

City Auditor's Highlights

Audit of the Honolulu Police Department's Policies, Procedures, and Controls, Resolution 19-255, Report No. 20-07



The Kealoha controversy and other well-publicized incidents of police officer misconduct raised serious questions and concerns about the police department's ability to identify, respond, correct and prevent misconduct, and about how a police chief could be held accountable for personal and professional misconduct. The current chief has prioritized restoring community and organizational trust, increased emphasis on reducing domestic violence in the department, and promoted training that emphasizes the ethics, integrity, and the guardian mentality. We found that although this has resulted in a department that identifies and responds appropriately to misconduct using its existing systems. But it has not fully applied feedback information from its corrective systems to deploy responsive preemptive measures to prevent and avoid misconduct.



Complaint investigation and review is well controlled and effective, but lessons are not learned to improve responsive preventive measures

The department is responsive to identifying and correcting misconduct. However, actions are taken after incidents occur. Changes are only made reactively to incidents. Key information from its corrective systems is not aggregated and reported to department management for its review to make responsive proactive changes that could result in prevention of misconduct or reduction of complaints. The department should consider using this information to better understand what is contributing to situations which require correction by the most severe discipline, how widespread the effects of this conduct may be, and how to use this information for awareness and knowledge to make proactive changes to policies, procedures, and controls.



The prevention outcomes of current department training are unknown

The department has set training improvement as a key planning objective. Ethics and integrity training is currently being implemented, so we were unable to assess the preventive outcomes of current departmental training. The department could improve its training by using, reporting, and evaluating key data from its misconduct and complaint information. This training may be improved by better understanding and awareness of the causes of misconduct. Analyzing how widespread effects may be can be used to make proactive changes to training content that prevents or avoids misconduct from occurring.







Employee early recognition system is not meeting its preventive purposes

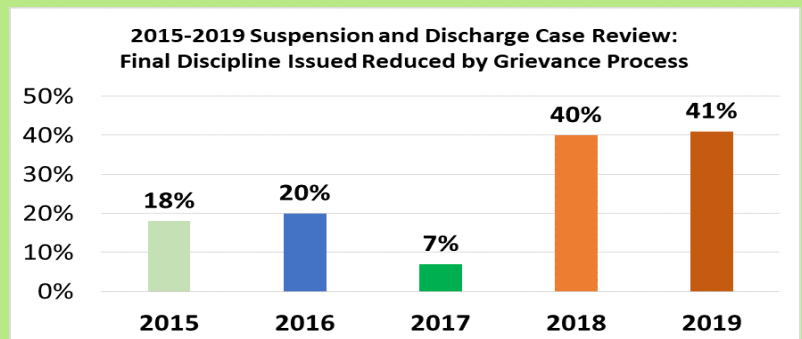
The department has not administered its employee early recognition program to work appropriately or maximize its identification and preventive objectives. As a result, the department may not be able to discern early warning signs in troubled officers and appropriately intervene before it turns into serious performance issues or misconduct. The department does not know if its early recognition system is effective due to evaluation and reporting difficulties. The department does not accurately know how many employees were reviewed for early recognition and intervention, and thus cannot report accurately on the use of the system or its effectiveness.

With better monitoring and reporting, the department would have the ability to develop insights from officer misconduct information and consider measures to prevent misconduct rather than just punishing officers after-the-fact. By analyzing data and trends, the department could provide appropriate policy, management, training, and other responsive changes to address emerging concerns or risks of future misconduct.

Key areas of concern highlighted in complaints:

-  Conduct involving alleged criminal acts in at least 27 percent of reported suspension and discharge discipline in the previous five years.
-  Involvement in multiple incidents or complaints that involved serious activities (e.g., use of force, pursuits, motor vehicle collisions, engaging in harassing or threatening behavior, or assaulting/harassing women).
-  Not intervening to prevent or report misconduct.
-  Personal problems related to domestic life or misuse of intoxicants that may have contributed to misconduct.

Correction of Misconduct is Highly Impacted by Grievance Process



We made 10 recommendations to improve the police department's policies, procedures, and programs for identifying and preventing officer misconduct. The police department expressed general agreement with the report's findings and recommendations.



For the full report, click or go to: <http://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/oca/> To see other audit reports from the Office of the City Auditor: <http://www.honolulu.gov/auditor/reportsworkplans.html>