



Coaching Process Analysis

Police Conduct Oversight Commission

December 2014

It is recommended that the document be read in an electronic format with internet access. The document contains live links to information discussed, including videos, transcripts, and PDFs whenever possible.

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Introduction

The Police Conduct Oversight Commission assures that police services are delivered in a lawful and nondiscriminatory manner and provides the public with meaningful participatory oversight of police policy and procedure. Commission members have a variety of responsibilities including shaping police policy, auditing cases, and engaging the community in discussions of police procedure. The Commission strives to be the citizen advisory group the community relies upon to openly discuss policy and procedures of the Minneapolis Police Department, to voice concerns regarding law enforcement/civilian interactions, and the organization that advances credible and meaningful feedback, without obligation to political influences, for the betterment of the City of Minneapolis. [For more information about the work of the Commission, meeting times and locations, and meeting minutes, please visit the Commission website.](#)ⁱ

Additionally, in the Police Conduct Oversight Ordinance, the Commission has direction to conduct programs of research and study, "review police department policies and training procedures and make recommendations for change."ⁱⁱ To facilitate this process, the Commission created this study by motion on February 11, 2014, at the regular Commission meeting. The motion requests the Office of Police Conduct Review to create and conduct a comprehensive study of the OPCR and MPD coaching process, including a performance audit, with the goal of achieving racial and other equity outcomes, and of building and supporting an accountability culture within MPD.

This report shall address each of the objectives in the motion.

Background

Upon receiving a complaint, the OPCR has four methods for resolution: (1) dismiss it, (2) send it directly to the focus officer's supervisor for action, (3) mandate mediation between the officer and complainant, or (4) send the complaint to an investigation involving a civilian or sworn investigator. The joint supervisor assessment is based on the seriousness of the allegations, the likelihood of a successful mediation, and evidence available for investigation. Method 2 is known as "coaching."

Coaching consists of sending a complaint directly to the precinct of the officer that is the focus of the complaint to address the allegations contained within. Coaching is used only for lower level violations, and if a more significant violation is discovered during the coaching process, the complaint is referred back to the OPCR. Coaching documents will first be submitted to precinct inspectors or unit commanders. The inspector or commander will forward the coaching documents and attached material to the appropriate supervisor to handle. [Find a sample coaching document here \(PDF\)](#).

The supervisor will determine whether a policy violation has occurred based upon the information gathered by the supervisor, and complete the coaching documentation form. The standard for this determination is preponderance of the evidence, a 51% likelihood that the allegation is true. A referral to the officer's supervisor does not denote that a policy violation has occurred. Policy violations or the lack thereof are noted in the completed documentation. Multiple policy violations in one year may cause a lower level complaint to be treated as a more significant violation. Supervisors may also coach the officer on how to improve performance and improve customer service regardless of whether a policy violation occurred.

If the supervisor determines the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence, he or she will determine the appropriate corrective action. This may involve coaching, counseling, training, or other non-disciplinary actions. The supervisor shall notify the officer of the recommendation and contact the complainant to explain that the complaint has been handled.

Only A-level (the least severe) complaints are sent to coaching, but the expectation is that supervisors will address inappropriate behavior before it leads to more severe misconduct. Additionally, coaching represents an immediate opportunity to repair relationships between community members and officers through supervisor action, as the OPCR has set an expectation that coaching complaints will be completed within the 45 day timeline. When a coaching supervisor completes the process, the completed coaching documents are reviewed and signed by the precinct inspector or commander and returned to the joint supervisors for review. If the joint supervisors find the coaching documents are incomplete, they are returned to the precinct inspector or commander for completion. [For further information, see the Commission coaching training here \(Prezi\)](#).

Methodology

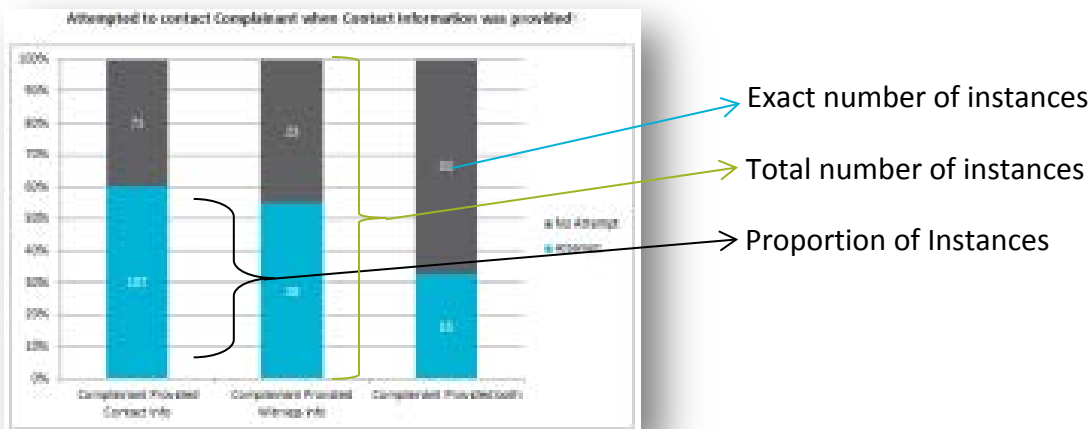
The Office collected all completed coaching documents returned by precincts/units between October 2012 and October 2014. In total, 194 coaching documents were analyzed using criteria selected by the OPCR and Commission. The criteria included:

- Duration of various aspects of the coaching process;
- Allegations sent to coaching;
- Precinct, shift, and rank of focus officer and coaching officer;
- Whether the focus officer was involved in past complaints, either as a focus officer or witness officer;
- Steps taken during the coaching process (e.g. whether complainant/witnesses were interviewed, police reports reviewed, focus officer interviewed);
- Documentation of steps during the coaching process;
- Policy violations and coaching; and
- Complainant notification information

Data on each document was collected in an excel spreadsheet ultimately used to create the data contained within this report. In total, approximately 16,500 data points were collected. [Find example columns of this data with all possible data points here \(Google Spreadsheet\).](#)

Once data was completed, various related categories were selected for comparison. Categories were divided into two sections, Coaching Process and Coaching Results. The Coaching Process section includes data on the steps taken during the coaching process, such as whether the complainant was contacted. The Coaching Results section contains comparisons involving whether an officer was coached or whether a policy violation occurred and various factors, such as precinct, shift, or rank.

When possible, data is depicted using 100% stacked column graphs to allow cross comparison. The actual amount of instances is displayed as numbers within the columns. For example:



In comparing data, it is important to note both the exact number of instances, as a very small number may lead to unreliable comparisons. For example, when only four instances of an event are recorded, one additional event may change the ratio by 20%.

Data may also be displayed in timeline format when necessary. Timeline intervals are one month and span October 1, 2012 – October 31, 2014.

Coaching Process Results

When a complainant submits allegations, the complainant is not required to describe the events in detail, instead merely describe the interaction that is the basis of the complaints. Hence, for a full understanding of what occurred from the Complainant's perspective, it is expected that they will be contacted for an interview. In 60% of cases, supervisors attempted to contact complainants. There was little difference in this rate between sergeants and lieutenants, or across shifts. Precincts, however, contacted complainants at significantly different rates, with a 40% + difference between precincts. Witnesses were contacted less frequently, and when complainants provided both their contact info and witness contact info, supervisors contacted both at a rate of approximately 33%.

It should be noted that there were instances where supervisors sought their own witnesses or complainant when contact info was not provided. In this small population of cases, decisions made by supervisors were clear and supported by evidence. For an example of this effort to obtain additional information, see [Case Summary 13-12-08 \(PDF\)](#).

When supervisors actually reached complainants, they did so after the meeting with the focus officer in 60% of cases. It seems good practice for supervisors to have all relevant information available before discussing the situation with the focus officer, and a complaint is not intended to be a complete record of an event. [Case Summary 14-07-08 \(PDF\)](#) provides an example of a case where Complainant was able to clarify the exact issues in the complaint before the supervisor spoke to the focus officer. Be aware that when little or no documentation of conversations occurred, it was difficult to tell whether it occurred before or after the meeting with the focus officer.

As such, documenting attempts to contact the complainant, conversations with all parties involved, and the steps taken to resolve the complaint is critical. Without this information, the coaching document is a poor reflection of the coaching process that occurred. It is little use to future parties and it is difficult to tell if an adequate coaching investigation took place. This is evident in [Case Summary 14-01-08 \(PDF\)](#). Complainant made language and Policy and Procedure Manual allegations, yet the supervisor only mentioned one of them in the interview with the focus officer. No conversation with the complainant is mentioned. The conclusion, therefore, is not supported. It is possible the supervisor did more in the case, but the summary does not reflect this assertion. If the supervisor leaves the MPD, the account of the event leaves with him or her.

Supervisors did document conversations with complainants and focus officers to some degree in approximately 90% of cases where these conversations occurred. However, the range in the quality of documentation is vast. Some supervisors used one sentence to describe the interaction, others wrote detailed descriptions, including dates of attempts to contact complainants and witnesses, as is seen in [Case Summary 14-05-04 \(PDF\)](#). The quality of documentation is critical; when it is poor it is nearly as useful as no documentation at all.

Generally, coaches reviewed most evidence provided, usually CAPRS reports, MECC communications, or squad recordings. In 45 cases, coaches located additional evidence by visiting the scene, seeking court records on outcomes, or locating additional witnesses. In nine of these cases, the supervisors conducted background checks on complainants such as arrest records or conviction; an example of which occurred in Case Summary [14-08-09 \(PDF\)](#). There were no reported instances where supervisors sought background information on officers other than the supervisor's personal opinion—generally that the officer behaves well. This subjective evidence differs significantly from a background check of a complainant.

In 158 cases, supervisors provided some documented reason for the outcome (e.g. coached/policy violation/nothing). Hence, in some 30+ cases supervisors did not document specific reasons supporting their outcome. The outcome may have been justified and all allegations addressed, but it is difficult to conclude this when such limited information exists. This is evident in [Case Summary 14-02-08 \(PDF\)](#) where the supervisor concludes that no coaching or discipline should occur without any additional information. Additionally, like the documentation of conversations with relevant parties, when documentation of decision making occurred, the quality varied significantly.

In almost all cases where complainant provided contact information, the supervisor followed up on outcome in a timely manner. The average time to follow up with a complainant after speaking with the focus officer was 19 days. However, in only 31% of cases were these conversations documented. The documentation of these conversations is important for two reasons. First, for data practices considerations, it is important to note what information was provided. "Outcome" in this case should be very basic, that the complaint was handled, as the content is not public. By documenting the information provided, reviewers can be assured that data practices violations did not occur.

In some cases, a more detailed notification is possible. In [Case Summary 14-04-10 \(PDF\)](#) the supervisor was able to explain the situation without describing the coaching that took place. Because it was documented, the OPCR could conclude that the supervisor actually resolved the issue involved.

Some complainant outcome notifications were documented as occurring before a conversation with the focus officer. While this may be a typo by the coaching supervisor, it could indicate that coaching supervisors made up their mind before discussing the incident with the focus officer. This appears to have taken place in [Case Summary 1-11-07 \(PDF\)](#). Considering that the supervisor has not obtained all evidence before talking to the focus officer, this should be avoided if it is occurring.

The timeliness of the coaching process has significantly improved. This can be seen across precincts. To smooth outliers, the average time to return coaching documents (total and ten prior) demonstrates this effect.

There were fourteen cases where unrelated opinions were included in documents. Unrelated opinions significantly detract from the professionalism of a coaching document. In [Case Summary 14-01-07 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor expresses significant dissatisfaction with the MPD language policy. This is not relevant to the coaching session, and other outlets are available to express this. In [Case Summary 14-01-02 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor describes the complaint as “the baseless ramblings of a person who seems to not be fond of law enforcement in general.” Considering that the supervisor was unable to contact complainant, this characterization appears out of place. If the allegations are not supported by obtainable evidence, the decision is supported with no need for this subjective characterization.

Coaching Outcome Results

While officers received coaching for language, attitude, harassment, failure to provide adequate protection, and violations of the Practice and Procedure Manual, these occurred at different rates. In the chart depicting this, cases with multiple allegations were removed to allow for an accurate cross comparison of allegations. Violation of the Policy and Procedure Manual (e.g. normal vehicle operation, traffic accident investigation procedures) were the largest source of policy violations and coachings. While coaching occurred in a wide variety of cases, policy violations only occurred for language, failing to provide adequate protection, and violations of the Policy and Procedure Manual.

The rate at which coaching occurred differed across precincts. While there are multiple explanations for why this may have occurred, it is still worth noting. The same can be said for officer shift, as daywatch seems to coach at a higher rate.

