FRANKLIN BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Community Members,

Every year brings new challenges and opportunities, and 2024 was no exception. As your Chief of Police, I'm proud to share how our department continued to evolve, respond, and lead with purpose in a time of ongoing change.

Law enforcement today demands more than enforcing laws. It calls for listening, learning, and adapting alongside the community we serve. This past year, we focused not only on safety and responsiveness, but also on strengthening relationships, improving communication, and supporting the wellness of both our officers and our residents.

This annual report reflects our efforts, not just in numbers and statistics, but in the stories of problem-solving, collaboration, and dedication behind the scenes.

Whether it was responding to emergencies, participating in community events, or implementing new technologies and trainings, our team showed up with professionalism and heart.



Looking ahead, we remain committed to building trust, improving transparency, and serving Franklin Borough with integrity. We thank you for your support, your partnership, and your belief in the work we do. It is our honor to protect and serve this community we call home.

Best regards,

Chief Gregory M. Cugliari

Chief of Police





Code of Ethics

AS A LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYEE, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I WILL keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I WILL never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice, or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I RECOGNIZE the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice. I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession...LAW ENFORCEMENT.





MISSION STATEMENT & CORE VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Franklin Borough Police Department will commit its resources in partnership with the community to:

- Promote a safe and secure environment, free from crime and fear of crime
 - Maintain order and provide for a safe and expeditious flow of traffic
 - Practice our core values of integrity, respect, service, and fairness.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY

Integrity is the hallmark of the Franklin Borough Police Department, and we are committed to the highest performance standard, ethical conduct, and truthfulness in all relationships.

We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and take pride in a professional level of service and fairness to all.

RESPECT

We treat all people in a dignified and courteous manner, and exhibit understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity, both in our professional and personal endeavors.

We guarantee to uphold the principles and values embodied in the constitution of the United States and the State of NJ.

SERVICE

We provide service in a courteous, efficient, and accessible partnership.

We foster community and employee involvement through problem-solving partnerships.

FAIRNESS

We treat all people impartially, with consideration and compassion.

We are equally responsive to our employees and the community we serve.





Overview

Franklin Borough is a small, yet historically rich municipality located in Sussex County, New Jersey. Known as the "Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World," we are celebrated for our rare mineral deposits and deep mining heritage that continue to set us apart.

- **Location:** We're located in northern New Jersey, sharing borders with our neighbors in Hamburg and Ogdensburg Boroughs, as well as Sparta and Hardyston Townships.
- Area: Our borough covers approximately 4.43 square miles (11.47 km²), with 4.36 square miles of land and 0.07 square miles of water.
- Population: As of 2023, the estimated population is around 5,008 residents.
- Nickname: Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World.

History

Franklin's story dates back to the 1600s, when it was originally known as Franklin Furnace. Our early days were shaped by iron mining and smelting along the Wallkill River. In the 1800s, major zinc deposits were discovered, laying the groundwork for the New Jersey Zinc Company, which played a vital role in shaping our community. We officially became a borough on **April 23, 1913**, and have carried our rich legacy forward ever since.

Government

We operate under the borough form of New Jersey municipal government, with a mayor and a sixmember council working together to guide our community.

- Mayor: John M. Sowden IV (as of 2024)
- Governing Body: Six-member Borough Council serving staggered three-year terms.
 - Councilwoman Rachel Heath (Council President)
 - Councilman Stephen Skellenger
 - Councilman Concetto Formica
 - Councilman John Postas
 - Councilman Gilbert Snyder
 - Councilman Joseph Limon
- Borough Clerk: Darlene Tremont



Demographics

- Median Age: Approximately 51.6 years, higher than county and state averages.
- Households: Around 2,252 households, with an average household size of 2.2 persons.
- **Income:** The median household income in 2023 is estimated at \$87,367, with a per capita income of \$40,973.

Education

Franklin is served by the Franklin Borough School District, which provides education from Pre-K through 8th grade. For high school, students attend Wallkill Valley Regional High School, which also serves surrounding communities.

Transportation and Road Infrastructure

Franklin Borough is well-connected through its roadways and public transportation options:

Major Highways:

- New Jersey Route 23 A primary north-south corridor through Franklin.
- County Route 517 (CR 517) Runs concurrent with Route 23 in sections, enhancing local connectivity.
- County Route 631 (CR 631) Known locally as Franklin Avenue, serving neighborhood traffic.

Total Road Mileage:

- 26.87 miles of roadways as of 2010.
 - Municipally Maintained: 21.00 miles
 - Sussex County Maintained: 2.93 miles
 - NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Maintained: 2.94 miles

Public Transportation:

 Accessible through the Skylands Ride bus service, connecting Franklin to broader Sussex County.





LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION

The Franklin Borough Police Department proudly participates in the New Jersey Law Enforcement Accreditation Program, a progressive initiative developed by the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police and modeled after the national CALEA program. This voluntary program enhances accountability and effectiveness through adherence to a comprehensive set of professional standards tailored specifically for New Jersey law enforcement agencies.

Our department was first accredited in 2021 following a rigorous evaluation by trained assessors from the New Jersey Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (NJLEAC). This process included an in-depth review of our policies, procedures, operations, and support services against 112 professional benchmarks. Assessors conducted thorough interviews, document reviews, and onsite inspections to determine compliance.

Accreditation is granted for a period of three years and requires annual reports and ongoing documentation to demonstrate continued compliance. It represents a significant professional achievement, affirming the soundness of our operations and our unwavering commitment to integrity, transparency, and public trust.

In 2024, we successfully completed our re-accreditation assessment. Following a comprehensive on-site evaluation and testimony before the Accreditation Commission, the department received a unanimous vote for re-accreditation by the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police.

As we begin our third accreditation cycle, we remain dedicated to continuously improving our service to the Franklin Borough community. The accreditation process provides a valuable framework for evaluating both strengths and areas for growth, guiding our department in upholding the highest standards of professionalism and public service.





