



Seattle Office of
Inspector General

Surveillance Technology Usage Review Computer-Aided Dispatch (2022 & 2023)

As Required by Seattle Municipal Code 14.18.060

September, 2024

Office of Inspector General

City of Seattle

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Purpose

Surveillance Ordinance Requirement

Per Seattle Municipal Code 14.18.060, OIG is required to annually review the Seattle Police Department’s (SPD) compliance with the requirements of Chapter 14.18 in its use of surveillance technologies.

Computer-Aided Dispatch No Longer a Surveillance Technology

In September 2024, Seattle IT removed Computer-Aided Dispatch from the City’s Master List of Surveillance Technologies.¹ While OIG is issuing this final annual report pursuant to SMC 14.18.060, the report will not include recommendations related to compliance with the relevant Surveillance Impact Report (SIR). Additionally, any outstanding recommendations from prior Annual Usage Reviews will be closed.

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1 https://clerk.seattle.gov/~CFS/CF_323176.pdf

Technology Description

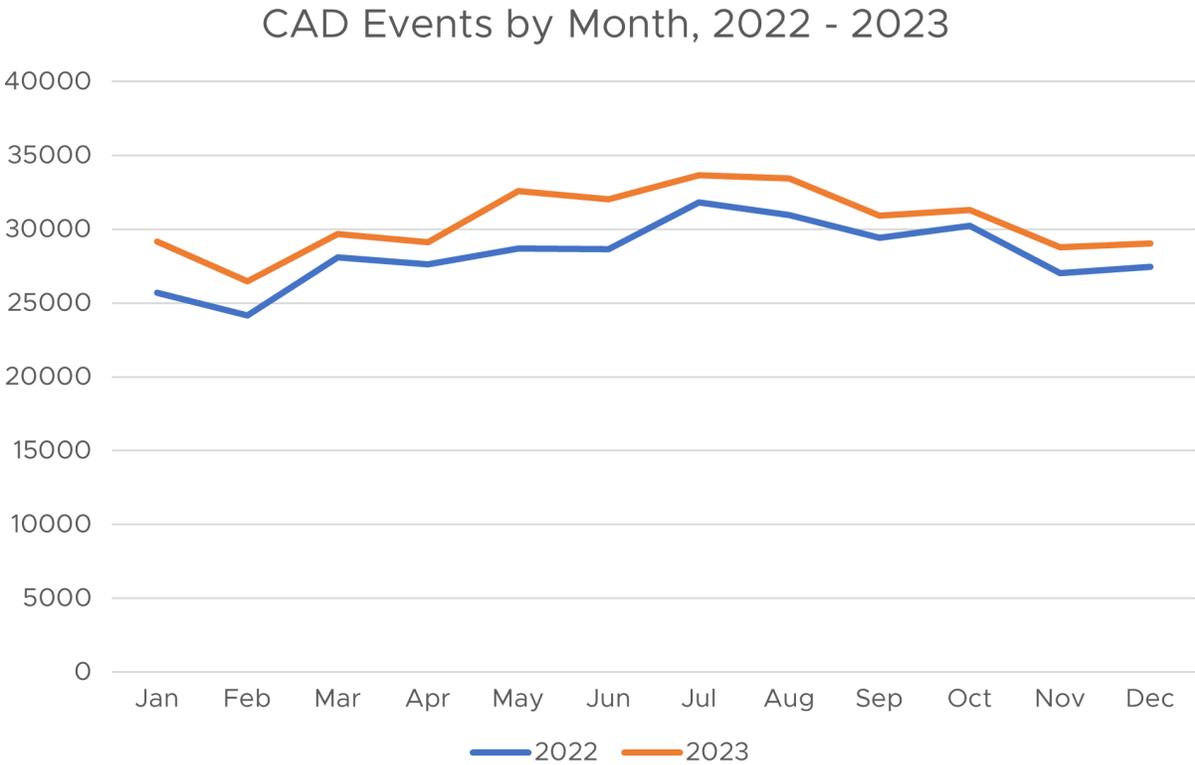
The Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is a real-time record-keeping technology used by the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to coordinate and document requests for police service and SPD’s response to those requests. The technology is used by 9-1-1 call takers in the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department (CARE) to document information reported by 9-1-1 callers in an organized and reportable manner. This information also assists 9-1-1 dispatchers with prioritizing emergency calls and assigning appropriate police, fire, and/or alternative responder resources to incidents.

SECTION A Surveillance Technology Usage

SMC 14.18.060, § A:
How surveillance technology has been used, how frequently, and whether usage patterns are changing over time.

