



Whatcom County

SHERIFF'S

Office

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF BILL ELFO



The year 2021 was a challenging one. A rather small but vocal number of people from within and outside the community have espoused anti-police rhetoric. Legislation, court decisions and a few changed criminal justice system practices significantly impaired law enforcement's ability to prevent crime and apprehend criminals. Our Corrections Bureau staff dealt with overcrowded facilities, COVID outbreaks and a population that is more and more manifesting serious and dangerous forms of mental illness. Our Emergency Management staff endured tremendous workloads in addressing the pandemic, floods and a myriad of other incidents.

Despite the negatives, WCSO is supported by the vast majority of the people in Whatcom County. We have a great team that has been sufficiently nimble to address changes and provide the best services possible to the people we are sworn to protect. Despite trends, we are able to recruit great deputies and support staff. While the courts and many county offices were closed for the pandemic, our people carried on.

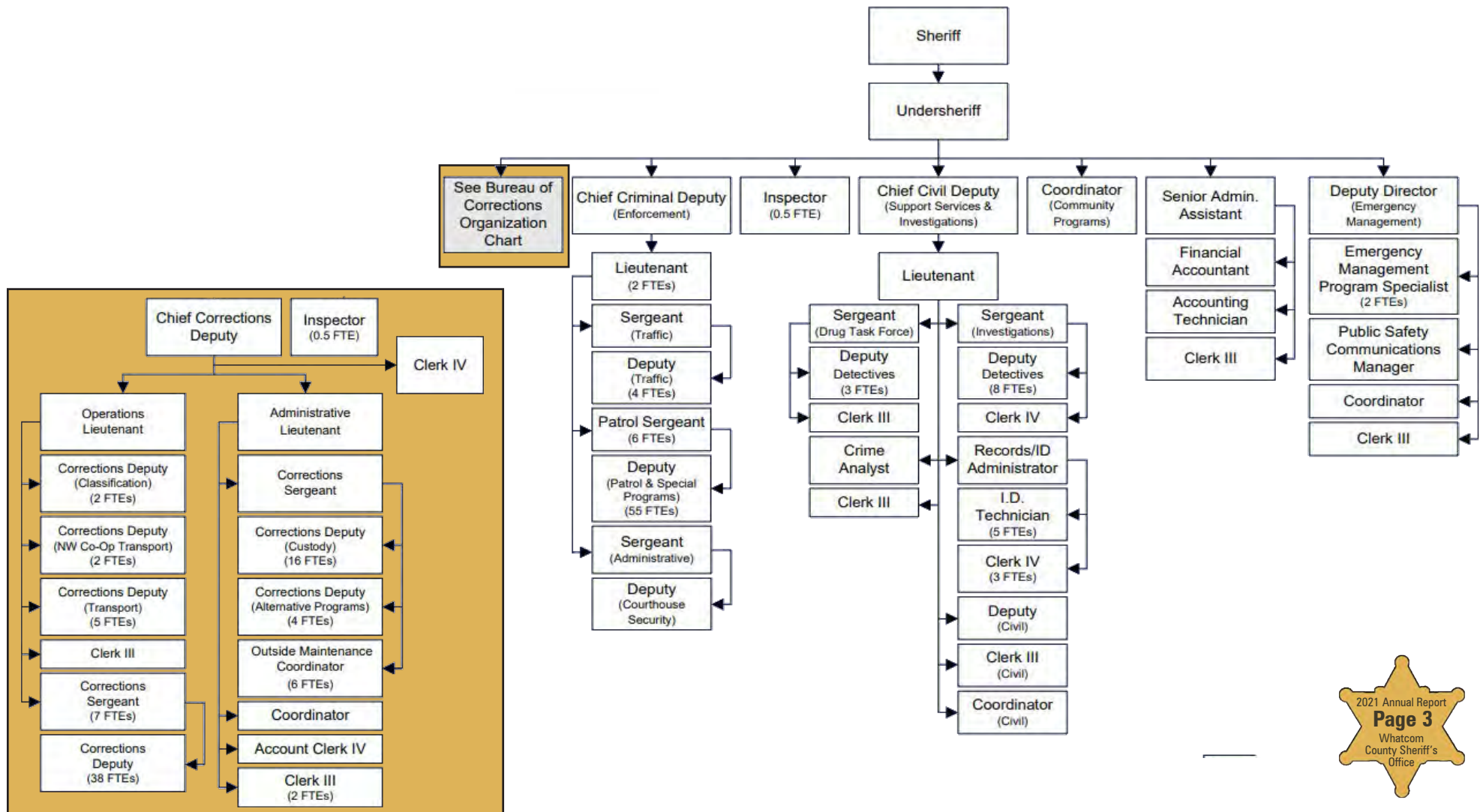
I am extremely proud of the members of the Sheriff's Office for meeting the ongoing challenges. I am also highly confident in the leadership team we have in place and look forward to us doing more great things together in 2022.

Bill Elfo, Sheriff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Elfo" with a stylized flourish at the end.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

As an elected official, the County Sheriff is responsible for law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Whatcom County. The Sheriff also has several county-wide responsibilities (serving both the cities and unincorporated areas), including operating the county jail and coordinating professional and volunteer search and rescue efforts. The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) is made up of three Bureaus: Field Operations, Investigations and Support Services, and Corrections; the Office of Professional Standards, and the Division of Emergency Management.



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our Vision

The Office of Sheriff: Dedicated to making Whatcom County the safest in the State through excellence in public safety.

Our Mission

We will provide the highest quality Law Enforcement, Corrections, Emergency Management and Support Services by:

- Protecting the lives, property, and rights of all Whatcom County residents and visitors through proactive, professional and compassionate actions by all members in partnership with the community;
- Upholding the highest standards of performance, behavior and ethics through our conduct, appearance, demeanor and decision-making;
- Preserving, honoring and defending the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Washington.

OUR CORE VALUES

EXCELLENCE

We are committed to delivering an extraordinary level of service by performing to the best of our abilities and seeking solutions that are practical, innovative, timely and effective.