In 2024, the Franklin Borough Police Department underwent a strategic reorganization to enhance operational efficiency and better align with our community-based approach to policing.

The department is organized into two primary divisions: the **Operations Division** and the **Support Services Division**. Both are overseen by the Captain, who reports directly to the Chief of Police. Within the Operations Division, Patrol Sergeants and Patrol Officers follow a direct chain of command. In the Support Services Division, the Detective Sergeant and assigned Detective in the Investigations Unit also operate within a defined chain of command. Personnel assigned to the Administrative Unit, Traffic Unit, and Records Unit report directly to the Captain.

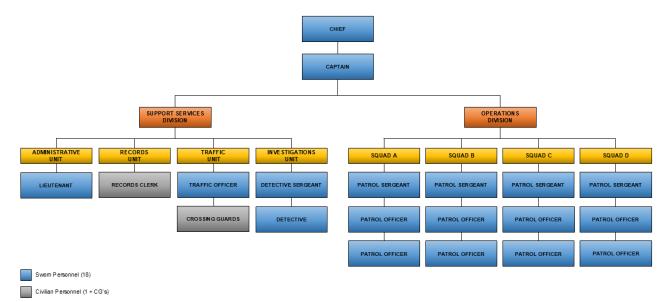
Operations Division

The Operations Division handles the department's primary law enforcement responsibilities, including uniform patrol, emergency response, crime prevention, and general public interaction. This is the most visible division within the department.

Support Services Division

The Support Services Division provides critical behind-the-scenes support and includes the following specialized units:

- Administrative Unit Oversees procurement, policy development, accreditation, and compliance.
- Traffic Unit Manages traffic enforcement, accident investigations, and roadway safety initiatives.
- Records Unit Maintains and organizes the department's official records and documentation.
- **Investigations Unit** Conducts in-depth investigations, processes crime scenes, and manages evidence and property.



^{*}The chart illustrates the department's organizational structure as of the publication date of this annual report.



OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Operations Division serves as the foundation of the Franklin Borough Police Department, carrying out the department's core law enforcement responsibilities. These include uniformed patrol, emergency response, crime prevention, and routine interaction with community members. As the most visible division within the department, Operations plays a central role in ensuring public safety and fostering positive relationships with residents.

In 2024, the Franklin Borough Police Department recorded 14,570 police incidents. These calls spanned a wide range of police functions, including inprogress crimes, motor vehicle crashes, disputes and disturbances, traffic enforcement, property checks, and other officer-initiated activities. Notably, many investigations that are ultimately transferred to the department's Investigations Unit originate with officers in the Operations Division, who are often the first responders to critical incidents and complex cases.

The figures to the right represent a snapshot of the department's operational activity and highlight the diverse responsibilities managed by the Operations Division.

Police Incidents: 14,570
Call Types: 105
Arrests: 164



Call for Service Type	Count
911 Call	87
Ambulance / Medical	597
Assault	16
Burglar Alarm	181
Burlgary	2
CDS Incident	3
Criminal Mischief	13
Death (Attended & Unattended)	7
Disputes & Disturbances	119
Domestic Dispute	57
Erratic Driver	152
Fire Alarm & Response	91
Found / Recovered Property	26
Fraud	27
Hazardous Condition	133
Juvenile Complaint / Offense	49
Mental Health	13
Missing Person	10
Mutual Aid	171
Noise Complaint	48
Property Check	2,934
Sex Crime / Offense	8
Shoplifting	19
Suspicious Conditions	340
Theft	33
Threats	25
FRO / TRO Incidents	46
Warrant Served	51
Welfare Check	188
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^{*}Incidents of a similar nature are combined for formatting purposes.



TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Franklin Borough Police Department is committed to keeping our roads and sidewalks safe for everyone. In 2024, the department pursued targeted traffic enforcement and public safety strategies to reduce accidents, increase pedestrian safety, and promote safe driving habits.

The following goals and objectives guided our work throughout the year:



- Evaluate Strategies: Adjust enforcement using data and feedback.
- Officer Training: Keep staff current on safety practices.
- **Traffic Issues:** Focus on speeding, pedestrian safety, and local concerns.
- **Community Outreach:** Educate and engage the public.
- Roadway Safety: Fix hazards and improve infrastructure.

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY - 2024

Motor vehicle safety is critical to protecting life and property in our community. By enforcing motor vehicle laws, we aimed to decrease crashes, improve pedestrian safety, and raise awareness of proper and safe driving behaviors. The department's traffic-related data suggests that officer-initiated motor vehicle enforcement, traffic calming measures, and the strategic use of traffic data to deploy resources more efficiently contributed to a reduction in traffic accidents. The statistics to the right highlight the department's 2024 traffic enforcement and public safety efforts.

Description	2024
Motor Vehicle Stops	3,591
Summonses Issued	968
Warnings Issued	2,623
Driving While Intoxicated	24
Driving While Suspended	75
Traffic Control / Radar Details	2,321
Motor Vehicle Accidents	256
Motor Vehicle Incidents	34
Disable Vehicles Assisted	98
Traffic Complaints	36

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS – ETHICS STATEMENT ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

The Franklin Borough Police Department complies with N.J.S.A. 40A:181.2, which prohibits ticket or arrest quotas and ensures enforcement decisions are never based on municipal revenue. Each situation is evaluated individually, and officers make decisions based solely on the facts of the case. No officer receives rewards or penalties based on the number of summonses or arrests. The department strictly prohibits biasbased policing, profiling, or discrimination in any enforcement activity, in accordance with the 14th Amendment and New Jersey Attorney General Directives 2005-01 and 2019-3.



SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

The Support Services Division plays a vital behind-the-scenes role in ensuring the police department operates efficiently and effectively. While sworn officers often serve on the front lines of public safety, support services provide the critical infrastructure, technical expertise, and logistical coordination that support both daily operations and long-term strategic goals. This division includes a combination of sworn and civilian personnel who specialize in areas such as administration, records management, investigations, and traffic operations.

INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Sworn Personnel: Det. Eric Moschberger / Det. David MacQuesten

The Investigations Unit, also known as the Detective Bureau, supports the Patrol Division by pursuing and apprehending criminal offenders and managing complex investigations that require coordination with local, county, state, and federal agencies. Franklin Borough's two detectives serve as liaisons to these partners, ensuring thorough case handling. No two cases are alike, the data below does not fully reflect the extensive resources and time dedicated to each investigation on behalf of our community's victims.

Description	Count
Criminal Investigations	26
Pre-Employment Background Investigations	2
Pieces of Evidence Processed	129
Sex Offender Registrations	16
Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Inspections	10
Firearms ID and Purchase Permit Applications Processed	97
Concealed Carry Permit Applications Processed	19



RECORDS UNIT

Civilian Personnel: Wendy Burdge

The Records Unit manages and maintains all official records generated by the department. Duties include data entry, record keeping, information retrieval, file management, fulfilling public records requests, compliance and reporting, and providing administrative support. The Unit plays a crucial role in maintaining accurate records, ensuring compliance with regulations, and supporting law enforcement operations.

Description	Count
Department Cases Processed	344
Discovery Processed	213
OPRA Requests Processed	23
Firearms Applications Processed	97
Accident Reports for Public Access	255

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Sworn Personnel: Lt. Nevin Mattessich

The Administrative Unit handles the department's core administrative functions, including managing procurement of equipment, vehicles, and supplies; overseeing the development, review, and implementation of departmental policies and procedures; coordinating efforts to maintain and achieve professional accreditation; and ensuring compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local mandates—such as training requirements, certification standards, and reporting obligations.

Description	Count
Digital Training Courses Facilitated	27
Agency Policies Updated	7
Vehicles Purchased and Upfitted	2
Firearms Applications Reviewed	116



TRAFFIC UNIT

Sworn Personnel: Sgt. Robert Vander Ploeg

The Traffic Unit promotes roadway safety and smooth traffic flow by enforcing motor vehicle laws, investigating crashes, and conducting DUI and speed enforcement. The officer assigned to the unit also supports school zone safety, special events, and addresses community traffic concerns. In addition, the unit uses traffic data to identify high-risk areas and guide enforcement efforts.

Description	Count
Traffic Complaints	20
Traffic Studies	19
Radar/Calming Details	323
School Traffic Details	85
Crossing Guards	14

TRAFFIC STUDY STATISTICS

Franklin Borough may span just 4.5 square miles, but it includes 26.87 miles of roadway and three major highways. Despite its size, the borough experiences high traffic volumes due to popular retailers, restaurants, and businesses. To address traffic concerns and improve safety, a dedicated Traffic Officer position was created in March 2024. This role supports targeted enforcement and data-driven strategies based on traffic analysis.

Traffic data is gathered through the department's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and a discreet radar study device, which is deployed based on resident input and identified needs. These tools help focus patrol efforts where they are most needed. The Traffic Unit analyzed data of over 374,000 vehicles recorded across 27 weeks and various timeframes. The following studies highlight roads where multiple traffic complaints were received.

Roadway	Average Daily Total	Average Speed (MPH)
Buckwheat Road	1,212	24.9
Cork Hill Road	1,593	25.5
County Route 631 (Franklin Avenue)	5,969	34
Davis Road	489	26.7
High Street	1,792	24.9
Main Street	714	23
Mitchell Avenue	1,970	26.7
Rutherford Avenue	1,008	28.1
State Route 23	22,834	37
Wildcat Road	365	27.3



SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Our officers' shoulder a diverse range of responsibilities beyond their traditional duties of maintaining law and order. In addition to their primary role of patrolling neighborhoods and responding to emergencies, our officers are tasked with the myriad of other responsibilities listed below.

ABC	ABLE	Academy Instructors	Accident Recon.	Accreditation	Active Shooter	Alcotest Coordinator	Armorer
Invest. Unit	Vander Ploeg	Geddis VanderPloeg Schneider Grissom	VanderPloeg MacQuesten	Mattessich Vander Ploeg	Schneider Moschberger	VanderPloeg Schneider	Schneider Prol
ALPR	Bias Incidents	Business Alarms	BWC/MVR System	BWC/MVR Redaction	Cellebrite Operator	CLEAR Program	Community Outreach
Schneider Geddis	Invest. Unit	Mattessich Burdge	Mattessich Geddis	Mattessich Geddis	Schneider	Geddis	Geddis Cugliari
Court Liaison	CPS Technician	Crossing Guards	Defensive Tactics	Discovery	Drug Recog. Expert	DV Team	Equipment
Geddis	VanderPloeg MacQuesten	Traffic Unit	Grissom Schneider	Burdge Mattessich	Geddis Schneider	Grissom	Mattessich
Evidence	Extra Duty	Facility Maint.	Field Training	Fingerprint Compliance	Firearms (FBPD)	Firearms Applications	First Aid/CPR
Invest. Unit	Geddis	Mattessich	Geddis VanderPloeg Schneider Grissom Babcock	Mattessich	Schneider Prol	Burdge Mattessich	Mattessich
Fleet Maint.	Grants	Gun Intel.	Handle w/Care Program	HLEO	ICAT	Internal Affairs	ІТ
Mattessich	Mattessich Geddis VanderPloeg	Geddis	Invest. Unit	Flora Della Fera	Vander Ploeg	Geddis VanderPloeg Schneider	Geddis Mattessich Schneider
Juvenile Liaison	LEAD Program	LE Licensing	LENS Liaison	Live Scan	MEB Instructor	Megans Law	Firearms Simulator
LaGrave	Babcock Della Fera Schneider	Geddis Invest. Unit	Mattessich	Mattessich	Grissom	Invest. Unit	Vander Ploeg
MV Titles	NIBRS/UCR	NJ Learn	NJSARS	OC Instructor	Operation Helping Hand	OPRA	Physical Fitness
Geddis	Burdge Mattessich	Mattessich	Geddis	Grissom	Geddis	Burdge Mattessich	Grissom
PowerDMS	Medicine Drop	PTT Phones	Parole- Notification	Public Information	Radar Instructor	Radios	Resiliency
Mattessich Cugliari	Geddis Invest. Unit	Mattessich Schneider	Mattessich Geddis	Cugliari VanderPloeg	VanderPloeg	Grissom Schneider	VanderPloeg MacQuesten
Right to Know	Security Assessor	SART	Scheduling	School Safety Team	Share911	Social Media	Special Events
Burdge	Grissom	Grissom	Geddis Cugliari	Invest. Unit	Mattessich	Cugliari	Geddis VanderPloeg
Special Needs	SH Adjust.	HQ Recording	SCPO	TAC Coord.	Training		
Babcock	Invest. Unit	Geddis	Geddis Invest. Unit	VanderPloeg Grissom	Geddis Mattessich		



