

A Timeline of Major Cleveland Police Department Controversies, 2000-2012

2000:

- A federal jury [awards \\$3.1 million](#) to Curtis Harris, a Cleveland man who was paralyzed when a patrolman shot him in the back during a struggle in 1997.
- The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) launches an investigation into repeated complaints that Cleveland police were violating the constitutional rights of citizens. The events that led the DOJ to Cleveland and the results of that investigation are [well documented](#).

2003:

- Cleveland police request larger caliber handguns amid opposition from those who feel they are already too quick to use their weapons. The issue hits the newspapers amid reports that in the previous five years, [police had killed eight people](#).

2004:

- DOJ closes its four-year investigation, criticizing the way the Cleveland Police Department handles use of force complaints and concluding that some police shootings "[may have been avoidable](#)." Cleveland signs a settlement agreement with federal officials promising changes.

2005:

- Cleveland Police shoot and kill 15-year old [Brandon McCloud](#) in the bedroom of his home. Media reports that a dispatcher advised an officer at the scene to “shoot to kill.”
- Three more police suspects die under questionable circumstances before the end of the year, bringing the two-year total to five. A special prosecutor is appointed to investigate these deaths. She later [rules in favor of the police](#) in each case.

2007:

- Cleveland Police Chief Michael McGrath “tightens” the department's [policy on car chases](#) after eight people are either injured or killed in 2007 as a result of police chases in the city.
- The *Plain Dealer* reports that all of the 4,427 use-of-force investigations by police supervisors from Jan. 1, 2003, through Sept. 9, 2006, [ended in the officers' favor](#).

2008:

- The *Plain Dealer* reports that [at least 18 people](#) had been killed in Northeast Ohio and even more injured since 2003 in accidents involving police chases. Six of the people killed were innocent bystanders.

2010

- Several officers [pursue and forcibly arrested](#) Harold Harris, 39, who they believe to be involved in a nearby aggravated robbery on the East Side. Officers reported hitting him "numerous times" before they were able to handcuff him. The car Harris was driving was not ultimately the one involved in the nearby crime.
- Police approach Marlando Williams after [seeing him jaywalking](#) near East 93rd Street and Wade Park Avenue. They say the man looks familiar from prior "incidents" A foot chase follows and Williams is later shocked with a Taser. Since jaywalking is so rarely enforced in Cleveland, questions of selectivity and bias were raised almost immediately. Police argued that they had a right to go after Williams since he looked familiar from two prior incidents.
- Officers Lyndsey Bissell and Adonna Perez are [accused](#) of assaulting a handcuffed inmate. They later plead not guilty in Cleveland Municipal Court and are acquitted.

2011

- Officers Paul Crawford, Martin Lentz, Christopher Randolph and Kevin Smith are [involved in a car chase](#) and a physical altercation with Edward Henderson, a man with a history of mental illness. They are charged with assault and plead not guilty. The charges are later dropped when federal prosecutors take over the case.

- A media investigation uncovers that six Cleveland police officers accused of using excessive force had been involved in physical altercations [with at least 39 suspects](#) since February 2009. All but one of these suspect were unarmed, 14 of the 36 suspects were never convicted of any crime and eight were never even charged.
- The same investigation uncovers that [three of the officers](#) accused of using excessive force had a history of financial problems, drug use and/or misdemeanor arrest records.
- Officer Martin Lentz arrests Jalil Anderson, of York, Pa., after a traffic stop on suspicion of driving under suspension. Lentz's written incident report from the evening, states that Anderson became combative during booking at City Jail and threw a belt that struck and injured the officer. Anderson is charged with felony assault of a police officer. [Video evidence](#) later contradicts the officer's claim. The police department denies the existence of the video for time, then later refuses to release it as a public record
- A state corrections officer files a lawsuit after a [mysterious standoff](#) with police that nearly results in a double-shooting. The case is [later settled](#) for \$900,000.
- The mother of a [man who died](#) after a New Year's Eve struggle with police files a suit accusing officers of using excessive force.
- Days later, an on-duty Cleveland police officer [shoots and kills a man in Parma](#). The family of the man later sues the department.

- A two-year string of continuous incidents leads the Cleveland Plain Dealer to launch a deeper investigation. Many [begin to call](#) for a second DOJ investigation.
- Mere weeks after the Plain Dealer reports on these renewed calls for a DOJ investigation, they report that police have [again been sued](#), this time for using excessive force on a Puerto-Rican teenager with Down Syndrome. They reportedly mistook the boy for a white neighborhood robber who was older, heavier and nearly a foot taller than the teenager.
- A 2011 Cleveland State University study [again raises serious questions](#) about the police procedures for investigating citizen complaints and providing answers. Many of those surveyed report that internal investigations into their complaints are not thorough, and the results are very slow, with most never being informed of a result either way.
- A book by Professor Ronnie Dunn, the Cleveland State professor who conducted the research, presents data which shows that Cleveland police ticket blacks at higher rates than whites. This information prompts a call for legislation requiring the monitoring of data from traffic stops in Cleveland. No law is ever passed.
- An ACLU of Ohio report, "[Overcharging, Overspending, Overlooking: Cuyahoga County's Costly War on Drugs](#)", describes the targeting of African American communities for patrols and sweeps, resulting in disproportionate rates of arrest and incarceration for people of color.

2012

- A 26 minute police chase culminates in 13 Cleveland police officers firing 137 rounds into a car, killing two people. Cleveland Police Chief Michael McGrath calls the shooting “[a tragedy](#).”
- Reports begin to emerge that [police ignored instructions](#) to terminate their car chase prior to the shooting.
- Community groups again call out for a [new DOJ investigation](#) into police practices in Cleveland.