

Audit of the Austin Police Department's Handling of Complaints



Office of the City
Auditor, Austin, TX

Katie Houston,
Assistant City Auditor

Andrew Keegan,
Auditor in Charge

2017 ALGA Conference

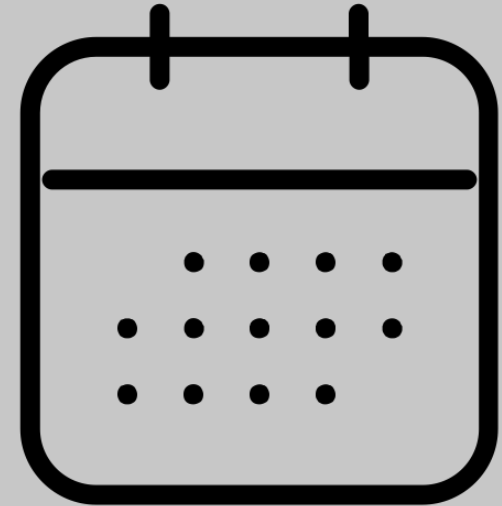
Why We Did the Audit

Right Topic



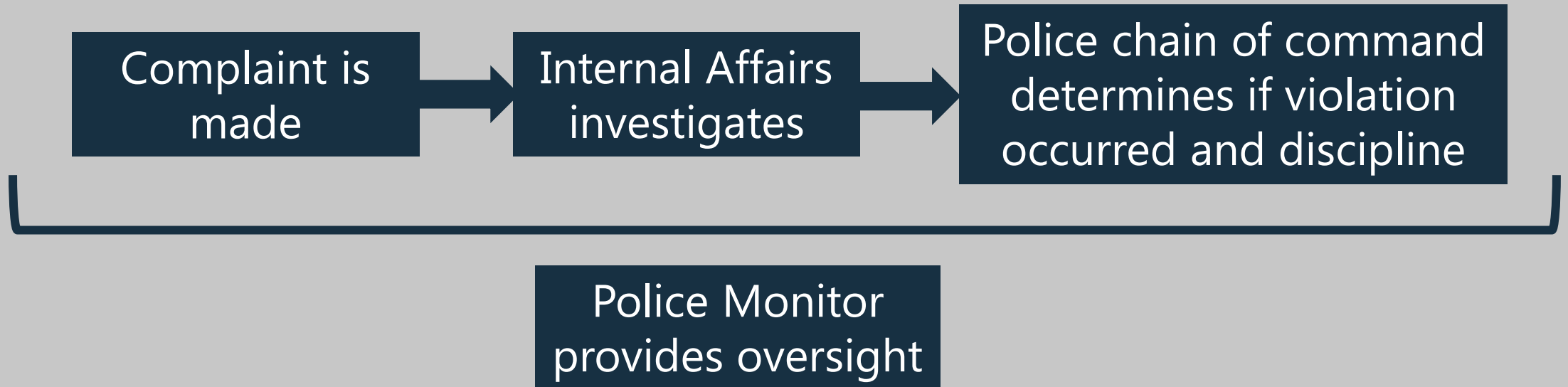
Created by Symbolon
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Right Time

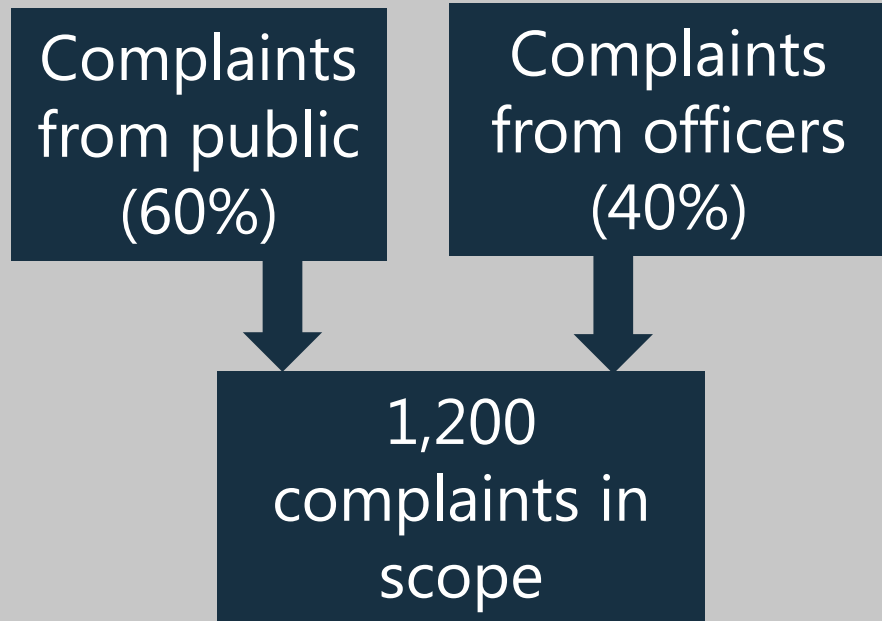


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Process for Handling Complaints