RECRUITMENT

On July 1, 2024, the Franklin Borough Police Department welcomed its newest officer, Dylan Testa, who recently graduated from the Morris County Police Academy's 103rd Basic Course for Police Officers.



Officer Testa is a Centenary College graduate, earning a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Paralegal Studies. He achieved a spot on the Dean's List during his senior year, reflecting his academic excellence.

While at the Morris County Police Academy, Officer Testa excelled both academically and physically, placing in the top 8% in physical fitness out of more than 50 recruits and maintaining an academic GPA in the high 90s. The academy's rigorous program demands dedication, endurance, and a commitment to excellence, requiring mastery of essential skills in law enforcement, including legal procedures, crisis response, and de-escalation tactics, while also meeting intense physical and academic challenges.

We are excited to have Officer Testa join our team and look forward to seeing the positive impact he will make in our community.



(Photo caption (L to R): Officer Lospinuso, Det. Moschberger, Chief Cugliari, Officer Testa, Capt. Geddis, Sgt. Schneider, Sgt. Vander Ploeg)

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

PROMOTIONS

In 2024, Officer Babcock was honored with a promotion to the rank of Sergeant in recognition of his leadership, dedication, and longstanding service to the Franklin Borough Police Department.

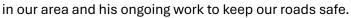


Sgt. Babcock has proudly served the Franklin community for 13 years. Throughout his career, has consistently demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and deep commitment to making a positive impact, both within the department and beyond. As a Field Training Officer, Sgt. Babcock has helped shape the future of our department by guiding and mentoring newly hired officers. His experience and steady leadership ensure that new officers are well-prepared and confident as they begin their service.

Outside of his daily responsibilities, Sgt. Babcock is a familiar and trusted presence in our community. He teaches the Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD) program at Franklin Elementary School, where he plays an important role in educating and supporting local youth.

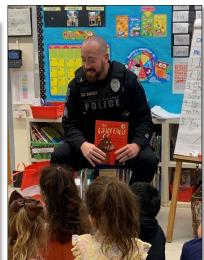
Sgt. Babcock also serves on the Autism New Jersey Law Enforcement Advisory Committee, working to promote autism-friendly practices in policing. His efforts help ensure that all members of our community are met with respect, understanding, and thoughtful care.

Sgt. Babcock's dedication to public safety has also been recognized in the past with the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Award, highlighting his outstanding efforts in reducing impaired driving











RETIREMENTS

On December 1, 2024, Sgt. Rafael Burgos officially retired from the Franklin Borough Police Department after 26 years of service to our agency and the citizens of our community.



A proud veteran of the United States Coast Guard, Sgt. Burgos began his public service career as a Special Police Officer in Beach Haven, NJ. After graduating from the Ocean County Police Academy, he began working full-time in law enforcement in Allentown, NJ, where he served for approximately three years. He later joined the Franklin Borough Police Department, where he earned the rank of Sergeant in 2017.

Over the course of his distinguished career, Sgt. Burgos served in many roles, including patrol officer, frontline supervisor, firearms instructor, and Megan's Law liaison. His unwavering dedication to protecting and serving the community has been evident every step of the way.

Sgt. Burgos has also been recognized for his efforts, including receiving a Lifesaving Award from the Fraternal Order of Police.

We thank Sgt. Burgos for his commitment and invaluable contributions to our department. We wish him continued success and happiness in all his future endeavors.











AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (MADD) AWARD

Sgt. Robert Vander Ploeg & Officer Zachary LaGrave







In June of 2024, Sgt. Rob Vander Ploeg and P.O. Zach LaGrave were honored with the prestigious "Recognition of Excellence Award" by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). This award highlights their outstanding efforts in reducing drunk and impaired driving in our community.

At the Annual New Jersey Law Enforcement Recognition Awards Event at the Heldrich Hotel in New Brunswick, Sgt. Vander Ploeg and P.O. LaGrave joined a distinguished group of officers from across the state who were honored for their exceptional dedication to traffic safety. Their efforts have made a significant impact in protecting lives and promoting a culture of responsible driving, and we are proud of their accomplishments!







AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

KINGDOM OF LIFE TEMPLE LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION AWARD

Chief Gregory Cugliari & Capt. Seamus Geddis

Chief Gregory Cugliari and Capt. Seamus Geddis were honored to attend a special Law Enforcement Appreciation ceremony hosted by the Kingdom of Life Temple on Main Street in Franklin.

During the event, Chief Cugliari and Capt. Geddis were recognized for their outstanding service to the Franklin Borough community.

The Franklin Borough Police Department extends its heartfelt gratitude to Pastor J. Samuel Canion, Lady Sandra Canion, and the entire Kingdom of Life Temple congregation for their kindness, support, and commitment to community partnership.









AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

ZOLL VISIONS TEAM AWARD

Det. David MacQuesten and Officer Zachary LaGrave

Detective David MacQuesten and Officer Zachary LaGrave were honored with the prestigious ZOLL Visions Team Award at the Heart & Soul community celebration event hosted by Atlantic Health System.

