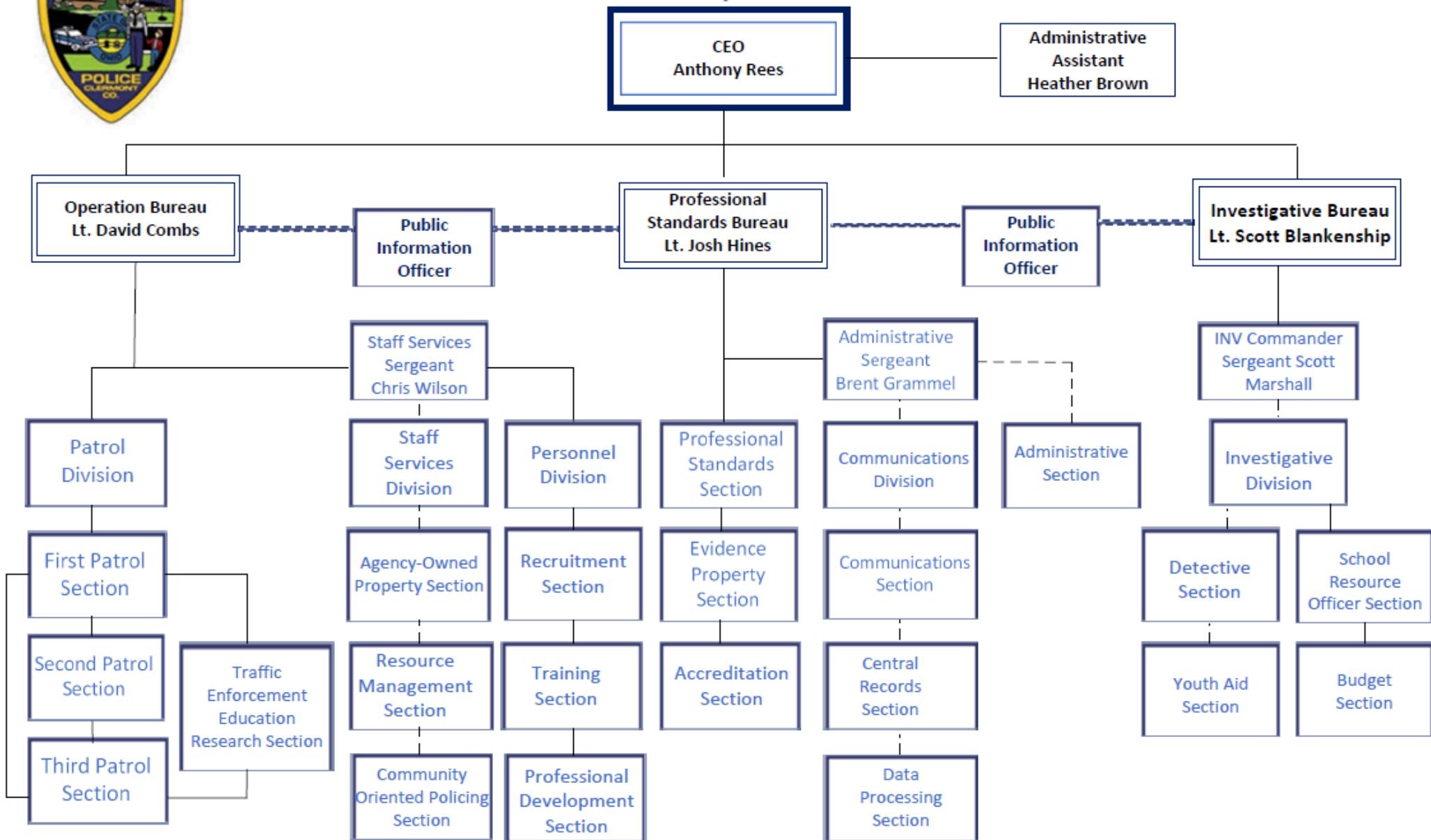
Heather Brown is the Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police. She has held that position since her hire in 1997. She continues to be a vital part of the administrative staff. Her duties are many, including human resource responsibilities.





