



Westlake Police Department

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Contact Us



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Letter from the Chief

The 2024 Westlake Police Department Annual Report has been prepared to provide you with some insight into the services provided. The Westlake Police Department is made up of over 100 individuals working together to provide excellent service to the people that live, work, and visit the City of Westlake. Sworn Police Officers, a Digital Forensics Examiner, Property and Evidence Specialist, Communications Dispatchers, Corrections Officers, Community Service Officers, Auxiliary Police Officers, Animal Control, and School Crossing Guards all contribute to a daily effort to advance our Mission and to achieve the Goals of the Westlake Police Department.

Social media and cell phone related crimes, illegal narcotics and associated crimes, and mental health crises remained a challenge for the Westlake Police Department in 2024. Community policing programs, including the Crime Prevention Unit, were utilized as a measure to address these issues. Continuing training was conducted to better prepare personnel for these challenges, and proactive enforcement efforts were implemented to deter, detect, and apprehend criminals and minimize violent crimes in the City of Westlake.

Chief Kevin Bielozer

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Department Goals and Mission

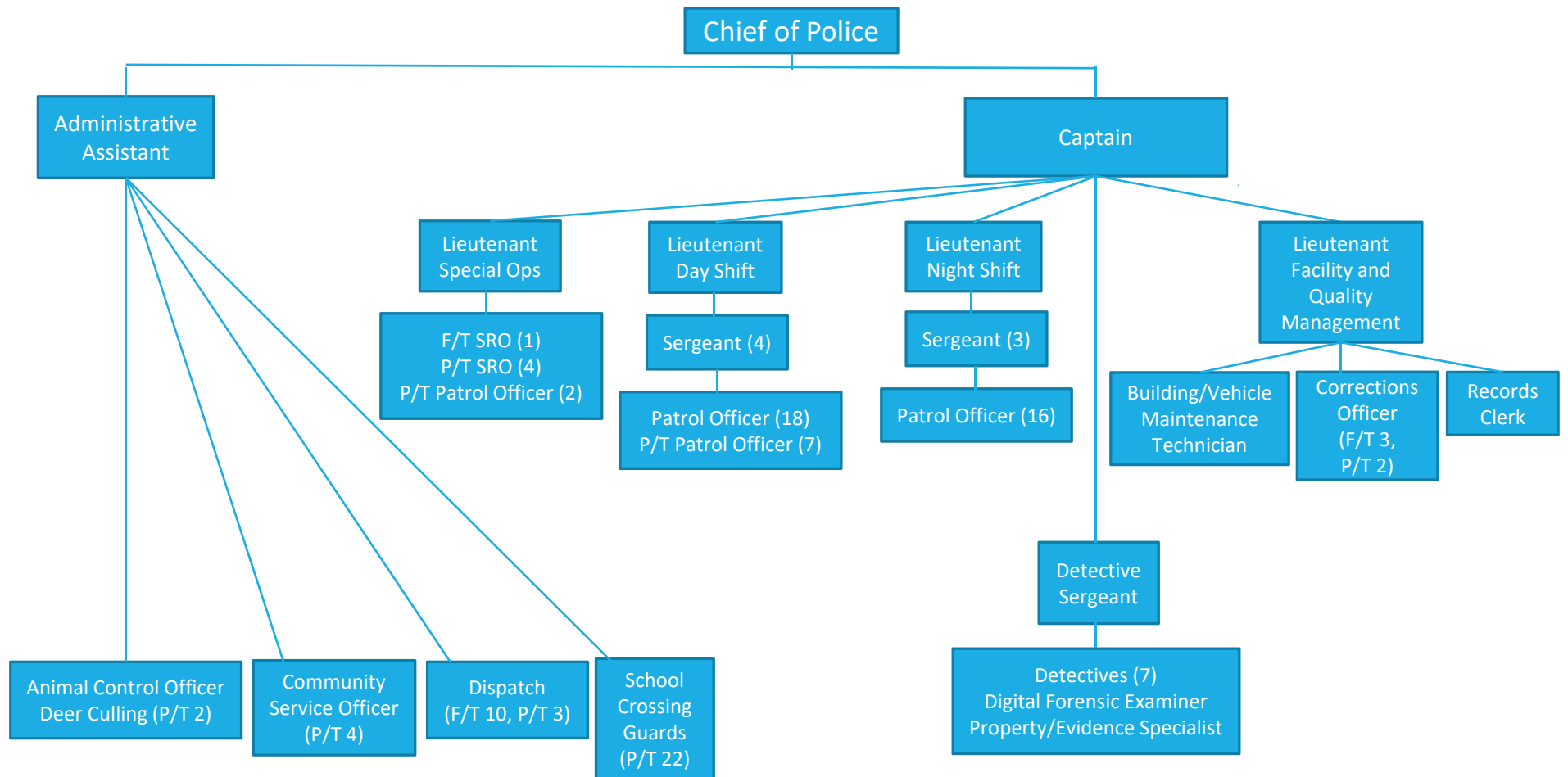
GOALS

- Preserve life and restore peace within the City of Westlake
- Reduce crime in the City of Westlake
- Improve professionalism of police services provided
- Create a sense of safety for those who live, work and visit the City of Westlake

MISSION

Make Westlake Safer Today.

Organizational Chart



Professional Development

In 2024, various WPD personnel attended the following training:

Active Assailant

Active Shooter Response

Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement

BAC Datamaster

Bicycle Patrol Officer

Building Searches

Crisis Intervention

Defensive Tactics

Digital Forensic Analysis and Investigations

Domestic Violence

Drone Forensics

Drugs and Narcotics Investigation

Field Training Officer

Firearms Instructor

Force Science De-Escalation

High Threat Close Quarters Battle

Hostage Negotiation

Human Trafficking

Interview and Interrogation

Less Lethal Instructor

Ohio Crime Prevention

Public Records

Pursuit Termination Techniques

Search and Seizure

Supervisor Training and Education

Notable Training

In 2024, the Westlake Police Department completed training presented by the Joint Commission (HRO) and the Just Culture Company (Accountability). Annual active shooter training was completed. Officers continued to receive advanced training in PIT, Realistic De-escalation, and the human performance / behavior based skills of firearms, tactical operations, vehicle engagements and defensive tactics. Training in Protective Service Details, Drone Operations, Leadership, Critical Decision Making models, and medical response was completed.

Arrests

In 2024, there were 3,689 arrests (total charges) filed, including physical arrests, direct indictments, and citations issued. The following chart shows the number of persons booked into the WPD Jail per year.