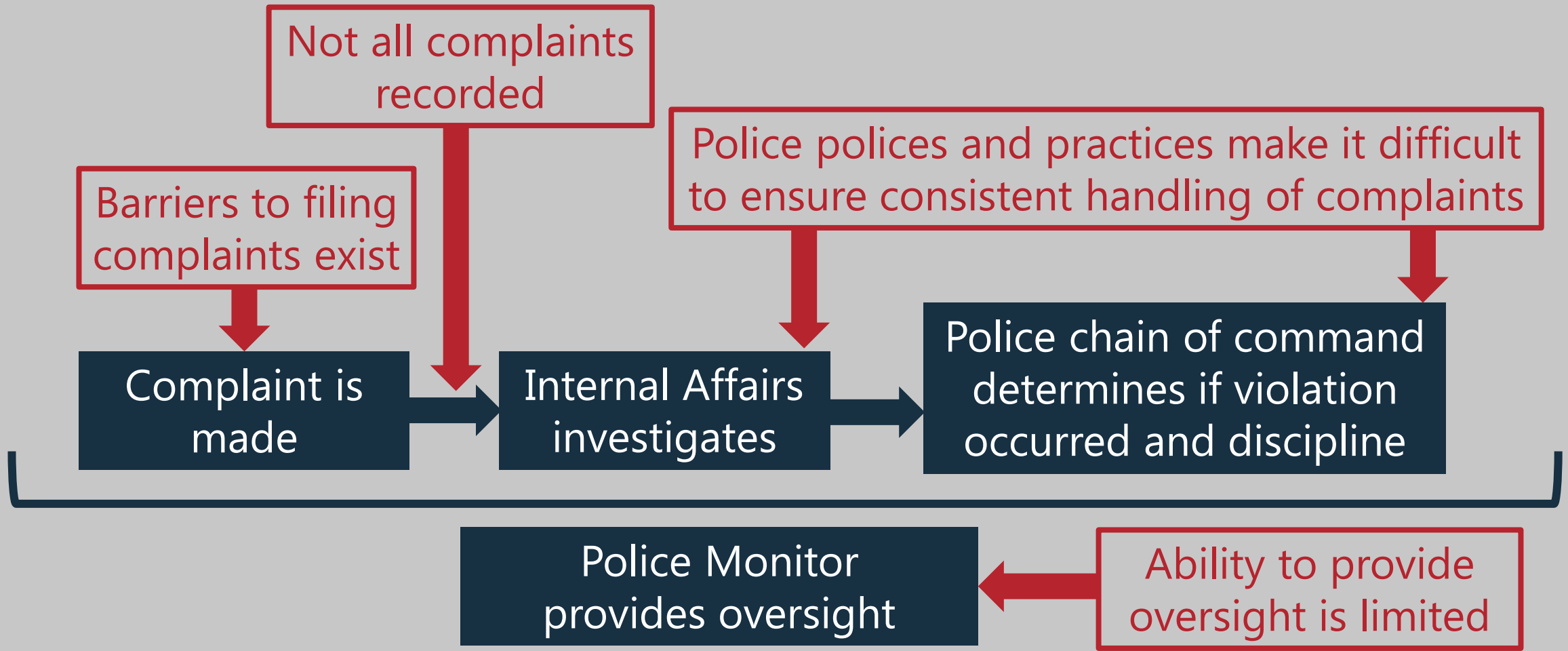


Universe of Complaints



- <50% of complaints resulted in discipline
- Frequent type of discipline was an oral or written reprimand

What We Found



Barriers to Filing Complaints

City's culture undermined outreach about the complaint process



Austin Texas
@austintexasgov



Welcome #SX SXers! We know you're loving Austin but if you experience a problem with police, let us know. 512-974-9090
austinpolicemonitor.com

RETWEETS

44

LIKES

28



6:10 PM - 10 Mar 2014



Austin Texas
@austintexasgov



@ArtAcevedo @Austin_Police does an extraordinary job under extraordinary conditions @SXSW Apologies if OPM message gave wrong impression

RETWEET

1



10:19 AM - 11 Mar 2014

Not all Complaints Recorded

- Several high-profile incidents involving officer conduct were not in complaint database
- APD supervisors reported not always forwarding complaints to Internal Affairs

Policies and Practices Impacted Consistency

- Officers who violated the same policy received different disciplines

Officer	Written Reprimand	3-Day Suspension	Additional Policy Violations During Incident
1	☑		YES
2	☑		YES
3	☑		YES
4		☑	NO
5		☑	NO

Oversight Ability Limited

- Access to investigative records was restricted
- Disagreements about discipline appeared to have no impact
- Required meetings between stakeholders did not occur

Results of the Audit

- Recommendations to the Chief of Police, Police Monitor, and City Manager
- Changes included:
 - Wider distribution of information on complaint process by Police Monitor
 - Police Chief made failure to report a complaint a fireable offense for officers

Obstacles and Approaches

Surprise News Events

Video Shows Brutal Arrest Of Black Schoolteacher In Austin

A white officer told the woman that black people had

Austin police apologize after video shows black woman's violent arrest

Austin officials fumbled 4 chances to address Breiaion King case

Council member calls for review of Breiaion King arrest case

Obstacles and Approaches

Involving Public in Fieldwork

- Emotional investment
- Understanding of policy



Obstacles and Approaches

Laws and Regulations

- Protection for records
- Comparisons not feasible
- Union agreements

