



VOLUSIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MICHAEL J. CHITWOOD, SHERIFF

To: Sheriff Michael J. Chitwood
Via Chain-of-Command

Date: April 12, 2026

From: Karen French, Accreditation Coordinator
Professional Compliance Unit

File: 116M0005.26

Subject: 2026 Annual Analysis on 2025 Use of Force and Pursuits

2026 Annual Analysis on 2025 Use of Force and Pursuits

In accordance with General Order 001-01 Use of Force Guidelines, General Order 001-03 Use of Less-Lethal Weapons and Devices and General Order 041-02 Motor Vehicle Apprehension, the Professional Compliance Unit shall complete an annual analysis of all pursuits and use of force reported in Blue Team, to include use of deadly force, less-lethal force, and agency policies and practices.

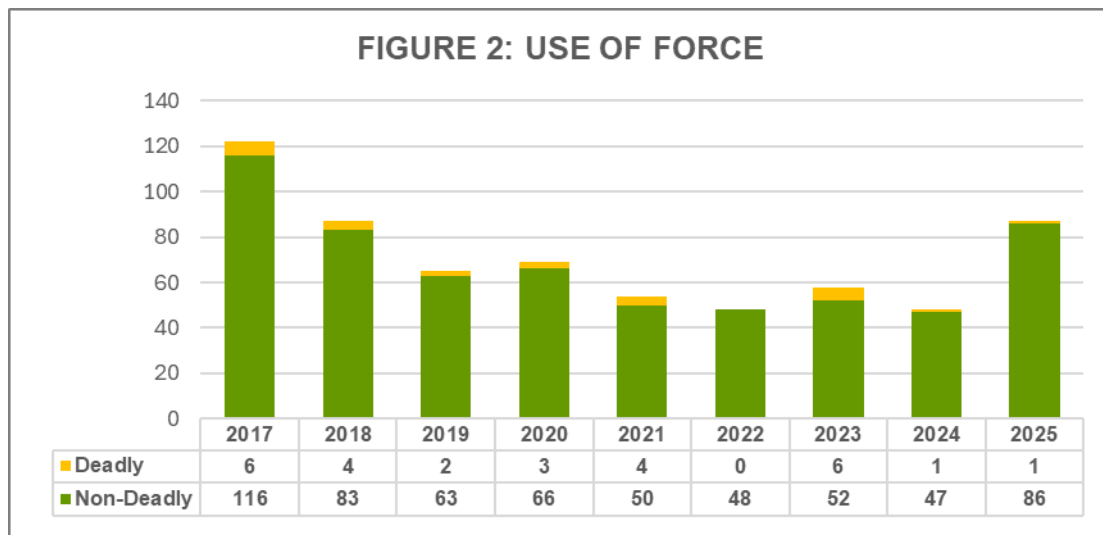
The purpose of the annual analysis is to provide an additional means outside of the administrative review process to identify and address training deficiencies/opportunities, use of force trends among Deputies, and for protection of the Deputy, the Volusia Sheriff's Office, and the community it serves.

Figure #1: Nine Year Statistical Review Summary

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Calls for Service	275,384	260,722	262,693	275,070	271,031	281,617	306,430	330,055	306,662
Total Arrests (Source: UCR / NIBRS)	13,079	10,488	9,370	6,459	6,400	6,930	7,603	9,945	10,665
Total Index Crime Rate	1,586	1,452	1,172	1,023	900	850	343* partial	NR	NR
Deadly Force Incidents	6	4	2	3	4	0	6	1	1
Deadly Force Persons	6	3	2	3	3	0	3	1	1
Deadly Force Vicious Animals	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
Deadly Force Accidental Discharge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less-Lethal Force Incidents	116	83	63	66	50	48	52	47	86
Total Use of Force Incidents	122	87	65	69	54	48	58	48	87
Total Vehicle Pursuits (Source: IAPRO)	5	7	6	6	5	6	3	4	9

2025 USE OF FORCE

During calendar year 2025, the Volusia Sheriff's Office made 10,665 total arrests (Ref.: 2025 NIBRS statistics from Enterprise RMS/BI Reporting). In June 2023, VSO transitioned from the Uniformed Crime Reporting System (UCR) to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). In effecting these arrests, the number of incidents in 2025 requiring use of force in response to subject resistance was 87 incidents, or about 0.8% of total arrests and less than 0.03% of all calls for service interactions with the public. The remaining 99.97% of all interactions were made without incident.



TREND ANALYSIS:

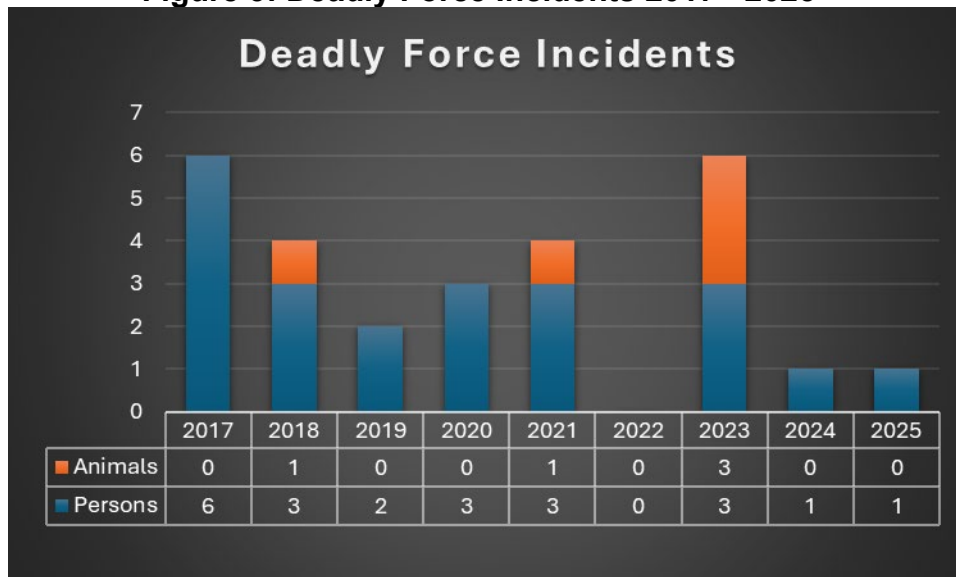
The above trend line indicates a 60.6% decrease in use of force incidents from 2017 through 2022; in calendar year 2023, there was a 20.8% increase in use of force incidents, in 2024 a 17.2% decrease in use of force incidents and in 2025 an 81.2% increase in use of force incidents when compared to 2024. This may be attributed to a 7.2% increase in arrests, increase in subjects' resistance, and the 83% increase in less-lethal incidents in 2025.

The total use of force incidents in 2025 decreased 28.7% when compared with the 2017 total use of force incidents, **with deadly force (one incident) in 2025 declining 83.3% from 2017**. This may be attributed to the Training Academy's continued defensive tactics and de-escalation training and PERF's ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics) training.

DEADLY FORCE:

Of the 217 uses of force in 2025, one (1) incident (0.5%) involved the use of deadly force with a firearm against a person. In accordance with the VSO's MOU with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), FDLE investigates the deadly force incidents and forwards final reports to the State Attorney's Office (SAO) for review.

Figure 3: Deadly Force Incidents 2017 - 2025



DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF DEPUTIES UTILIZING DEADLY FORCE

The only Deputy involved shooting occurred on July 5, 2025, at approximately 2128 hours at 1402 Derbyshire Road, Daytona Beach in District 3 North.