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
537	592	639	879	838

Average length of stay = 17.46 hours



Calls For Service

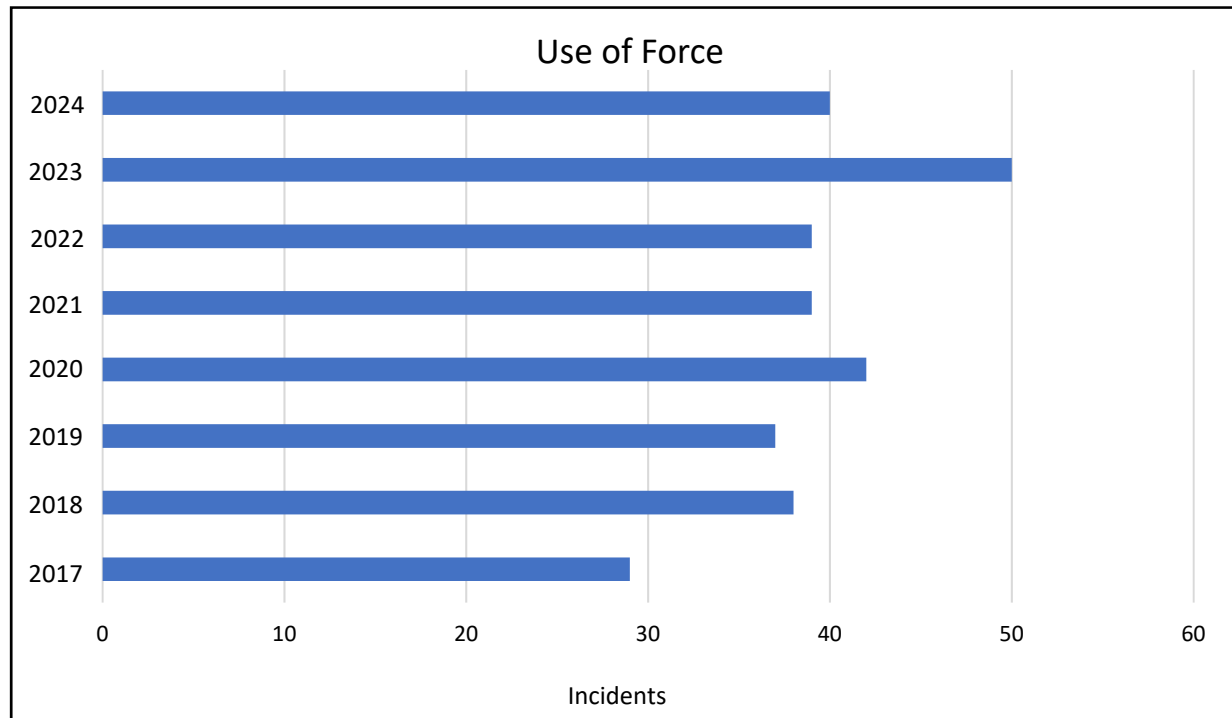
Calls For Service				
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
29,142	31,135	32,312	32,290	31,563

Total Incident Reports Taken – 1,576

UCR Part I Offenses	
Homicide	0
Rape	8
Robbery	2
Aggravated Assault	7
Burglary	23
Theft/Larceny	335
Motor Vehicle Theft	37
Arson	1

Use of Force

Use of Force is the application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. Police Officers may use force only in compliance with law and policy. Each Use of Force is reviewed for compliance with law and policy.



Use of Force (continued)

Each time an officer uses force, the incident is reviewed for compliance with law and policy. Additionally, quarterly and annual reviews of use of force reports are examined for relevant trends and the potential identification of training and equipment needs or policy changes.

In 2024, officers used force on 40 occasions.

0 – Number of violations of Use of Force law/policy in 2024

2 – Number of citizen complaints made regarding Use of Force, officer exonerated both times

0 – Number of serious injuries (fatality) incurred by the suspects/subjects

2 – Number of minor injuries (scrape/K9 bite) by suspects/subjects

1 – Number of officers injured during Use of Force incident

0 – Number of times officers presented a Taser to obtain compliance

1 – Number of times a suspect was Tasered

Use of Force (continued)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Use of Force Incidents	42	39	39	50	40
Physical Arrests per Use of Force	13:1	65:1	71:1	45:1	92:1
Use of Force Incidents per Suspects Injured	10.5:1	19:1	13:1	16.6:3	20:1
Persons Arrested per Use of Force Suspect Injury	134:1	853:1	1387:1	749:1	1889:1
Policy Violations per Use of Force	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations

