

HPD Misconduct: 16% of Officers arrested or prosecuted -- one every 5.7 weeks

SA: Nearly 1 of every 6 current Honolulu Police Department officers have been taken to court over criminal or civil allegations of wrongdoing, ranging from excessive force to domestic abuse, according to a first-of-its-kind analysis by the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

Just since 2010, an officer has been arrested or prosecuted at the rate of one every 5.7 weeks.

Among the most recent examples was Keoki Duarte.

The eight-year police veteran was charged in June for allegedly assaulting an Oahu motorist in a road-rage incident.

Four years earlier, he was one of eight HPD officers sued by two hikers after the pair was allegedly beaten — one suffered broken facial bones — on a remote mountain trail. Police mistook them for burglary suspects....

Several national experts were alarmed by the Star-Advertiser's findings.

"To have the percentage you found is really just astonishing to me," said Samuel Walker, professor emeritus at the University of Nebraska's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice in Omaha....

The newspaper found that more than 330 officers, or nearly 16 percent of the 2,100-member squad, have been named as defendants in criminal cases, temporary restraining orders and wrongful-conduct lawsuits since joining the force. (That's one per week.) Most of the lawsuits alleged on-duty civil rights violations, while most of the TROs involved off-duty conduct....

The analysis comes nearly six years after Chief Louis Kealoha, who was promoted to the top job in late 2009, met with reporters to deplore a spate of officer arrests at the time. Kealoha called the arrests unacceptable and vowed to continue efforts to address the problem.

But that has hardly disrupted the steady stream of unflattering news reports on rogue officers, raising questions about how effectively HPD is dealing with misconduct and whether its discipline serves as an adequate deterrent....

Of the 55 criminal cases from the past six years that the newspaper examined, more than half resulted in convictions or deferred pleas of guilty or no contest. The deferrals give the defendants the opportunity to keep their records clean if they stay out of trouble for a certain length of time.

Most of the 18 officers whose pleas were deferred remain on the job. Only one of the 14 who were convicted is still an HPD officer....

The Star-Advertiser analysis is the first to provide a systematic look at how often HPD officers are formally accused of wrongdoing....

Dennis Kenney, a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, said the newspaper's finding that nearly 16 percent of officers have been accused of wrongdoing is high.

Most research, he said, suggests that about 5 percent of officers account for a disproportionate share of complaints against police. "You are talking about far more than just complaints if it is going to

court," Kenney said in an email....

- SA: Lawsuits against officers cost \$9.7M over decade
- SA: How Star-Advertiser conducted its analysis

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