Officers and sergeants were coached at very similar rates, and there are too few coaching documents with lieutenant focus officers to compare. Similarly, whether the coaching supervisor was a sergeant or lieutenant does not appear to impact the rate at which coaching occurred. Again, there were too few cases where inspectors or commanders were coaches to draw an accurate comparison.

Officers admitted to at least some behavior described in the complaint 55 times. When they did so, they were coached at nearly twice the average rate. In some cases where the officer admitted allegations, they were not coached, but this may be because the behavior was acceptable with additional justification not included in the complaint.

Coaching outcomes in cases where coaching supervisors spoke with the complainant versus those who did not speak with complainant were very similar. This does not detract from the importance of contacting complainants, as allegations can be clarified which enhances the benefits of the coaching session. When witnesses were involved and contacted, the rate of coaching slightly decreased.

The duration of the coaching investigation does not appear to create great variation in coaching results. However, the effectiveness of a coaching session or policy violation is significantly weakened when it takes a lengthy amount of time to complete. Timely coaching can prevent problematic behavior before it occurs again.

When multiple focus officers were involved, coaching was less frequent, particularly when the supervisor spoke to both at the same time. Coaching occurred approximately 17% of the time, almost half the average rate of coaching. When the officers were interviewed separately, the rate increased approximately 5%.

The quality of the documentation of the coaching session and policy violation varied

significantly. In [Case Summary 14-07-08 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor clearly stated the policy and the expected behavioral change when describing the coaching session. Were the officer to be involved in a similar event in the future, this coaching document would be of utility to the coaching supervisor. While no policy violation occurred in [Case Summary 14-07-10 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor stated that the focus officer should provide a more detailed explanation in reports for decision making in the future. The expectation is clear.

Alternatively, in [Case Summary 14-08-03 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor checked the box on the coaching form indicating that coaching occurred, but there is no explanation as to why. As such, it is unclear what expectations were set. Similarly, in [Case Summary 14-10-07 \(PDF\)](#), the supervisor stated that he discussed “the inappropriate use of harsh language” with the officer with no detail. Hence, it is difficult to determine if any expectations were set.

Quick Statistics

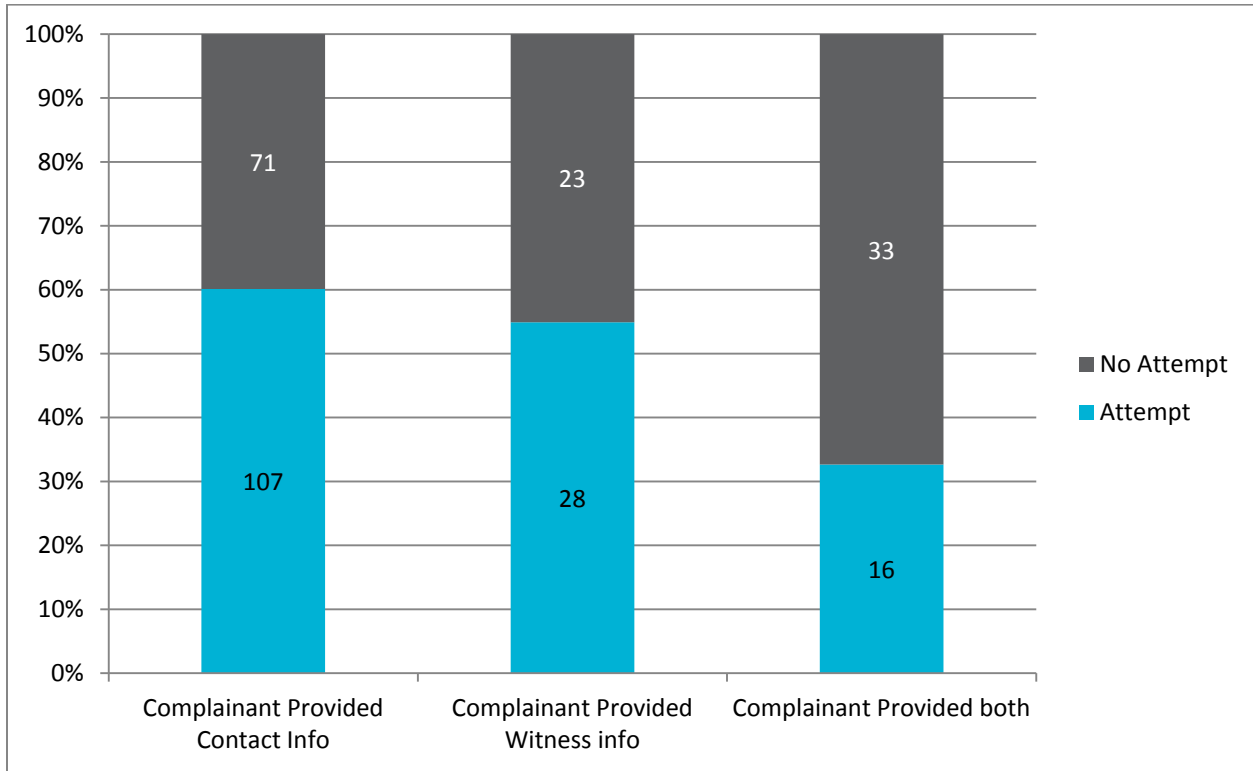
Duration of Coaching Documents	
Average Time to Complete Coaching	81 Days
Median Time to Complete Coaching	30 Days
Outcomes	
Policy Violations	17
Coaching	66
Rate of Coaching	34%
Rate of Policy Violations	9%
Number of Documents Sent to Precincts	
1st	36
2nd	26
3rd	41
4th	29
5th	36
Other	25
Allegations in Documents	
Use of Force	1
Inappropriate Language	30
Inappropriate Attitude	48
Harassment	27
Discrimination	1
Theft	0
Failure to Provide Adequate/Timely Protection	37
Retaliation	1
Violation of the Policy and Procedure Manual	67
Multiple Allegations	16

Focus Officer Rank	
Officer	160
Sgt	28
Lt	5
Coach Rank	
Sgt	117
Lt	66
Inspector	4
Other (Commander)	6
Shift of Focus Officer	
Day	44
Mid	48
Dog	43
Other	49
Shift of Coach	
Day	44
Mid	46
Dog	43
Other	58

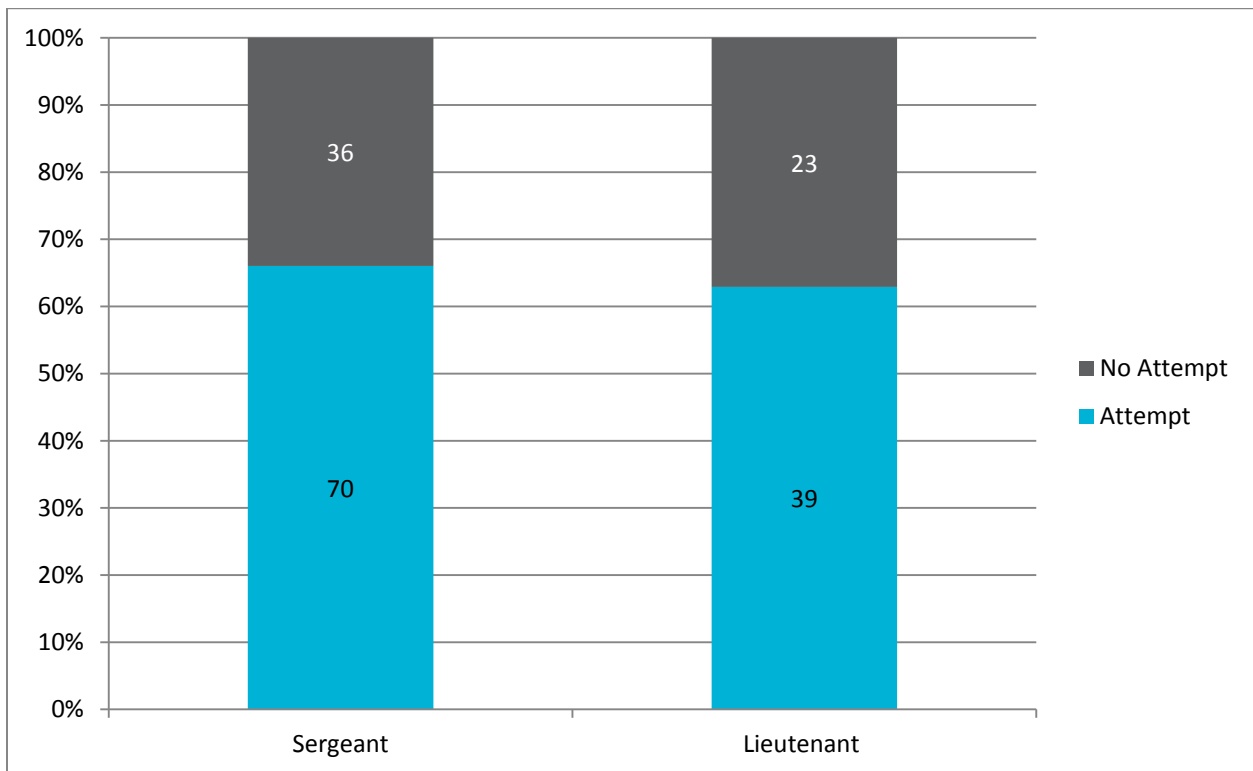
Coaching Process Statistics

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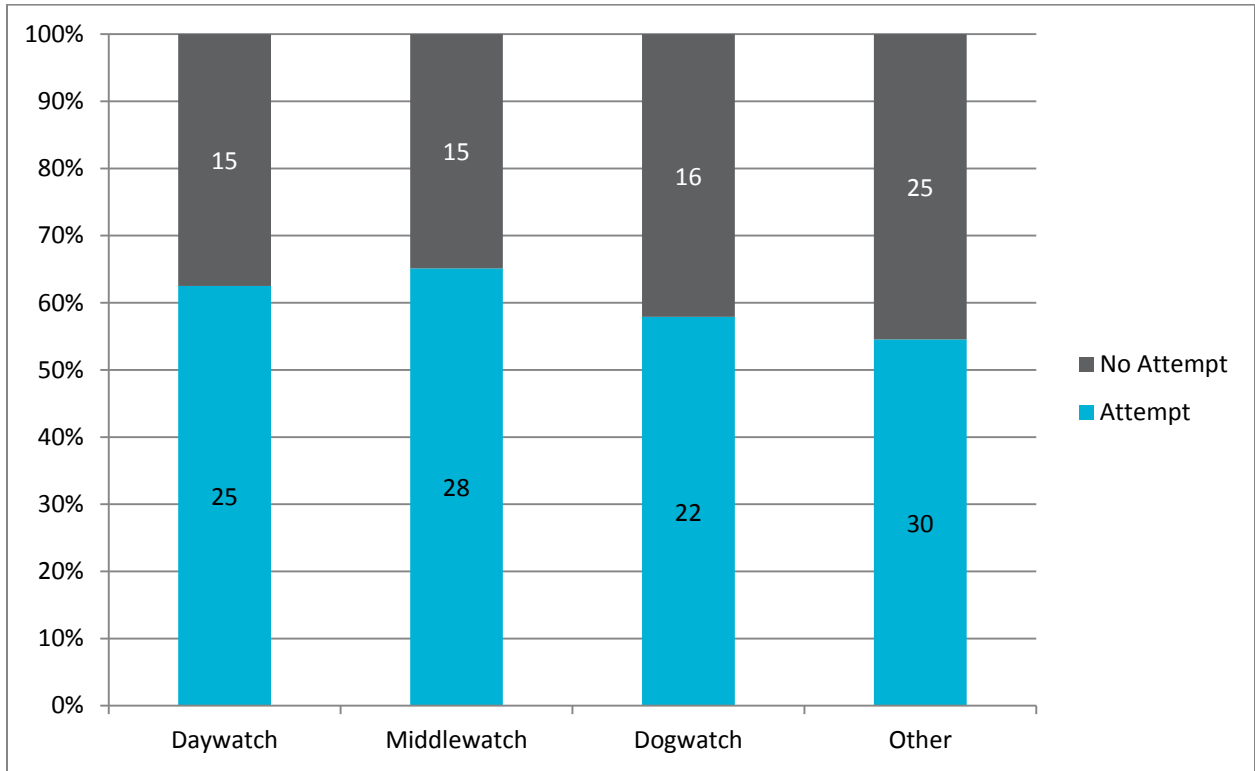
Attempted to Contact Complainant When Contact Information was provided