Vehicle Pursuits

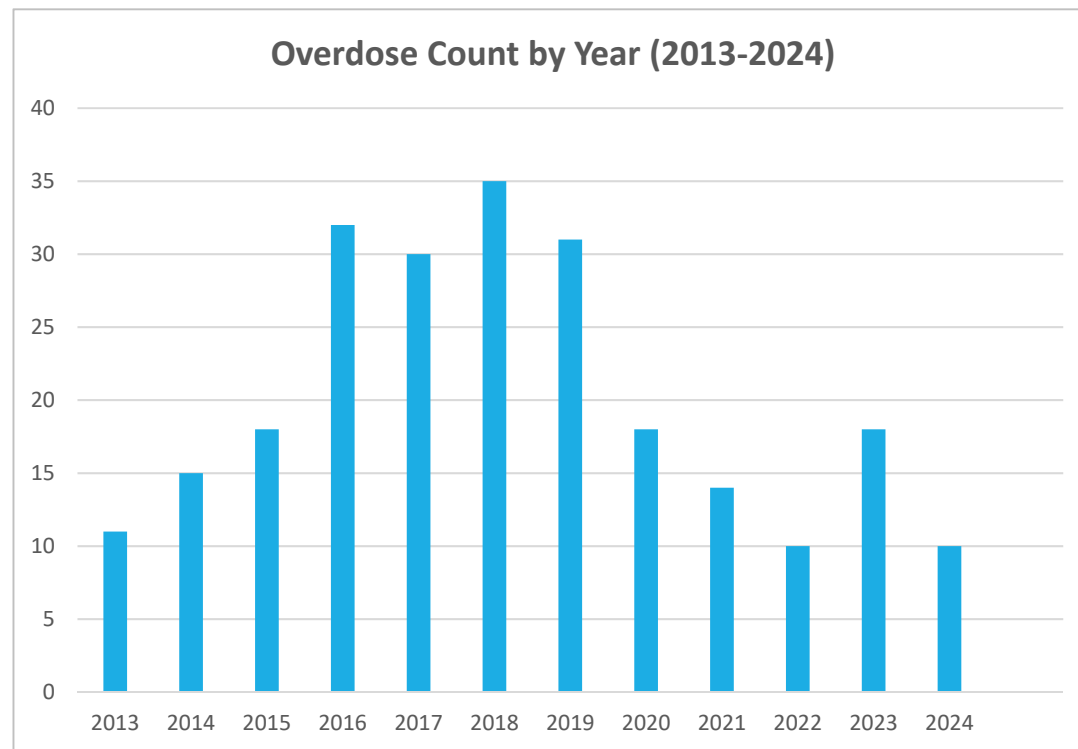
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	17	26	20	50	48
Stop Sticks Used	1	1	0	11	3
Occurred on Interstate	9	16	6	33	32

Domestic Violence

The Westlake Police Department responds immediately to all reports of Domestic Violence incidents. Domestic Violence incidents can occur anywhere (home, business, public place, motor vehicle, etc.) and may be reported in-progress