



Department of Police Accountability

Audit Report

San Francisco Police Department: Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Use-of-Force Oversight

Presented to the San Francisco Police Commission

February 4, 2026

Why DPA Did This Audit

- DPA has a Charter mandate to audit SFPD's use of force.

Audit Objective and Scope

- To determine the effectiveness of SFPD's processes for monitoring use-of-force incidents.
- The audit considered use-of-force incidents from May 2024 to March 2025.

Methodology

- DPA conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.
- Those standards require auditors to plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence that provides a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

Key Requirements

Under DGO 5.01:

- Supervisors shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether the force used appears reasonable and is within policy.
- The Training Division shall ensure that use of force data is systematically reviewed, examined, and assessed to identify and address training needs and efficacy.

Audit Findings

- **Finding 1:** Process limitations reduce SFPD's ability to show that use-of-force evaluations are consistent, thorough, and objective.
- **Finding 2:** Data access limitations and informal practices may hinder SFPD's ability to use use-of-force evaluations to improve training.
- **Finding 3:** Use-of-force reporting and audit practices limit SFPD's ability to show internal accountability and effective oversight.

Finding 1: Process limitations reduce SFPD's ability to show that use-of-force evaluations are consistent, thorough, and objective.

Key Subfindings:

- Supervisors are not required to describe the basis for their compliance determinations, leaving the department without clear reasons for these decisions.
- SFPD does not have policy requirements for how lieutenants and captains should review evaluations, limiting the department's ability to ensure that these members provide consistent oversight.
- Gaps in policy and system controls limit SFPD's ability to show that use-of-force evaluations are objective.

Finding 2: Data access limitations and informal practices may hinder SFPD's ability to use use-of-force evaluations to improve training.

Key Subfindings:

- SFPD's transition of the evaluation form to a new system disrupted the Training Division's access to aggregate use-of-force data.
- The Training Division does not have formal procedures for analyzing use-of-force data, which may hinder its ability to consistently identify trends and assess training effectiveness.

Finding 3: Use-of-force reporting and audit practices limit SFPD's ability to show internal accountability and effective oversight.

Key Subfindings:

- SFPD does not have formal procedures to help ensure consistent, accurate reporting of use-of-force incidents to the California Department of Justice.
- Supervisors must complete a duplicative use-of-force log, which may reduce time available for incident evaluation.

Recommendations

The report includes 14 recommendations to strengthen SFPD's use-of-force oversight.

Key Recommendations:

- Ensure the Supervisory Use of Force Evaluation Form captures the basis for policy-compliance determinations.
- Define the responsibilities of lieutenants and captains when reviewing a Supervisory Use of Force Evaluation Form. As necessary, incorporate these responsibilities into DGO 5.01, or another applicable written directive, and ensure the evaluation form captures the substance of their reviews.
- Formalize procedures for reporting incidents to the California Department of Justice and incorporate them into DGO 5.01 or another applicable written directive.
- Formally assess the continued need for the use-of-force log. If the department determines that the log does not serve a distinct function, it should remove the requirement from DGO 5.01.