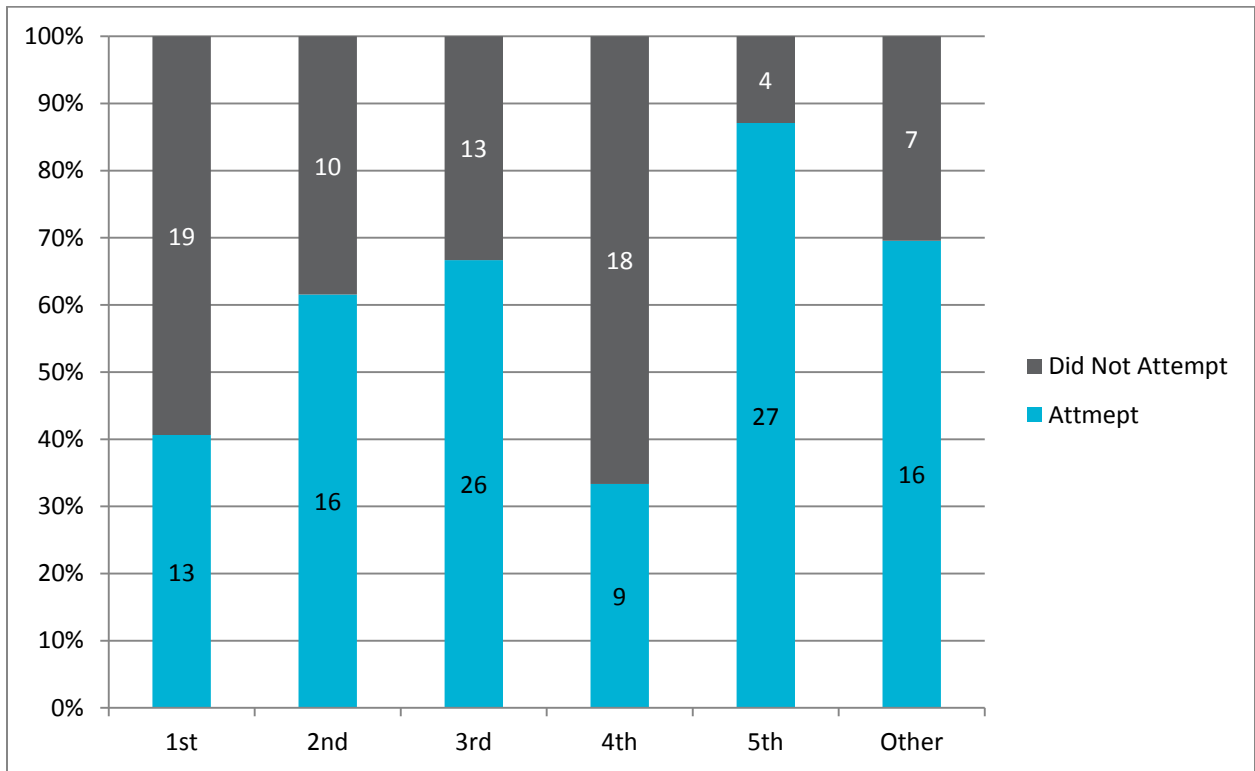
Attempt to Contact Complainant by Coach Rank



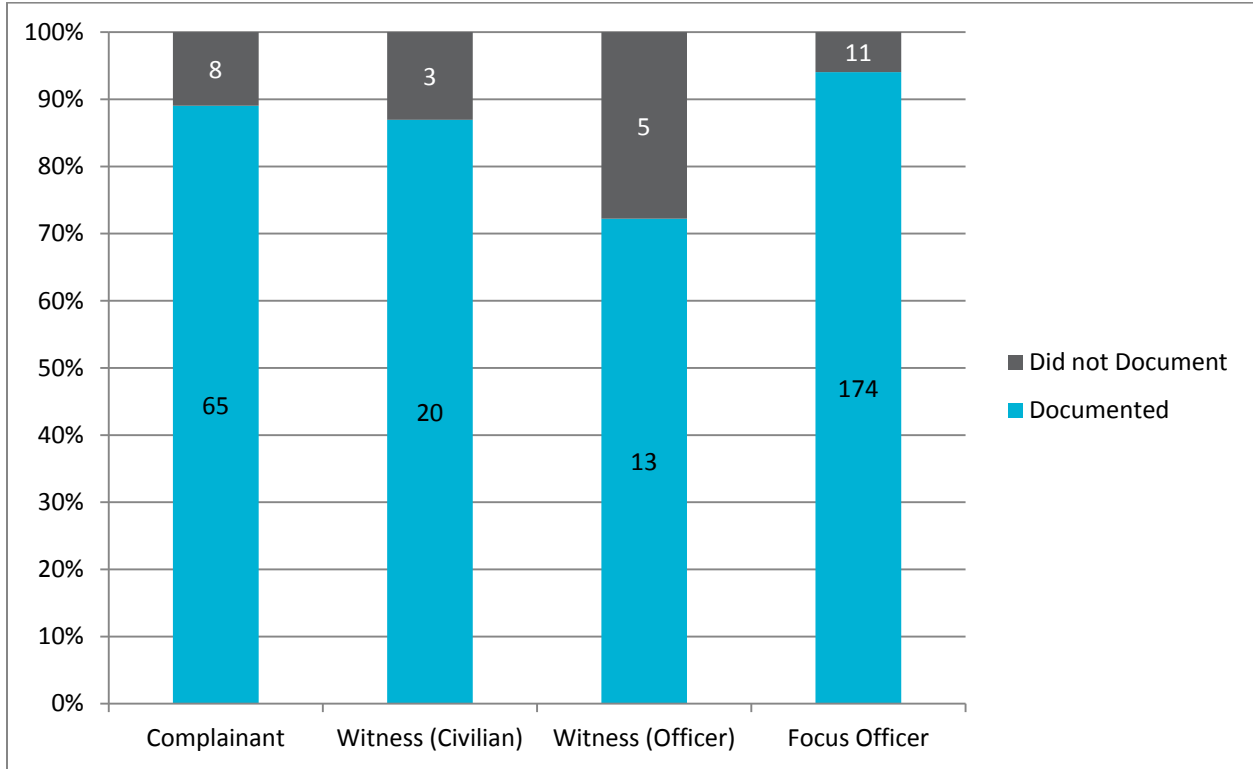
Attempt to Contact Complainant by Shift



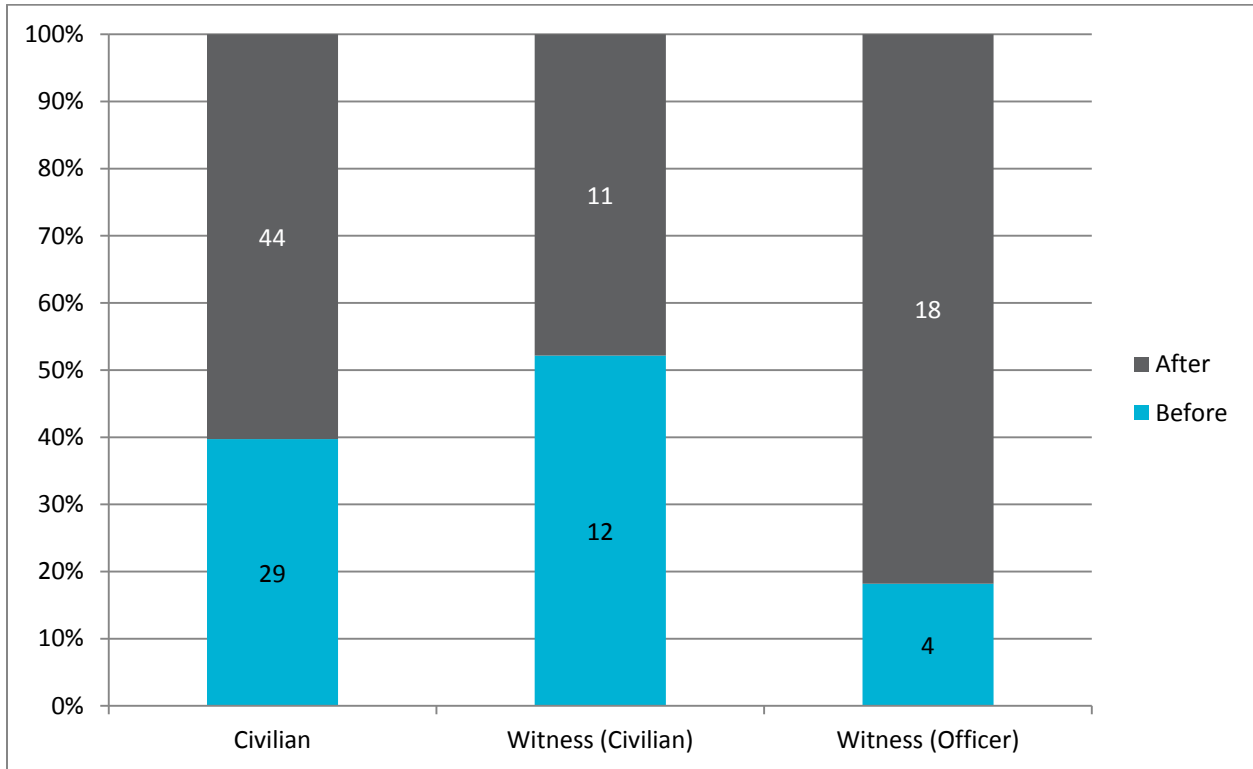
Attempt to Contact Complainant by Precinct



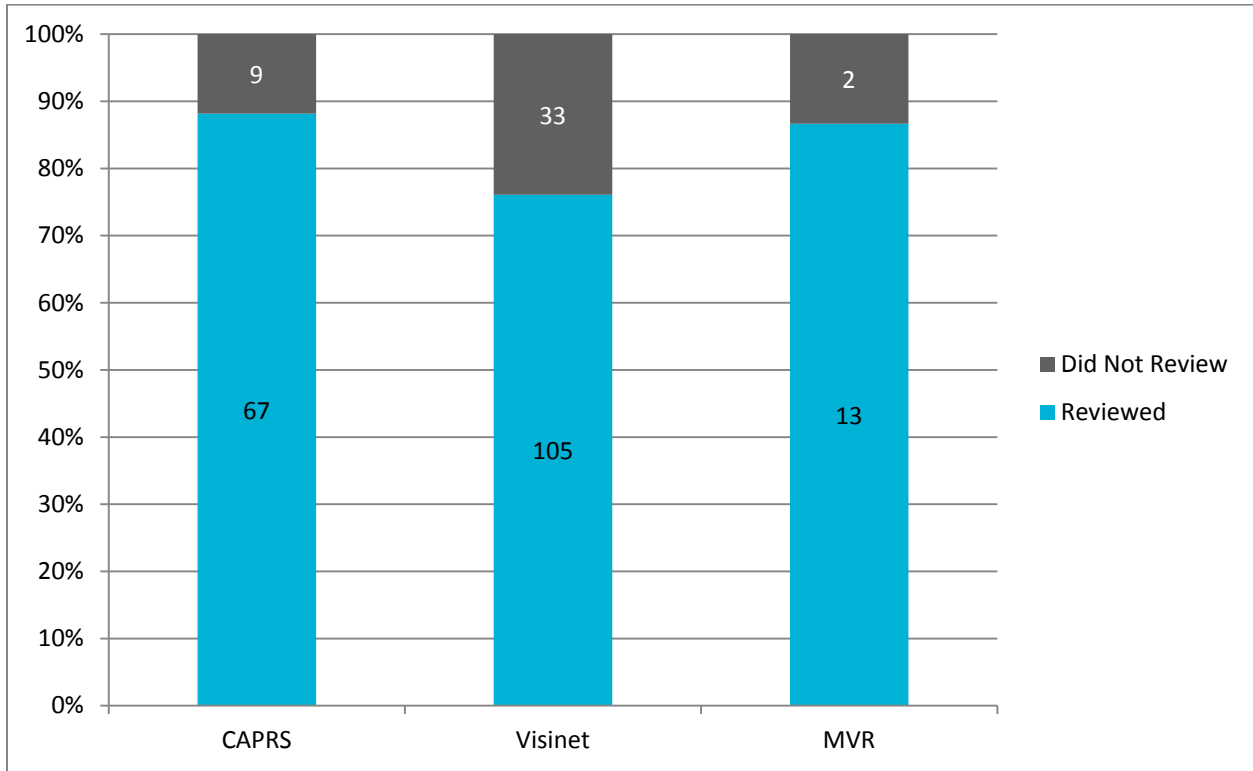
Coaching Supervisor Documented Conversations