or after the fact. Some incident reports result in either arrest or the attainment of an arrest warrant; some incidents require a prosecutor to review and determine charges; and some incidents are found not to be acts or threats of violence.

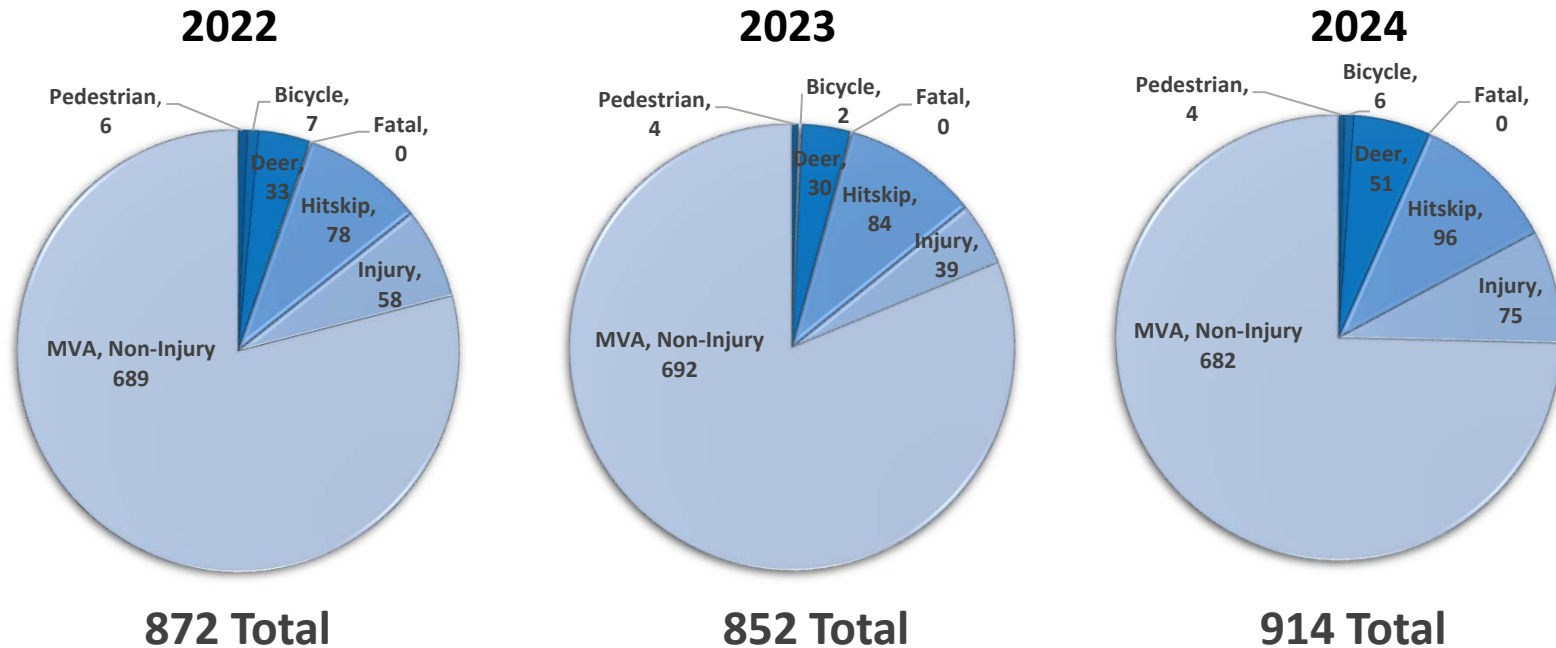
Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Service Per Year				
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
231	209	169	183	170

