

# National Use-of-Force Data Collection FAQs for the Crime Data Explorer

## September 20, 2021

*Note: These FAQs are updated from the FAQs that used to be located on FBI.gov.*

### **What is the National Use-of-Force Data Collection?**

Police-involved shootings and use of force have long been topics of national discussion, but a number of high-profile cases in which subjects died during arrests or while in police custody have heightened awareness of these issues. The opportunity to analyze information concerning use-of-force incidents and to have an informed dialogue is hindered by the lack of nationwide statistics. To address the issue, representatives from major law enforcement organizations collaborated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and developed the National Use-of-Force Data Collection.

The national data collection of federal, state, local, and tribal contributors will enable data users to view data on use-of-force occurrences involving law enforcement from a nationwide perspective. The goal of the resulting statistics is to provide an aggregate view of the incidents reported and the circumstances, subjects, and officers surrounding the incidents. The data collected focuses on information that is readily known and reportable within days after a use-of-force occurrence. Statistical reports will emphasize the collective nature of the data and will not assess whether the officers involved in use-of-force incidents acted lawfully or within the bounds of department policy.

### **What is the scope of use-of-force incidents covered by this collection?**

This collection includes actions by a law enforcement officer as a response to resistance that results in the death or serious bodily injury of a person or when a law enforcement officer discharges a firearm at or in the direction of a person. The term “serious bodily injury” means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, unconsciousness, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Serious bodily injury would include all gunshot wounds (regardless of whether they are penetrating or grazing), apparent broken bones, possible internal injury, severe laceration, stitches, sutures, chipped teeth, loss of teeth, canine bites requiring medical attention, unconsciousness due to an applied carotid artery hold, and injuries severe enough to require medical intervention and/or hospitalization. The term “medical intervention” does not include routine evaluation of the subject to determine fitness for arrest or detention by an emergency medical technician or medical staff at a medical facility. (This definition is based, in part, upon Title 18 United States Code [U.S.C], Section 2246 [4].)

### **Who will contribute data to this collection?**

Participation is open to all federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and investigative agencies in coordination with the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Each law enforcement agency will be responsible for reporting information for its own officers connected to incidents that meet the criteria of the data collection.

### **Is it mandatory for law enforcement agencies to contribute to this data collection?**

The FBI has no legal authority to mandate reporting of any data to the UCR Program. The FBI works closely with the major law enforcement agency organizations and the Criminal Justice Information

Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB), which is composed of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners to encourage law enforcement agencies to participate in the data collection.

**When did data collection begin?**

The FBI officially began collecting use-of-force data on January 1, 2019.

**Is the National Use-of-Force Data Collection going to capture and report information about the people involved in these occurrences?**

No names or personally identifiable information will be shared as part of this collection. The goal of the National Use-of-Force Data Collection is not to offer insight into single use-of-force incidents, but to provide an aggregate view of the incidents reported and the circumstances, subjects, and officers surrounding the incidents. The data collected will focus on the type of information that is readily known and can be reported within the first few days after a use-of-force occurrence. Statistical reports will emphasize the collective nature of the data and will not assess whether the officers involved in use-of-force incidents acted lawfully or within the bounds of department policy.

**Will the data collection include the final disposition or adjudication of the incident?**

The National Use-of-Force Data Collection does not collect information about final dispositions or adjudications of use-of-force incidents.

**Are all the data elements required?**

Yes, agencies must respond to all data elements. However, for many questions, if information is unknown because the investigation is still incomplete, users can select “Pending further investigation.” If the information is not known and is unlikely to ever be known, they may select “Unknown and is unlikely to ever be known.”

In months when no use-of-force incidents occurred in their jurisdictions, agencies must submit a “zero report” to confirm that no use-of-force incident occurred.

**What training is available?**

The FBI uses Microsoft Teams to provide live demonstrations of how to submit and manage use-of-force data within the National Use-of-Force Data Collection portal. The demonstrations can be scheduled by request. The FBI also developed a set of instructional videos, a series of quick guides, FAQs, and a Help Desk to assist users. To request a demo or get help, contact the use-of-force staff by telephone at 304-625-9998 or via email at [useofforce@fbi.gov](mailto:useofforce@fbi.gov).