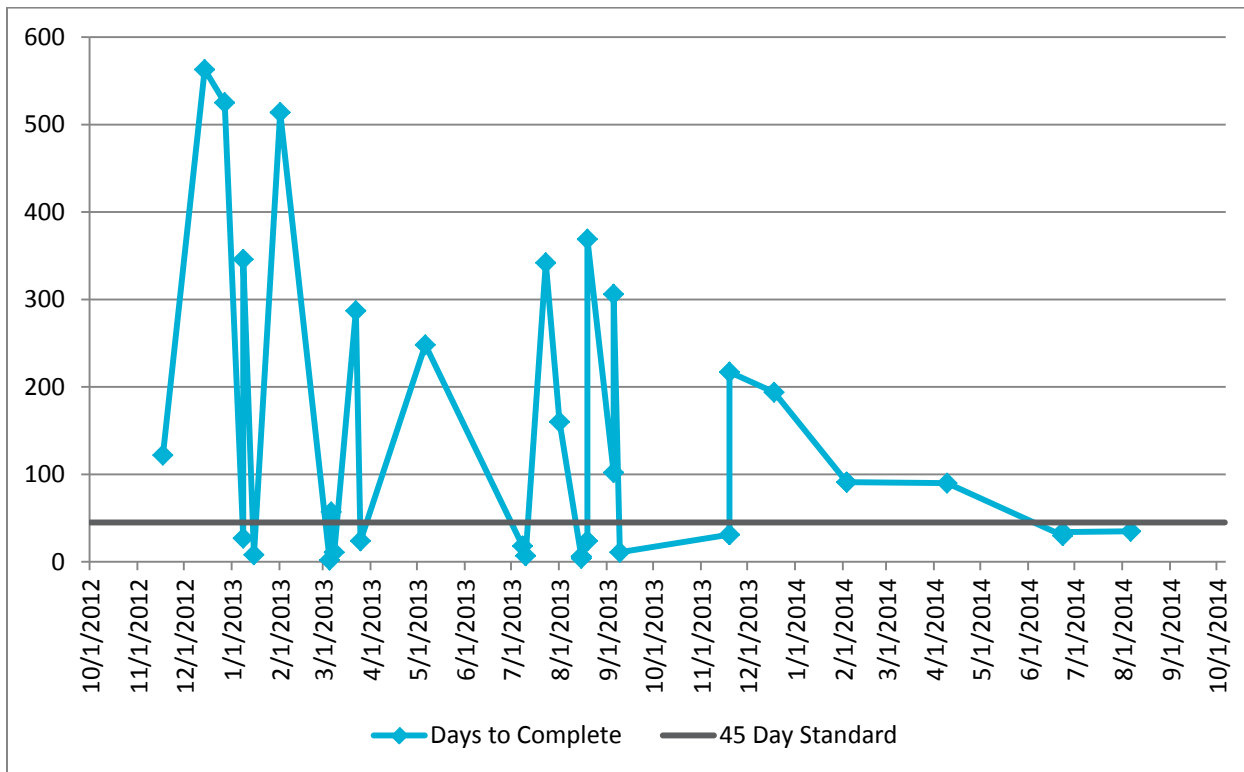
Contacting Complainant/Witnesses Before Focus Officer Conversation