Figure 4: 2025 Deputy Use of Deadly Force by Six Hour Time Periods

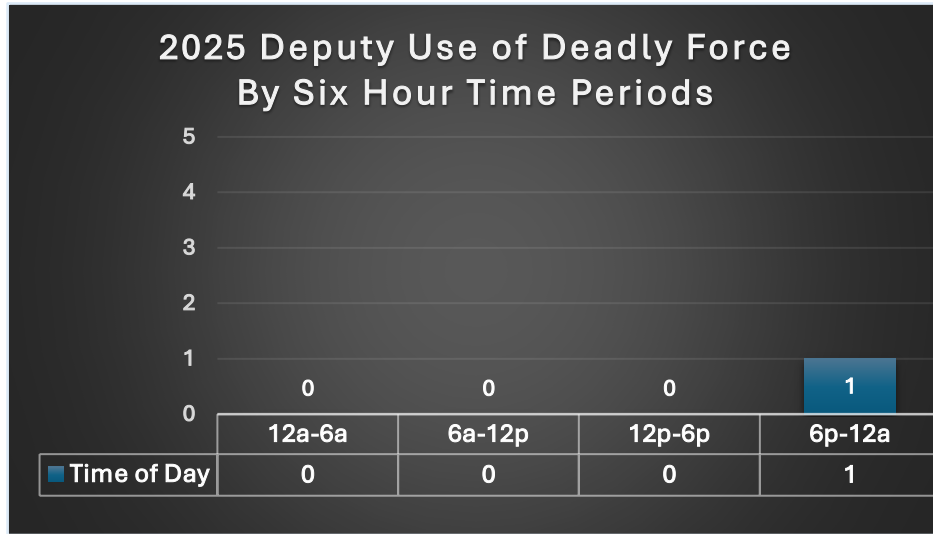
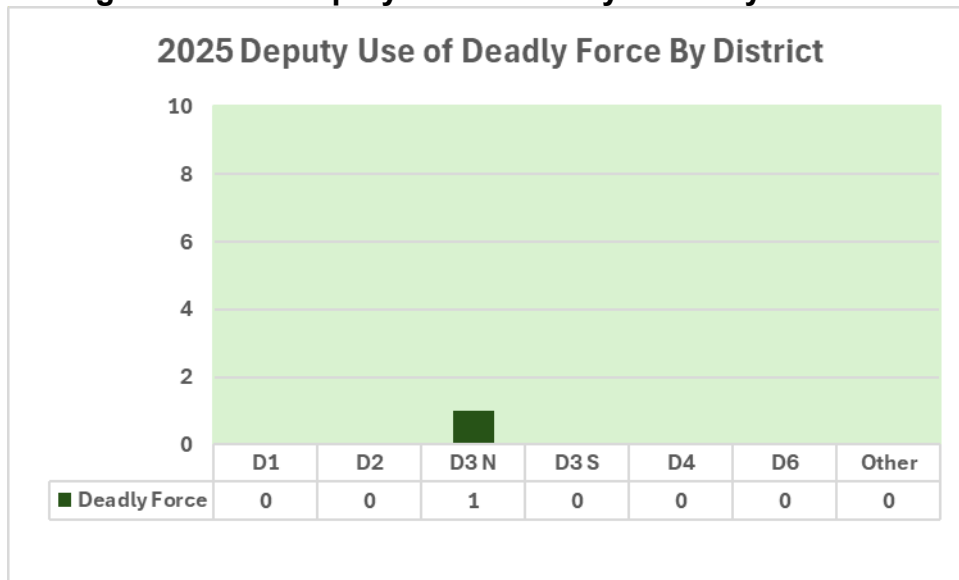


Figure 5: 2025 Deputy Use of Deadly Force by District



RACE, GENDER AND AGE OF SUBJECTS IN DEADLY FORCE INCIDENTS

The subject in the deadly force shooting incident is a Caucasian male, who was 18 years old at the time of the incident.

Figure 6: 2025 Race/Ethnicity of Subject

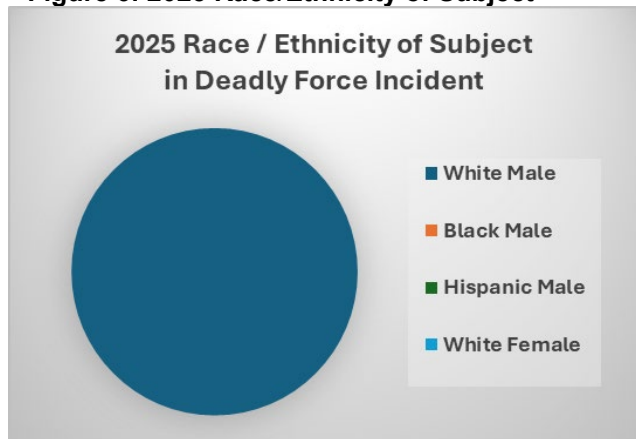
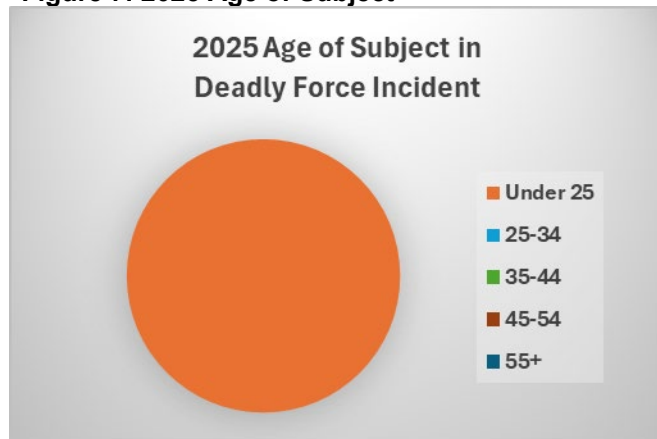


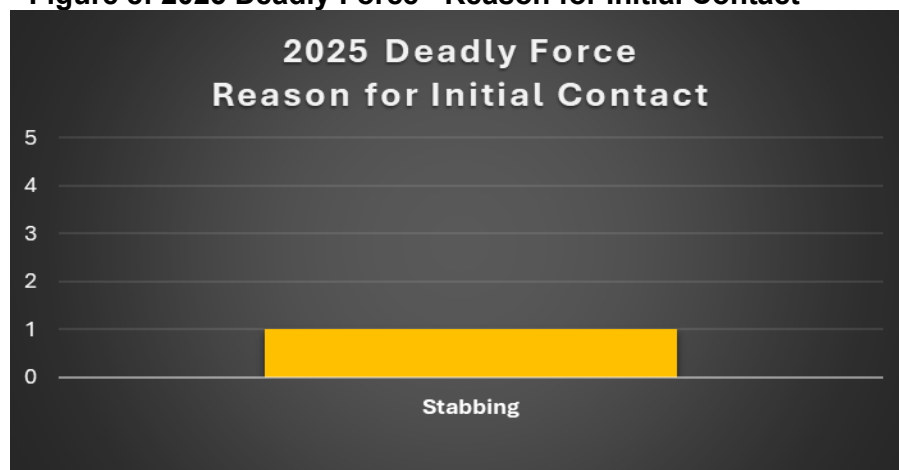
Figure 7: 2025 Age of Subject



REASON FOR INITIAL DEPUTY CONTACT

The reason for the initial Deputies' contacts in the only deadly force incident is a call for service for the stabbing of two individuals.

Figure 8: 2025 Deadly Force - Reason for Initial Contact



Case Report 25-13992 July 5, 2025

On July 5, 2025, at approximately 2128 hours, Deputies and Daytona Beach Officers were dispatched to a reported stabbing of two victims at 1402 Derbyshire Road, Daytona Beach. Deputies contacted two victims suffering from multiple stab wounds outside the residence. The suspect attacked the victims with a knife, with another roommate possibly still in the residence.

Based on the violent attack and the potential for another victim, Deputies determined exigent circumstances existed. Deputy Bergeron and Deputy Nelson, along with Daytona Beach PD Officers, entered the residence. Watson exited from a bedroom holding a large knife above his head charging toward the Deputies and DBPD Officers. Deputies and DBPD Officers discharged their firearms striking Watson.

Involved Suspect:

Landon Watson W/M 18 YOA

Deputies Involved:

Deputy Brady Bergeron A/M 29 YOA

Deputy William Nelson B/M 37 YOA

The VSO contacted FDLE and they assumed the investigation into the Deputy involved shooting. After a thorough investigation by FDLE and a review by the State Attorney's Office, the deadly force utilized by Deputies and DBPD Officers was determined to be "justified." Internal Affairs completed their investigation into the deadly force incident, and the Sheriff deemed the deadly force by Deputies "justified". Deputies did not violate any VSO General Orders during the incident.

LESS-LETHAL FORCE:

Based on the number of subjects and the level of subject's resistance, some incidents required multiple-deputy response and/or transition between more than one type of less-lethal force/weapon. Subsequently, more than one "use" of force per incident may be reported, resulting in a higher number of "uses" when compared to the number of "incidents" responded to. The number of less-lethal incidents in 2025 are based on the incidents reported by supervisors utilizing Blue Team and uploaded in IAPro.