**What oversight will ensure the information is accurate and truthful?**

The FBI CJIS Division will coordinate with law enforcement agencies to prevent potential duplicate reporting in situations where multiple law enforcement agencies are present during an incident with a use of force that meets the criteria for this data collection. The FBI UCR Program will compile information in order to provide a complete picture of incidents when multiple agencies are involved in a use-of-force incident.

**What data will be collected and reported about law enforcement use-of-force events?**

Three types of use-of-force events and information related to each event are collected. These events include the following:

- When a fatality occurs connected to use of force by a law enforcement officer.
- When there is serious bodily injury\* to a person connected to use of force by a law enforcement officer.
- When a firearm\*\* is discharged by law enforcement at or in the direction of a person.

The goal of the resulting statistics is to provide an aggregate view of the incidents reported and the officers, subjects, and circumstances surrounding the incidents for use in identifying trends and characteristics. The collection is not intended to offer insight into single use-of-force incidents. The characteristics of single, specific use-of-force incidents should be addressed by the local agency.

#### **\*Definition of serious bodily injury**

The term “serious bodily injury” means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, unconsciousness, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Serious bodily injury would include all gunshot wounds (regardless of whether they are penetrating or grazing), apparent broken bones, possible internal injury, severe laceration, stitches, sutures, chipped teeth, loss of teeth, canine bites requiring medical attention, unconsciousness due to an applied carotid artery hold, and injuries severe enough to require medical intervention and/or hospitalization. The term “medical intervention” does not include routine evaluation of the subject to determine fitness for arrest or detention by an emergency medical technician or medical staff at a medical facility. (This definition is based, in part, upon Title 18 United States Code [U.S.C], Section 2246 [4].)

#### **\*\*Definition of firearm**

The term firearm means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Firearms discharged at or in the direction of a person with less lethal munitions, such as beanbags, pepper balls, and rubber bullets are excluded. In addition, electronic control weapons are not to be considered firearms. (This definition is based on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives definition, 18 U.S. 921 [a] [3].)

#### **What is the FBI’s role in collecting and reporting use-of-force data?**

With the input of its law enforcement partners, the FBI developed the National Use-of-Force Data Collection portal and maintains the database for use-of-force information. The FBI periodically releases statistics to the public via the FBI’s Crime Data Explorer.

#### **What is the role of law enforcement agencies in the collection and reporting of use-of-force data to the FBI?**

Law enforcement agencies may voluntarily submit their use-of-force incidents to the National Use-of-Force Data Collection. Many agencies already publish use-of-force statistics to their constituents and have made transparency a priority in their communities. For the national data collection, each law enforcement agency will be responsible for reporting information for their own officers connected to incidents that meet the criteria of the data collection. For months in which no use-of-force incidents

occur, agencies submit a “zero report.” Most law enforcement agencies in the United States already report various types of data to the FBI—either directly or via their state UCR Programs.

### **Why is the FBI leading this initiative?**

In 2015, then FBI Director James B. Comey made crime data modernization a top priority at the FBI. At that time, he stated that the FBI was not collecting the right information to understand and analyze events that included police-involved shootings. The Director pledged that the FBI would support efforts to establish a reliable system for law enforcement to report information on use-of-force incidents.

Major law enforcement organizations and agencies worked with the FBI to develop the National Use-of-Force Data Collection, along with other partners, such as the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The FBI continues to meet and coordinate with these organizations and agencies to provide reliable, accurate and timely information.

### **What groups are involved in shaping this data collection?**

Federal, state, local, and tribal organizations and law enforcement representatives partnered with the FBI to develop the National Use-of-Force Data Collection, to include:

- Local, tribal, and federal agency representatives
- Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies
- Association of State UCR Programs
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Major Cities Chiefs Association
- Major County Sheriffs’ Association
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- National Sheriffs’ Association
- Police Executive Research Forum

These representatives invested many hours in discussions and decision-making, which was instrumental in conceiving reporting requirements, data elements, and publication concepts. These entities continue to support and promote participation in the data collection. Other supporters have included Community Oriented Policing Services, the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, among others. The FBI acknowledges the contributions of all participants who have helped establish a credible data repository that will inform discussions on use-of-force for a variety of user communities.