INTEGRITY

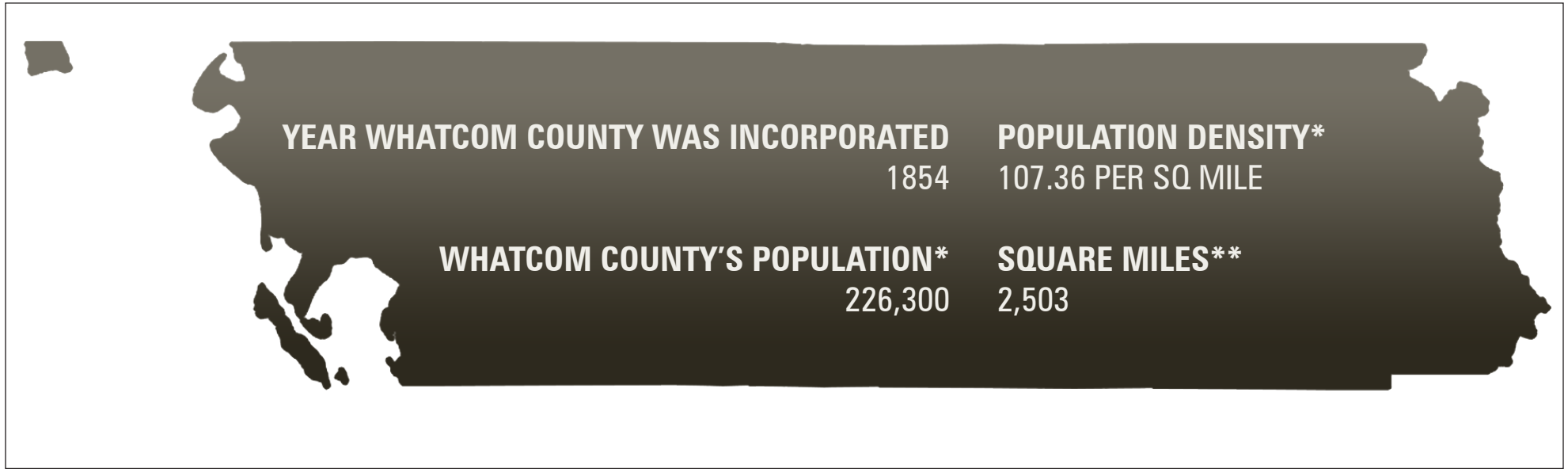
We will maintain credibility with each other and our constituents through honesty, consistency, loyalty and accountability.

TEAMWORK

We believe success is achieved by working together and in partnership with our community with openness, humility, resolve and respect.



WHATCOM COUNTY AT A GLANCE



In 2021, deputies responded to 38,716 incidents. Neighborhood and Resident Deputies focus on densely populated unincorporated areas by working with residents to achieve community safety.

*Data from [Washington State Employment Security Department](#)

**This number includes the water area that WCSO's Marine Unit patrols

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CITIZEN'S ACADEMY

The Citizen's Academy is a 12-week program that provides an opportunity for Whatcom County residents to learn about the WCSO. Participants become familiar with the WCSO's mission, values, and philosophy of policing. Participants were able to attend a virtual Citizen's Academy in the Spring of 2021.

PROJECT SANTA

Every year we are thrilled to provide gifts to local school children through the magic of Project Santa. This magic is made possible by so many caring members of our community: 4th Corner Elites, Whatcom County Cruisers, Gear Heads of Whatcom County, Corvettes Unlimited of Bellingham, the Cascade Cruisers from Mount Vernon, Low & Slow, Dawson Construction and Custer Gun Club. These organizations continually raise money for Project Santa, which, in turn, allows us to spread some holiday cheer. We coordinate with Nooksack, Blaine, Lynden, Mt. Baker, Ferndale, and Meridian school districts and their resource staff to determine who needs what. This year, we recruited a small number of masked elves to purchase the presents from lists the children made themselves. Just like in years past, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provided their sleighs. Volunteer WTA drivers delivered the gift bags to the county schools. WCSO deputies and staff distributed these gifts of toys, clothing, and grocery gift cards to 91 children and their families.



BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

PATROL UNIT

The Patrol Unit is the largest division of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office. Patrol deputies provide a wide variety of services including responding to 911 calls for service, in-progress crimes, requests for information and assistance, investigating crimes, motor vehicle accidents and natural and unnatural deaths. Patrol deputies also make arrests, testify in court, resolve complaints, maintain the peace, and perform crisis intervention.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

2017	40,330
2018	46,632
2019	44,408
2020	41,430
2021	38,716

RESIDENT DEPUTY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEPUTY PROGRAM

The WCSO utilizes both a resident deputy program and a neighborhood deputy program. The resident deputy program allows law enforcement presence and response in remote or isolated areas within Whatcom County. In 2021, WCSO had three deputies residing full-time in these areas: two in Point Roberts and one in Newhalem. The neighborhood deputy program consists of five deputies assigned full-time to specific geographical areas; Foothills (which encompasses Maple Falls and Glacier area), Birch Bay, the South Lake Whatcom area (which encompasses the Sudden Valley and Cain Lake areas), and an additional outpost position that patrols the U.S. National Forest Lands within Whatcom County (Baker Lake east of Glacier) working in cooperation with U.S. Forest Service.

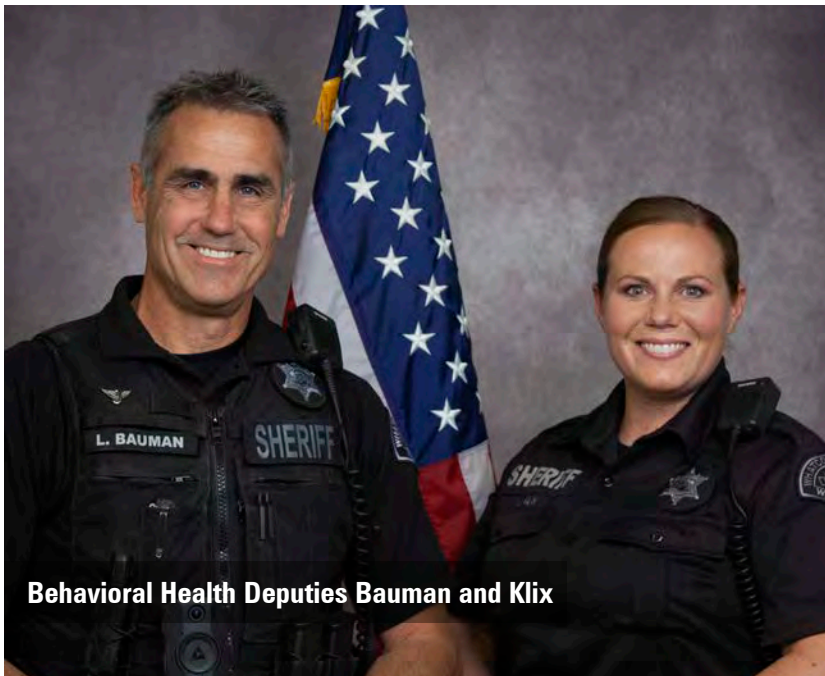
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPUTY (BHD) PROGRAM

The Behavioral Health Deputy Program is intended to assist the Patrol Division in effectively intervening and de-escalating crisis situations involving persons with behavioral health issues and/or developmental disabilities. In 2021, two deputies were assigned to focus primarily on mental-health related calls and to connect people with appropriate services, acting as liaisons between the WCSO and the behavioral health community and social service organizations.

In 2021, WCSO Behavioral Health Deputies responded to:

- 1,308 MENO calls (person experiencing a mental health issue)
- 14 Suicides
- 884 Welfare Checks

WCSO's BHD Program continues to reach out in partnership with support communities including monthly meetings with the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI).



