

Changes and Training in the Poulsbo Police Department

In the past 18 months, the Poulsbo Police Department has hired seven new officers and one professional staff to fill three new positions and five vacancies. As a result, more than half of the patrol division and ALL first-line supervisors are new. Elimination of the Assistant Chief position and creation of two Lieutenant positions provides more supervision and better-quality control to ensure that the Poulsbo PD is following policy and best practices.

With extra funding provided by the City, Poulsbo Police Officers received 54 hours of training in 2021, more than double the State-required 24 hours. Poulsbo officers' training included:

- Crisis Intervention Training
- Patrol Tactics and De-escalation
- Less Lethal tools; taser
- Defensive Tactics – special emphasis has focused on using time, distance, gathering more resources to de-escalate volatile situations and only use force as a last resort.
- Implicit bias and cultural awareness

In addition, over 50% of our patrol officers have completed the Criminal Justice Training Commission's 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) curriculum. Our remaining officers are scheduled to complete this curriculum in 2022.

Poulsbo PD has joined a regional training cadre with Suquamish PD, Bainbridge Island, Kitsap County, Port Orchard, and Bremerton that allows us to train together and establish more standardized procedures. This cadre trains together at least once a quarter to ensure officers from other agencies have a similar understanding of procedure and practice. These training sessions focus on de-escalation tactics, use-of-force tactics, less-lethal tools, and tactics.

Poulsbo Police command staff and officers have participated in at least six listening circles sponsored by the Welcome Home Project (helping formerly incarcerated people enter into community) and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. These powerful interactions help officers understand the human struggle many have with addiction. Police Officers play a role in helping people face their struggles with addiction and the toll it takes on people in the community. This process also helps officers have empathy and compassion for people struggling with addiction.

Poulsbo PD has hired a full-time social worker who works alongside our patrol Officers. This Behavioral Navigator has had a huge positive impact on policing. She responds to calls with officers and follows up with clients based on officer referrals. In 2020, when our Navigator was part-time, we had an average of 3 referrals a week. In 2021, she helped over 250 individuals. Now, we average one referral to her a day.

Poulsbo PD has also been working very closely with Poulsbo Fire Cares. Fire Cares is a new Fire Department program that provides community care for people in mental health crisis or with an ongoing need for follow-up support. We work in partnership with CARES to provide the right response to people in need.

The Poulsbo Police Department is changing, as are many police departments in the country. We know the future of law enforcement will look different than it has in the past and we embrace meaningful change. Our goals are to be transparent, accountable, approachable, and open to input from our community. We value the power of relationships and desire to improve our role in the community one interaction at a time.