On July 18, 2023, officers responded to the Anytime Fitness gym in Franklin for a medical emergency. Upon arrival, they observed three individuals, later identified as Stacie Krieger, Ronwaldo Tan, and Jason Boggs, performing CPR on an unconscious male. Together, they tirelessly administered chest compressions and utilized an AED to deliver shocks. Their collaborative efforts proved successful as the individual regained consciousness before being turned over to arriving medical personnel and transported to a local hospital.



The Heart & Soul event began in 2014 as a way to honor the incredible accomplishments of the first responders and emergency personnel who provide exemplary life-saving care to members of our community.

During the event, Officers MacQuesten and LaGrave were recognized along with Ms. Krieger, Mr. Tan, Mr. Boggs, and numerous paramedics and hospital staff whose collaborative efforts epitomize the spirit of heroism and compassion.





December 2024 – P.O. Alex Lospinuso was recognized by the department for providing constructive and supportive guidance to a fellow officer during the processing of a detainee. His efforts helped improve the use of department equipment and were well-received, demonstrating a strong example of peer mentorship and informal leadership.

December 2024 – Det. Eric Moschberger and P.O. Brendan Prol were recognized by a member of the public for their rapid response and professionalism during a medical emergency call. A community member expressed gratitude for the assistance they provided, highlighting their professionalism and dedication.

November 2024 – Sgt. Robert Vander Ploeg was recognized by the department for his dedicated efforts in securing grant funding through a partnership with local Walmart stores. His initiative and follow-through on the grant process will provide valuable supplies and equipment for the agency, with the potential for recurring support.

November 2024 – P.O. Daniel Flora and Det. Eric Moschberger were recognized by a member of the public for their outstanding assistance with a motor vehicle incident. The individual shared that both officers went "above and beyond" to help achieve a successful resolution and expressed deep appreciation for their consistent communication and support during a challenging time.

November 2024 – Sgt. David Schneider was recognized by the department for his leadership and dedication in overseeing the dispatch radio system upgrades for our agency. He proactively coordinated with the Sparta Police IT Department, ensuring a smooth transition and improving the department's radio capabilities to better support officers in the field. His efforts have strengthened radio communications and enhanced overall operations.

September 2024 – P.O. Daniel Flora and P.O. Brendan Prol were recognized by a member of the community for their swift response and exceptional assistance following a motor vehicle accident. The individual shared that both officers went above and beyond in helping during a difficult situation, expressing deep gratitude for their support.

July 2024 – Sgt. David Schneider was recognized by the department for his professionalism and composure during a challenging incident involving a use of force. Following a thorough review, it was determined that the force used was objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the situation. Despite being provoked during the encounter, Sgt. Schneider maintained the high standard of conduct expected, exemplifying the professionalism and restraint valued by the agency.

July 2024 – P.O. Zachary LaGrave and P.O. Jake Rotunda were recognized by the department for their thorough investigative work during a traffic stop. Through careful observation and follow-up, they uncovered that the driver had provided false information and was wanted on a nationwide extradition warrant. Their attention to detail and persistence led to the driver's arrest and successful transfer to county custody.



The Franklin Borough Police Department strives to maintain a high quality of law enforcement services. Improving the relationship between employees and the public facilitates cooperation vital to the department's ability to achieve its goals. We are committed to providing law enforcement services that are fair, effective, and impartially delivered. It is our policy to accept and investigate all complaints of department and employees' alleged misconduct or wrongdoing from all people who wish to file a complaint, regardless of the hour or day of the week. This includes reports from anonymous sources, juveniles, undocumented immigrants, and persons under arrest or in custody.

All alleged instances involving an officer whose behavior, performance, or failure to act violates departmental rules, regulations, procedures, as well as relevant criminal and civil statutes, and the United States or New Jersey Constitutions, will be treated as reportable incidents. All reportable incidents shall be carefully and thoroughly reviewed by the Internal Affairs Supervisor to determine the manner of response that best serves the public, the department, and the employee. Reportable Incidents classified as misconduct will result in an internal investigation conducted in accordance with the New Jersey Attorney General's Internal Affairs Directive and this written directive.

The conclusion of each internal affairs investigation will result in one of the following four (4) dispositions:

- **Sustained.** A preponderance of the evidence shows an officer violated any law; regulation; directive, guideline, policy, or procedure issued by the Attorney General or County Prosecutor; agency protocol; standing operating procedure; rule; or training.
- **Unfounded.** A preponderance of the evidence shows that the alleged misconduct did not occur.
- **Exonerated.** A preponderance of the evidence shows the alleged conduct did occur but did not violate any law; regulation; directive, guideline, policy, or procedure issued by the Attorney General or County Prosecutor; agency protocol; standing operating procedure; rule; or training.
- **Not Sustained.** The investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation.

The Franklin Borough Police Department adheres to a system of progressive discipline, aligned with the New Jersey Attorney General's Guidelines, that includes the following elements:

- Oral reprimand or performance notice;
- Written reprimand;
- Monetary fine;
- Suspension without pay;
- Loss of promotional opportunity;
- Demotion; and
- Discharge from employment.



Our internal affairs policy is designed with the primary aim of enhancing our ability to deliver police services while assuring the people of our community that complaints of police misconduct are properly addressed.

Annually, our police department furnishes the Sussex County Prosecutor's Office with a comprehensive statistical report detailing the nature of complaints received and the outcomes of our investigations. Furthermore, this report is made readily accessible to the public through our official website.