Union Township Police Department

January 2025



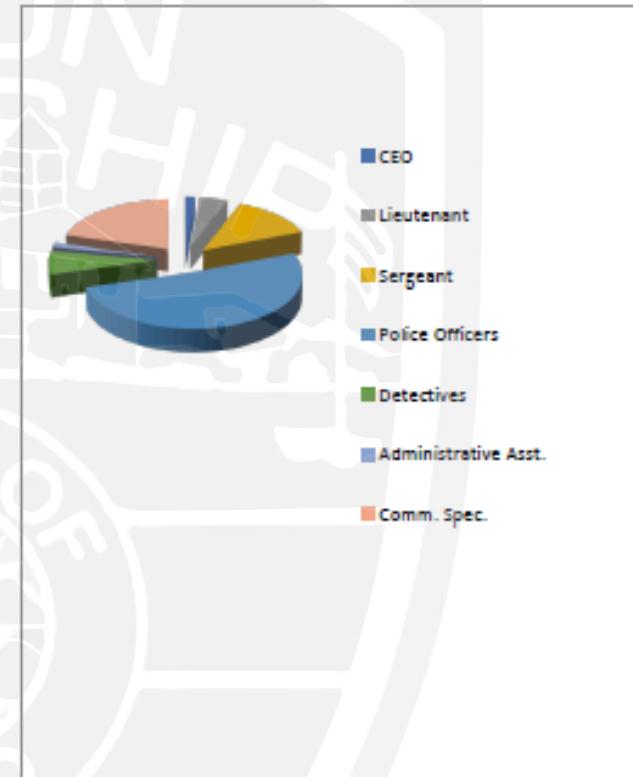
Nationally Accredited Police Department and Communication Center.



Police Department

STAFFING

Sworn Positions	Current	Current	Current
	Male	Female	All
CEO	1	0	1
Lieutenant	3	0	3
Sergeant	8	1	9
Police Officers	32	3	35
Detectives	3	0	3
Sworn Total	47	4	51
Non-Sworn Positions	Current	Current	Current
	Male	Female	All
Administrative Asst.	0	1	1
Comm. Spec.	1	13	14
Non-Sworn Total	1	14	15
Totals	48	18	66



Operations

BUREAU

The Operations Bureau is commanded by Lt. David Combs and consists of the Patrol Division, Staff Services Division, and Personnel Division. Operations is the largest agency bureau with an authorized complement of 41 employees.

The Patrol Division is the largest division of the bureau. It is responsible for handling citizen calls for service, tactical response to apprehend criminals, community problem solving, enforcement of traffic laws, and investigation of traffic crashes. Total calls for service for 2024 were 63,375, an 8% increase from 2023. This can be attributed to more non-criminal self-initiated activity by officers. The total number of crime reports by officers increased, with 12,672 total reports generated, a 2% increase from the previous year. Part 1 UCR Crimes (the major felony type crimes) decreased from 1,250 to 1,114, a .12% decrease from 2023.

The Road Patrol Section consists of three patrol shifts managed 24/7 by six patrol sergeants. Road patrol is assisted by two state-certified canine units and one officer assigned to plain clothes narcotics with the Clermont County Narcotics Unit. Two Patrol Division Officers are certified Traffic Crash Reconstructionist. They are equipped with the latest technology and are capable of investigating any traffic crash, from a simple two-car accident to a multiple fatality. Enforcement efforts are targeted to increase public awareness of traffic laws and reduce the number of crashes. Traffic Officers work closely with the Clermont County Engineer's Office in planning traffic flow as well as identifying traffic hazards. The total number of crashes investigated in 2024 was 1,217 compared to 1,367 in 2023. This decrease of 14% may be attributed to high visibility enforcement and less crashes along the SR 32 corridor with the Bach Buxton overpass being completed. Road construction projects scheduled along the SR 32 corridor for 2024 continued as planned, with major work being done at SR 32 and Glen Este Withamsville Road. The number of arrests for Operating a Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence decreased in 2024 by 4%. In 2024, officers arrested 151 impaired drivers compared to 157 in 2023. The township has seen a decline in OVI arrests over the last several years.

Crime prevention and public relations are considered a department-wide effort headed by Lt. Combs. Members are responsible for reaching out to the Union Township community with programs designed to inform and educate on various topics. Assigned personnel participate in local, state, and national organizations to network and stay current on trends and available programs. Every contact with the public should be considered an opportunity to serve and educate the public. Union Township Police Department exhibits this belief through outreach programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Women's Unarmed Self-Defense classes, Citizen Police Academies and Reunions, a Police Night Out crime prevention festival, Child Gun Safety classes, School Safety talks, Safety Trailer displays at local events, and certified security assessments by trained officers.