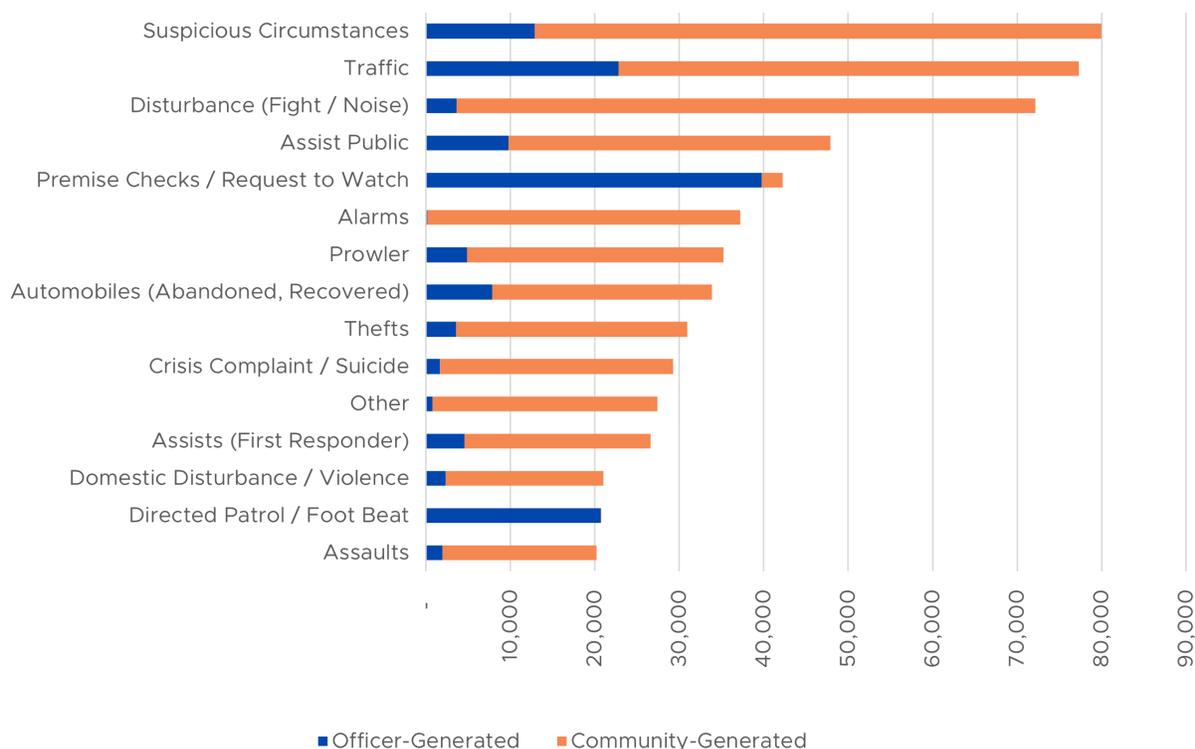
SPD provides an online, publicly-accessible Computer-Aided Dispatch Dashboard detailing CAD events from various years. According to this dashboard, SPD reported a total of 339,799 CAD events in 2022 and 366,129 in 2023. Of this total, 77.45% were community-generated, 22.46% were officer-generated, and 0.09% did not have an identified source.

Figure 1. CAD Events Over Time



Each CAD event in 2022 was categorized under one of the forty-five event types identified for that year; below are the top fifteen.

Figure 2. Top 15 CAD Events by Event Type in 2022 & 2023



SECTION B

Data Sharing with External Partners and Other Entities

SMC 14.18.060, § B:
How often surveillance technology or its data are being shared with other entities, including other governments in particular.

CAD data may be shared outside of SPD with various external agencies and entities within legal guidelines or as required by law. Requests for CAD data may be received from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, prosecuting attorney’s offices, insurance companies, courts, federal and state law enforcement agencies, and members of the public.

As reported in OIG’s first surveillance review for this technology, CAD records are requested daily and in high numbers.¹ Due to search limitations and the frequency and volume of these requests, it remains infeasible to accurately determine the number of CAD records that were shared during a given period.

¹ https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OIG/Audits/SurveillanceTechnologyUsageReview_Computer-AidedDispatch_%282021%29.pdf

SECTION C

Data Management and Safeguarding of Individual Information

SMC 14.18.060, § C:

How well data management protocols are safeguarding individual information.

Data Retention

According to SPD personnel and Section 6.6 of the Surveillance Impact Report, data within CAD and the subset of CAD data that is migrated into SPD's Records Management System (RMS), also known as Mark43, are retained indefinitely, and no data currently stored within those systems are deleted or removed.

SECTION D

Impact on Civil Liberties and Disproportionate Effects on Disadvantaged Populations

SMC 14.18.060, § D:

How deployment of surveillance technologies impacted or could impact civil liberties or have disproportionate effects on disadvantaged populations (...).

Personally identifiable information (PII) is regularly captured in CAD. The collection of PII is necessary to provide responding officers with relevant information about the individuals they will be encountering. While normal use of this technology does not impact civil liberties or have disproportionate effects on disadvantaged populations, SPD's retention of PII does present ongoing risk to the owners of that information. However, this risk is not significant if data are adequately protected. Following OIG's initial review of this technology, SPD reported implementation of additional security measures within Mark43 to safeguard PII.

SECTION E

Complaints, Concerns and Other Assessments

SMC 14.18.060, § E:

A summary of any complaints or concerns received by or known by departments about their surveillance technology and results of any internal audits or other assessments of code compliance.

Office of Police Accountability (OPA) Complaints

There were no CAD-related complaints submitted to OPA in 2022 or 2023.

City of Seattle Customer Service Bureau Complaints

A review of the complaints submitted to the Customer Service Bureau in 2022 or 2023 found no complaints related to the CAD **surveillance technology**.

Internal Audits or Assessments

OIG did not locate any internal audits or assessments related to this technology for the period of this review.



SECTION F

Total Annual Costs

SMC 14.18.060, § F:
Total annual costs for use of surveillance technology, including personnel and other ongoing costs.

In 2022, the total annual application cost for the Versaterm CAD technology was \$428,208.79, and in 2023 it was \$442,913.81. Personnel costs were not assessed for these years as OIG was unable to accurately identify the total costs for the CARE department and SPD personnel who operate and maintain this technology.

APPENDIX A: Management Response

SPD provided that it has no substantive response to this review as no matters requiring a response are raised, but appreciates the opportunity to review.

Non-Audit Statement This review was not conducted under Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS); however, OIG has followed GAGAS standards regarding the sufficiency and appropriateness of evidence.