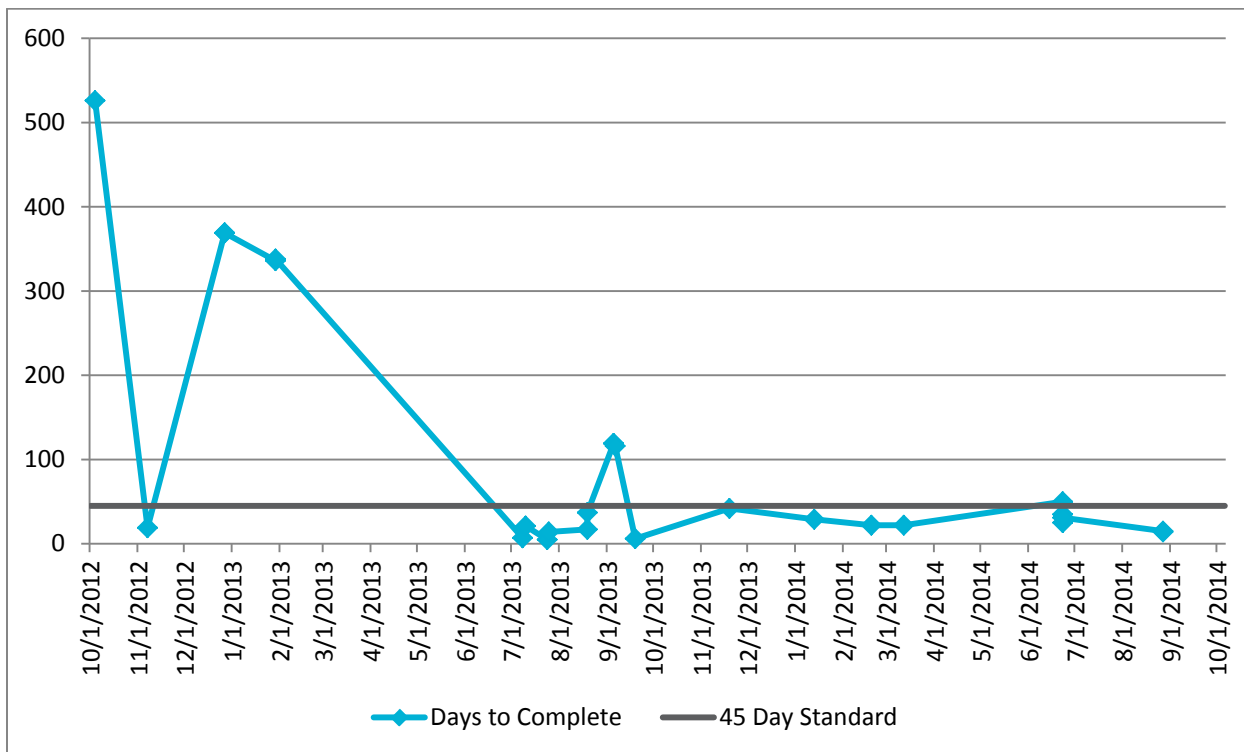
Reviewing Evidence



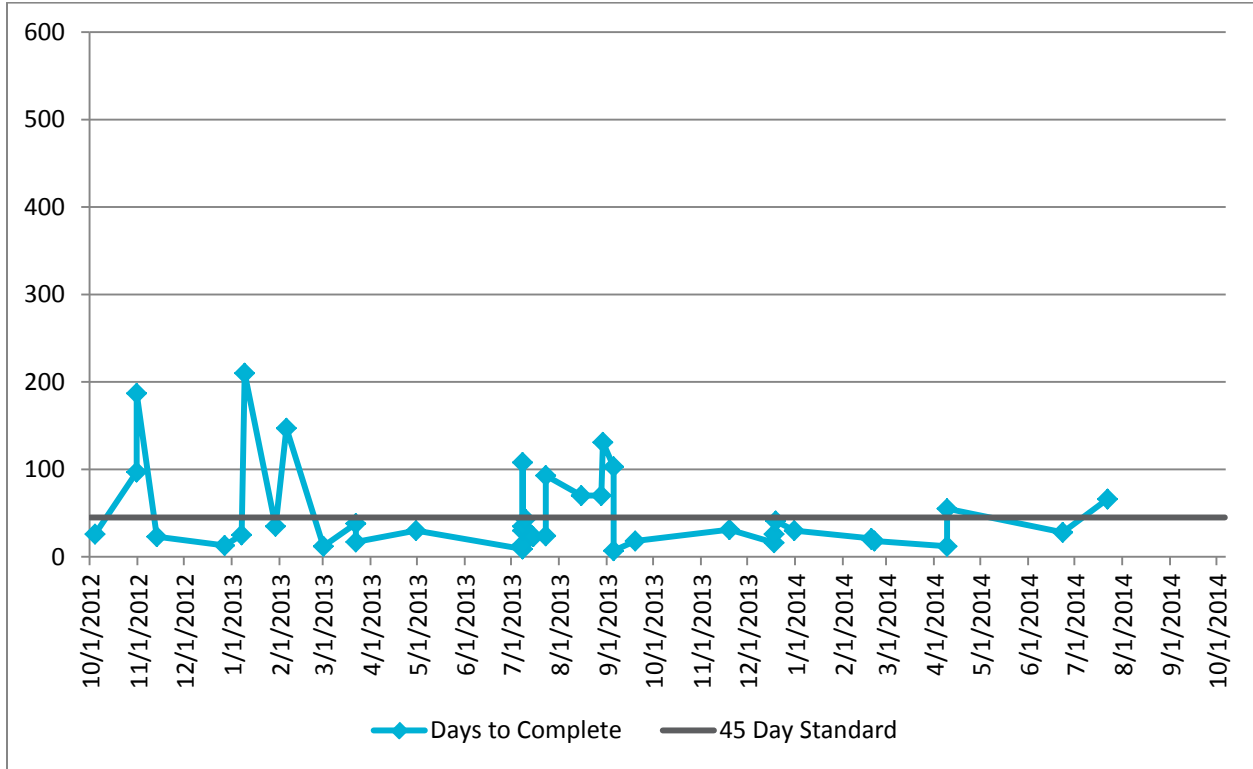
1st Precinct



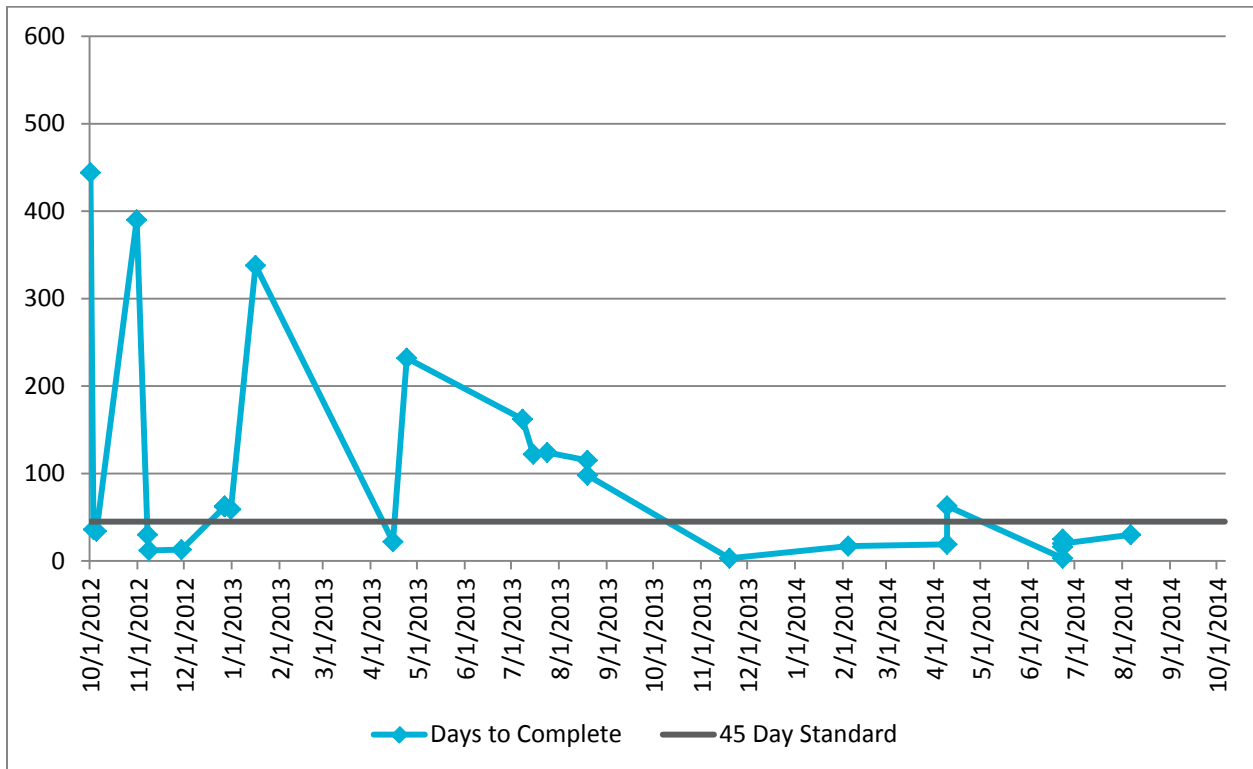
2nd Precinct



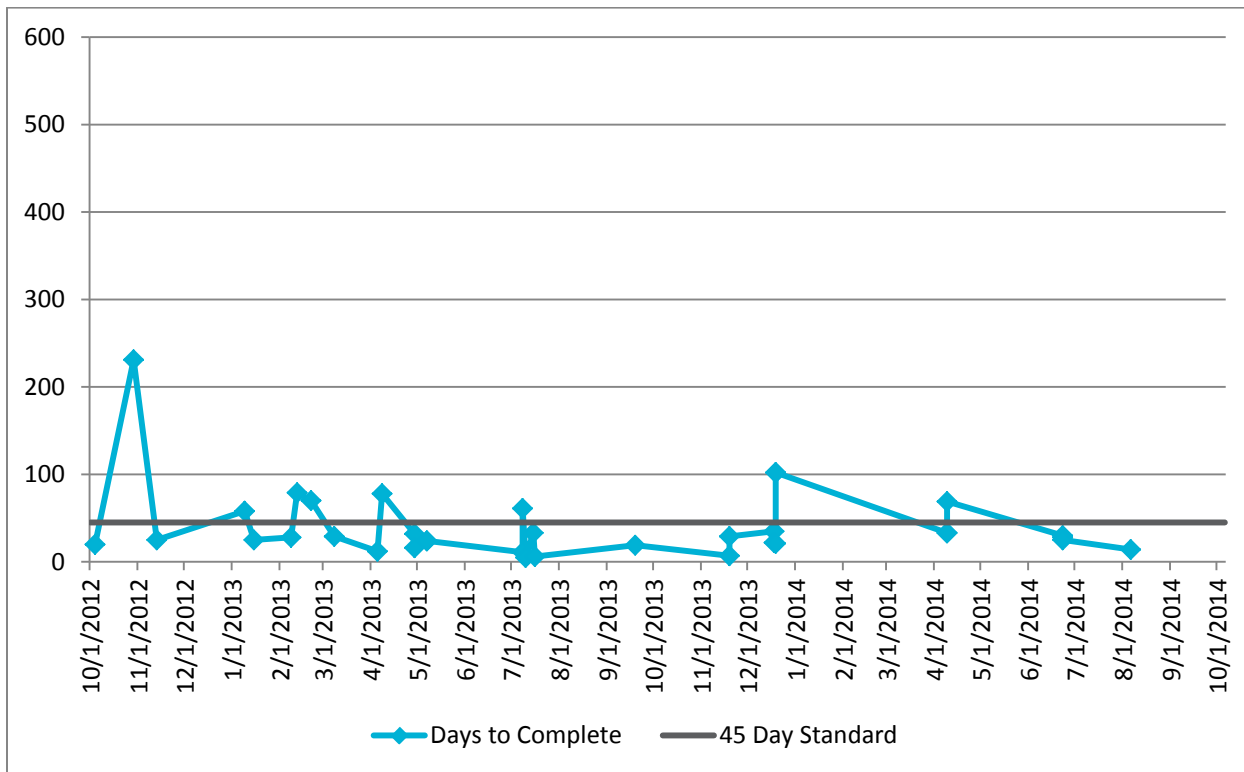
3rd Precinct



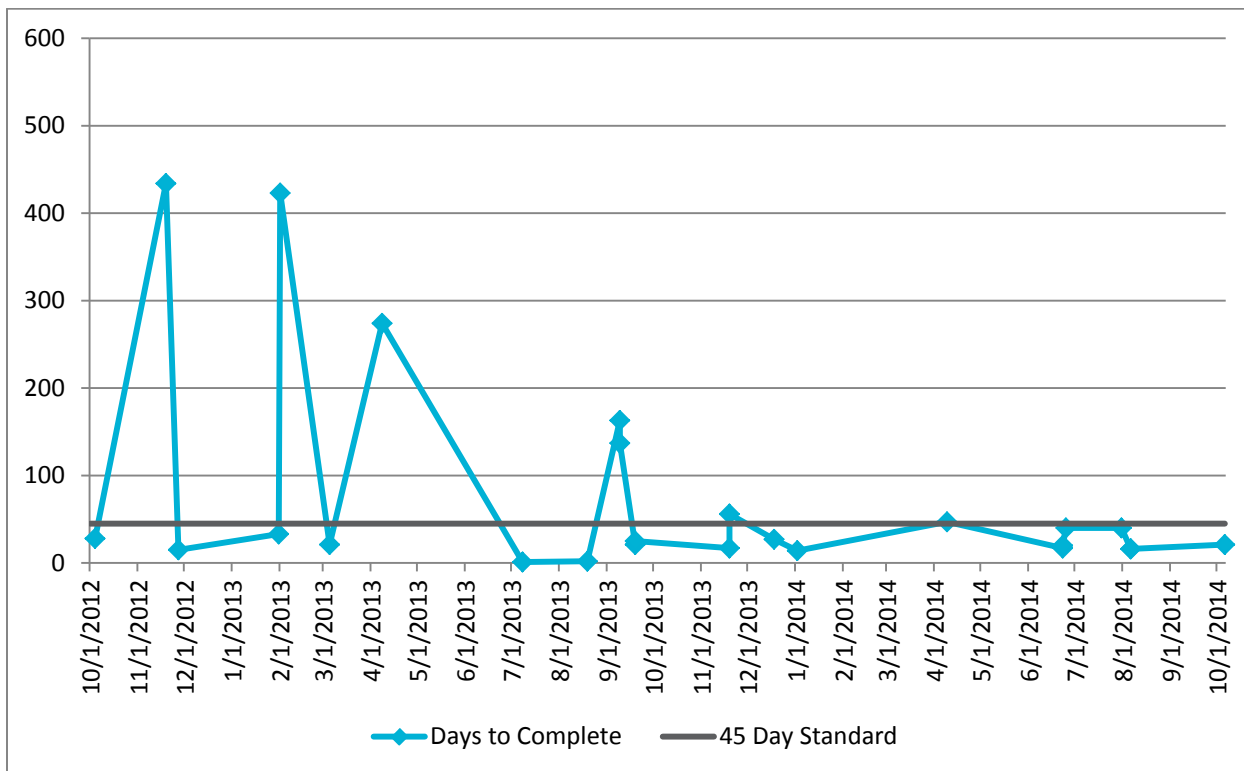
4th Precinct



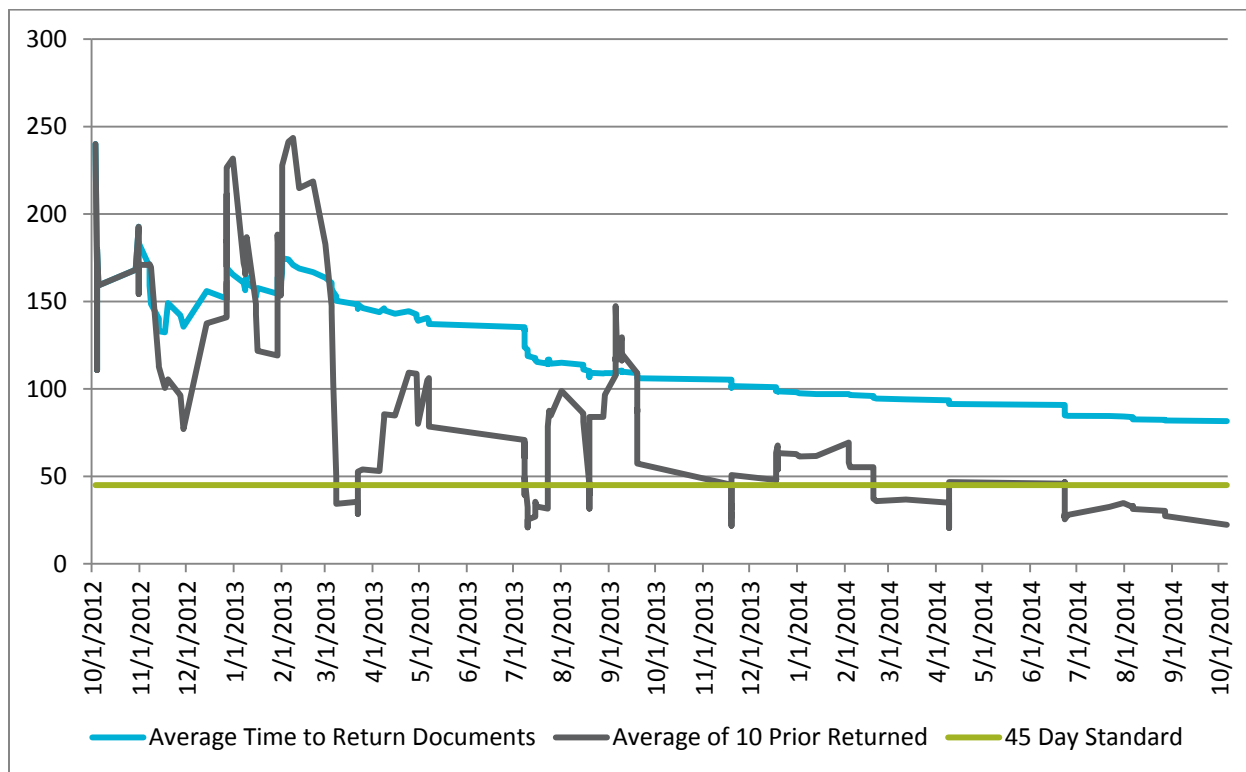
5th Precinct



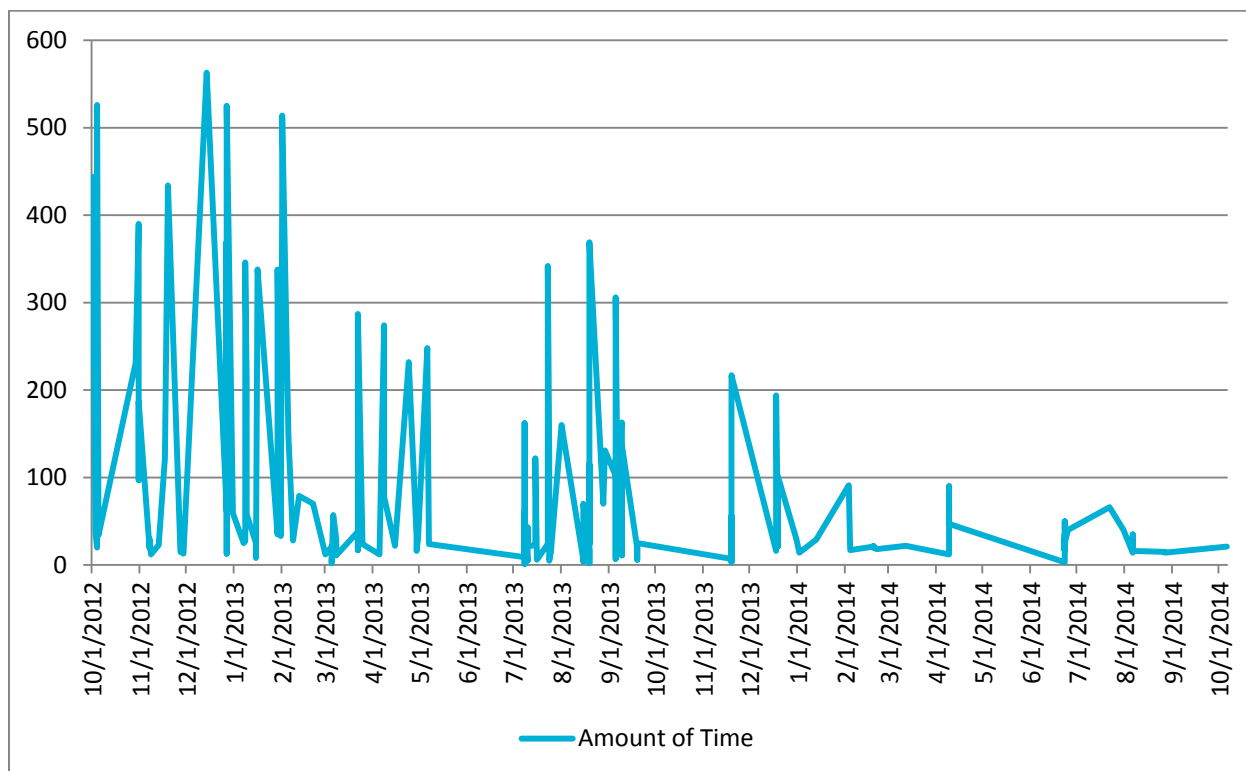
Other



Average Length of Coaching Over Time



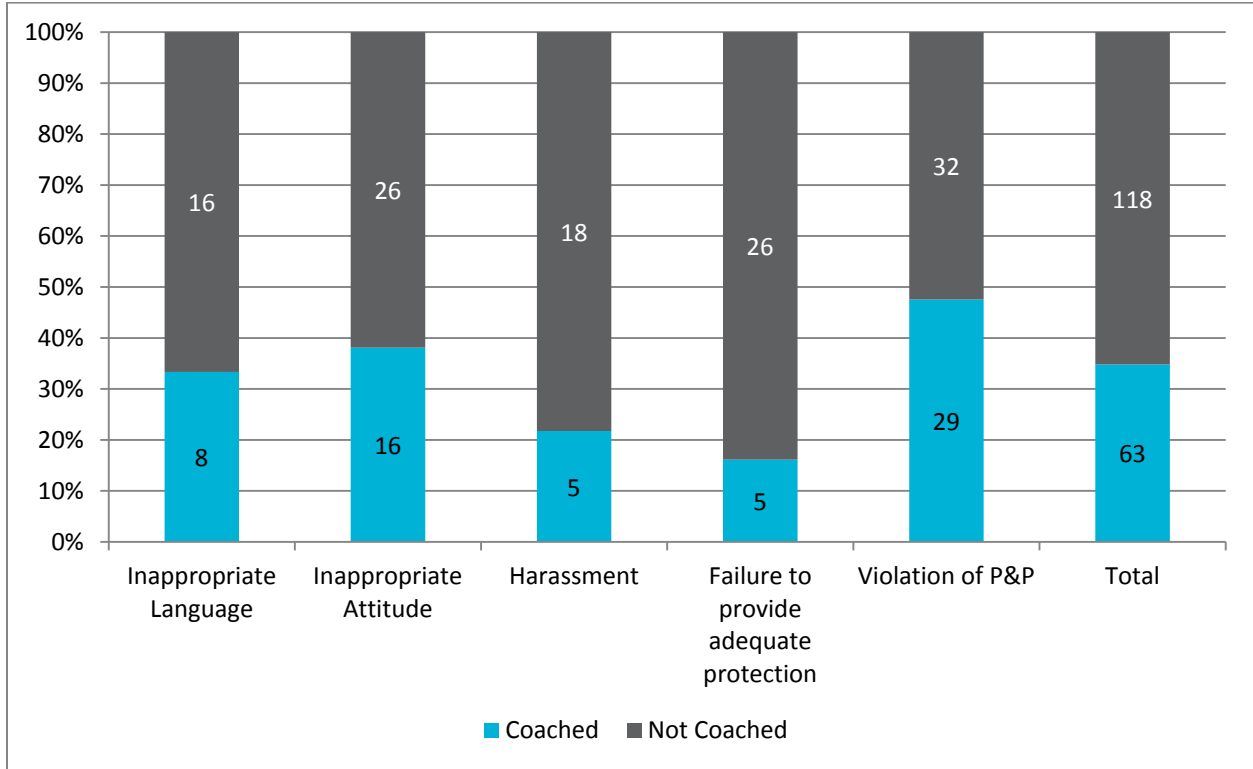
Duration of All Returned Coaching Documents



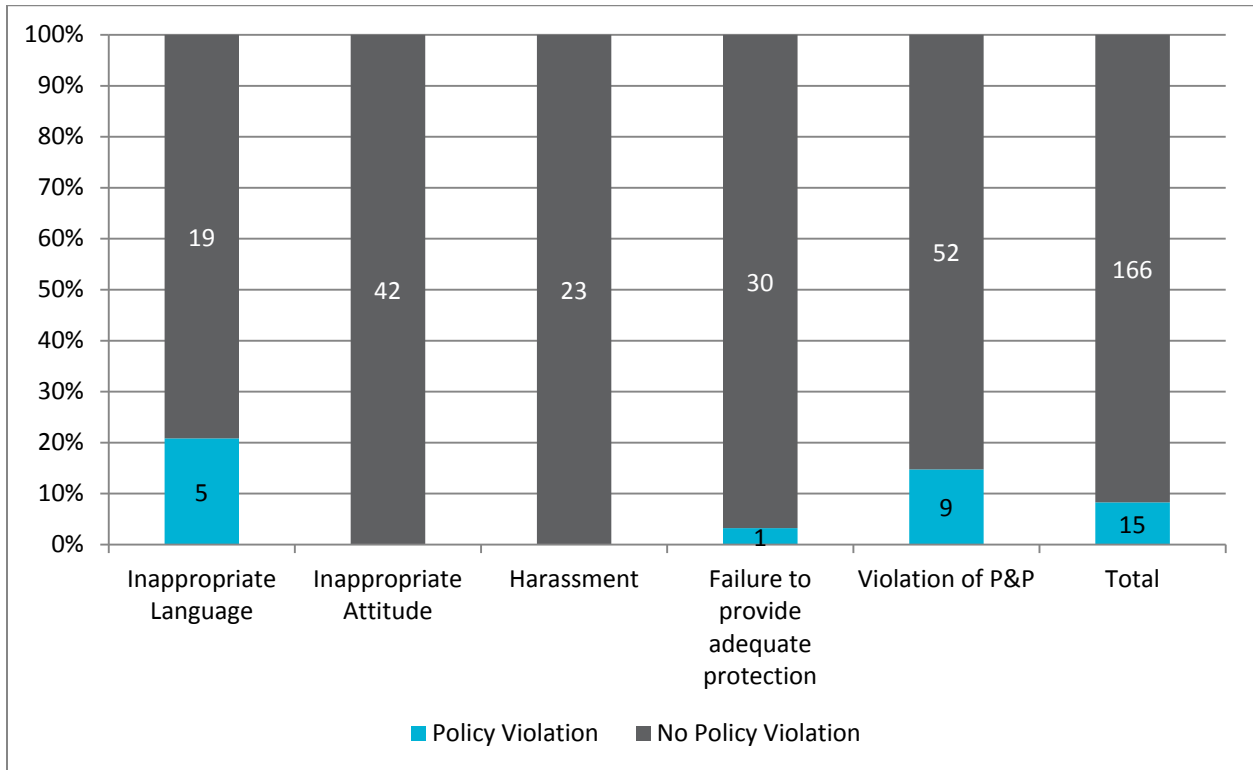
Coaching Outcome Statistics