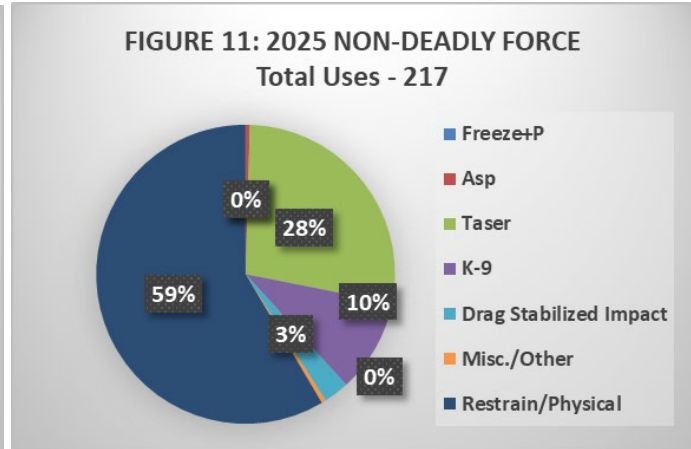
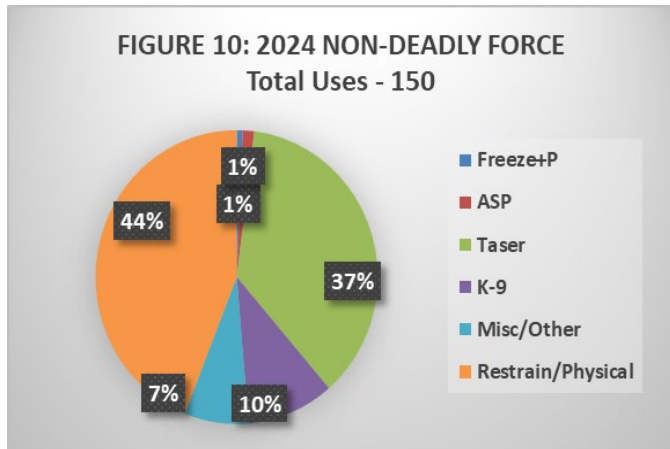
In 2025, deputies responded to 86 different incidents requiring use of less-lethal force in response to subject(s) resistance. These 86 incidents required a combined total of 217 uses of various types of less-lethal force. The table below (figure 9) breaks down the less-lethal force by type and corresponding number of uses:

FIGURE #9: BREAKDOWN OF NON-DEADLY FORCE BY TYPE

TYPE OF USE:	2017 No. of Uses	2018 No. of Uses	2019 No. of Uses	2020 No. of Uses	2021 No. of Uses	2022 No. of Uses	2023 No. of Uses	2024 No. of Uses	2025 No. of Uses
Stop Sticks -Pursuit related	28	13	11	*	*	*	*	*	*
Freeze +P	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0
ASP	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	1
Taser	39	53	22	48	61	59	41	55	60
K-9	29	23	23	22	15	8	12	15	22
Impact Munition	0	0	0	1	2	7	0	6	6
Misc./Other (misc.)	2	3	9	5	3	5	8	5	*1
Restraining / Defensive/ Escort / Physical Force	35	67	59	75	52	101	89	66	127
Restraint Chair (ERC)	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL COMBINED USES:	138	160	129	152	134	181	152	150	217

* Pursuit related Stop Sticks no longer counted with Non-Deadly Force. Hobble is no longer counted as a less-lethal use of force.

LESS-LETHAL FORCE BY TYPE: 2024 - 2025 COMPARISON



ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF FORCE:

Top Three Less-Lethal Options Utilized:

127 uses of Restraining/Defensive/Escort/Physical Force (58.5%)

60 uses of Taser (27.6%)

22 uses of K-9 (10.1%)

RESTRAINING/ DEFENSIVE/ ESCORT / PHYSICAL FORCE: Restraining/defensive/escort/physical force represents 58.5% of all less-lethal force used during 2025 (127 uses). Restraining/defensive/escort/physical force as a less-lethal force increased 92.4% in 2025 when compared with 2024, decreased 25.8% in 2024 when compared with 2023, and decreased 11.9% in 2023 when compared with 2022. All uses of restraining/defensive/escort/physical force were administratively reviewed through the chain of command, and several issues were addressed with roll call training, remedial training, and/or counseling on handcuffing procedures with a resisting subject, recovery position after handcuffing, officer safety, tactical coordination, level of force on restrained individuals, de-escalation techniques and communication, interview and interrogation, non-custodial vs custodial, reasonable suspicion vs. probable cause, and defensive tactics. In four (4) of the 35 incidents (4 uses – 3.2%), two (2) subjects were armed with a firearm, a subject threw a glass bottle at a Deputy, and another subject threw a microwave at Deputies. Two additional subjects were reaching into their waistbands.

TASER: Taser use remains in the top three (3) less-lethal use of force options, with 27.6% of the total (60 uses). Taser usage as a less-lethal use of force increased 9.1% in 2025 when compared with 2024; in fifteen (15) of 32 incidents (30 uses – 50%), subjects were armed (three firearms, one vehicle, one Glock replica BB gun, six knives, 5' wooden spears, OC spray, glass bottle, needle with fentanyl and one metal rod). Two subjects were reaching into their waistbands, another was reaching for his shoe, and another reaching for his fanny pack. One subject threw a microwave at Deputies, and another threw a can of soda. An additional subject's pit bull bit a Deputy several times.

In the fifteen (15) incidents where Deputies utilized the Taser on fleeing subjects, subjects were armed in five (5) of those incidents (33.3%), in two (2) incidents subjects were reaching into their waistbands (13.3%), and another subject was reaching into his shoe (6.7%). **Subjects resisted Deputies with active, aggressive, or deadly force resistance in all the remaining less-lethal force Taser incidents (53.1%).** All Taser uses were administratively reviewed through the chain of command, and several issues were addressed with roll call training, remedial training, or counseling on Taser deployments, communication skills, subject's prone position, stating cause for detention, defensive tactics, laying the Taser down, and evaluating subject's condition prior to deployment. Taser continues to be a valuable less-lethal option for Deputies to use with little or no lasting effects or injury to the subject.

Please note a change in Taser usage methodology in 2025. Taser uses are defined as the number of Taser cycles per subject not the actual probe/dart contacts or cartridge releases. In addition, a Deputy utilized the Taser on an aggressive pit bull that bit him (not counted in the total Taser uses).

K-9: K-9 use remained one of the top three uses for 2025 at 10.1% of the total uses (22); all uses were administratively reviewed without any issues on K9 deployment. Of those 21 incidents (22 uses), five (5) subjects were armed with firearms (22.7%), one (1) subject was armed with a knife (4.5%) and another subject was armed with 5' wooden spears (4.5%).

MISC./OTHER: The other uses of less-lethal force in 2025 were: six (6) uses of the 40 mm less-lethal launcher (2.8%), one (1) use of a flashlight (0.5%), and one (1) use of an asp (0.5%). In five (5) of six (6) 40 mm launcher uses (2.3%), the subject was armed with a rifle or a knife. Roll call training, remedial training, counseling and/or discipline were administered in circumstances where Deputies violated general orders.

*The Use of Less-Lethal Weapons and Devices - General Order (GO-001-03) was revised to no longer include hobbles as a less-lethal use of force.

INCIDENTS vs. USES:

The following chart (Figure #12) is a nine (9) year comparison in the numbers of less-lethal incidents to the subsequent uses of force in response to subject resistance. NOTE: A "*use-to-incident ratio*" is also provided for a proportionate comparison between years.

FIGURE #12: LESS-LETHAL INCIDENTS VS. USES IN RESPONSE TO RESISTANCE

8-YEAR COMPARISON:	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Arrests	13,079	10,488	9,370	6,459	6,400	6,930	7,603	9,945	10,665
Total Less-Lethal Incidents	116	83	63	66	50	48	52	47	86
Total Uses of Less-Lethal Force (Responses to Resistance)	138	160	129	152	134	181	152	150	217
Average Uses of Force per Incident (Ratio)	1.2	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.7	3.8	2.9	3.2	2.5
Average Uses of Force per Arrest (Ratio)	.011	.015	.014	.023	.021	.026	.020	.015	.020

Analysis of the above chart shows the number of less-lethal incidents (86) in 2025 decreased 25.9% when compared with 2017 but increased 83.0% when compared to 2024. The number of less-lethal force incidents show a trending decline of 58.6% from 2017 – 2022, with a minor uptick in 2020. In 2023, the number of less-lethal incidents increased 8.3% from 2022 and in 2024 decreased 9.6% from 2023. The average uses of force per incident ratio from 2017 through 2022 shows an upward trend in subject's resistance, in 2023 a 23.7% decline, in 2024 a 10.3% increase, and in 2025 a 21.9% decrease. This may be attributed to the number of armed subjects, subjects' resistance and subjects' failure to comply with lawful commands given by deputies. The average use of force per arrest ratio shows a trending increase of 136.4% from 2017- 2022, a 23.1% decline in 2023, in 2024 a 25.0% decrease, and in 2025 a 33.3% increase. This consistent application of force regardless of the spikes and fluctuations in incidents over each of the nine (9) years may be attributed in part to the agency's commitment to scenario-based training with emphasis on professional and effective command presence, swift control of the situation and subsequent de-escalation on the part of the Deputies.

MULTIPLE-DEPUTY RESPONSE:

Of the 86 incidents responded to by the agency, *69 incidents* (80%) required a combination of *multiple-deputy* response and accounted for *183 of the 217 uses* (84%) of less-lethal force:

2-Deputy response = 34 incidents (40%); 81 uses (37%)

3-Deputy response = 20 incidents (23%); 53 uses (24%)

4-Deputy response = 11 incidents (13%); 37 uses (17%)

5-Deputy response = 3 incidents (3%); 11 uses (5%)

6-Deputy response = 1 incident (1%), 1 use (1%).

