



CITY OF PUNTA GORDA  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Howard Kunik, City Manager  
From: Thomas Lewis, Chief of Police  
Date: June 7, 2016  
Subject: Florida Department of Law Enforcement 2015 Uniform Crime Report

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The Punta Gorda Police Department is pleased to present an analysis of the 2015 Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data for the State of Florida which was released on June 3, 2016 by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. As in past years, the intent of this report is to provide you with an overview of 2015 UCR data as it relates to the City of Punta Gorda.

**About the Uniform Crime Report**

The reliability of Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data is a constant issue in criminology and among criminal justice professionals. There are two principle instruments for measuring crime in the United States: the UCR and the National Crime Victimization Survey. The consensus in the field is that the "real" amount of criminal activity lies between these two measures.

UCR numbers reflect the crimes reported by the local agencies (primarily Sheriff's Offices and Police Departments) to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The UCR does not include all offenses reported to the police, but is limited to a well-defined list of reportable offenses. These offenses provide an indicator over time of variations in crime trends. In addition, a number of factors influence the reporting of offense incidents to local agencies. For example, some communities are more likely to report a crime to the police than others are. Other factors may include local report-writing policy, manpower allocations, training received by officers on report writing, training received by police records personnel on UCR standards and the decisions and discretion exercised by individuals at every step of the process. As you can see, there are many reasons for variability in reporting between jurisdictions, counties and even states.

Since UCR is not reporting total crime, but rather a select list of crimes reported to the police, the trend data may possibly be more useful than the actual numbers themselves. It is generally thought that the UCR does a good job of reflecting whether crime is increasing or decreasing. Using the trend, one assumes that any problems in the reporting are consistent over the years even as the problems vary. Nationally, the victimization data (based on interviews of individuals) has mirrored the UCR data trend, which gives the Florida Department of Law Enforcement some confidence in its reliability. Simply put, UCR should be used as an indicator of criminal activity but not the ultimate measure.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has warned against “simplistic and incomplete analyses” that merely compare crime index figures for one community with those of another. According to the FBI, unless cities are carefully matched or unless composite statistics take region and community size into consideration, too many other factors could explain the crime rate difference – even assuming equal diligence in reporting.<sup>1</sup> In our following comparisons of UCR data, we specifically take region and community size into account. That being said, there are certain numbers that are intrinsically of interest to us and are meaningful within themselves: Murder, Robbery, and Rape offenses are but a few.

### *Our View of UCR*

Philosophically, the management of the Punta Gorda Police Department views statistical crime data critically. We understand that with a low crime rate in a City of approximately 17,675 people, small increases or decreases in specific crime numbers can result in dramatic percentage swings – in either direction. We are neither quick to assign blame for a negative trend nor are we quick to take credit for a positive trend. We feel that the best approach to evaluating this information is through a thorough analysis of the data, followed by strategic planning that results in the formulation of countermeasures to achieve our desired outcomes. Finally, we feel that our City’s growth management policies, urban design efforts, economic development strategies, and overall city services positively impact our low crime rate.

### **Index Crimes in the State of Florida**

Index crimes consist of murder, forcible sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. Total index crimes in the State of Florida continue its downward trend with a reduction of 1.6%.

It is important to note for the purpose of analysis that when assessing a percentage increase or decrease in index crimes, no one crime is given more emphasis than another by UCR. Part one crimes are simply added together and a deviation noted. Therefore, a significant reduction in murders and robberies could easily be offset by an increase in larcenies. This emphasizes the need to evaluate the composite figures for trends as opposed to attempting to interpret a meaning for the individual numerical figures. It is also a significant reason that index variation results are controversial by their very nature.

### *Crime in Florida*

Murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault are classified as violent crimes within UCR. There was a 2.6% increase in violent crime throughout the State of Florida. With violent crime of particular concern, we note that murder increased by 5.7%. Firearm-related murders increased by 11.2%, while murders involving knives or cutting instruments decreased by 5.7%. Robberies decreased slightly throughout the State of Florida with 21,097 robberies reported in 2015. This represents a 2.2% decrease from last year’s number of 21,576. The crime of robbery involving a

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<sup>1</sup> Ammons, D.N. (2001). *Municipal Benchmarks: Assessing Local Performance and Establishing Community Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). California: Sage Publications.

firearm increased slightly by 0.4%. Forcible sex offenses (as defined by the State of Florida) increased by 6.1%.