Behavioral Health Deputies Bauman and Klix

BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

FIELD TRAINING UNIT

The training requirements to become a patrol deputy are extensive. After being hired, each new deputy is sent to the [Washington State Criminal Justice Training Center's Basic Law Enforcement Academy](#) (BLEA) to successfully complete the 720 hours required to receive a Washington State Peace Officer Certification. After the training academy, each new deputy must complete a three and a half month program through WCSO's Field Training Unit which is managed by a Lieutenant and supervised by a Sergeant. Six tenured senior deputies are selected, trained, certified and staffed to serve as Field Training Officers (FTOs). (While FTO stands for Field Training Officer, it is the term commonly used for field training student deputies under the direction of the Field Training Unit.)

During the four phases and approximately 500 hours of training in the FTO program, deputies learn through on-the-job training and daily assessments. Every day, training is documented in Daily Observation Reports (DORs) and each phase requires an End of Phase Report (EPR). The student deputy must demonstrate an increase in knowledge, skills, and abilities related to their patrol duties before proceeding to the next FTO phase. Deputies must complete the FTO program to continue employment and subsequently be assigned as a probationary deputy for the duration of a 15-month period. Upon successful completion of Field Training, each student deputy is prepared to function as an independent deputy within the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office.

In 2021, five WCSO Deputies attended and graduated from BLEA and three Deputies completed their FTO training.

FORCE OPTIONS TRAINING UNIT

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Force Options Training Unit provides training to deputies in the judicious and ethical use of force. Our goal is to provide a data-driven curriculum that emphasizes de-escalation and tactics that provide the opportunity for the best possible outcome for all parties involved. When a suspect's actions require the use of force by a deputy, that force should be reasonable, proportional, and controlled. Our force options unit is comprised of several disciplines that work together to ensure consistency and efficiency while providing an integrated system that deputies can use to problem solve dynamic situations.

1. Less lethal options – taser, ranged impact/restraint systems, pepper spray
2. Defensive tactics – hands-on control and defensive techniques
3. Firearms – intended to stop actions that may cause death or serious bodily injury

In 2021, the Force Options Unit provided over 1000 hrs of training to our deputies in these areas. While we focus on individual skills and proficiency, much of this training focuses on updating our deputies on changes to the law that affect how force is applied. Knowing how to use force is vital but knowing when to use force and making those decisions under stress is more important. To accomplish this, our deputies undergo significant time in reality-based training scenarios where they can put all of their tools together to give them and our citizens the best chance for a positive outcome.

BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

TRAFFIC UNIT

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Traffic Unit was formed in 2004 to provide a more coordinated effort in preventing collisions on County roadways, utilizing both motorcycles and patrol vehicles. The mission of the Traffic Unit is to provide safe roadways to all drivers through the use of engineering, education and enforcement to prevent death, injury and property damage.

2021 TRAFFIC CALLS FOR SERVICE

COLLISIONS	525	PARKING PROBLEMS	37
TRAFFIC PROBLEMS	294	WA STATE PATROL ASSISTS	272
TRAFFIC HAZARDS	746	ROAD USE INVESTIGATIONS	15
TRAFFIC STOPS/ARRESTS	467	JUNK VEHICLE INSPECTIONS	107
DUI ARRESTS	117	TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS	4055
ABANDONED VEHICLES	204	TOTAL	6839

2021 AGENCY-WIDE TRAFFIC STATISTICS

	Total Collisions	Fatal Collisions	Injury Collisions	Fatalities	Injuries	Traffic Infractions	Non-Traffic Infractions	Criminal Traffic	Criminal Non-Traffic	Total Tickets
January	39	0	11	0	12	560	0	72	25	657
February	42	0	5	0	6	850	0	58	18	926
March	42	0	12	0	16	564	6	71	26	667
April	30	0	5	0	5	576	56	60	12	704
May	32	0	5	0	6	397	40	30	19	486
June	41	0	11	0	18	223	137	21	15	396
July	42	0	11	0	13	188	195	23	24	430
August	48	0	18	0	22	81	105	25	24	235
September	47	0	10	0	15	166	8	23	17	214
October	51	0	15	0	17	124	4	26	19	173
November	64	0	20	0	29	155	0	32	16	203
December	47	0	8	0	9	171	1	26	24	222
Report Totals:	525	0**	131	0**	168	4055	552	467	239	5313

**All fatal Collisions were reported under WSP reports.

BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

K-9 UNIT

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Canines (K-9s) are chosen for specific traits and attributes. They are partnered with a K-9 handler deputy who works extensively with the K-9 before going into the field as a team. Because of their superior senses of smell and hearing and physical capabilities, trained K-9s are valuable law enforcement assets. The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office K-9s are used to locate missing or endangered persons (e.g., lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention) and persons wanted for criminal offenses.

K-9 units may be used when there is a reasonable belief an individual poses an imminent threat of violence or serious harm, the individual is physically resisting or threatening to resist arrest, or the individual is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by other than the K-9 would pose a greater threat to the safety of deputies or the public. K-9s are also utilized to locate various controlled substances. The K-9 units go through continuous training throughout their career. They are often utilized by other police agencies throughout Whatcom County when needed.

WCSO started 2021 with three K-9 teams: K-9 Elliot and Deputy Taddonio, K-9 Jag and Deputy Streubel and Hyde and Deputy Nyhus. All three of these K-9s retired from service in 2021 and officially became family members of each of their handlers. The second half of 2021 was all about training our new K-9s, Apex and Luca with their handlers Deputy Streubel and Deputy Taddonio, respectively.

2021 K-9 STATISTICS	
Deployments	143
Narcotic Seizures*	
Cocaine (in pounds)	1.3
Methamphetamine (in pounds)	6.7
Heroin (in pounds)	10.8
Total Pounds of Narcotics Seized	18.8
Fentanyl pills	153,055
Firearms Seized*	5
Cash Seized*	\$108,000

*WCSO's K-9 Unit was involved in these seizures

BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

SPECIAL RESPONSE UNIT

The WCSO maintains a Special Response Unit (SRU) comprised of two teams: a Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.

CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM (CNT)

The goal of the CNT is to resolve crisis incidents while attempting to avoid unnecessary risk to deputies/officers, citizens, victims, and subjects. Crisis negotiation skills have consistently proven to be law enforcement's most risk effective method to achieve the desired outcomes. Crisis negotiators are deployed with SWAT as part of the Special Response Unit. In addition, negotiators are regularly used on Patrol to deal with barricaded subjects and to de-escalate situations involving persons with mental health issues.

SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS TEAM (SWAT)

The SWAT team provides specialized support to the WCSO or other law enforcement agency personnel in handling critical field operations where special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field deputies/officers appear to be necessary.