Drug and Alcohol Overdoses



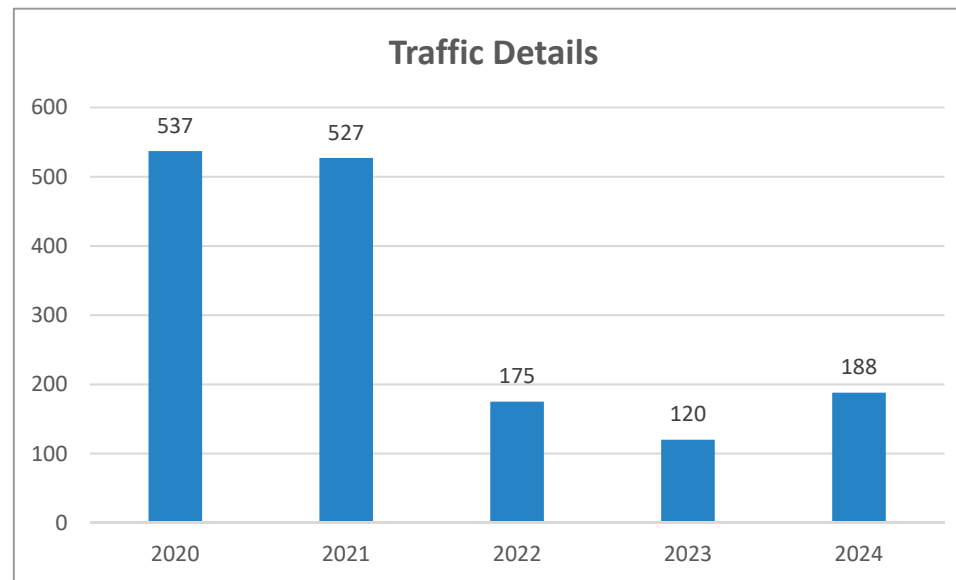
Motor Vehicle Accidents

The following charts provide insight into the type of motor vehicle accidents investigated.



Traffic Details

Traffic details are conducted in response to data analysis and citizen complaints. When patrol time permits, an officer is assigned to a particular location in order to deter or apprehend traffic violators.