2024 INTERNAL AFFAIRS ANNUAL SUMMARY

Description	# Allegations	# Initial Allegation Sustained	# Other Allegation Sustained	# Not Sustained
Criminal violation	0	0	0	0
Differential treatment	0	0	0	0
Excessive force	0	0	0	0
Improper arrest	1	0	0	1
Improper entry	0	0	0	0
Improper search	0	0	0	0
Domestic violence incident (non-criminal)	0	0	0	0
Demeanor	0	0	0	0
Other rule violation	7	0	3	4
TOTAL	8	0	3	5

In addition to responding to complaints and conducting internal investigations, the Internal Affairs function also plays a proactive role in promoting accountability and maintaining high professional standards within the department. To support this goal, our agency employs a multifaceted approach to monitoring officer conduct and performance. This includes the use of an early warning system designed to identify potential concerns before they escalate, as well as a structured monthly review of body-worn camera footage. These tools allow supervisors to observe patterns, reinforce policy compliance, and provide timely feedback or intervention when necessary, all of which contribute to a culture of transparency, integrity, and continuous improvement.



USE OF FORCE

Police officers are entrusted with the responsibility of using force when necessary to uphold public safety and enforce the law. This authority is carefully regulated and intended to be used only in specific circumstances, such as protecting themselves or others from harm, preventing the escape of a suspect, or maintaining order during dangerous situations. The use of force must always be reasonable, proportionate, and guided by departmental policies and legal standards to ensure it aligns with constitutional rights and community expectations.

The Franklin Borough Police Department utilizes a comprehensive three-tiered system for meticulously reviewing use-of-force incidents. These tiers encompass Supervisor, Command, and Executive evaluations, ensuring a thorough and accountable assessment process.

In all instances when law enforcement force is used, except when such force results in a fatality, whether on or off duty, all officers who employ such force shall complete and submit an electronic Use of Force Report (through the Attorney General's Use of Force Portal).

Supervisor Review – The officer's sergeant shall promptly review Use of Force Reports for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with policy. This includes reviewing the report in the Attorney General's Use of Force Portal and printing a copy for the case file.

The review must consider all available information, such as video footage, reports, statements, medical records, and injury documentation. Supervisors must also assess whether the force was applied in a non-discriminatory manner, ensuring fair treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics.

The supervisor shall recommend appropriate actions, which may include commendation, training, policy updates, equipment changes, discipline, or criminal referral. The outcome must be documented in a Guardian Tracking record.

If the officer involved is a supervisor, the next highest-ranking supervisor will conduct the review. If the Chief of Police uses force, the internal affairs supervisor will complete the review.

Command Review – The Captain or his/her designee shall also review these incidents in the same manner as described above.

Executive Review – The Chief of Police shall review each meaningful command review and approves or rejects the recommendations of the supervisors who conducted the review.



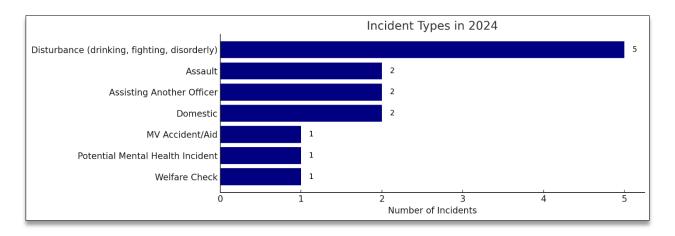


In 2024, the Franklin Borough Police Department recorded **14,570** calls for service, covering a wide range of police functions, including responses to crimes in progress, traffic crash investigations, disturbances, security/property checks, motor vehicle stops, and other officer-initiated activities. Officers used force in only seven incidents, meaning force was used in **less than 1%** of total calls for service.

Our Use of Force Reports indicate that officers consistently used the minimum amount of force necessary to control and de-escalate situations. In 2024, only one individual reported minor injuries (a contusion or complaint of pain) related to a use-of-force incident—compared to one in 2023 and six in 2022. In each instance, subjects received prompt medical attention, and no complaints of excessive force were filed against any officer.

2024 USE OF FORCE DATA

# of Incidents	# of Reports	# of Officers	# Avg. Reports per Incident	% of Officers Who Used Force
7	10	6	1.4	35%



Despite a significant increase in call volume over the past three years, the number of Use of Force Reports has remained steady and even decreased in 2024. Calls for service rose from 13,399 in 2022 to 14,771 in 2023, before slightly declining to 14,570 in 2024. Notably, the most common reason for the use of force was disturbances, including incidents involving drinking, fighting, and disorderly conduct.





EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS)



The Franklin Borough Police Department follows the guidance outlined in New Jersey Attorney General Directive 2018-3, which calls for the use of an Early Warning (EW) System. This system is designed to identify patterns in officer conduct that may signal an increased risk of harm to the public, the department, or the officer. It includes required performance indicators and may also be customized with additional, objective indicators that reflect the needs of the department and the community it serves.

When an officer reaches the threshold for concern—based on these indicators—supervisory personnel initiate a review and implement appropriate remedial action to address the behavior. The goal of the EW System is to support officer accountability, promote public trust, and ensure the continued safety and professionalism of police services.

BODY WORN CAMERA (BWC) RECORDING REVIEWS

Supervisors conduct random formal reviews of selected recordings at the rate of at least one segment per subordinate per calendar month to assess officer performance as well as to flag video/audio that may be appropriate for training purposes.

When identifying any areas where additional training or guidance is needed, supervisors shall take the appropriate corrective action and communicate this information to the command staff through the chain of command for any additional action or remediation.



In 2024, supervisors conducted 168 random BWC reviews and 10 risk-based reviews.

ANIMAL CRUELTY



Under New Jersey law, the authority to enforce animal cruelty statutes (N.J.S.A. Title 4, Chapter 22) has been transferred from the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA) to County Prosecutors and local law enforcement. Each police department must designate a **Municipal Humane Law Enforcement Officer (HLEO)**, who is certified by the New Jersey Police Training Commission.

HLEOs are responsible for enforcing state animal cruelty laws, investigating reports of neglect or abuse, and ensuring animals receive proper care and medical attention. They also play a key role in educating the public about humane treatment and responsible pet ownership. All animals in New Jersey must be provided with adequate food, water, and shelter.

The Franklin Borough Police Department is proud to have two certified HLEOs: **P.O. Nicholas Della Fera** and **P.O. Daniel Flora**.