Here is a brief synopsis of WCSO SWAT/CNT deployments for 2021:

- Assisted the WSP after a suspect barricaded in a home after a pursuit. The suspect pointed a firearm at deputies from inside the residence. CNT deployed with SWAT and attempted to negotiate with the suspect. He surrendered after chemical munitions were introduced.
- Provided security for the courthouse and jail while the Bellingham Police Department cleared an encampment from the area in front of City Hall.
- Assisted the DEA with a federal warrant service stemming from a narcotics investigation. CNT deployed with SWAT. The location was secured and turned over to the DEA.
- Served search/arrest warrants as part of an attempted murder 2nd investigation. Three locations were searched. CNT deployed with SWAT. One suspect immediately surrendered upon the arrival of SWAT and was arrested for felony harassment. The main suspect surrendered to deputies later.
- Assisted the Whatcom Gang and Drug Task Force with the service of a search warrant stemming from a drug investigation. CNT deployed with SWAT. The suspect surrendered when SWAT arrived on the scene. The suspect was arrested for Manufacture and Delivery of a Controlled Substance for both Fentanyl and Heroin, Possession of multiple controlled substances, Six counts of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Two counts of Unlawful Possession of a Stolen Firearm and Maintaining a Dwelling for Drug Sales.

BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

MARINE SERVICES UNIT

The Marine Services Unit, also known as Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Unit conducts vessel safety inspections and education pertaining to safety on the water. Marine deputies also provide enforcement of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) laws and assist with search and rescue incidents in and around county rivers, lakes and coastal areas.

OPERATIONS BETWEEN MEMORIAL DAY AND LABOR DAY 2021:

9 patrol missions on Lake Samish

23 patrol missions on Lake Whatcom

44 missions on Puget Sound

2 Search and Rescue Missions

Participated in Operation Dry Water

In 2021, RBS patrols provided:

608 vessel-on-the-water law enforcement hours

1236 officer-on-the-water law enforcement hours

85 ramp inspection hours

This produced:

523 written inspections

15 citations

In 2021, the RBS assisted 26 vessels and 67 boaters in distress and investigated 17 boating accidents.

TRAINING and PRESENTATIONS

Marine Training (Received)

- Basic Marine Law Enforcement Training 44-hour
- Annual Maintenance Training
- Annual Fall Conference

Marine Training (Given)

- Basic Marine Law Enforcement Training 44-hour
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Boater Education 1-hour presentation

Presentations

- Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla Meeting

WCSO MARINE SERVICES FLEET

Donzi 2008 27' Fiberglass: Primary vessel for Lake Whatcom

Heliarc 1995 20' Aluminum: Primary vessel for Nooksack River & Baker Lake

Munson 2017 19' Aluminum: Primary vessel for search and rescue & Lake Samish

Bombardier 2005 10' Personal Watercraft:

Primarily used for patrol during high traffic periods



WCSO Marine Unit Deputies rescue Norwester passengers

On April 17, WCSO Marine Patrol Deputies were conducting regular patrol along the Us/Canada border in the area just north of Patos Island lighthouse when they heard a MAYDAY call from the vessel "Norwester", located at the entrance to Prevost Harbor on Steward Island. The "Norwester", a 78-foot wooden vessel had run aground and was taking on water. The vessel also had eight adults on board. Deputies were the first government vessel on the scene. They positioned their vessel along the port bow of the Norwester and safely transferred all passengers and a dog.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Bureau of Investigations and Support Services is primarily responsible for long-term detailed investigations into crimes against persons and narcotic crimes, as well as executing processes and orders of the courts, managing WCSO records and evidence, and overseeing many of the processes that support the accomplishment of WCSO's core missions.

2021 MAJOR CRIMES HIGHLIGHTS:

- Attempted Murder / Drive-by shooting on Hillvue Road in Birch Bay in February. Juan Avena was shot in the right leg by Martin Siergiey outside of his home. Juan reportedly had a sexual encounter with Martin's wife. Martin was arrested for attempted murder.
- Assault w/ a knife. This is the case where a hiker stabbed a mountain biker multiple times while on a bike/hiking trail in the area of Y Road. An altercation ensued after the subjects encountered each other on the trail and were trying to pass each other. Dake Traphagen was arrested for assault 1st.
- Voyeurism case where step-dad was arrested for taking images of children in their family bathroom using a hidden camera.
- Homicide investigation- Lynda Mercy case. The victim was Thomas Flood whose body was found dumped in the 9200 block of Semiahmoo Parkway in Blaine on 040721. After extensive investigation, Lynda Mercy was located and arrested on April 13, 2021.
- Murder 2nd- Dylan Wolcott was arrested for running over Myron Fultz on Hawthorne Place in Maple Falls on July 2, 2021. Dylan stated he had taken drugs and intentionally struck the victim with his vehicle after the victim yelled at him.
- Attempted murder investigation in the 5400 block of Mt. Baker Highway on July 15, 2021. Scott Baker shot Wade Dickerson in the abdomen after an argument. Scott Baker was arrested for Attempted Murder 1st after fleeing from deputies during a vehicle pursuit.
- Mount Baker School threats. No arrest was made but many search warrants for social media were executed.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

WHATCOM GANG AND DRUG TASK FORCE (WGDTF)

The WGDTF is a multi-agency task force comprised of members from the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Bellingham Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations and Customs and Border Protection. The WCSO oversees and manages the Task Force which focuses on mid to upper level distributors of narcotics in and around Whatcom County.

With the common goal to disrupt the illicit drug traffic in the area by immobilizing target violators and trafficking organizations, the WGDTF conducts undercover operations and surveillance to investigate, gather, and report intelligence data relating to trafficking in narcotics and dangerous drugs. In partnership and cooperation with our Federal partners, WGDTF has assisted the DEA in the following investigation in 2021:

WGDTF local investigations lead to larger Fentanyl investigations resulting in a DEA OCDETF case. With the assistance of WCSO CIT & SWAT, there was a Federal arrest of three prolific dealers in Lynden, Ferndale, Everson, and Bellingham. 20,000 Fentanyl pills, 2.5 kilos of Heroin, and 5 pounds of meth were seized.

LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS

- A several-month investigation of a male suspect selling heroin and methamphetamine in a Bellingham neighborhood concluded with a search warrant service. Assistance was provided by a WCSO K9, WCSO Criminal Interdiction Team, and officers from the Bellingham Police Department. The suspect and one other individual were arrested. A total of 45.28 grams of heroin, 35.57 grams of methamphetamine plus \$1,000 in cash were seized. A stolen construction tool valued at approx. \$6,000 was also recovered and returned.
- Multiple local investigations include prolific local drug dealers, often utilizing the I-5 corridor, running between Whatcom, Snohomish, and King Counties to obtain the supply. These investigations resulted in 8 arrests over several months, one of which was related to a controlled substance homicide with the suspect admitting to providing Fentanyl pills to the victim. Seizures consisted of 197 grams of Heroin, 815 grams Meth, 117.8 grams of Cocaine, nearly 150 Fentanyl pills, \$5,100 cash, 15 illegally possessed firearms, and a vehicle used for the conveyance of drug sales.
- Investigation where the use of social media to advertise sales of hallucinogens, targeting underage buyers resulted in one arrest, and the seizure of 10.9 grams of Ecstasy/MDMA, 3 LSD tabs, 16.1 grams of Psilocybin, 14.5 grams of Cocaine, 1 stolen firearm, and \$177 cash. Two firearms, one of which was confirmed to be stolen, were also recovered. The suspect was arrested for Possession of a stolen firearm, unlawfully carrying a loaded pistol, and Possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

WHATCOM GANG AND DRUG TASK FORCE (WGDTF)

WGDTF has an assigned WCSO Detective who serves as a Task Force Officer with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). These cases highlight our partnership with providing investigative support and enforcement related to trafficking that occurs in Border Counties, and throughout the state:

- HSI investigation led to the arrest of an individual and seizure of 1,000 fentanyl pills.
- HSI investigation and arrest of an individual and seizure of 500 Fentanyl pills.
- HSI investigation and Federal arrest of 2 individuals and seizure of 1,000 grams Heroin, 1,000 grams Meth, and 100,000 Fentanyl pills.
- Joint investigation with HSI in a child pornography case; thousands of child sexual abuse images were located and the suspect is pending federal charges.
- Two joint prostitution/human trafficking investigations with HSI.

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS

- A suspect was arrested in late July for delivery of a controlled substance after several controlled Purchases by an agent of the Whatcom Gang and Drug Task Force (WGDTF). He was also arrested by Bellingham PD for controlled substance homicide and admitted to providing Fentanyl pills to the victim.
- In June, investigators from the Whatcom Gang and Drug Task Force (WGDTF) assisted investigators from Colorado's Regional Anti-Violence Enforcement Network (RAVEN) in locating and apprehending wanted subject Gregory A. THOMAS at 7062 Guide Meridian Rd, Lynden, WA (Hidden Village RV Park). Colorado investigators had tracked Thomas to Whatcom County after he was believed to have fled the state. He was the primary suspect in an active murder investigation of a 21-year-old woman in Colorado.
- A Whatcom Gang and Drug Task Force (WGDTF) source of information contacted WGDTF detectives and provided information that a suspect of multiple homicides was in Whatcom County. WGDTF detectives coordinated with the Bellingham Police Department and Kent Police Department with surveillance, tracking, and locating of the suspect, Joseph DIXON. Using the information, the Kent Police Department was able to take DIXON into custody and obtain additional evidence of the homicides in Whatcom County.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

WHATCOM GANG AND DRUG TASK FORCE (WGDTF)

2021 WGDTF STATISTICS	
Federal Indictments	3
Felony Whatcom County Arrests	20
Arrests of documented gang members	1
Pending Felony Cases	28
Seized approximately:	
Cocaine	613 grams
Methamphetamine	6,695 grams
Heroin	1,342 grams
Fentanyl pills (with DEA)	108,398
LSD Tablets	3
Liquid LSD	10.8 grams
Psilocybin Mushrooms	16.1 grams
Marijuana (black market)	26.2 grams
Firearms Seized (between DEA and WGDTF)	21
Cash and property seized (between DEA and WGDTF)	over \$12,000

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

RECORDS AND EVIDENCE DIVISION

Accomplishments for 2021:

- Clerk III position moved from Crime Analysis to Records to assist with staffing the front counter
- New ID Technician position added specifically to process body-worn camera footage
- Full property/evidence inventory completed
- Focused on hiring throughout the year – finished off 2021 90% staffed
- Installed a CPL application kiosk in the lobby
- Switched from paper CPLs to hard plastic cards
- Assisted IT in completing major Spillman upgrade

STATISTICS FROM RECORDS AND EVIDENCE	2019	2020	2021
Public Disclosure Requests	2,257	2,151	2,402
Concealed Pistol Licenses (CPLs) Processed	2,397	1,829	2,775
Warrants Processed	1,828	1,242	1,899
Protection Orders Processed	1,024	1,108	1,000
Firearm Transfer Applications Processed	3,285	6,038	5,308*
Evidence Items Booked	3,860	3,695	2,470
Evidence Items Destroyed	3,239	2,498	3,301

*There is no data for July-November 2021 as there was no supervisor and no clerk. Data was collected January-June and December; a monthly average was calculated and applied to the missing months. Also, please note that the number for 2020 was abnormally high due to civil unrest.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CIVIL DIVISION

The WCSO serves legal documents, performs evictions and carries out orders of the courts. Trained WCSO personnel review all orders to be served by the Sheriff or deputies to limit their liability. The WCSO handles all of the evictions for Whatcom County. All Writs of Restitution are required to go through the Whatcom County Superior Court before they are delivered to the WCSO. Types of civil court orders carried out by the WCSO include: Orders of Sale, Writs of Execution, Writs of Attachment, Writs of Restitution, Writs of Replevin, and Writs of Habeas Corpus.

DOCUMENTS SERVED	2019	2020	2021
Service of Subpoenas to Deputies	4,827	4,126	4,414
Service of Subpoenas on witnesses for Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office	350	135	234
Service of Subpoenas received from other Prosecutor's Offices within WA ST	24	11	9
DSHS Papers served	35	31	26
Attorney Papers served	303	132	204
(Papers served for Private attorneys and citizens)			
Total Civil Papers Served	5,539	4,435	4,887
Writs of Restitution	190	64	85
Real Property Executions	31	11	5
Personal Property Executions	2	2	0
Writs of Attachment (Real & Personal)	1	0	2
Writs of Habeas Corpus	9	6	8
Writs of Replevin	2	0	1
Total Evictions, Writs and Sheriff Sales Executed	235	83	101
Total Documents Served	5,774	4,518	4,988

SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR)

Whatcom County Search and Rescue Council is currently comprised of six volunteer SAR units that can be activated by the WCSO for search, rescue, and recovery incidents in urban, rural, and wilderness settings. They can also be called upon for evidence searches related to criminal cases. There are three trained SAR Deputy Coordinators plus a Lieutenant that oversees the group. SAR also works closely with partners from neighboring counties, Whidbey Naval Air Station (WNAS), and Customs and Border Protection. Our volunteers are also occasionally sent to assist other counties needing additional search personnel.

2021 was a challenging year for the search and rescue unit. This is primarily due to the response to the historic flood event which began in November. SAR volunteers and deputies performed numerous rescues. They often came across subjects in need of help while transiting from one location to another or there were numerous rescues in specific areas. Incidents were responded to by trucks and boats with swift water rescue volunteers on board. One boat, belonging to the Summit to Sound Volunteer Rescue Unit, was destroyed due to hitting several submerged objects.