Additional Officers from Daytona Beach PD, DeLand PD, Orange City PD, Ormond Beach PD, South Daytona PD and Flagler County Deputies were also involved in the above listed less-lethal incidents.

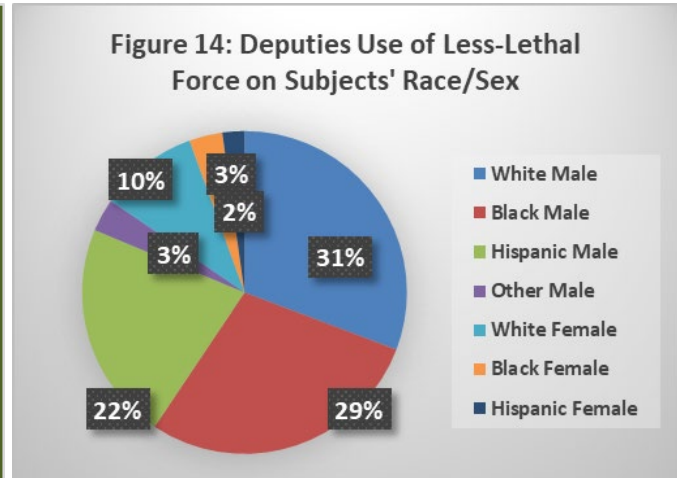
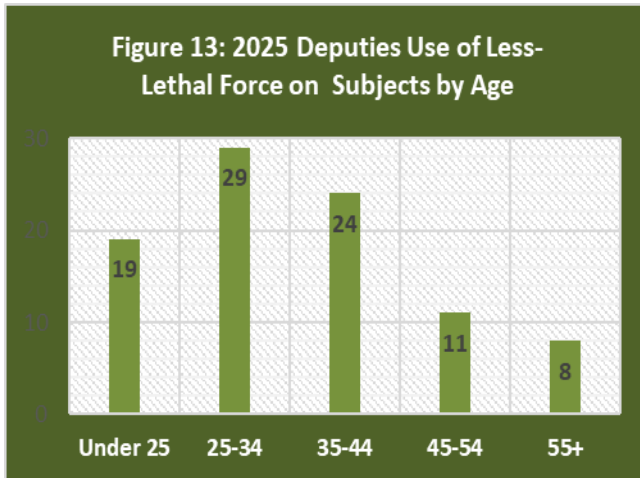
SINGLE-DEPUTY RESPONSE:

The remaining seventeen (17) incidents (20%) required a single deputy response to resistance and accounted for 34 uses (16%) of less-lethal force.

RACE, GENDER & AGE OF SUBJECTS IN LESS-LETHAL USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS

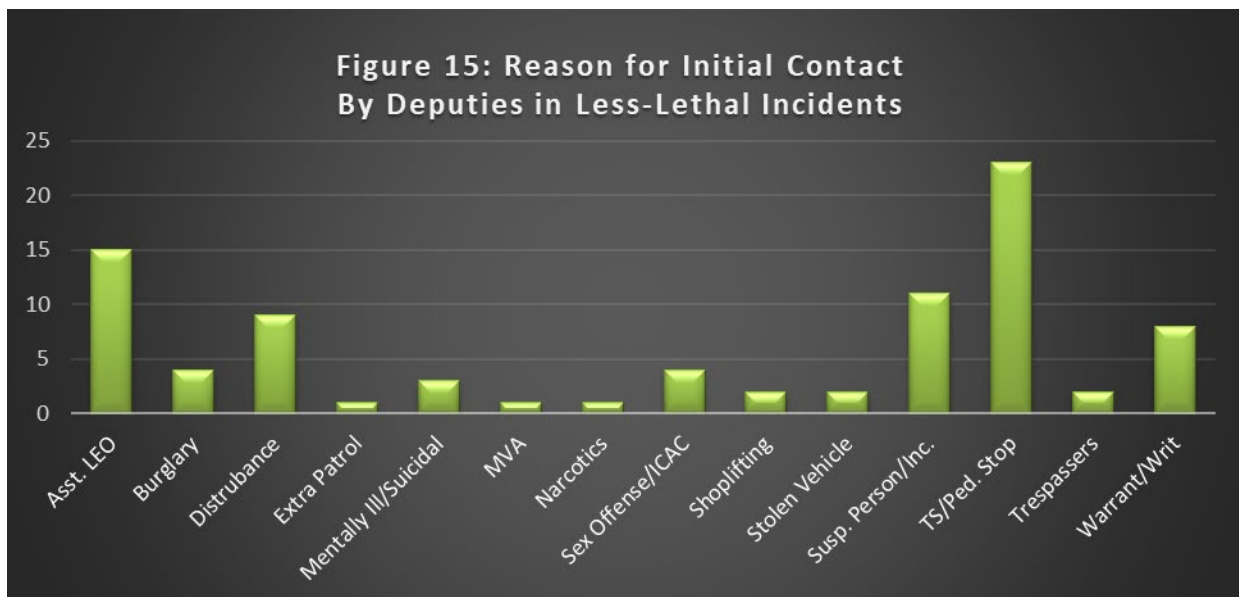
Deputies utilized less-lethal force in response to resistance on 91 subjects. Of the 91 subjects, 77 are male - (85%) and fourteen (14) are female – (15%); 28 Caucasian males – (31%), 26 African American males – (29%), 20 Hispanic males – (22%), three (3) Other males (3%), nine (9) Caucasian females – (10%), three (3) African American females – (3%), and two (2) Hispanic females – (2%).

The subjects' ages in less-lethal use of force are: nineteen (19) subjects under the age of 25 – (21%), 29 subjects between 25 – 34 years of age – (32%), 24 subjects between the ages of 35-44 (26%), 11 subjects between 45-54 years of age – (12%), and eight (8) subjects are 55 years of age or older – (9%).



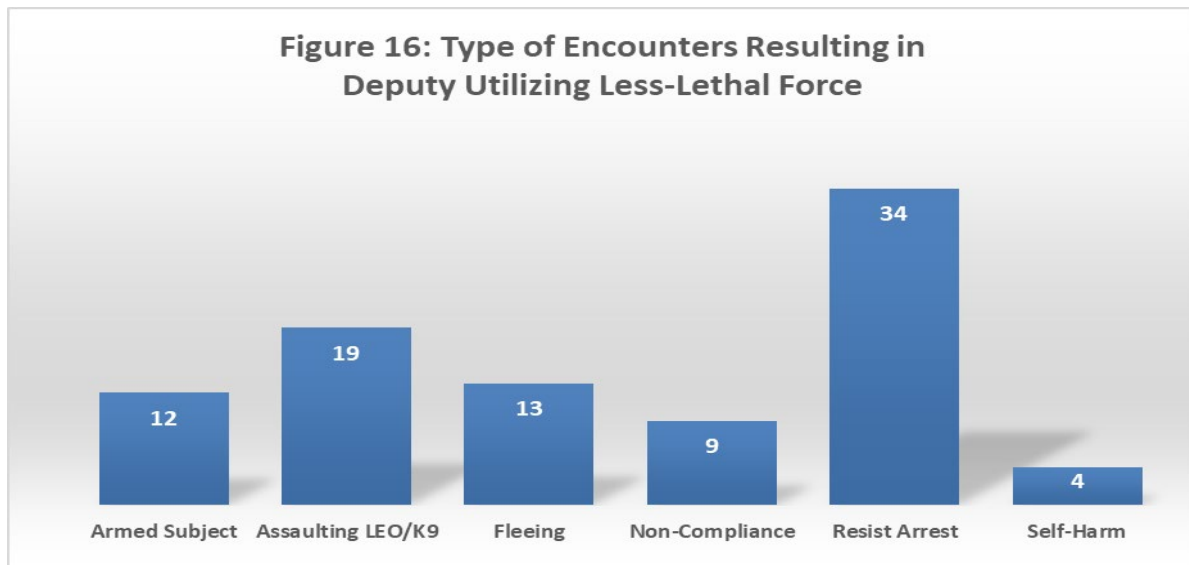
REASON FOR INITIAL CONTACT BY DEPUTY IN LESS-LETHAL FORCE INCIDENTS

Deputies responded to the following calls for service that resulted in Deputies utilizing less-lethal force: fifteen (15) assisting other agencies (17.4%), four (4) burglaries (4.7%), nine (9) disturbances/domestic disturbances (10.5%), one (1) extra patrol (1.2%), three (3) mentally ill/suicidal persons (3.5%), one (1) motor vehicle accident (1.2%), one (1) narcotics incident (1.2%), four (4) sex offenses/ICAC op (4.7%), two (2) shoplifting incidents (2.3%), two (2) stolen vehicles (2.3%), eleven (11) suspicious persons/suspicious incidents (12.8%), and two (2) trespassing incidents (2.3%). Deputies conducted 23 traffic/pedestrian stops (26.7%) and served eight (8) warrants/writs (9.3%).