Notable Cases

Dating back to August of 2023, officers were dispatched to the BMW of Westlake after a report of three suspicious males looking at vehicles. Employees noticed that after the males left the area, the dealership's key fobs no longer worked on the vehicles. Night shift patrol kept special attention on the dealership for the suspected key swapping, and eventually found an occupied vehicle at the West Spring Inn with males who fit the suspects' description. After a probable cause search, the males were arrested on drug charges. Detective Boots investigated and completed countless search warrants over the course of seven months. Using cell phone records and other technology, he was able to identify 29 stolen vehicles and 10 stolen license plates, with a total loss value of \$3.1 million. The incidents spanned multiple states and ultimately led to shipping ports where stolen autos were being shipped overseas. In July of 2024, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutors Office released details of the indictments as some of the parties involved had been taken into custody. In total, eight males were indicted on 44 felony counts.

On the morning of July 7, 2024, a resident reported a burglar was just in his house. The resident heard a door chime and came downstairs to find fur coats discarded on the ground. Officers responded and immediately detected evidence that the house had been forcibly entered while the homeowners had been inside, but the suspect had already fled the scene without being seen. Drops of blood left behind by the perpetrator were collected along with other physical evidence and sent to the crime lab to be processed. The DNA results positively identified a 38-year old Akron man as having been at the scene of the crime. Search and arrest warrants were executed, and the suspect was taken into custody. The suspect was on parole for previous crimes, and had recently been released from prison after a 15 year sentence for Aggravated Robbery. Additional physical evidence of the crime along with property stolen from the Westlake resident, were recovered. The suspect was charged with felony Burglary and was transported to the Cuyahoga County Jail on a bond of \$500,000 Cash or Surety.

Notable Cases (continued)

On August 14, 2024, Westlake Officers responded to Dick's Sporting Goods in reference to an adult male who had taken pictures of juvenile females while in a dressing room. The suspect description was provided of a white male wearing dark pants, a dark shirt with yellow on the sides and shoulders. Officers identified a vehicle leaving the area with a male operator matching the description, but the vehicle belonged to a business. Surveillance was conducted at the business with the assistance of the owner who helped in identifying the suspect. A warrant was issued for the suspect's arrest, but he fled the area. Additional search warrants were requested in order to track down the suspect before he was located and ultimately arrested hiding out in Sugarcreek, OH.

On March 21, 2024 at 7:45 a.m., a resident on Cobblestone Way reported that his Audi had just been stolen from his driveway after he left the vehicle running to warm it up and went inside briefly. The Audi was seen fleeing the area followed by a stolen Genesis SUV. Westlake Officers and Detectives tracked the vehicle to a supermarket in the 3500 block of Ridge Rd. in Cleveland. The vehicle was occupied when located, and the reckless thieves struck a Westlake cruiser with the Audi in an attempt to flee the police. When approached, four individuals ran from the vehicle but only two were immediately arrested. One had a firearm in his waistband, and two additional firearms were found in the vehicle. Investigators noted that two extended firearm magazines were found with the guns including a very large capacity drum type magazine. The suspects were arrested within 2-hours of the theft. The suspects, 18 and 19 years old, both listed Cleveland addresses, and have been charged with Carrying a Concealed Weapon, Receiving Stolen Property, and Assault on a Police Officer for having struck the officer's cruiser.

Auxiliary Police Unit

The City of Westlake maintains a first rate Auxiliary Police Unit that is well-equipped and well-trained. The 15 members of the Auxiliary Police Unit are a diverse group of individuals with a steadfast commitment to service. The Unit assists police officers by attending to less-urgent issues that would otherwise keep police officers from the important job of law enforcement.

In 2024, the auxiliaries volunteered a total of 1,395-hours to the City.

Three new members joined the Unit: Raymond Monhart, Grace Rached, and Terry Schoenberger.

Auxiliary Dan Udrija celebrated 20 years of service in September.

Auxiliary Michael Stybel celebrated 5 years of service in November.



Crisis Intervention Team

Crisis Intervention Training is a program developed in a number of U.S. states to help law enforcement officers react appropriately to situations involving mental illness or developmental disability. The goal of CIT training is to provide law enforcement officers with the knowledge and techniques to approach individuals they believe to have a mental illness, and to de-escalate crises. By integrating CIT training with prior law enforcement training, officers are better able to connect persons with mental illness to treatment instead of inappropriate incarceration.

