



# City of Cambridge Police Department

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## **Commissioner Robert C. Haas and the Cambridge Police Department Crime Analysis Unit Identify New Progressive Tool for Analyzing Officer Performance and the Use of Discretionary Police Authority**

**June 17, 2010** -- In the wake of the events of last summer, the Cambridge Police Department Crime Analysis Unit began analyzing data from reports relating to incidents<sup>1</sup> of disorderly conduct in the City of Cambridge.

This internal analysis used data from the years 2004 – 2008 to examine disorderly conduct incidents in Cambridge and to compare data from those years with regional and national averages. This analysis included identifying the neighborhoods and business districts in which these incidents occurred, as well as the race of the offender and the arresting officer.

In its analysis, the department found CPD disorderly conduct arrests to be well below national and regional averages in terms of the rate of arrests per capita. The percentage of people charged with disorderly conduct in Cambridge was also found to be in-line with regional and national averages in terms of percentage of total arrests and also according to the race of offenders.

When disorderly conduct charges were further analyzed based on the race of the offender and the arresting officer, results showed that black and white offenders were charged at the same rate, regardless of the race of the arresting officer.

Overall, this analysis found that charges for disorderly conduct **do not increase** when officers are the target of an offender's aggression and that there are **no disparities by race**. The data also shows that of the 9 arrests for simple disorderly conduct in 2008 where the officer was the target of the aggression, all 9 incidents involved **different officers** and all 9 offenders were white.

Data for the year 2008 was used for an in-depth analysis based on several factors. The Crime Analysis Unit characterized disorderly conduct incidents into three types of scenarios officers are faced with:

- *Charges for Other Offense* (60%) – offender charged for more significant offense(s) and also charged with disorderly conduct.
- *Aggravated Disorderly* (17%) – conduct was so egregious that incident included additional charges (Typically Assault & Battery on Police Officer and/or Resisting Arrest).
- *Simple Disorderly* (23%) – charged solely for disorderly conduct.

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, "incidents" refers to arrests and/or charges of disorderly conduct either at the time of arrest or those subsequently added.

Through this detailed analysis, the Crime Analysis Unit identified that the potential for misuse, or the public perception of misuse, of police discretion increases as:

- The target of the offenders conduct becomes more focused on the police or an individual officer.
- The scope of their criminal conduct lessens.

Resulting from this analysis, Commissioner Haas has identified a new, progressive indicator of police officer performance. This new tool, in conjunction with other departmental practices and “early warning systems” used to identify potential problem behavior such as reviewing all citizen complaints, conducting audits and field inspections, etc., can be used to identify if and when officers are abusing their discretionary authority.

Based on this analysis and the identification of the new, progressive officer performance and use of discretionary authority indicator:

- Disorderly conduct incidents in the city will receive more scrutiny.
- CPD will use this new tool as an opportunity to train officers.

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