Definitions of Common Animal Cruelty Violations

- Animal Cruelty: Acts of abuse or the failure to provide care.
- Animal Neglect: Failing to meet an animal's basic needs, such as food, water, and shelter.
- Adverse Environmental Conditions: Exposure to extreme temperatures (below 35°F or above 90°F) or hazardous weather without adequate protection.
- **Bodily Injury:** Any physical pain, illness, or impairment.
- **Cruel Conditions:** Inhumane treatment or restraint that poses a risk to the animal's health or wellbeing, including improper tethering or denying access to water.

Description	Count
Total Animal Complaints	181
HLEO Investigations Conducted	6
Criminal Charges Issues	3
Animal Abuse/Cruelty Summonses Issued	2



HLEO Officer Della Fera





Our officers are committed to continuous professional development and staying sharp in their skills. They engage in a combination of training methods, including the use of digital learning platforms, inperson training sessions, and scenario-based exercises. Many of our officers also serve as instructors at the police academy, where they teach a range of topics and reinforce their own knowledge through mentoring and leading others. This blended approach to learning ensures that our team remains well-prepared, adaptable, and up to date with evolving best practices in law enforcement.

In 2024, officers completed approximately 3,332 hours of training across a wide range of courses, including but not limited to:

CLEAR Institute
Accreditation Manager
Pre Employment Background
Internal Affairs Investigations
Frontline Supervision
Autism Awareness for LE
DRE Instruction
Drug Reform Instruction
Methods of Instruction
Title 2C Instruction
Basic Course for Police Officers
Field Training Program
Firearms Qualifications
Firearms Familiarization
Bloodborne Pathogens

Use of Force
Vehicular Pursuit
Domestic Violence
Field Training Refresher
Workplace Harassment
Fire Repression
Criminal Justice Info/MDT
Temporary Detention/PREA
Mechanical Force/OC Spray
Mechanical Force/MEB
First Aid and CPR
MVR/BWC Use
Leadership
Bias-Based Policing
Auto-License Plate Reader

Detainee Transportation
Security Awareness
Legal Updates
Investigative Report Writing
Hazard Communications
Performance Evaluations
Basic Crime Scene
Emotional Disturbed Persons
Officer Wellness
Ethics
OPS-LENS
Defensive Tactics Instruction
Defensive Tactics
Active Shooter
Alcotest Recertification

In addition to in-service training, officers stay informed through regular updates and guidance from federal, state, county, and local agencies. The department also distributes training bulletins, special orders, and memorandums on internal functions, all of which officers are required to review and acknowledge. These communications cover operational procedures, changes to laws, annual training requirements, new initiatives, updated directives, and other matters critical to effective law enforcement.









January 2024 - Contractor Charged with Theft by Deception

An individual was arrested after allegedly accepting payment for contracting work and failing to complete the job. The victim reported paying several thousand dollars for services never rendered. The person was charged with theft by deception and released on a summons pending a court appearance.

February 2024 - Juvenile Arrested for Firearm and Explosives Offenses

Police responded to a domestic dispute and discovered a juvenile had allegedly pointed a loaded firearm at a family member. A further search revealed multiple prohibited weapons and homemade devices. The juvenile was charged with several serious offenses and placed in juvenile detention pending court proceedings.

February 2024 - Multi-Agency Drug Raid Dismantles Local Operation

Following a multi-month investigation, police executed a search warrant and arrested several individuals involved in distributing methamphetamine. Multiple agencies assisted, and charges included possession with intent to distribute and weapons offenses. All suspects were lodged in county jail pending court appearances.

February 2024 – Gas Station Crash Injures Employee and Damages Utility Infrastructure

A pickup truck crashed into a gas station after hitting a utility pole and a wall, injuring a station employee. Both the driver and employee were hospitalized. The crash caused power outages and significant property damage; an investigation remains ongoing.

April 2024 – Sexual Assault Report Leads to Arrest

An individual was arrested after a report of sexual assault in a retail parking lot. The victim contacted police shortly after the incident, and the suspect was detained during an unrelated traffic stop. He was charged with sexual assault and criminal sexual contact and released to a hospital pending a court hearing.

April 2024 - Psychic Reader Arrested in Multi-State Theft Scheme

A woman posing as a psychic and tarot reader was arrested after allegedly defrauding a victim of cash and valuables worth nearly \$20,000. She was extradited from Massachusetts after being identified in a motor vehicle incident. She had a history of similar crimes across multiple jurisdictions and was charged with theft by deception.

June 2024 - Knife Incident at Community Event

Police arrested a man who reportedly brandished a folding knife and stabbed it into a picnic table during a dispute at a public event. The incident occurred in front of families and children near a live entertainment area. The individual was charged with disorderly conduct and unlawful possession of a weapon and released on a summons.



June 2024 - Repeat Offender Charged Again for Psychic Scheme

The same individual previously charged in April was arrested again following new allegations of defrauding another victim of over \$25,000. The woman had continued her psychic services under the alias 'Aminah' after her release and voluntarily presented herself to authorities. She was issued a new complaint summons and released pending another court appearance.

June 2024 - Traffic Stop Leads to Fugitive Arrest

During a motor vehicle stop, an individual provided false identification and a fraudulent driver's license. Further investigation revealed the person had a nationwide extradition warrant from Florida. He was charged with obstruction and hindering apprehension and is awaiting extradition from county custody.

July 2024 – Traffic Stop Leads to Drug Charges

A routine motor vehicle stop resulted in the arrest of an individual found in possession of cocaine. The person received multiple traffic summonses and was charged with a third-degree drug offense. He was released pending a court appearance.

July 2024 - Driver Eludes Police, Later Arrested

During a traffic stop, a driver fled the scene and was later located by another police department. He was charged with eluding and disorderly conduct and transferred to a correctional facility. He remains in custody pending his appearance in court.