TYPES OF ENCOUNTERS RESULTING IN DEPUTY UTILIZING LESS-LETHAL FORCE

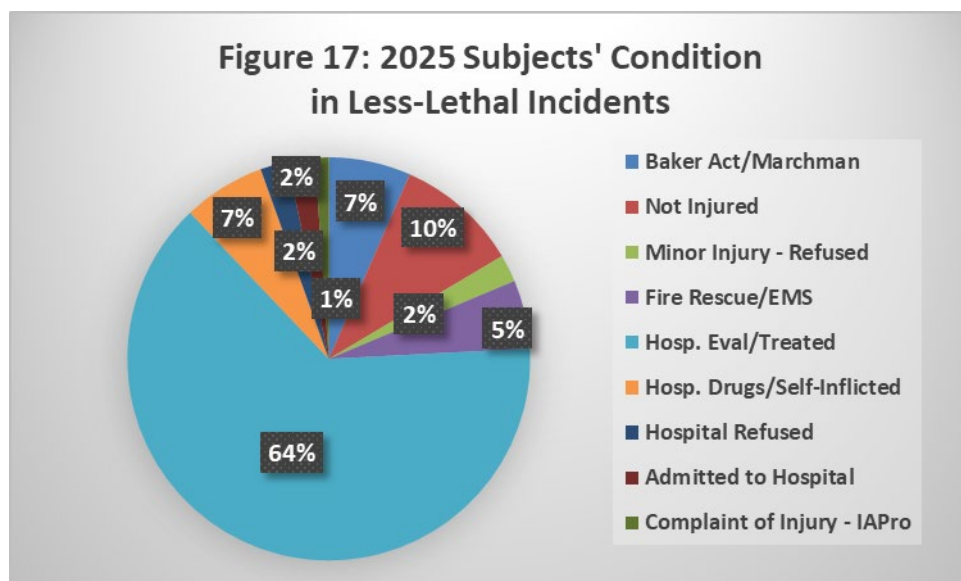
During 2025, the types of encounters resulting in Deputies utilizing less-lethal force were: twelve (12) armed subjects – (13.2%), nineteen (19) assaulting a LEO/K9 - (20.9%), thirteen (13) fleeing - (14.3%), nine (9) non-compliance – (9.9%), 34 resisting arrest – (37.4%), and four (4) involving self-harm – (4.4%).



DEPUTY UTILIZED LESS-LETHAL FORCE – RESPONSE TO SUBJECTS’ RESISTANCE

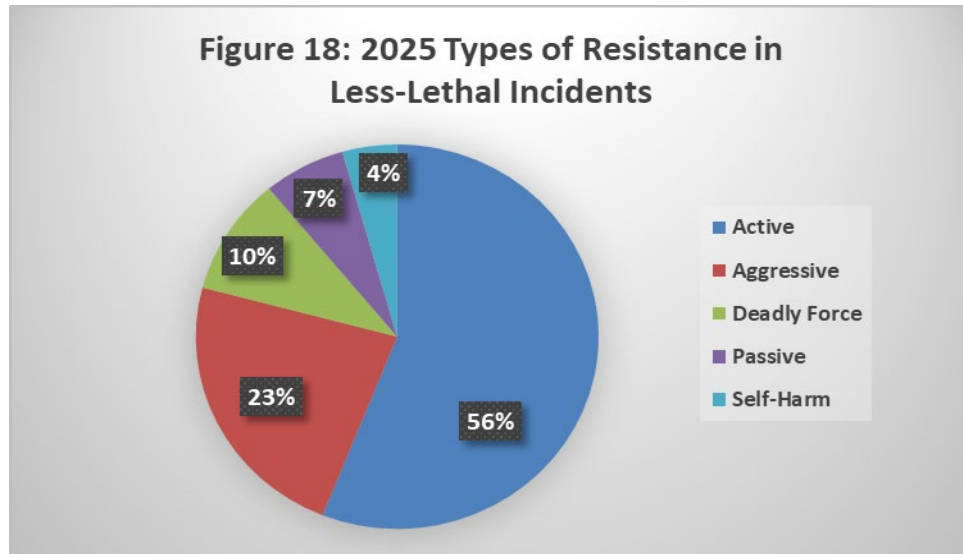
Of the 91 subjects where Deputies responded to resistance with less-lethal force, the following summarizes the subjects’ injury/condition: nine (9) subjects were not injured (10%); two (2) subjects had minor injuries but refused EMS (2%); five (5) subjects were treated/released by EMS or Fire Rescue (5%); 58 subjects were evaluated and treated at a hospital (64%); six (6) subjects were treated at the hospital due to self-inflicted injuries and/or ingesting narcotics (7%), two (2) subjects refused treatment at the hospital (2%), two (2) subjects were admitted to the hospital (2%); and six (6) subjects were admitted to the hospital as a Baker Act or Marchman Act (7%).

One (1) subject complained of an injury to his shoulder to the on-scene Sergeant; however, due to his aggressive resistance during the incident and no visible injury to his shoulder, the Deputy was instructed to transport him directly to the Branch Jail without being evaluated by EMS (1%) violating GO-001-01 (4.a.2).



TYPE OF RESISTANCE DEPUTIES ENCOUNTERED IN LESS-LETHAL FORCE INCIDENTS

During the calendar year 2025, Deputies responded to 86 different incidents that required use of less-lethal force in response to subjects' resistance. In 19 of these incidents, Deputies utilized less-lethal force in response to more than one level of resistance or 22% of the 86 incidents. The 91 subjects' resistance in the 86 incidents were: active resistance – 51 (56%), aggressive resistance – 21 (23%), passive resistance – 6 (7%), deadly force/life threat to others – 9 (10%), and self-harm – 4 (4%). The resistance listed is the highest resistance with each subject that utilizes more than one type of resistance.



In the 19 incidents where subjects resisted deputies in more than one type of resistance, the nature of call was: assist other agency – 2 (10.5%), disturbance/domestic disturbance – 3 (15.8%), ICAC operation – 1 (5.3%), sex offense – 1 (5.3%), shoplifting – 1 (5.3%), suicidal person – 1 (5.3%), suspicious person – 1 (5.3%), traffic stop – 6 (31.6%), trespasser – 1 (5.3%), and warrants – 2 (10.5%).

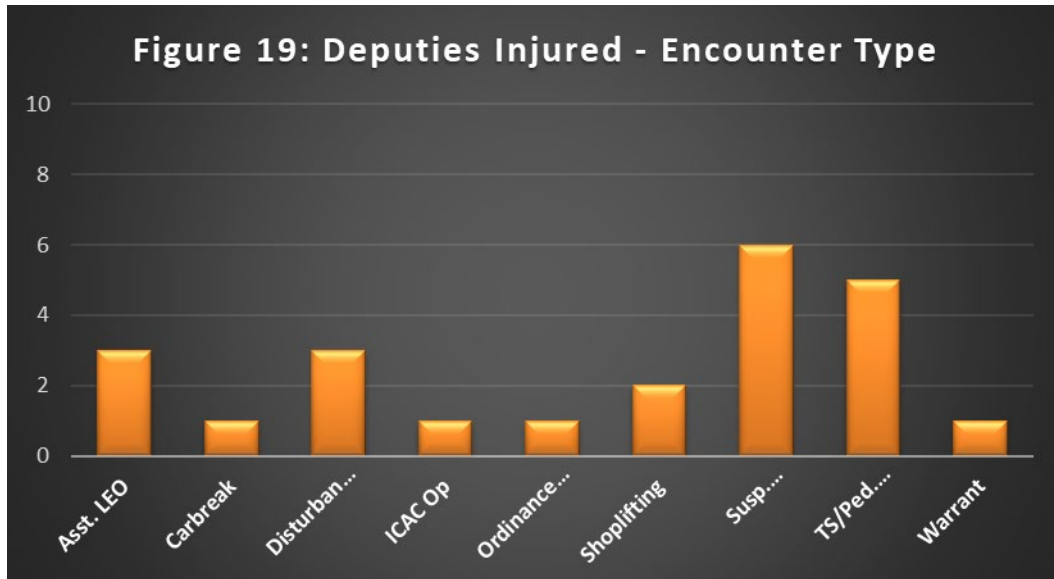
DEPUTIES INJURED IN ENCOUNTERS WHERE LESS-LETHAL FORCE UTILIZED

In the 86 incidents where Deputies utilized less-lethal force, 23 Deputies were injured (14.7%). Fire / Rescue treated four (4) Deputies on scene (2.6%), twelve (12) Deputies did not require or refused medical services (7.7%), seven (7) Deputies required evaluation at the hospital (4.5%), and 133 deputies were not injured (85.3%).