The department continued to rebound in 2024 and began to see an increase in our public education programs as we were again able to offer our staple of programs. The department hosted its 17th annual Police Night Out at Veterans Park, which was again extremely well attended by our community. The department held its 19th annual Citizen Police Academy in 2024. Twenty-two members of the community graduated from the 12-week Citizens Police Academy.

Operations

BUREAU – CONT.

The department will continue to look for new ways in 2025 to advertise for the CPA Program to have more community members participate. In 2024, the Union Township Police Department partnered with the Mercy Health Plex at West Clermont High School and hosted four women's self-defense classes. Officers also put on Active Shooter training at several local businesses and financial institutions. Union Township Police Department has begun to phase out of the Neighborhood Watch program. With the increase in social media platforms law enforcement uses, the department has looked for new ways to get crime information out to the community. Facebook continues to be utilized in that regard, and new platforms such as "Next Door" and Lexus Nexis are being explored. The Citizen Police Academy Alumni group continues to grow and participate alongside officers in various public relations events hosted throughout the year. In April, the CPA Alumni assisted with Crime Stoppers Drug Take Back and Paper Shred and were able to take over 202 lbs. of prescription narcotics out of circulation.

Officers from the Crime Prevention section continue to educate the Township's financial institutions with Robbery Response update presentations in 2024, as well as professional Security Assessments. The department's three state-certified Security Assessment officers have given the police department an additional resource to be able to provide our residents and business owners looking to improve security around their businesses and homes. Facebook and the continued utilization of the department's Facebook page have increased the police department's visibility in the community. As a result, police department programs have also seen an increase in interest and attendance, and public tips accepted via the Facebook page have led to numerous arrests and case closures. In total, officers participated in or instructed 92 public relations events in 2024. In keeping with the Department's mission of fostering a relationship of genuine, mutual respect with the community, we continue to develop new ideas to increase positive interactions with the public. Crime Prevention officers will continue to meet new challenges head-on while remaining active within the Crime Prevention section and still handling their primary duties of answering calls for service.

The Staff Services Division is managed by Sgt. Chris Wilson and provides support services for the agency, including supervision over purchasing, requisitions, maintenance of equipment and the fleet, and upkeep of the police department building. Agency-Owned Property and Resource Management Sections of the Staff Services Division are responsible for all agency-owned equipment, vehicles, and facilities, including ordering approved purchases, inventory, inspection, and repairs. The smooth day-to-day operation heavily depends on the Staff Service's ability to satisfy needs. All agency-owned firearms are inspected on schedule, and trained armorers and certified agency personnel perform any repairs. All member-issued equipment is inspected by their respective supervisor annually, and they, in turn, report subordinates' needs to the Staff Services Commander. The Staff Services Division saw a significant upgrade in support and technology available to our officers through the introduction in 2021 of body camera systems to our department. All department officers are now equipped with body cameras. Department supervisors continuously review footage from the cameras to ensure quality control. Support was also increased by adding significant upgrades to our Armory, namely, the Armor-Link software set-up, which enables maintenance of our department-issued firearms to be tracked and kept up with.

Operations

BUREAU – CONT.

The **Personnel Division** is dedicated to training its personnel under the direction of Lt. Combs. Our training in lethal and non-lethal force and response to critical incidents far exceeds those standards set by the State of Ohio. Training requests from members directly correspond to annual evaluations, endorsed by one's supervisor and approved by a training committee. The agency takes advantage of all local, state, and federal training offers and occasionally sponsors and hosts state-provided training for other departments at Union Township's Civic Center. In-service roll call training in 2024 included immersive topics such as ethics, racial profiling, critical incident response, De-escalation Techniques and personal early warning systems.

The agency worked hand-in-hand with the Clermont County Prosecutor's Office to provide department members timely and essential legal updates. In addition, the full implementation of the Power DMS system allowed for fluid training and communication. Union Township Police Department members completed a total of 3,180 hours of training in 2024, including 8 hours of in-service training on Taser and Pepper Ball Systems recertification and de-escalation training and 16 hours of training in firearms. The agency participates in a county-wide Special Response Team by assigning seven tactical officers and one negotiator. In addition, three officers are assigned to the Regional Dive Team and receive regular training. Five Union Township officers are also designated as peer support officers trained to assist and counsel other officers dealing with or struggling with their experience from a critical incident. Union Township offers its members a generous college tuition reimbursement that allows the agency members to continue to expand their knowledge base and contribute to the growth of the Police Department. The police department continued its tradition by sending three first-line supervisors to the Southern Police Institute's 12-week Administrative Officers Course in Louisville, KY.