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Policy Violation Ratio by Precinct Where Document was Sent	22
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Amount of Time Between Coaching Sent and Returned and Ratio of Coaching	25
Amount of Time Between Incident Date and Coaching Returned and Ratio of Coaching	26
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached When Multiple Focus Officers Involved	26

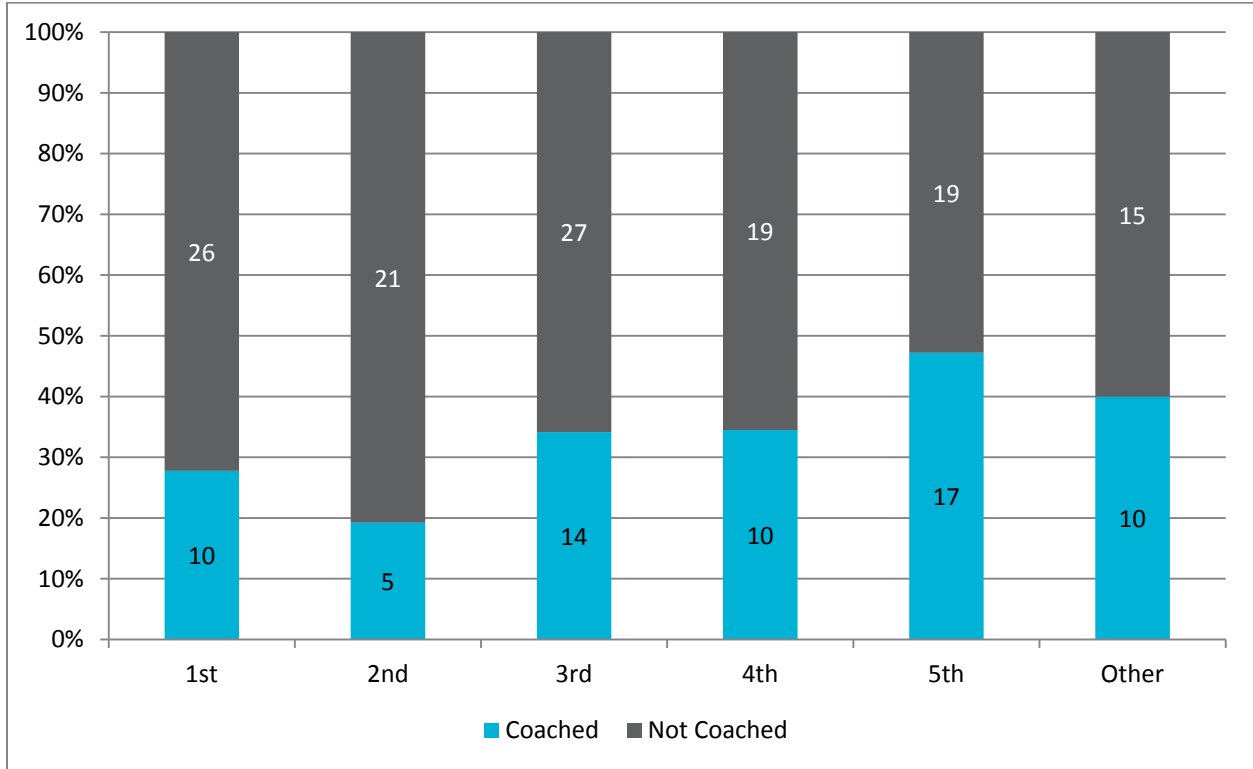
Ratio of coached/not coached by Allegation - Removed cases with multiple allegations



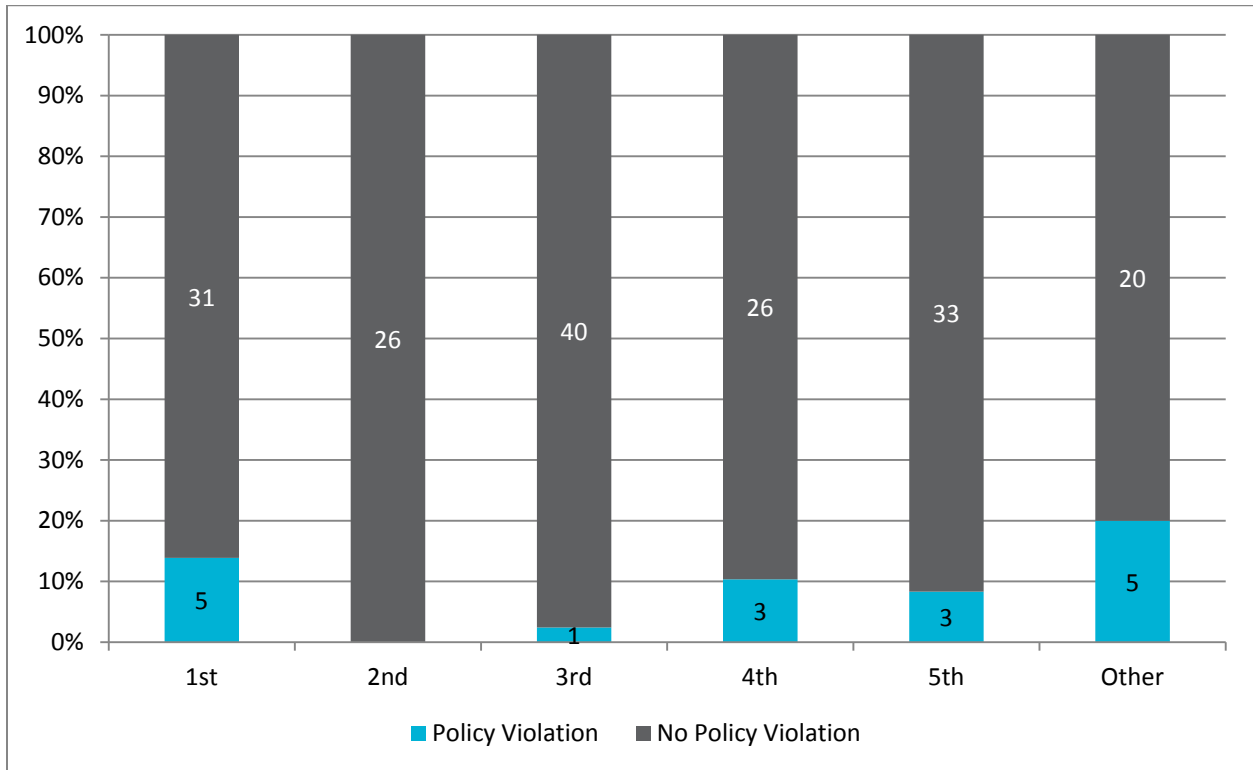
Policy Violation and Allegation - Removed cases with Multiple Allegations