Of the 91 subjects where Deputies used less-lethal force, 53 subjects were chemically impaired or suspected of being under the influence of either drugs or alcohol (58.2%), and in six (6) incidents, subjects were having a mental health crisis (6.6%).

Three (3) Deputies responded to assist another agency (13.0%), three (3) Deputies responded to a disturbance/domestic disturbance (13.0%), one (1) Deputy responded to a burglary of a conveyance (4.4%), one (1) Deputy responded for an extra patrol (4.4%), one (1) Deputy assisted with an ICAC operation (4.4%), two (2) Deputies responded to a shoplifting complaint (8.7%), six (6) Deputies responded to a suspicious incident/person (26.1%), five (5) Deputies responded to a traffic stop/pedestrian stop (21.7%), and one (1) Deputy responded to serve a warrant (4.4%).

In several incidents, Deputies were exposed to the subjects' blood, saliva and/or bodily fluids. In the incident reports, there isn't any notation of Deputies receiving treatment by EMS or Fire Rescue on scene; however, some Deputies are reporting to the Infection Control Officer for the exposure, and other Deputies to Human Resources who are referring the Deputies to CentraCare.



RACE, GENDER & AGE OF DEPUTIES INJURED IN LESS-LETHAL FORCE ENCOUNTERS

The breakdown of the Deputies injured is sixteen (16) Caucasian males (70%), three (3) African American males (13%), and four (4) Hispanic males (17%). The ages of the injured Deputies are: two (2) Deputies are under the age of 25 (9%), sixteen (16) Deputies were between the ages of 25 – 34 (70%), four (4) Deputies were between the ages of 35 – 44 (17%), and one (1) Deputy was between the ages of 55 – 64 (4%).

Figure 20:

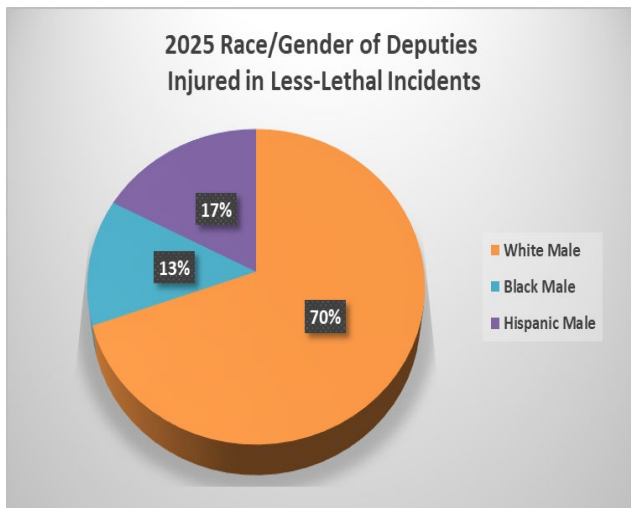
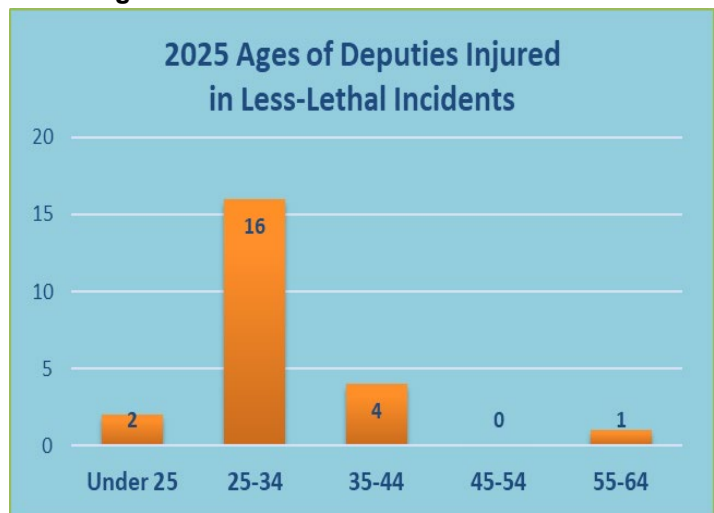
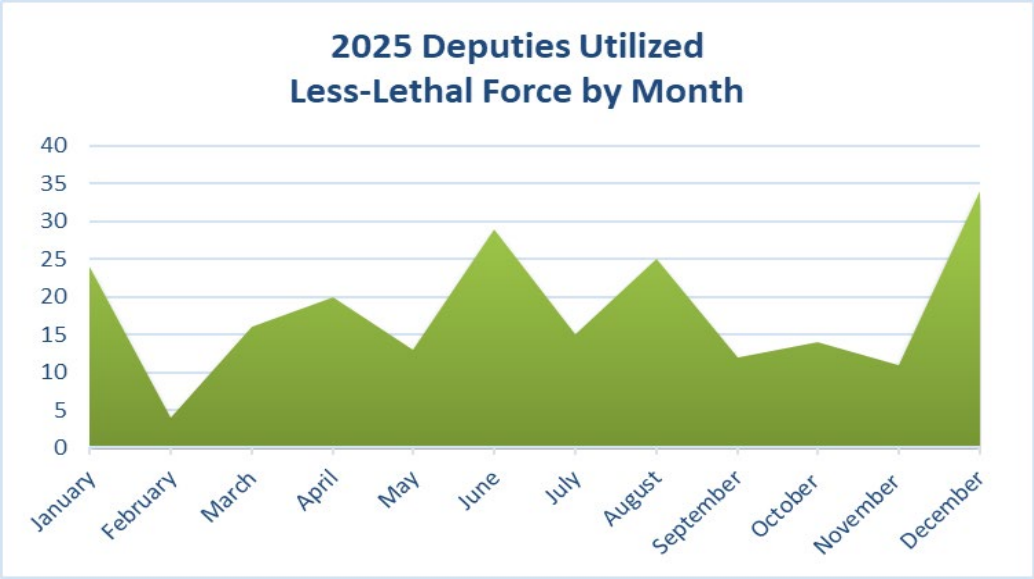


Figure 21:



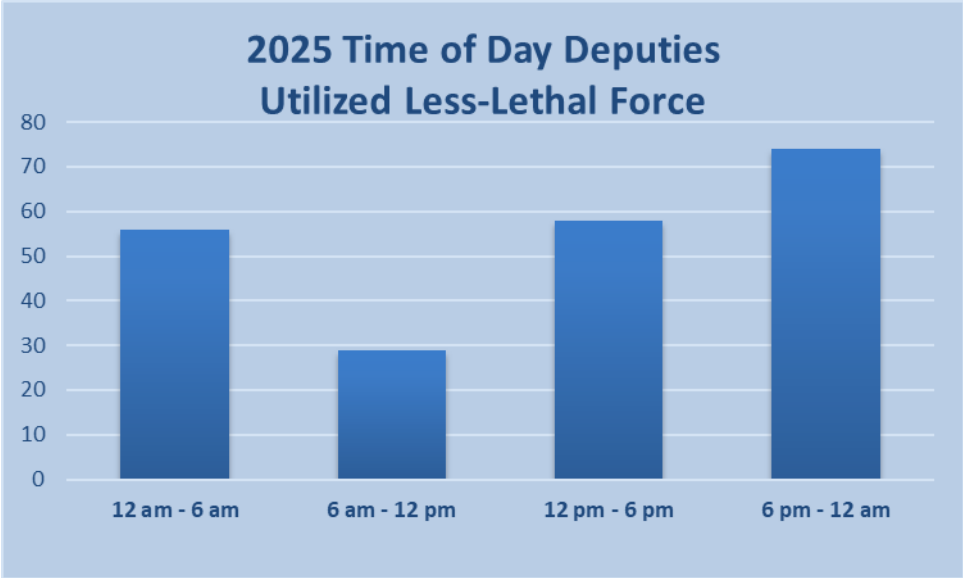
Deputies utilized less-lethal force on subjects: 24 times in January (11.1%), four (4) times in February (1.8%), 16 times in March (7.4%), twenty (20) times in April (9.2%), thirteen (13) times in May (6.0%), 29 times in June (13.4%), fifteen (15) times in July (6.9%), 25 times in August (11.5%), 12 times in September (5.5%), fourteen (14) times in October (6.4%), eleven (11) times in November (5.1%), and 34 times in December (15.7%).

Figure 22:



Of the 217 uses of less-lethal force, 56 uses occurred between 12 am – 6 am (25.8%), 29 uses occurred between 6 am – 12 pm (13.4%), 58 uses occurred between 12 pm – 6 pm (26.7%), and 74 uses occurred between 6 pm -12 am (34.1%).