The Westlake Police Department has fourteen (14) Officers, two (2) Dispatchers and two (2) Jailers trained in Crisis Intervention. CIT Officers hand out "CIT Packets" which contains information about services and resources throughout the area that the individual can contact to receive help.

2020 – 45 CIT Packets given out

2021 – 51 CIT Packets given out

2022 – 46 CIT Packets given out

2023 – 29 CIT Packets given out

2024 – 12 CIT Packets given out

Digital Forensics Lab

The Westlake Police Department's Digital Forensics Lab (DFL) processes evidence from cell phones, computers and various other electronic devices. The DFL has been in service to the Northern Ohio region for over 10 years. Throughout the past decade, over 100 local, state, and federal police agencies have come to the Westlake Police Department for assistance with digital forensic cases.

In total, 210 cases and 404 digital evidence items were processed in the Westlake Digital Forensics Lab in 2024. A total of 39 agencies were assisted. Some of the types of cases investigated were Sex Crimes, Drug Trafficking, Fraud, Overdose, Theft, Homicide, Robbery, Arson, and Assault.

In the year 2024, an employee of the Westlake Digital Forensic Lab was ranked in the top 50 examiners out of the 3,900+ examiners in the nation. The highly in-demand services our lab offers, coupled with high productivity rankings nationally, is a testament to the professionalism and dedication to service of our Westlake Police Department Forensic examiners.

Drone Unit

The Westlake Police Department Drone Unit consists of eight (8) UAS Pilots. The Drone Unit was involved in 117 operations, both within the jurisdictional boundaries as well as mutual aid requests including:

Search Warrants	Accident Investigation
Locating missing persons	Area searches for suspicious persons
Investigations/Intelligence	Crime Prevention (business and residential)
Domestic Incidents	Fires

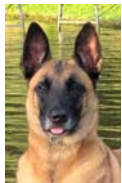
The Drone Unit also supported special events including the 2024 Solar Eclipse, the Fourth of July event at Clague Park, and the Presidential Election, providing overwatch and rapid intelligence.

Additionally, the program launched and executed several community outreach initiatives, including a youth drone program where participants competed in a drone competition at Tri-C, a drone program for senior citizens at the Westlake Community Services Center, and a Westshore Enforcement Bureau Young Leaders program.

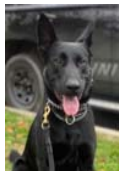
K-9 Unit



CASH



TIMMY



VINCE

The Westlake Police Department's K-9 Unit consists of three K-9s: Cash, Timmy, and Vince.

In 2024, the unit was deployed 144 times for Community Relations activities, including increased presence in schools and high density areas, such as Crocker Park.

The 10 Enforcement related activities included mutual aid requests for other agencies, area searches, and force protection. Force protection, while low in number, is significant for reducing the need for officer involved use of force and encouraging surrender of dangerous suspects, reducing the risk of injury to both officers and suspects.

The K-9 Unit had over 1,300-hours of training in 2024.

K-9 Unit (continued)



The Westlake Police Department's Therapy/Search & Rescue K-9 "M.L.E." (pronounced Emily) is making quite a difference in the community.

In 2024, MLE logged over 100-hours in Community Relations activities, including safety talks, school visits, and support/therapy uses including schools and nursing homes.

MLE is a 2-year old, American Black Labrador Retriever. Her trainer at American K9s, who name their dogs after American heroes, named MLE in honor of the Master Trainer's father, a retired Army Colonel, who was her "American Hero". MLE loves people and making people smile!



Property and Evidence

The Westlake Property Room operates using National Standards and Practices from the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Professional Standards.

The Property Room personnel ensure incoming property/evidence is packaged correctly and preserved from contamination, its protected from theft or loss, the “chain of custody” is maintained, the accurate documentation of releases and dispositions, and provide adequate security for the Property Room and its contents.