The Index Crime Rate

A second key measure of overall jurisdictional criminal activity is the index crime rate which provides a measure of index crimes per 100,000 service population. The index crime rate is calculated by dividing the total index crimes by the service population of the community. Florida's index crime rate decreased by 3.1%.

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data  
**Florida's Index Crime Rate**

Year	Total Index Crimes	Population	% Change	Crime Rate	% Change
2006	849,926	18,349,132	2.4	4,632.0	-1.0
2007	876,981	18,680,367	1.8	4,694.7	1.4
2008	883,905	18,807,219	0.7	4,699.8	0.1
2009	824,559	18,750,483	-0.3	4,397.5	-6.4
2010	770,518	18,771,768	0.1	4,104.7	-6.7
2011	769,480	18,905,048	0.7	4,070.2	-0.8
2012	725,944	19,074,434	0.9	3,805.8	-6.5
2013	698,607	19,259,543	1.0	3,627.3	-4.7
2014	673,138	19,507,369	1.3	3,450.7	-4.9
2015	662,372	19,815,183	1.6	3,342.7	-3.1

Crime in Charlotte County

As the two principal providers of law enforcement services in Charlotte County, the Punta Gorda Police Department and Charlotte County Sheriff's Office crime trend comparisons are relevant simply due to our geographical connection and similar demographics. A summarized comparison of the two agencies and our respective populations follows:

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data  
**Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Comparison**

Categories	Charlotte County				City of Punta Gorda				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015	14/15 Change
Population	146,373	146,592	146,980	149,466	16,984	17,087	17,487	17,675	1.0%
Total Arrests	8,875	9,162	9,515	8,751	575	483	672	668	-0.6%
Total Index Crimes	3,616	3,482	2,912	2,685	289	317	295	252	-14.6%
Index Crime Rate	2,470.4	2,375.3	1,981.2	1,796.4	1,701.6	1,855.2	1,687.0	1,425.7	-15.4%
% Crimes Cleared	36.5%	40.2%	48.4%	47.2%	37.4%	32.5%	39.0%	42.1%	7.9%

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data  
**Charlotte County/Punta Gorda Index Crime Comparison**  
 (By UCR crime category)

	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Agg Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Veh Theft
City of Punta Gorda	1	1	5	15	16	200	14
Charlotte County	0	30	25	270	400	1,864	96

## Crime Comparisons Among Surrounding Jurisdictions

There are a number of law enforcement agencies in the surrounding jurisdictions of Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Lee, Hendry, and Sarasota counties who are required to submit UCR data to the State. Several of these agencies do not have a specific service population per se (e.g. Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, etc.) with respect to regional UCR calculations. A breakdown of agencies by type within the surrounding counties is as follows:

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data

### **Number of Law Enforcement Agencies in the Surrounding Counties**

(Listed by Type)

SWF Law Enforcement Agencies	No.
Sheriff's Offices	7
<b>Municipal Police Departments</b>	<b>11</b>
Port Authority Police Agencies	2
University Police Agencies	3
Florida Dept of Law Enforcement	1
Florida Div of Insurance Fraud	1
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	7
Florida Highway Patrol	7
FL Division of Alcoholic Bev. & Tobacco	7
Dept. of Corrections Inspector General	7
<b>Total Reporting Agencies</b>	<b>53</b>

Although each of the eleven municipal law enforcement agencies in the surrounding counties are impacted differently by crime due to various demographic and geographic factors, an analysis of municipal UCR crime data in our own region is worthwhile. The following surrounding municipal agencies are listed by crime rate.