The Personnel Division is also responsible for recruiting potential sworn and non-sworn personnel. Various resources are used in recruitment, such as career days at the local grade schools and high schools, and the department's ride-along program serving the University of Cincinnati Clermont College internship program and the UC Police Academy. Officers and Command Officers also attend local police academies, such as the University of Cincinnati Clermont College and Butler Tech, to recruit aspiring police officers.



Investigative

BUREAU



The Investigative Bureau, commanded by Lt. Scott Blankenship, comprises three divisions: Investigative, SROs (School Resource Officers), and Budgeting. As a partnering agency with the Clermont County Sheriff's Narcotics Unit, Lt. Blankenship is also responsible for supervising any department member assigned to the task force.

The Investigation Division includes five sworn officers who hold the rank of detective and are assigned all serious felony crimes, missing persons, and death investigations. Serious felony crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, major theft or fraud, auto theft, and arson.

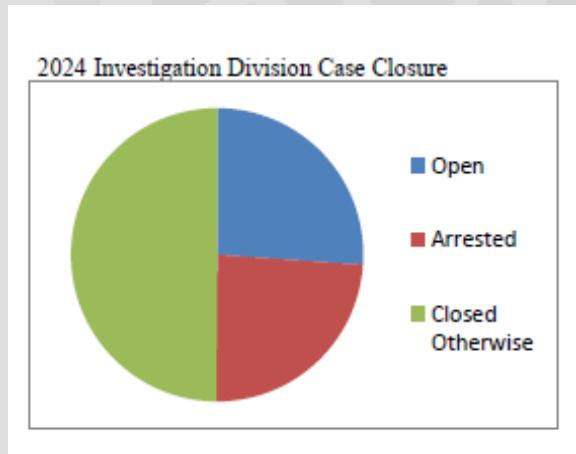
Investigation Division members receive advanced training in evidence gathering and processing, suspect interviewing, case preparation and management, and specialized homicide and sex crime investigation techniques. The division encompasses a State of Ohio certified Evidence Technician, Polygraph Examiners, FAA Certified Drone Pilots, a Computer Forensic Investigator, and a Youth Aid Detective.

During 2024, Investigators worked over 477 felony cases, closing about 115 (24%) by arrest. Of the remaining, 239 (50%) were closed otherwise, inactivated, or unfounded. The remaining 125 cases (27%) are added to the 2025 caseload.

The Polygraph Unit performed 12 pre-employment examinations. The Drone Unit was used for nine incidents, ranging from missing-person cases to auto accidents and crime-scene documentation.

Investigative BUREAU - CONT.

The 2024 investigative highlights included the arrests of individuals suspected of an organized crime group, Breaking / Entering, and a theft ring involving four local businesses' coin machines. The Investigation Division participated in the prosecution of several individuals involved in an organized crime group. The group was involved in Breaking / Entering and theft from coin machines throughout the tri-state. Detectives identified the suspects and presented an organized crime case to the Clermont County Grand Jury, where three individuals were indicted. Detectives were also able to obtain evidence, which assisted with prosecutions in numerous other states. Due to the investigative unit's quick action, stolen US Currency and business keys were located and returned to the business owners.



School Resource Officer Section

The agency's School Resource Officer Program is a unit within the Investigation Division due to the sensitive nature of the position. We currently have two SROs and one K-9 in the West Clermont High School, one "roaming" SRO for the West Clermont Elementary Schools, and an additional SRO was added to the Carter Center School for Excellence this year.

The SROs are involved in the investigative process of criminal offenses that occur on school campuses, disciplinary hearings, and educational events for their students. We continue to enjoy a terrific working relationship with both school districts.



Professional Standards

BUREAU

The Professional Standards Bureau, currently commanded by Lt. Josh Hines, consists of the Administrative and Communications Divisions. These divisions provide support services for the agency, including supervision of all non-sworn personnel, communications, records, and accreditation. The Professional Standards Bureau is also responsible for the formal complaint and internal affairs processes, as well as oversight of the agency's Evidence Property Section.