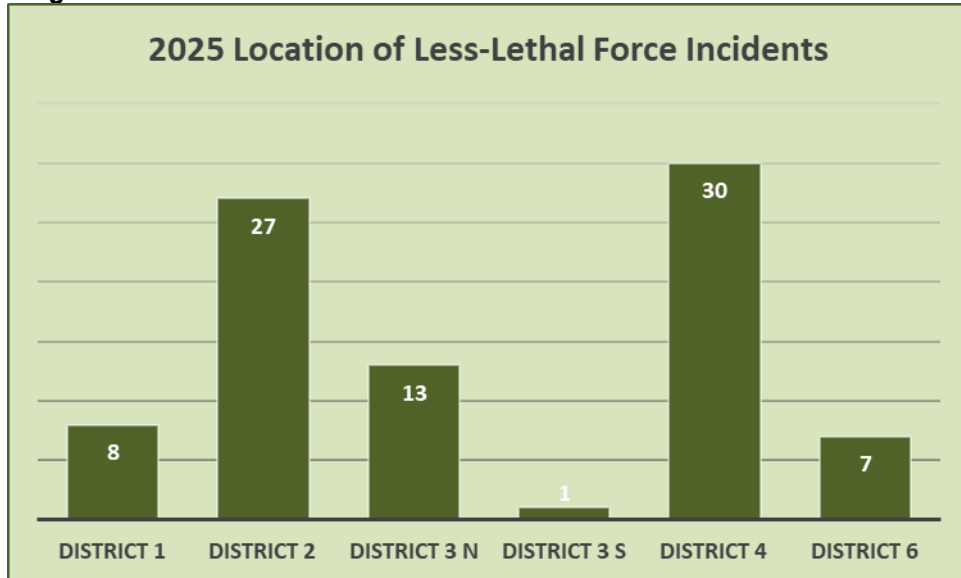
Figure 23:



LOCATION OF LESS-LETHAL INCIDENTS

Of the 86 incidents of less-lethal force, eight (8) incidents occurred in District 1 (9.3%), 27 incidents occurred in District 2 (31.4%), 13 incidents in District 3 N (15.1%), one (1) incident in District 3 S (1.2%), 30 incidents in District 4 (34.9%), and seven (7) incidents in District 6 (8.1%).

Figure 24:



2025 REVIEW OF USE OF FORCE POLICY AND PRACTICES:

During the calendar year 2025, the Volusia Sheriff's Office Training Academy trained 10 new Deputy Recruits who successfully completed the Basic Law Enforcement Training and passed the state exam.

Statistical data of index crime and number of arrests indicate dramatic reduction in both from 2017 through 2022; however, in 2023, 2024 and 2025 the number of arrests increased. The index crime totals for 2024 and 2025 are not currently available. In June 2023, the Volusia Sheriff's Office transitioned from UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting) to NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System). The UCR index crime rate is not available; with NIBRS, crime reporting has additional crime classifications.

In 2022, the use of force incidents decreased 30.4% when compared to 2020 but increased 20.8% in 2023. In 2024, the use of force incidents decreased 17.2% from 2023. In 2025, the use of force incidents increased 81.2% from 2024.

The number of Deputies assaulted in 2022 increased 30.2% from 2021. The number of Deputies assaulted in 2023 increased 57.4% and decreased 24.7% in 2024. The number of Deputies assaulted in 2025 increased 4.1% over 2024. This may be attributed to the upward trend in subjects' resistance, subjects' being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, civil unrest throughout the country and failure to comply with lawful commands given by Deputies.

Since implementing the PERF ICAT training model beginning in 2017, and with continued emphasis and investment in the Guardian and de-escalation philosophies, the agency has seen a 25.9% decrease in the use of force incidents from 2017 overall, and an 83.3% decline in deadly force incidents against a person in 2025 when compared with 2017.

Supervisory and administrative reviews are being conducted and documented in accordance with General Orders, are entered into Blue Team by supervisors, and are forwarded through the chain-of-command. As with all incidents involving use of force in response to subjects' resistance, Command Staff conducts the final review and policy adherence as presented by Internal Affairs.

The Volusia Sheriff's Office made a policy revision to General Order 001-01 Use of Force Guidelines on May 22, 2025, "Whereas VSO general order GO-001-01 Use of Force Guidelines sets forth agency policy regarding the full range of use of force options by Deputies, this general order is designed to set forth procedural guidelines for all agency approved less-lethal Weapons and Devices. VSO recognizes the need to provide and train Deputies who are faced with unlawful resistance with effective use of force options when restraining or empty hand control measures either fail or are deemed impractical in the situation, and when deadly force is not justified." "The agency approved less-lethal weapons and devices are as follows: Emergency Restraint Chair, StunTronics Band-it, Sabre Red, Taser models X2, 7 and 10, K9, ASP baton, Defensive tools of convenience, 12-GA. less-lethal impact munitions, the pepper ball system, or 40 mm sponge round less-lethal munitions." Use of less-lethal force shall be documented in an Incident Report and shall require a supervisory Response to Resistance report and Administrative Review through the chain of command.

The Volusia Sheriff's Office continues engaging with the community and continues to build trust and new partnerships within the community. This investment in the community is vital to engaging all segments of the community and especially crucial when highly emotional incidents/events occur. Social media as a tool continues to raise awareness and open doors for future opportunities.

FIGURE #25: PURSUIT MATRIX

Incident	Date / Time	Reason for Pursuit	Method of Termination	Result in Crash	Injuries/Hospital	Avg/ Max mph	Total Distance miles/ time	Violator Eluded/ Arrested	Within Policy
25-02464 VP 25-003	2/7/25 1716 hrs.	Attempted to run over two (2) Deputies	Subject crashed into uninvolved motorist's vehicle	Yes	Subject bitten by K9 / Yes	/ 80 mph; issue with Force Watch	12 miles / 20 minutes	Yes/Yes	Yes
25-03826 MVA 25-004	2/26/25 2131 hrs.	Fleeing Vehicle	Suspect stopped vehicle	Yes, def. drove into patrol vehicle	No / No	/ 80 mph issue with Force Watch	8.6 miles / 9 minutes	Yes/Yes	Not authorized by supervisor; didn't obey traffic laws
25-13467 VP 25-004	6/29/25 1759 hrs.	TS Flee / Elude	Subject stopped; vehicle crash	Yes	No / No	23 / 81 mph	2.7 miles / 6 minutes	Yes/ Yes	Not authorized by supervisor; didn't obey traffic laws
25-13342 MVA 25-012	6/28/25 0205hrs.	TS Flee/Elude	Suspect stopped	No	Subject bitten by K-9 / Yes	/ 133 mph	13.36 miles / 9 minutes	Yes/Yes	Not authorized by supervisor; didn't obey traffic laws
25-18246 MVA 25-017	9/3/25 0836 hrs.	Fleeing/ Reckless Driving/ Super speeder	PIT	No	No / No	/ 118 mph	Over 10 miles/ 7 minutes	Yes/Yes	Sheriff authorized
25-20430 VP 25-005	10/5/25 1704 hrs.	Agg. Assault	Suspect stopped / VCT	Yes / VCT	No / No	25 mph	377 ft. / 0 minutes (.0714 miles)	Yes/ Yes	Yes
25-23624 VP 25-006	11/19/25 0412 hrs.	Shooting	Deputy aborted	No	unknown	/Over 130 mph	Approx. 30 miles/ 16.5 minutes	Yes / No	Yes
25-22083 VP 25-007	10/28/25 1008 hrs.	TS Flee/elude	Detective lost sight of suspect	No	unknown	/ 50 mph	1.5 miles / 2 minutes	Yes / No Affidavit filed	Not authorized by supervisor; didn't meet pursuit criteria
25-19854 MVA 25-027	9/26/25 2310 hrs.	TS Flee/elude	Deputy ran over stop sticks	No	No / No	50 / 54 mph		Yes/Yes	Not authorized by supervisor; didn't obey traffic laws

PURSUIT REVIEW:

There were nine (9) pursuits during 2025; supervisory and administrative reviews were well-documented providing good detail. One (1) of the nine (9) pursuits was initiated due to the subject's attempting to run over Deputies (11.1%), one (1) pursuit of the subject(s) in a shooting incident (11.1%), one (1) pursuit of a subject in a DV aggravated assault (11.1%), one (1) pursuit of a subject due to reckless driving and willful and wanton disregard for public safety (11.1%), and the other five (5) pursuits were initiated due to the subjects attempting to flee and elude law enforcement (55.6%).

Upon administrative review, four (4) pursuits are within General Orders with the other five (5) pursuits not being authorized by the supervisors nor did the Deputies obey traffic laws; the supervisor only approved stop sticks. After Supervisor inquiries, Command Staff and Internal Affairs reviews, the Deputies received discipline based on their discipline history (counseling, letter of reprimand or suspension), and remedial training on VSO General Order 041-02 Motor Vehicle Apprehensions.

