General Discussion

Injuries were sustained by 27.6 percent of the law enforcement officers assaulted in 2013. There were 620 assaults with injury reported, for an assault with injury rate of 2.1 per 100 full-time officers. Pittsburgh had the highest assault with injury rate, at 10.0 percent. Statewide, 89.4 percent of the assaults on police officers were cleared by arrest.

Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) were employed in 81.4 percent of the assaults on Pennsylvania police officers in 2013, while 11.1 percent of the assaults were committed with dangerous weapons other than firearms and knives or cutting instruments. Assaults with firearms and knives or other cutting instruments accounted for 5.8 and 1.6 percent of attacks, respectively.

Assaults with hands fists feet etc. produced the highest rate of personal injury; 29.7 percent of the officers attacked with these weapons were injured.

In 2013, 32.5 percent of the assaults happened while officers were responding to disturbance calls. This category of police activity, together with officers attempting other arrests, officers investigating suspicious persons or circumstances, and officers engaged in traffic pursuits and stops accounted for the majority of assaults on police officers.

Personal weapons were predominantly employed in the assaults during most types of police activity, and 85.0 percent of the police officers were assigned to vehicle patrols at the time of assault. Analysis revealed that 37.9 percent of the assaults on officers assigned to 2-person patrols happened while the officers were responding to disturbance calls, while 48.3 percent of assaults on officers assigned to 1-person patrols occurred while they were responding to disturbance calls or attempting other arrests.

In 2013, 22.9 percent of assaults on officers or detectives on special assignment took place while they were attempting other arrests, and 16.0 percent of assaults on officers on other assignments occurred when they were handling, transporting, or maintaining custody of prisoners.

Most assaults on police officers in 2013 occurred in May (211), while the fewest occurred in February (152).

In 2013, 52.2 percent of the reported assaults on police officers were committed between the hours of 6:01 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., while 25.5 percent occurred during the 4-hour period between 8:01 p.m. and midnight. Only 1.6 percent of the assaults were reported between 6:01 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.