Below is a breakdown of additional significant calls:

- Three incidents where subjects had become stuck in the snow while traveling by vehicle to the Baker Lake Hot Springs.
- Two incidents involved the search for missing subjects with dementia in the city of Bellingham.
- Two river rescues were performed for subjects who became stranded while kayaking or inner tubing on the Nooksack River.
- One Nooksack River search for a subject reported having jumped from a bridge in Ferndale.
- Six injured climber calls. Four involved rescues by WNAS and Snohomish County's SnoHawk Helicopter Rescue Unit.
- One injured backcountry skier was rescued by WNAS
- Five hiking incidents where the subjects were lost or in need of further assistance.
- One hunter who became lost during a snow storm.
- One recovery of a subject found deceased in Squalicum Creek inside Bellingham city limits.

SIX SAR UNITS:

Whatcom County Dive Search and Rescue
Whatcom Emergency Communications Group
Whatcom County 4x4 Unit
Bellingham Mountain Rescue
Summit to Sound Search and Rescue
Whatcom County Snowmobile Search and Rescue



The WCSO is also a participant in Project Lifesaver in conjunction with Dementia Support Northwest. Project Lifesaver is a program designed to locate missing persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease, autism, or other various brain ailments. Radio frequency transmitters and receivers are used to track those with a tendency to go missing and wander. Participant intake is done by Dementia Support Northwest while the search component is done by trained SAR deputies and volunteers.

CORRECTIONS BUREAU

The WCSO Corrections Bureau includes three main branches:

- The Downtown Jail which functions as the main intake facility and houses full custody offenders.
- The Sheriff's Office Work Center which manages all of the jail alternative programs and lower security offenders.
- The Corrections Transport Unit provides transportation for offenders outside of the facility.

2021 OVERVIEW

As with many organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally affected the way we do business. We started 2021 with a COVID outbreak at the Work Center, necessitating the facility to go into lock down to try and contain the spread of the disease. Ultimately 48 out of the 52 offenders housed there became ill with COVID. None required hospitalization and all recovered fully. A lesson learned from this experience has been that the design of the Work Center will not prevent airborne illnesses from spreading throughout the facility.

This experience helped to pinpoint changes in the protocol such as an expansion of testing for both staff and offenders, coordination with the Health Department for contact tracing, and systematizing our responses to new cases. While we have had small outbreaks with staff, and are consistently finding 1 or 2 new cases a week with incoming offenders, the isolation protocols have prevented those cases from spreading.

JAIL POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Due to the need to maintain areas in the jail for medical quarantine, the booking restrictions used in 2020 continued into 2021. An interesting paradox surfaced when reviewing year-end numbers: The total number of bookings dropped by 17% between 2020 and 2021. At the same time, the total ADP (Average Daily Population) increased by 4%. The majority of the increases occurred in the last quarter of 2021, and are primarily being driven by cases out of Whatcom County Superior Court.

Approximately 80% of all offenders in custody are being held on at least 1 felony charge resulting, in many cases, in longer jail stays. The ALS (Average Length of Stay) has increased by 29% during 2021. If offenders are remaining in custody longer, there is less space for new offenders. The last factor affecting the jail population is the types of offenses. While restricted due to booking controls, we saw significant increases in several different offenses, such as:

- Violation of Protection/Restraining or Domestic Violence Order increased 36%
- Vehicle Theft Up 6%
- Assault 2nd up 6%
- Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer increased by 127%
- Malicious Mischief up 20%
- Drive-by Shooting increased by 700%
- Felony Harassment up by 7%
- Resisting Arrest increased by 24%

CORRECTIONS BUREAU

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE:

In 2021 the jail continued to experience significant increases in offenders with mental health and substance use illnesses. The number of offenders with very serious forms of mental illness increased to approximately 35% and is reflective of a nationwide trend. We continue to have high percentages of our population struggling with various substance abuse disorders. As 2021 progressed, we have seen the focus of Opioid use in the community shift from Heroin to Fentanyl laced pills. We are consistently discovering large amounts (200 pills or more) of “blues” during body scans on incoming offenders. This is despite growing participation in our MOUD (Medication for Opioid Use Disorder) program, intended to assist individuals with their addiction. Lastly, Methamphetamine continues to be a very real concern in our community. The percentage of overdose deaths in Whatcom County due to Meth has increased by over 554% between 2004 and 2020. The side effects of Methamphetamine use have a significant impact on the health care demands in the jail. This can range from Malnutrition, dental issues, drug-resistant abscesses, and serious cardiac illness.

2021 JAIL ALTERNATIVES OVERVIEW

There were some challenges in maintaining Jail Alternatives this year, due to the COVID pandemic. There was a dramatic reduction in the offenders referred to Jail Alternatives as most of the Court Systems shut down. That, coupled with some of the restrictions the Unit was operating under to keep staff and offenders safe, limited the ability to provide some of the options that have been available in the past. Even with the COVID related issues, the Offender Work Crews worked over 16,122 hours, for projects as widespread as assisting with flood control and salmon habitat restoration to litter pick up (54,600 pounds), cleaning illegal dumpsites, and removing, by hand, approximately 11,040 pounds of noxious, invasive, weed. The value of this labor, using the 2021 minimum wage as the multiplier, is \$220, 800 and provides offenders with a way of providing a valuable service to the community at large. The Corrections continues to provide both Electronic Monitoring/Detention services and a Work Release program which allows individuals to complete their jail time in less than full custody. As a result, they can maintain jobs, schooling, and community treatment, as well as moving a total of 161 offenders from full custody beds. This diverted a total of 7,654 bed days.

The combined revenue generated by all of these programs in 2021 amounted to \$525,154. This revenue helps offset the tax money used to fund the jail operations. Offenders who fit the criteria for the programs, but do not have funds to cover some of the fees usually associated with the program can have the fees either reduced or waived.