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data

### **Surrounding Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies**

(Ranked by Index Crime Rate/100,000)

Agency	Pop.	Total Crime Index	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Crime Rate/ 100,000	% Cleared
Marco Island PD	16,728	148	0	4	0	8	26	105	5	884.7	12.2%
Sanibel PD	6,502	87	0	0	0	4	25	56	2	1,338.0	14.9%
<b>Punta Gorda PD</b>	<b>17,675</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,425.7</b>	<b>42.1%</b>
North Port PD	62,235	957	1	24	13	63	164	664	28	1,537.7	29.8%
Cape Coral PD	166,508	3,339	0	12	46	145	581	2,415	140	2,005.3	22.8%
Venice PD	21,418	434	0	4	3	28	87	301	11	2,062.3	15.2%
Naples PD	19,527	555	0	2	4	15	74	451	9	2,842.2	27.6%
Arcadia PD	7,610	261	0	5	8	50	85	100	13	3,429.7	51.7%
Fort Myers PD	72,395	2,952	14	38	178	514	419	1,600	189	4,077.6	26.4%
Sarasota PD	52,905	2,683	5	28	112	212	417	1,798	111	5,071.4	21.5%
Clewiston PD	7,441	462	1	2	18	30	71	322	18	6,208.8	51.3%

Punta Gorda ranks a notable third among all Southwest Florida municipal agencies (regardless of size) behind only Marco Island and Sanibel in crime rate.

We are also encouraged by an analysis of Florida municipal law enforcement agencies with a service population between 15,000 and 20,000. In 2015 Punta Gorda again had the 2<sup>nd</sup> in lowest crime index crime rate when compared to 19 other law enforcement agencies with a similar service population. We have maintained this distinction 6 out of the past 7 years (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015).

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data

**Florida Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies 15,000-20,000 Service Population**  
 (Ranked by Index Crime Rate/100,000)

Agency	Pop.	Total Crime Index	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Crime Rate/ 100,000	% Cleared
Marco Island PD	16,728	148	0	4	0	8	26	105	5	884.7	12.2%
<b>Punta Gorda PD</b>	<b>17,675</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,425.7</b>	<b>42.1%</b>
Safety Harbor PD	17,103	326	0	6	4	27	39	239	11	1,906.1	29.1%
Lake Mary PD	15,905	313	1	7	7	40	68	179	11	1,967.9	20.4%
Naples PD	19,527	555	0	2	4	15	74	451	9	2,842.2	27.6%
Village of Pinecrest	18,408	529	0	1	3	11	116	380	18	2,873.8	15.7%
Maitland PD	17,007	493	0	4	6	28	136	291	28	2,898.8	19.1%
Tavares PD	15,106	451	0	2	4	90	139	174	42	2,985.6	21.1%
Lynn Haven PD	19,287	581	0	3	8	40	46	460	24	3,012.4	44.6%
Seminole PD	18,231	634	0	2	12	26	61	513	20	3,477.6	44.0%
Lake Wales PD	15,011	561	1	1	12	25	132	363	27	3,737.3	48.7%
Stuart PD	16,110	627	0	5	10	69	49	473	21	3,892.0	30.8%
Vero Beach PD	15,608	635	0	10	7	64	121	413	20	4,068.4	26.8%
Eustis PD	19,432	827	2	10	11	40	158	580	26	4,255.9	23.5%
New Port Richey PD	15,351	805	1	10	35	116	161	421	61	5,244.0	21.2%
Bartow PD	18,205	1,032	0	9	19	83	127	746	48	5,668.8	28.7%
Belle Glade PD	17,448	1,079	3	15	42	211	232	536	40	6,184.1	18.9%
Zephyrhills PD	15,010	966	1	1	141	33	107	785	25	6,435.7	53.5%
Opa Locka PD	17,528	1,416	6	5	105	279	268	649	104	8,078.5	16.9%
Cocoa PD	18,313	1,673	4	36	64	230	269	990	80	9,135.6	25.3%

**Crime in the City of Punta Gorda**

Again, the 2015 UCR report brings overall good news to the City of Punta Gorda with respect to crime and our community. The overall index crime rate for the City of Punta Gorda decreased by 15.4% in 2015. Violent crime increased from 8 reported offenses in 2014 to 22 in 2015. This is much more consistent to what we have seen in historical data compared to the extreme low we witnessed in 2014. There were 33 violent crimes reported in 2009, 27 in 2010, 15 in 2011, 11 in 2012 and 21 in 2013.