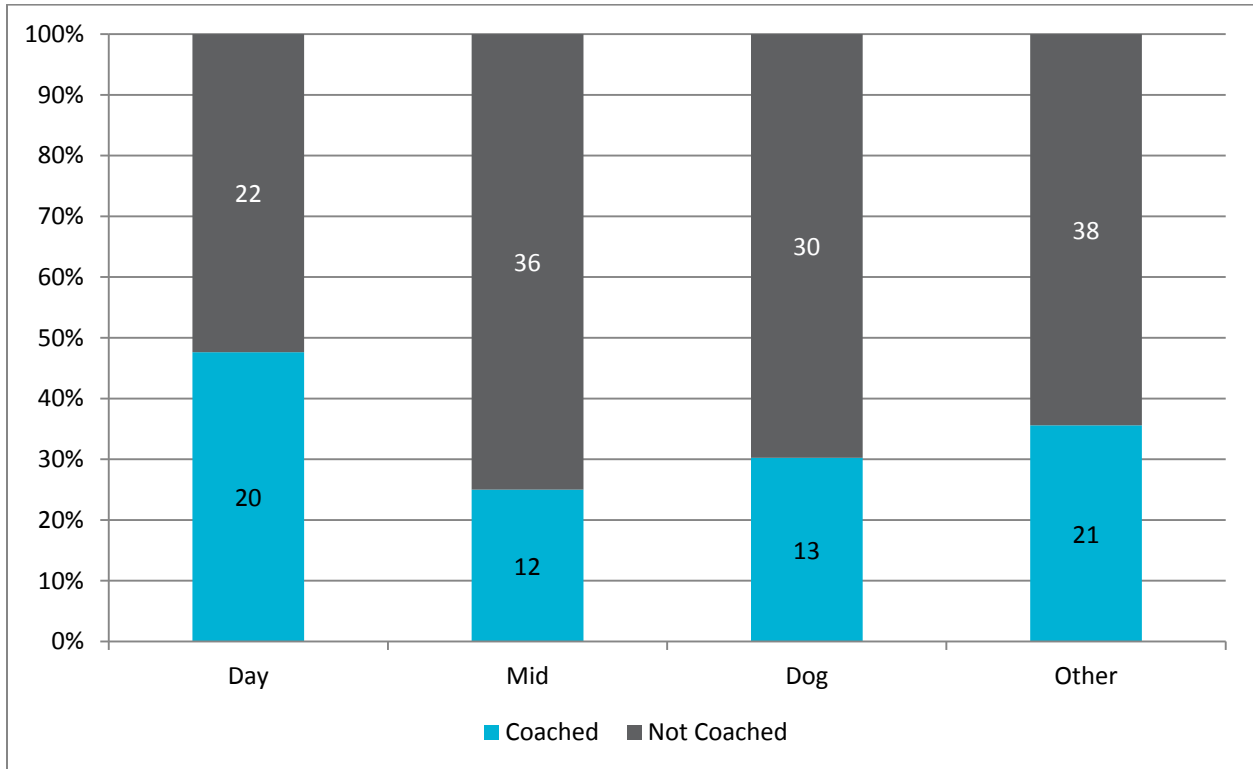
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached by Precinct Where Document was Sent



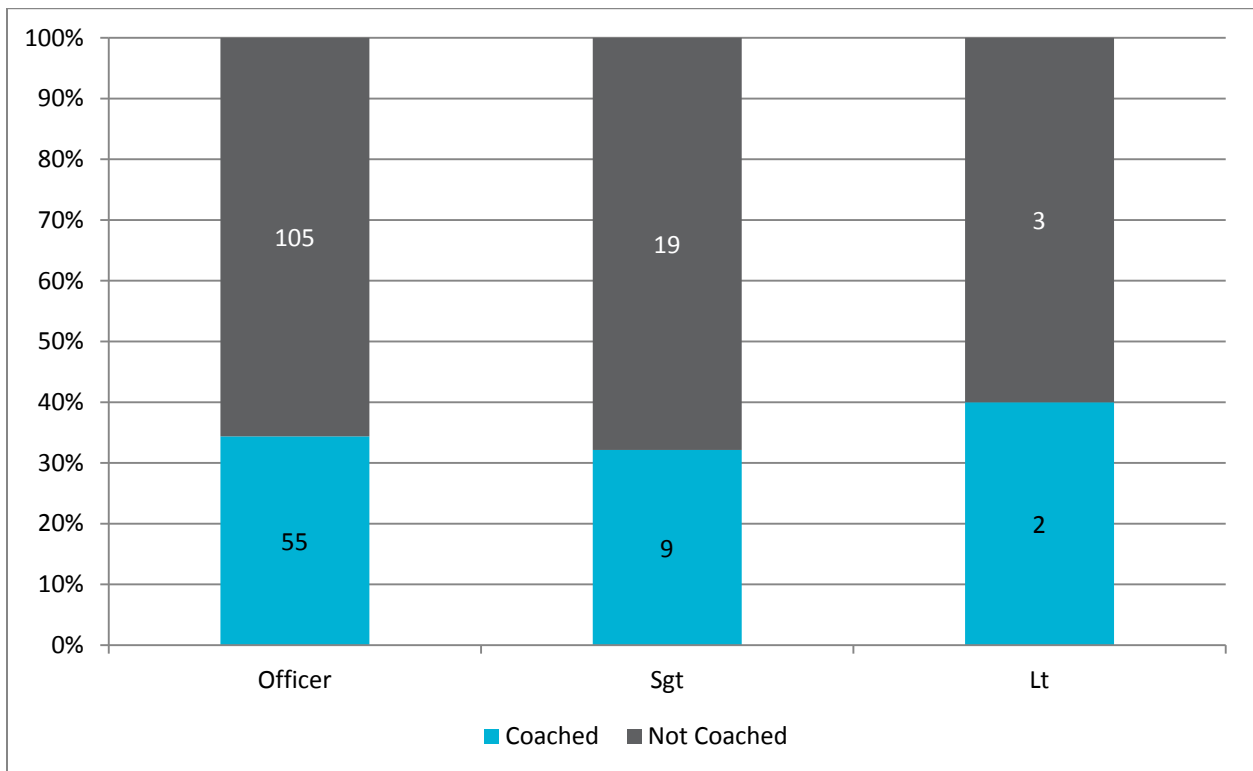
Policy Violation Ratio by Precinct Where Document was Sent



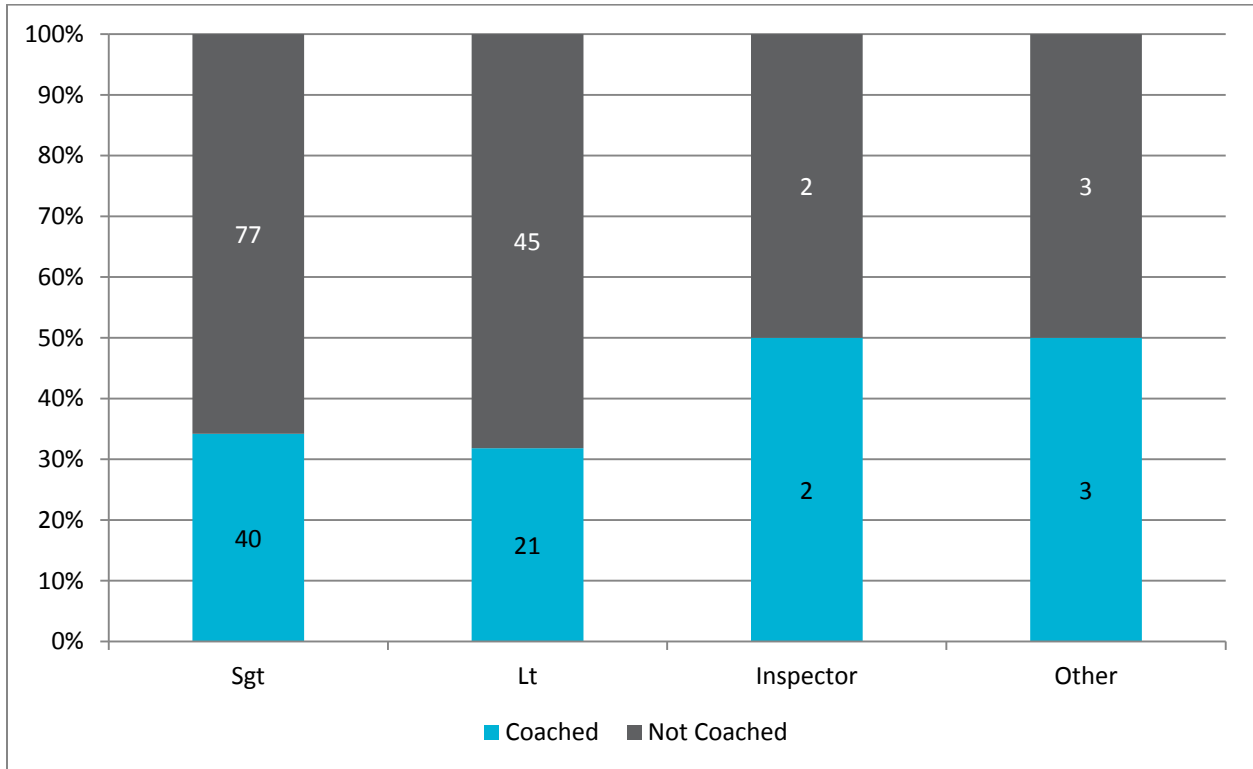
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached by Coaching Officer Shift



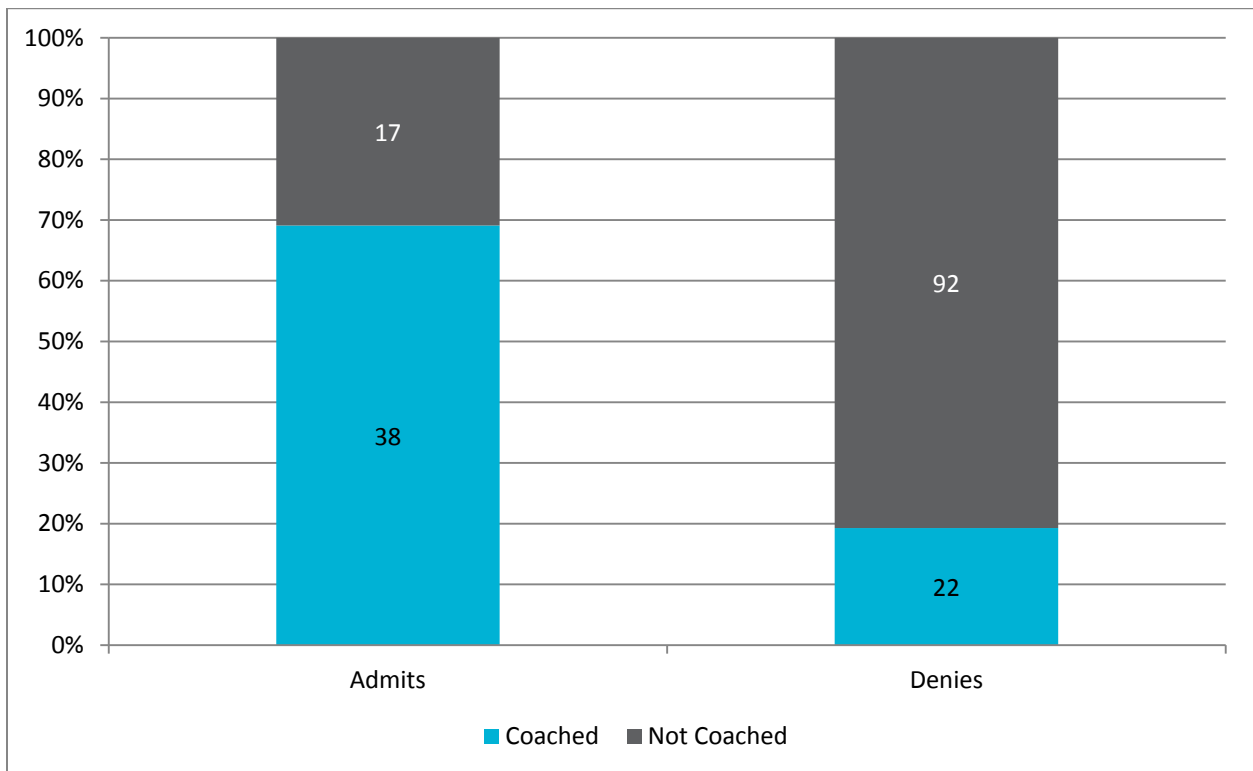
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached by Focus Officer Rank