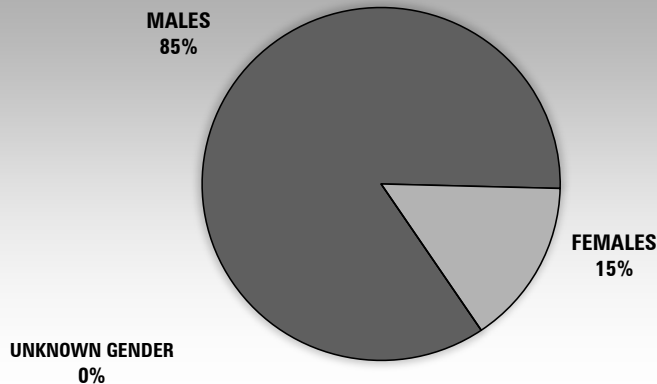


WCSO Work Crew

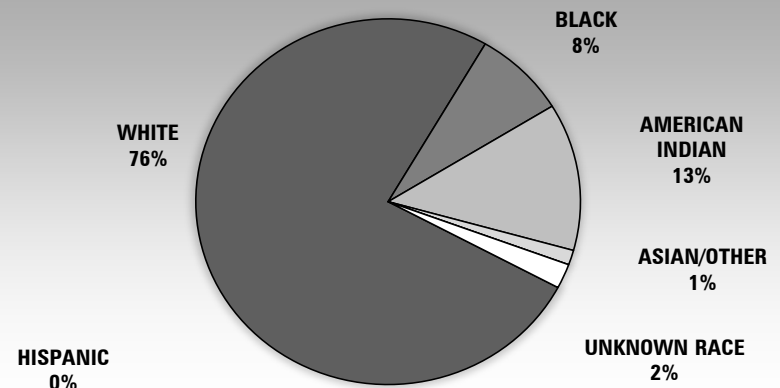
CORRECTIONS BUREAU

WHATCOM COUNTY JAIL STATISTICS	2019	2020	2021
Design Capacity (Downtown Jail + Work Center)	298	298	298
Daily Bed Rate	\$131	\$198	\$193
Average Length of Stay (Days)	12	14 ¹	18
Percentage of Use	102%	74%	78%
Average Daily Population (ADP)	304	222 ²	231
Electronic Home Detention	5,958 days	6,218 days ³	6,470 days
Work Release	3,102 days	1,803 days	1,184 days
In Custody Work Crew	5,796 days	3,499 days	2,314 days
Out-of-Custody Work Crew	2,664 days	1,401 days	1,033 days
In Custody Deaths	0	0	0

2021 INMATES' GENDER (ADP)



2021 INMATES' ETHNICITY (ADP)



1 As the Court systems shut down, offenders length of time in custody grew.

2 This Jail program also provides services for approximately 20 participants per day who are on the District Court Pre-Trial Misdemeanor Supervision program.

3 Starting in March of 2020 the Jail took several steps to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the jail population. Booking restrictions were imposed, we worked with the Prosecutor's office to release lower risk offenders, out of custody and in custody work crew programs were put on hiatus, and additional offenders were placed on EHD. This resulted in a significant drop in the daily jail population in both facilities. Due to the nature of the work, all Corrections staff members were considered essential workers and reported to the facilities on their regular schedule. Deputies who were assigned to oversee the Alternative Programs were used to cover staff shortages in the full custody facilities.

4 In 2019 the Federal government moved the category of "Hispanic" from race to ethnicity. The Jail's record management system was not programmed to collect ethnicity, so individuals who would have previously identified themselves as "Hispanic" are selecting another category.

2021 CRIME STATISTICS

The following section provides WCSO offense counts for Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against Property, and Crimes Against Society. These numbers are derived from monthly National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) submissions by Washington State law enforcement agencies. For more detailed information, visit [Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Crime in Washington 2021 Annual Report](#).



For up to date statistics on crime,
please visit [WCSO's Crime Stats Dashboard](#).

Offense Description	Reported 2019	Reported 2020	Reported 2021
Murder	4	6	4
Manslaughter	1	0	0
Rape	33	25	23
Sodomy	6	4	1
Sexual Assault w/Object	0	0	0
Fondling	25	21	18
Aggravated Assault	100	110	107
Simple Assault	286	236	198
Intimidation	126	129	111
Kidnapping	15	15	7
Incest	1	5	0
Statutory Rape	4	1	4
Human Trafficking Offenses	0	0	0
Violation of No Contact/Protect.	198	200	139
Robbery	8	10	2
Burglary	353	355	306
Larceny-Theft Offenses	779	795	742

2021 CRIME STATISTICS



For up to date statistics on crime,
please visit [WCSO's Crime Stats Dashboard](#).

Offense Description	Reported 2019	Reported 2020	Reported 2021
Motor Vehicle Theft	106	191	151
Arson	8	14	3
Destruction of Property	372	358	374
Counterfeiting/Forgery	42	42	22
Fraud Offenses	106	408	299
Embezzlement	1	0	0
Extortion/Blackmail	6	5	5
Bribery	0	0	0
Stolen Property Offenses	53	49	27
Animal Cruelty	3	3	1
Drug/Narcotic Violations	257	241	62*
Drug Equipment Violations	7	14	2
Gambling Offenses	0	0	0
Pornography	4	4	3
Prostitution Offenses	1	0	0
Weapon Law Violations	30	42	22

*Washington State Supreme Court's Blake decision significantly changed the ability to charge a criminal offense for personal possession of any drug, including heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine.

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (OPS)

The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) works to ensure that WCSO policies and procedures remain both compliant with new legislation and court rulings, as well as consistent with the best practices in areas such as the use of force, the management of citizen complaints, and internal investigations, and the recruitment and hiring of new employees. We recognize that transparency and accountability are key elements to maintaining public trust.

Although deputies have always documented their uses of force in the case reports they write, in 2021 the WCSO started requiring all deputies to enter additional use of force data into the BlueTeam system. This system has been used by the WCSO for years to collect vehicle pursuit data, and now allows us to quickly review and report out on key use of force data elements.

Also, in 2021 the WCSO continued our transition to the Lexipol policy system. This system provides hundreds of policies for both corrections and law enforcement that are continually reviewed and updated as legal standards and industry practices change. We hope to complete this transition by the end of 2022. New legislation that went into effect in July 2021 and January 2022 also required comprehensive policy updates.

Recruiting new employees continues to be a challenge in the law enforcement profession and at the WCSO. In 2021 we said goodbye to 19 employees and welcomed 21 new employees. OPS coordinated 65 records checks on prospective new employees and over 300 additional records checks on volunteers working with the Division of Emergency Management.

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (DEM)

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, through its Division of Emergency Management (DEM), is responsible for providing emergency management services for all of unincorporated Whatcom County and for the cities of Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, Sumas, and the Port of Bellingham. The City of Bellingham Fire Department, through its Office of Emergency Management, provides emergency management services within the city limits of Bellingham.

2021 SIGNIFICANT DEM ACTIVATIONS

- **Incident #21-4321 November Atmospheric River Flooding; FEMA PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION, FEMA-DR-4635-WA**
On November 15 and 16 rivers reached the flood stage at multiple locations. Several communities saw record-breaking precipitation events, resulting in approximately 1,900 flood-damaged businesses and structures in Whatcom County. More than 500 individuals were forced by floodwaters to evacuate from their homes in Whatcom County. This event was the most impactful natural disaster to hit Whatcom County since it was formed in 1854. This flooding caused over 150 million dollars in damage to Whatcom County. Response and recovery from this flood will be ongoing throughout 2022 and into 2023.
- **Incident #21-0114, January Wind Storm**
January 13-17, 2021: Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Support, Incident Management Team, coordinated volunteer support in response to the "January Surprise Storm" which left over 10,500 Puget Sound Energy Customers without power.
- **Continued working on FEMA PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION, 20-0256 FEMA-4539-DR-WA Super Bowl Flood**
January 20-February 5, 2020, Declaration Date: April 23, 2020. The Super Bowl Flooding caused approximately \$4 million in damage to Whatcom County. Most heavily impacted was the Everson / Sumas area.
- **FEMA PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION, 20-0265 FEMA-4481-DR-WA COVID-19**
January 30, 2020, and continuing through 2021, Declaration Date: March 13, 2020, DEM continued to support the Health Department for Whatcom County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PLANS

- **Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan** – The Division completed the 5-year update of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan which is required by FEMA to qualify for FEMA assistance following a disaster and to be able to be eligible for mitigation grants including the: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Public Assistance Grant Program (PA); Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC); Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) and Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAG).