In 2024, there were:

4,267 – Items Stored in Location

1,608 – Items Submitted Into Property

1,563 – Items Collected

344 – Items Sent to the Lab for Analysis

228 – Items Returned to Owner

1,399 – Items Destroyed

School Resource Officer

With the cooperation of the Westlake City School District, the Westlake Police Department has continued to expand its School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. WPD currently has six (6) SROs who provide an increased safety presence and teach about the dangers of drug, prescription drug, alcohol and tobacco use. Further, general lessons about crime, cybercrime, and police operations are provided to students.

The WPD SRO Team works together with a singular focus of making students safer while in school.

Community Policing Activities

Block parties, Parades

Child Safety Seat Checks

Civilian Fingerprinting

Coffee With A Cop

Community Policing Academy

Cyber Bullying Presentations

Hurricane Relief Donations

Lending Library

Meals on Wheels



Operation Medicine Cabinet

Ride Along Program

Safe Kids

Safety Pup

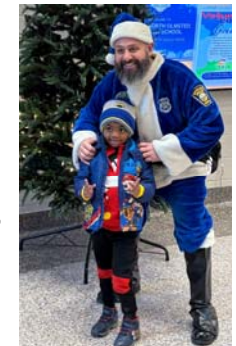
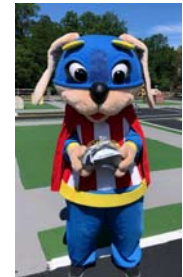
Safety Talks for businesses & schools

Self-Defense Training at businesses

Shop With A Cop

Touch-a-Truck

Vacation House Checks



Community Police Academy

The goal of the Community Police Academy is to increase the understanding between the community and the police department that serves it, in the hopes of building a strong and mutually beneficial relationship for the future of our community.

The Community Police Academy is held once a week for twelve consecutive weeks and is free to qualifying applicants from the community. Students participate in role playing, ride-alongs, and many hands-on activities including driving a police car on a closed course, range time with department issued handguns, and building searches. Students also learn about Jail operations, Drones, SWAT, Narcotics Investigations, OVIs, K-9, Human Trafficking, Death Investigation, Accident Investigations, and Crime Scene Investigations. In the Fall of 2024, the Community Police Academy had 19 students.



Safety Town

Safety Town is one of the City's longest running programs offered through the Westlake Police Department, celebrating 54-years. The goal of Safety Town is to offer pre-kindergarteners basic safety instruction on the following topics: pedestrian, bicycle, car/seatbelts, 911, gun, strangers, fire, school bus, swim, internet, and animal safety.



Westshore Cadets Post #18



The Public Safety Cadets is a national non-profit organization managed by active and retired law enforcement officers, business leaders dedicated to preparing young adults, ages 14-20yo, for careers and leadership in the public safety profession.



The City of Westlake established the Westshore Public Safety Cadets in 2015. The Cadets meet bi-monthly to train on various law enforcement related procedures and tactics, such as proper handling of firearms, first aid, traffic stops and crime scene investigations. The Cadets utilize their training when they compete in the annual Competition.

In 2024, the Westshore Public Safety Cadets attended the Annual Ohio Law Enforcement Explorers Association (OLEEA) Heart of Ohio Competition and received several awards. The Cadet Advisors are proud to share that the program works – Cadet Junkins was sworn in as a Police Officer and is attending the Police Academy, and Cadet Kean was sworn in as an Auxiliary Officer and hired as a Correction Officer, both for local law enforcement agencies.



2024 WPD Awards

Each year, members of the Westlake Police Department nominate candidates and vote for one officer and one employee to be recognized for their exceptional service.

Officer of the Year

Detective Ronald Boots



Employee of the Year

Community Service Officer Terry Flanagan



Retirements, Promotions, & New Hires

Retirements

Lieutenant Brian Pasti – 36-years of service

Officer Jason Carman – 27-years of service

Officer Paul Hartranft – 22-years of service



Promotions

Sergeant Nathan Fox was promoted to Lieutenant.

Patrol Officers Stephen Barnie and Giovanni Santiago were promoted to Sergeant.



New Hires

Full-time Patrol Officers: Jarryel Salazar, John DePalma, Jakeb Tekavec, Nicholas Armeni

Part-time Patrol Officer: Michael Motylewski