The number of non-violent crimes decreased 19.8% from 287 reported offenses in 2014 to 230 in 2015. Non-violent crime has consistently trended down over the past several years with 329 non-violent crimes reported in 2009, 376 in 2010, 326 in 2011, and 278 in 2012 and 296 in 2013.

The 2015 UCR index crime rate was 1,425.7 which made for a very favorable year. In fact, the Index Crime Rate in 2015 was the lowest the City of Punta Gorda has experienced in the last two decades (since 1995).

2015 Uniform Crime Reporting Data  
**Index Crime Rate for the City of Punta Gorda**  
 (2006-2015)

Year	Pop.	% Change	Crime Rate	% Change
2006	16,952	-	2,890.5	-
2007	17,444	2.9	2,551.0	-11.7
2008	17,651	1.2	2,827.0	10.8
2009	16,989	-3.8	2,130.8	-24.6
2010	17,079	0.5	2,359.6	10.7
2011	16,471	-2.0	2,036.0	-13.7
2012	16,984	1.5	1,701.6	-16.5
2013	17,087	0.6	1,855.2	9.7
2014	17,487	2.3	1,687.0	-9.0
<b>2015</b>	<b>17,675</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1,425.7</b>	<b>-15.4</b>

Violent Crime in the City

Violent crime (as defined by UCR) includes murder, forcible rape, forcible fondling, robbery, and aggravated assault. In 2014, we saw an increase in these offenses from 8 to 22. The year 2015 brought one murder, one forcible rape, no forcible fondlings, five robberies<sup>2</sup>, and 15 aggravated assaults in the City of Punta Gorda. An analysis of the 15 reported aggravated assaults shows one involved a firearm, 8 involved a knife/cutting instrument, and four involved hands/fists/feet and two involved some other kind of weapon. Three of the aggravated assault cases alone account for 8 victims by a single offender.

Non-Violent Crime in the City

This year, we experienced a decrease within the City, going from 287 non-violent crimes in 2014 to 230 in 2015. In 2014, there were 39 burglaries reported. Comparatively in 2015, the number of reported burglaries decreased significantly to 16. There was a decrease in the number of larcenies or thefts. In 2014, there were 241 larcenies reported. There were 200 larcenies reported in 2015, for a decrease of 17.0%. There were 14 motor vehicle thefts reported in 2015 as compared to seven in 2014.

Clearance Rate

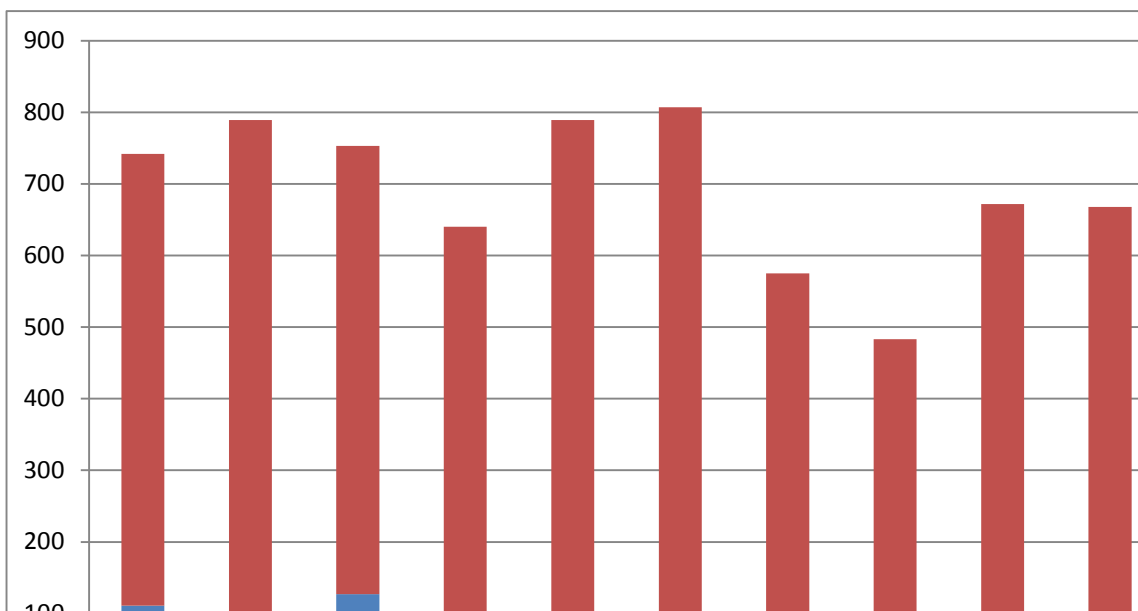
The clearance rate represents the percentage of index crimes cleared by the Police Department (closed pursuant to UCR guidelines) in a given year. This particular figure is of key importance to leadership as we assess our effectiveness in solving or reclassifying index crimes within the city. The statewide clearance percentage for 2015 was 25.9% The Punta Gorda Police Department's