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (DEM)

2021 DEM ACTIVITIES (cont)

TRAININGS, COORDINATED

- Nearly all of the training in 2021 was conducted in support of response to wildfires, earthquakes and tsunamis. Additionally, the DEM focused significant training on the Incident Management Team within the Emergency Operations Center.
- FEMA ICS 300 – Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- Whatcom County Winter Storm Preparedness Training

EXERCISES, COORDINATED

- May: EOC to EOC Statewide Emergency Communications focusing on Rapid Damage Assessment
- September: Table-top exercise for Bellingham International Airport
- October: 2021 Great Washington ShakeOut
- December: Puget Sound Energy Dam Failure Notification Exercise

PARTICIPATED IN OTHER AGENCY EXERCISES

- January: King tide storm emergency response, City of Blaine
- March: Tsunami response workshop, WA-EMD, Camp Murray
- March: Volunteer mobilization center volcano response table-top exercise, Volunteer Mobilization Center
- March: Region 1 Marine Unit workshop - Allowed Federal, State, Local, Law Enforcement, Fire Service, and Commercial marine responders the opportunity to understand the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of each marine unit, thereby, enhancing future responses with a better knowledge of available resources.
- May: Washington State amateur radio exercise, WA-EMD, Camp Murray (remote participation)
- November: BP Cherry Point Refinery worst-case spill drill
- November: Phillips 66 Ferndale Refinery mid-case spill drill

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (DEM)

COMMUNICATIONS

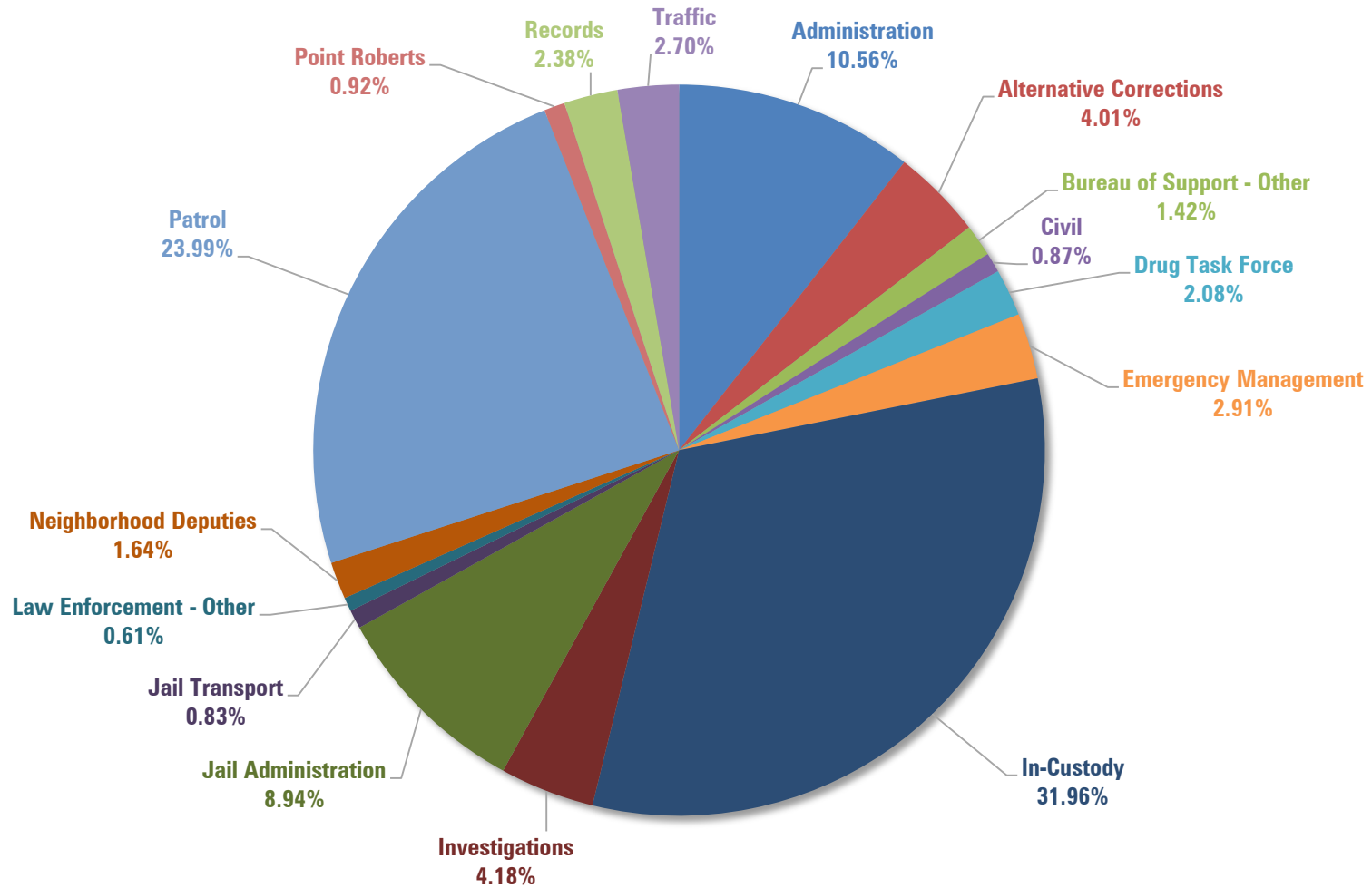
WCSO's DEM is responsible for Public Safety Communications in Whatcom County and is implementing the [Whatcom County Integrated Public Safety Radio System](#). Whatcom County's communications backbone has been in use since the mid-1980s and had only minor upgrades since. The Whatcom County Integrated Public Safety Radio System Project builds a public safety radio system for use by all first responder agencies in Whatcom County, its political subdivisions, as well as adjacent counties. This major radio project involves multiple partnerships with jurisdictions across Whatcom County including the City of Bellingham, Whatcom Transportation Authority, and the Fire and EMS communities.



Babcock site of the Public Safety Radio System tower

2021-2022 BUDGET

2021-2022 SHERIFF'S OFFICE BUDGET BY PROGRAM*



*Whatcom County Executive's 2021-2022 Budget