Communications Division

The Communications Division consists of 911 Emergency Dispatch (one of only two centers in Clermont County, Ohio) and Data Processing. Dispatchers share data entry duties and assist Central Records. These are essential support functions of the agency, utilizing 14 non-sworn employees. Communications also provides 24-hour emergency dispatching of police, fire, and EMS services for Union Township. The section handles thousands of monthly telephone calls, both emergency and non-emergency. Our 911 dispatchers are EMD & EFD certified through the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). The Union Township Communications Center is accredited by CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies).

Throughout 2024, the communications center fielded 19,445 emergency 9-1-1 calls and 37,916 administrative calls, ranging from internal communication to public service orientation.



Professional Standards

BUREAU – CONT.



The **Central Records Section** processes all documents generated by police officers and manages a computerized records system, which includes all citizen calls for service, crime reports, traffic crash reports, warrants, and contacts with persons. Document archival is accomplished through electronic imaging. Public records inquiries, court filings, requests for officers' body-worn camera videos, and expungements are also vital functions of the Records Section. The Records Section handles and disseminates tens of thousands of documents each year, generated by 52 sworn officers, in addition to the numerous requests by the general public. Central Records processed over 7,148 records requests in 2024.

The **Accreditation Section** is responsible for the accreditation process. Sgt. Brent Grammel manages our accreditations and receives assistance from Communications Specialists Jen West and Jamie Robinson, currently assigned to our Central Records Section. Sgt. Grammel also serves as an Accreditation Assessor with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Union Township is dedicated to the accreditation philosophy throughout its government services, including national recognition of Police, 911 Emergency Communications, Fire, and Public Works. The Union Township Police Department and its Emergency 911 Center were reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in 2024. It was the fifth reaccreditation for the Communications Center and the ninth overall award for the Police Department.

In addition to Accreditation, this section works closely with the Professional Standards Bureau to create and revise policies and General Orders. It is also responsible for keeping employees apprised of changes in state and federal laws.



Professional Standards

BUREAU – CONT.



Evidence Property Section

Custodian Dean Murray manages our property room under the auspices of the Professional Standards Bureau. In 2024, Property Custodian Murray processed approximately 2,530 pieces of property/evidence through the agency's property room. His additional responsibilities include preparing court documents, transporting evidence to and from crime laboratories, conducting auctions, and maintaining inventories. Each year, a complete inventory is conducted in our property room to ensure the integrity of all evidence.

Citizen Complaints

The Union Township Police Department maintains careful records of all professional standard investigations and citizen complaints. An alleged violation of criminal law, civil law, or corrupt activity prompts a professional standard investigation. Citizen complaints, however, are usually non-criminal in nature and often pertain to an alleged violation of agency policy or standards of conduct. Our citizen complaint program requires written documentation and supervisory involvement in every complaint received. After a citizen complaint investigation is completed and a recommendation is provided, the Chief of Police reviews the investigation and determines the final disposition. The Chief then provides the complainant with the final disposition in writing. Our complaint process and statistics are also available to the public, as required by CALEA standards, and are monitored for early warning purposes. In 2024, five citizen complaints were filed and investigated within the Professional Standards Bureau.

Employee Grievances

The collective bargaining agreement is a contract between Union Township and our union employees that establishes rights, protections, grievance procedures, wages, and other departmental procedures. Negotiations to renew the agreement through 2025 were completed in 2022. **There were no grievances filed in 2024.**

2024 Citizen Complaints

Exonerated	0
Not sustained	0
Unfounded	4
Sustained	1
Withdrawn	0
TOTAL	5

2024 Grievances

TOTAL	0
--------------	----------

Achievements

2024

The Union Township Police Department recognizes that certain actions or activities performed by department members, whether planned or in response to emergency circumstances, should be recognized and rewarded. For that reason, the agency participates in recognition programs within and outside the department. Examples of recognition programs include the agency's Annual Chief's Award, the Clermont County Law Enforcement Banquet, the special presentation segment of the monthly trustees' meetings, and the issuance of letters of commendation.

*Excellence in
Service*



Det. Disbennett, Ofc. Dwelly, Ofc. Perkins, Ofc. Hale, Det. Taylor, & Sgt. Bock

Achievements

2024 - CONT.

Southern Police Institute AOC Grads



Sgt. Bullock & Sgt. Smith

Achievements

2024 - CONT.

*Encourage the Heart
Child Focus*



SRO Williams

Recap

2024

Police Night Out



Recap 2024

Drug Take Back



UNION
Women's Self-Def.



Job Fair



Recap

2024



Recap

2024

Santa in UT