July 2024 – Firearm Discharge While Intoxicated Results in Multiple Charges

A man was arrested after allegedly firing a rifle while intoxicated, damaging a neighbor's property where children were present. He was charged with weapon possession, endangerment, and several related offenses. He was lodged in county jail awaiting a court hearing.

July 2024 – Shoplifting Complaint Uncovers Outstanding Warrants

An individual was arrested for shoplifting and attempting to hide his identity by providing false information. Police later discovered multiple active warrants, including one with no bail. He was charged with several offenses and detained in county jail.

July 2024 – Man Charged After Attempting to Enter Vehicles

Police arrested a man seen attempting to access vehicles and private property without authorization. After initially providing a false identity, he was found to have an outstanding warrant. He was charged with trespassing, obstruction, and other offenses, and transported to a hospital for medical care.

August 2024 – Road Rage Incident Involving Imitation Firearm

Police responded to a road rage incident where an imitation firearm was allegedly displayed. The suspect fled but was located shortly afterward and charged with multiple offenses including simple assault and harassment. He was released with a summons pending court proceedings.



August 2024 – Multiple Arrests Over Three Days for Repeat Offender

One individual was arrested on separate occasions over a three-day span for assault, weapons violations, and violating a protection order. He was lodged in a correctional facility following each arrest and now faces multiple charges. He awaits a hearing in superior court.

August 2024 – Woman Arrested for Shoplifting at Retail Store

An individual was arrested inside a store after being found with nearly \$800 of concealed merchandise. She was also found to have multiple active warrants from several jurisdictions. She was charged with third-degree shoplifting and lodged in the county correctional facility pending court.

September 2024 - False Stolen Vehicle Report Uncovered

Two individuals were arrested after filing a false stolen vehicle report. Surveillance footage showed the vehicle being driven by its reported owner, contradicting their statements. Both individuals were charged and released with court summonses.

November 2024 – Suspect Charged in Liquor Store Burglary

Following a break-in at a local liquor store, police charged a suspect with burglary, theft, and criminal mischief. The suspect was arrested in another jurisdiction on unrelated charges and remains in custody. Multiple agencies collaborated in the investigation.

December 2024 - Burglary Alarm Leads to School Trespass Arrest

Officers responded to a burglary alarm at a school and located a suspect inside the building. Surveillance footage helped guide the search, and the individual was arrested without incident. He was charged with trespassing and criminal mischief and released pending court proceedings.

December 2024 - Hit-and-Run Driver Arrested After DUI Crash

A driver involved in a collision fled the scene but was later located after crashing again and found to be under the influence. Minor injuries were reported from the initial crash. The driver was charged with assault by auto and DUI and was evaluated at a hospital before court processing.















































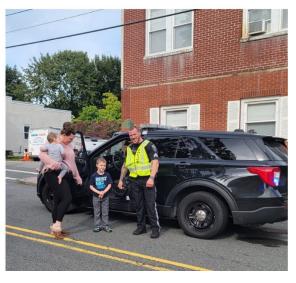










































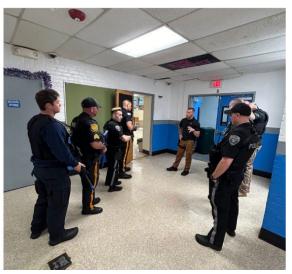






























In Honor and Remembrance

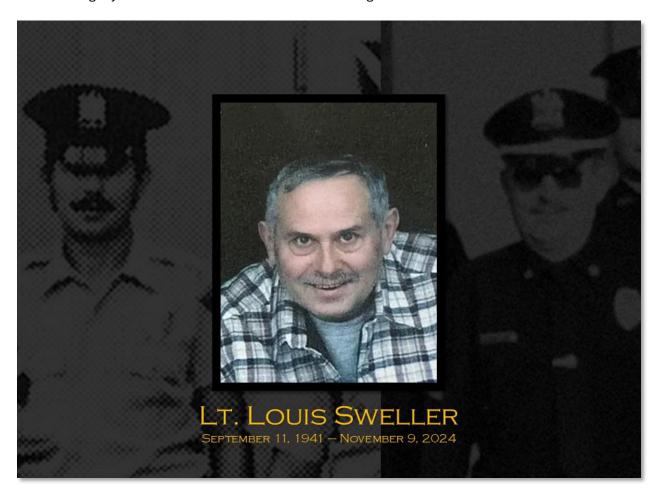
Ret. Lt. Louis Sweller

September 11, 1941 - November 9, 2024

Retired Lieutenant Louis Sweller passed away at the age of 83 on Saturday, November 9, 2024, at the Karen Ann Quinlan Home for Hospice in Fredon Township, NJ, after a courageous battle with a prolonged illness. Born to Louis and Violet Sweller in Sparta, NJ, Lt. Sweller was a lifelong resident of Franklin and was deeply dedicated to both his community and his country.

Lt. Sweller served honorably in the United States Army during the Vietnam War before embarking on a long and distinguished career as a sworn officer, proudly serving Franklin Borough until his retirement in 2003. Known for his love of the outdoors, he spent many hours hunting, fishing, and gardening with family and friends.

The Franklin Borough Police Department extends its deepest condolences to the Sweller family. Lt. Sweller's legacy of service and dedication will not be forgotten.





I genuinely hope you find value in the information contained within this comprehensive annual report. This report reflects a portion of the efforts, achievements, and challenges faced by your dedicated professionals over the past year while upholding their oath to serve and protect our community.

At the core of our values lies an unwavering dedication to accuracy and integrity. We understand the importance of providing you, the members of our community, with reliable information about our activities and performance. Therefore, we want to assure you that every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this report is thorough, accurate, and complete.

As your police department, we remain committed to fostering open communication and unwavering trust. We believe that by working together, we can build a safer and stronger community for all.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in us.

- Chief Gregory M. Cugliari



Franklin Borough Police Department

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2024 Annual Report Prepared by Chief Gregory Cugliari and Sgt. Robert Vander Ploeg (PIO)