<sup>2</sup> A robbery is defined by UCR as "the taking or attempting to take anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody or care of another person by force, threat of force, violence, and/or by putting the property custodian in fear."

2015 clearance percentage of **42.1%** remains above average compared to other similarly sized law enforcement agencies. Of the agencies in the 15,000-20,000 population range, the average clearance rate was 28.5%.

### Other Trends

Total arrests decreased by 0.6% from 2014 to 2015. In 2015, there were 668 arrests as compared to 672 in 2014.



### In the line of duty deaths

The Punta Gorda Police Department had six officers assaulted in 2015 which is up from two in 2014. Across the State of Florida, there were two officers killed in the line of duty in 2015 compared to six in 2014, two in 2013, three in 2012, seven in 2011 and four in 2010.

#### **Officer Jared Forsyth – Ocala Police Department**

On April 7, 2015 Officer Jared Forsyth was accidentally shot and killed while participating in firearms training at the Lowell Correctional Institution's firing range on NW Gainesville Road at approximately 3:00 p.m. A firearm was accidentally discharged during the training and the round struck Officer Forsyth in the side of his chest, between the panels of his vest. He was transported to Ocala Regional Medical Center where he succumbed to the wound approximately two hours later.

#### **Deputy William Myers – Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office**

Deputy Sheriff Bill Myers was shot and killed while serving a domestic violence injunction at a local attorney's office on Plew Avenue, in Shalimar, at approximately 8:20 a.m. He had served the papers on the subject and was leaving the office when the man opened fire from behind, striking him multiple times in the back and the back of the head. Deputy Myers was rushed to Ft. Walton Beach Medical Center and underwent surgery to save his life. Just after 2 p.m. he passed away.

### Summary

Upon reviewing the comprehensive 2015 UCR data for the City of Punta Gorda, highlights of the preceding report include:

- Punta Gorda's **overall crime rate** decreased 15.4%. The crime rates for the last five years remain among the lowest in the last decade. This is also the lowest crime rate on record for the past two decades (since 1995 when our oldest data was available).
- When compared to municipal police departments throughout Florida with a service population between 15,000 and 20,000, Punta Gorda maintained 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind Marco Island for lowest crime rate.
- Among the eleven (11) municipal law enforcement agencies in the Southwest Florida region (regardless of size or population), the crime rate in Punta Gorda ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> only to Marco Island and Sanibel.
- Punta Gorda experienced an increase in **violent crimes**. There were 22 violent crimes in 2015 as compared to 8 in 2014.
- **Non-violent crime** decreased 19.9% in 2015 with 230 non-violent crimes reported, as compared to 287 in 2014.
- The City of Punta Gorda had one **forcible sex offense** in 2015 after reporting zero in 2014.
- One murder occurred in 2015. Until this past year a **homicide** had not occurred in the city of Punta Gorda since 2009, while statewide homicides increased 5.7% in 2015.
- **Total Arrests** remained the same with 672 in 2014 compared to 668 in 2015.
- **DUI Arrests** remained the same with 88 in 2014 compared to 87 in 2015.
- **Drug Arrests** increased 11.5% from 217 in 2014 compared to 242 in 2015.
- **Domestic violence** offenses went down by 22% in 2015. In 2015 17 domestic violence offenses were reported and 30 arrests (multiple offenders) were made. In comparison in 2014, 22 domestic violence offenses were reported and 22 arrests were made.

TL/jc