The five (5) Deputies involved in pursuits without supervisor authorization (55.5%), have all been employed less than five (5) years with the Volusia Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office currently has 164 Deputies employed with less than five years of experience.

Stop Sticks - During 2025, Deputies deployed stop sticks four (4) times and in support of planned tactical measures to terminate pursuits. In two (2) of the nine (9) pursuits (22.2%), Deputies successfully deployed stop sticks slowing the vehicles down, two (2) vehicles stopped due to a crash (22.2%), a Detective lost sight of one (1) vehicle (11.1%), a Deputy ran over stop sticks in one (1) pursuit (11.1%), a Deputy aborted a pursuit (11.1%), and the remaining two (2) ending because the suspects stopped their vehicles (22.2%).

NOTE: Deputies also utilized 30 additional stop sticks in motor vehicle apprehensions to **prevent** escalation/engaging in active pursuits.

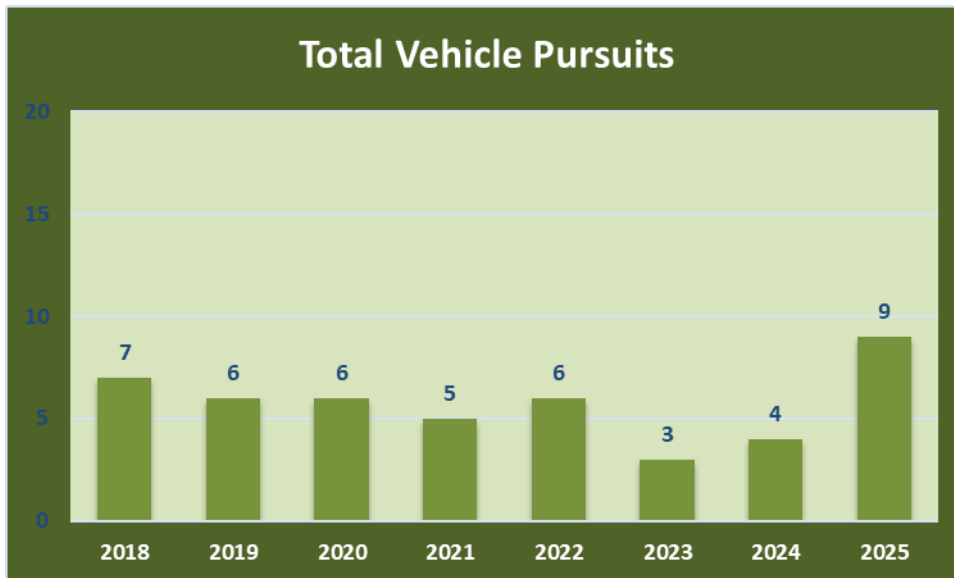
Vehicle Containment Techniques (VCT) – In calendar year 2025, the Training Academy taught and certified Deputies in Vehicle Containment Techniques during the Annual Deputy Refresher Training. Deputies utilized vehicle containment techniques eight (8) times to terminate motor vehicle apprehensions and one (1) pursuit.

Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) – Sheriff Chitwood executed a PIT to terminate a pursuit after a successful stop stick deployment slowed the speed of the suspect's vehicle.

In several motor vehicle apprehensions, Deputies did not obey traffic laws reference speeding, running stop signs and/or red traffic lights. The Deputies received discipline based on their discipline history (counseling), letter of reprimand and received remedial training on Motor Vehicle Apprehensions.

The below 8-year trend line 2018 - 2025 indicates an average of 5.7 pursuits/year. Historical review for this period 2018 - 2025 reflects that of the 46 pursuits, 17 (37.0%) pursuits were not in compliance with established policy. Pursuits remained relatively low with a slight uptick in 2025 (28.6%) from 2018 mainly due to several Deputies pursuing suspects without supervisor approval and not meeting pursuit criteria.

FIGURE #26: EIGHT-YEAR PURSUIT TREND



REVIEW OF PURSUIT POLICY AND PRACTICES:

The VSO General Order (GO-041-02) was revised on August 15, 2025, to include: *“Due to the hazards presented by pursuits, it is the pursuit Supervisor’s responsibility and role to direct the pursuit conclusion as soon as practicable through the use of approved forcible stopping techniques and available resources.”* Forcible stopping techniques allowed are the vehicle containment techniques (VCT), use of tire deflation systems, and precision immobilization techniques (PIT) which are described in detail. *“Stationary roadblocks are extremely dangerous and are prohibited from use in pursuits because of their extreme danger.”*

“Observation Phase - The Deputy’s ability to maintain contact with the subject vehicle without circumventing any traffic control devices and reaching no speeds in excess of either posted speed or those speeds customarily driven by the majority of drivers along the route. EMERGENCY LIGHTS AND SIRENS ARE NOT AUTHORIZED. This tactic is used when the subject refuses to stop or attempts to elude the Deputy, and circumstances do not meet the criteria for a pursuit. It is limited to three (3) agency vehicles unless otherwise authorized by a Supervisor. “

“Exigent Circumstances: 1) If authorized by a Sergeant or above, a Deputy may pursue if there is a reasonable belief that the continuing conduct of the driver presents an immediate and life-threatening danger to the public or law enforcement. Are based upon the driver’s actions prior to law enforcement’s involvement, not created after an attempt to stop a vehicle has been made. 2) If a suspected impaired driver operates a vehicle in a manner constituting an immediate danger to the public that is greater than the pursuit of the suspected impaired driver, the suspected impaired driver may be pursued with the Supervisor’s approval. 3) The fact that a Deputy has to move from the path of a fleeing vehicle may or may not constitute an aggravated assault or attempted murder for the purpose of this policy.

A Deputy must articulate that imminent danger exists, and the suspects' actions were believed to be intentional and not a result of incidental or accidental contact. 4) Deputies shall not ram a suspect's vehicle or discharge firearms towards a suspect's vehicle except in extreme cases where deadly force is authorized."

The pursuit report and review process are updated to state: *"If the pursuit involved criteria in the exigent circumstances section found above, the approving Supervisor will clearly articulate the need for the pursuit in written form to the Law Enforcement Division Chief." The Professional Compliance Unit will conduct a documented annual analysis of all pursuits to include a review of policy and reporting procedures. The analysis is forwarded through the chain of command and approved by the Sheriff."*

The agency trains all sworn officers in Emergency Vehicle Operations during the Annual Deputy Refresher training. *"No Deputy shall participate in the use of forcible stopping technique until a VSO approved training for the specific forcible stopping technique to be used is successfully completed."*

When Deputies utilize a vehicle containment technique (VCT), they are required to complete an incident report or a supplement report. The supervisor will submit a motor vehicle apprehension report in BlueTeam and will be forwarded through the chain of command for an administrative review. If the VCT is utilized during a pursuit, the supervisor shall complete a pursuit report, supervisor inquiry and forward for an administrative review.

When a Deputy deploys a tire deflation device, they must complete an incident report and a supplement report by all involved Deputies. The deploying Deputy shall also fill out the Stop Stick Report form from the VSO forms webpage. The supervisor authorizing the deployment shall complete a motor vehicle apprehension report in BlueTeam and forward through the chain of command for an administrative review. If deployed during a pursuit, the supervisor shall complete a pursuit report, supervisory inquiry and review using BlueTeam.

Any use of the PIT requires a pursuit report, supervisory inquiry and an administrative review.

The Vehicle Apprehension Decision-Making Matrix was updated to include a list of felony crimes where Deputies are allowed to pursue based on the risk level.

Supervisory and administrative reviews are being conducted and documented in accordance with policy and are forwarded through chain-of-command. As with all incidents involving pursuits, Command Staff conducts final review for justification and policy adherence as presented by Internal Affairs.

Review of agency policy and practices indicates good use of additional resources such as Air One, K-9 and support vehicles. Primary and support vehicles are functioning in their proper roles.

In addition to review of all pursuits, the agency conducts administrative reviews through chain of command on all motor vehicle apprehensions as a precautionary measure to ensure established procedures are being followed and that law enforcement response does not elevate to "pursuit mode" in violation of policy. This review facilitates the early detection of

potential training needs, ensures continued deputy safety, and preserves the intent of policy and integrity of practice. Documented progressive discipline is utilized when needed.

Overall, the combination of pursuit guidelines, training, supervisory authorization and review, and professional deputy restraint continue to keep the number of pursuits to minimum numbers. In addition, the supervisory authorization, and the review process itself adds a level of accountability and an evaluation element to each incident, which re-enforces the practice of individual professional restraint. This review process also provides a means to address any policy issues in a timely manner to ensure that practice continues to reflect procedure; no change to policy was required during this review period.

Professional Compliance Unit
April 2026

cc: Chief Deputy Brian Henderson
Division Chief Kyle McDaniel
Division Chief Eric Westfall
Assistant Chief Erik Eagan
Captain Kurt Schoeps
Lt. Patrick Leahy