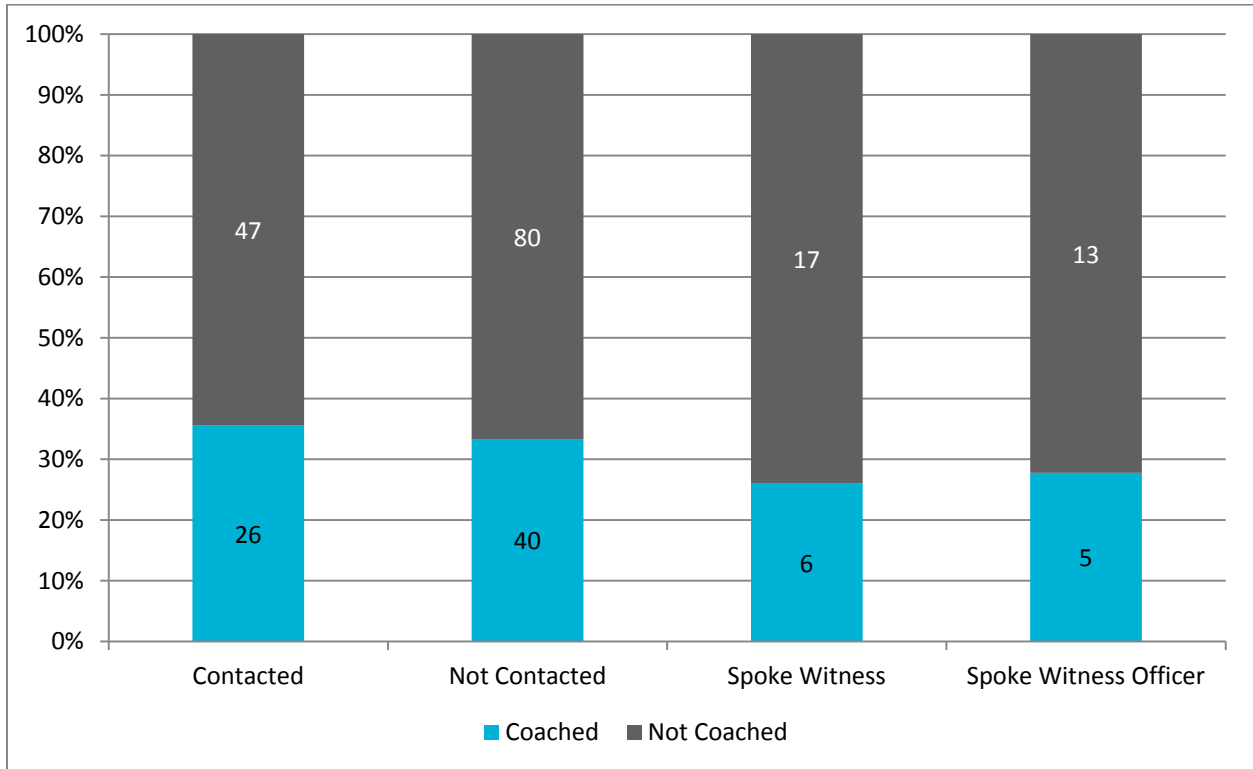
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached by Coaching Officer Rank



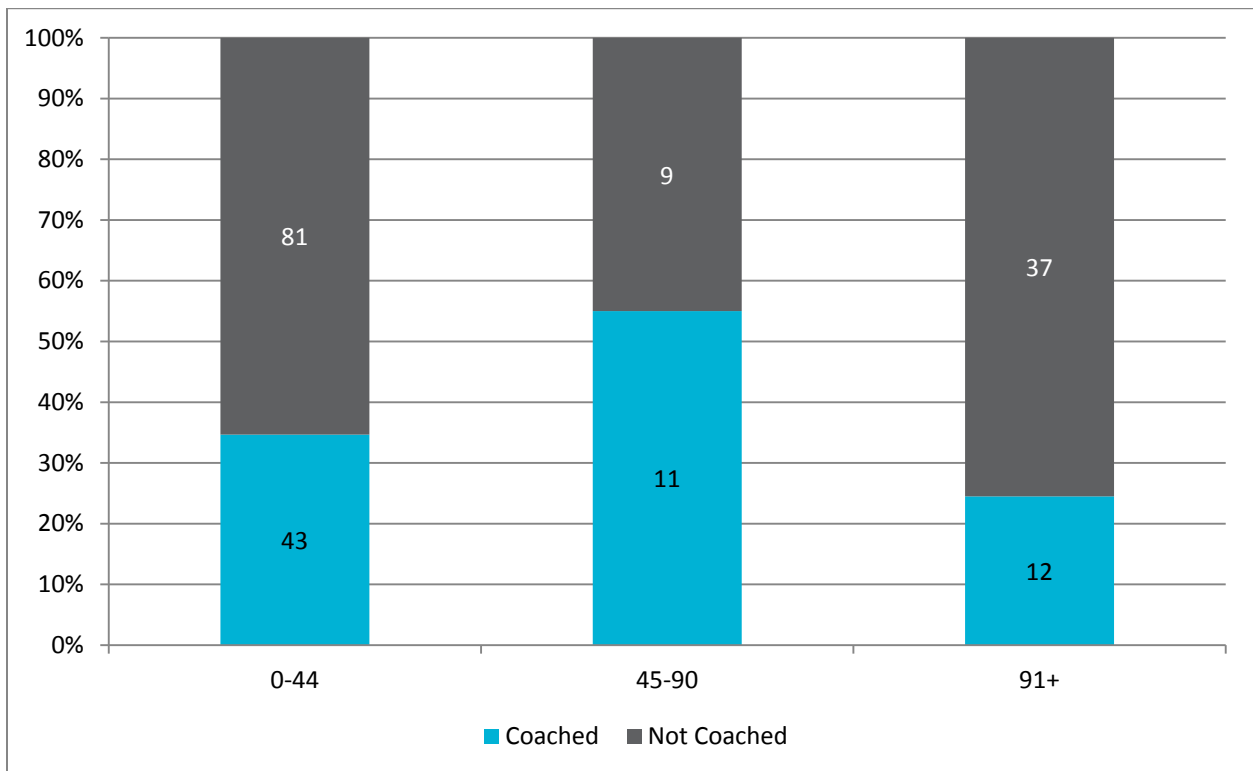
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached When Focus Officer Admits Some Allegations



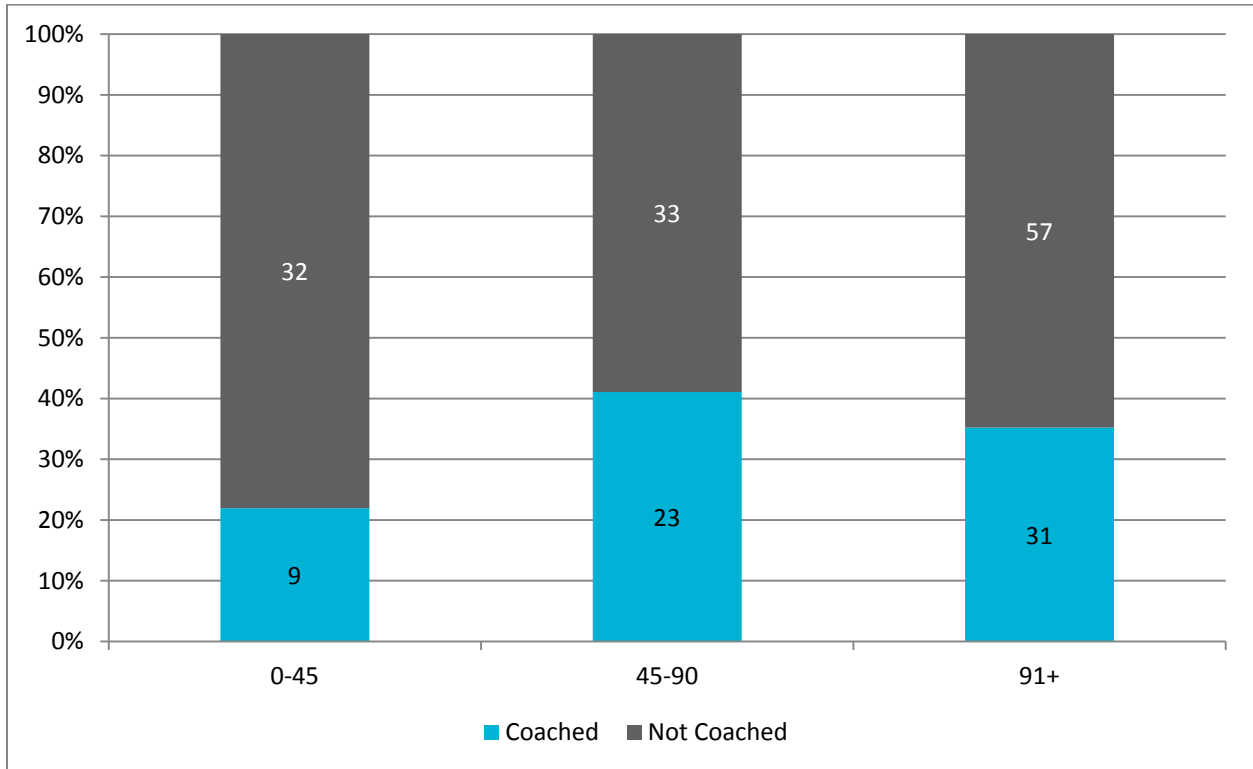
Ratio of Coached/Not Coached When Supervisor Spoke with Complainant



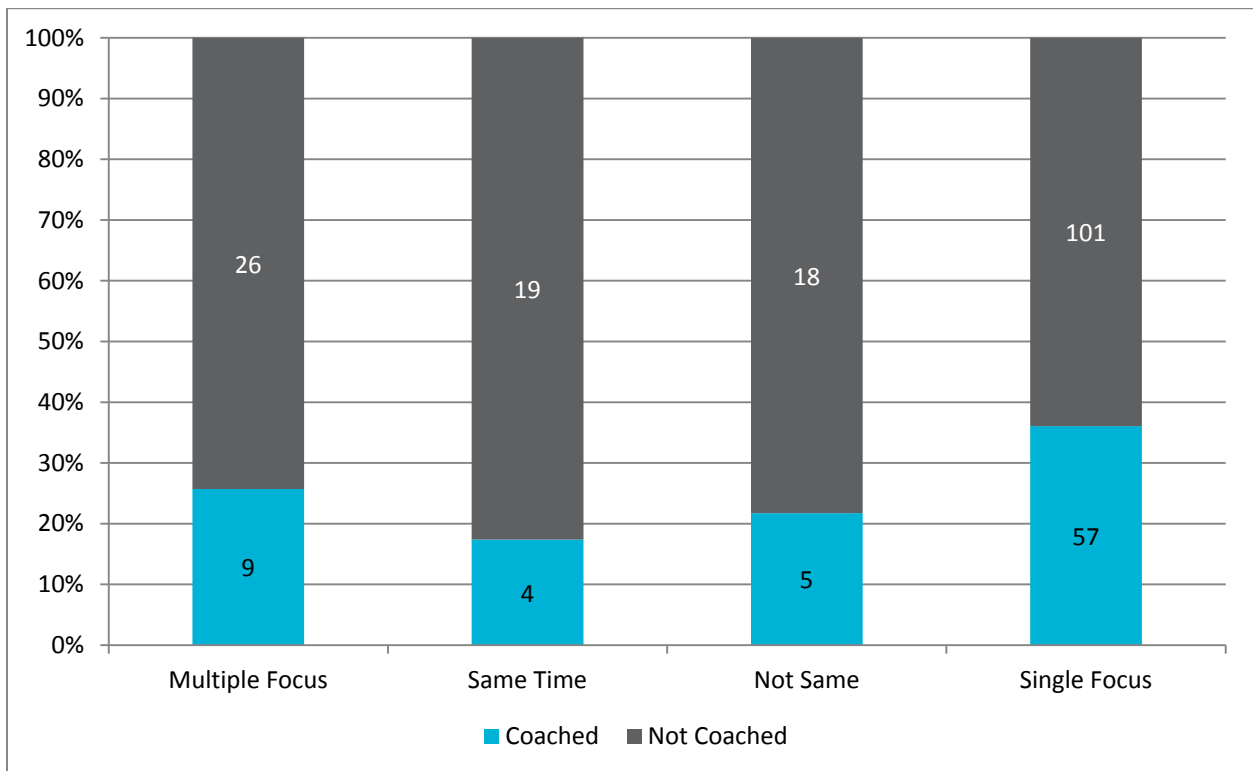
Amount of Time Between Coaching Sent and Returned and Ratio of Coaching



Amount of Time Between Incident Date and Coaching Returned and Ratio of Coaching



Ratio of Coached/Not Coached When Multiple Focus Officers Involved



References:

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- i <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/conductcomm/index.htm>
 - ii Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Section 172.80(f)(4)

Appendices
