

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

RHODE ISLAND CAPITOL POLICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Prepared by: Chief Matthew Sutton

**Rhode Island Capitol Police Headquarters
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RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
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Headquarters

A State Accredited Agency

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Colonel Darnell S Weaver
Director, Department of Public Safety
Superintendent, Rhode Island State Police

Matthew Sutton
Chief of Police
Rhode Island Capitol Police

Rhode Island Capitol Police 2024 Annual Report

Agency Overview

The Rhode Island Capitol Police was established in 1974 so that the Rhode Island State House would have a police force that was unique unto itself and trained to deal with its specific security needs. Today the Capitol Police are assigned to sixteen facilities throughout the state to provide police and security services.

The mission of the Rhode Island Capitol Police is to provide basic protection for life and property, enforce all laws and ordinances, maintain order at demonstrations and public events, prevent and repress crime, detect violations of the law, and apprehend violators at the Rhode Island State Capitol and annexes, properties contained therein, and the other state buildings, grounds, and premises where they maintain security responsibilities.

In addition, the Capitol Police ensure the safety and security of the general officers, state legislators, judges, state employees, and members of the public who work in and visit these public buildings. Officers operate the metal detectors and x-ray machines at the entrances to all the courthouses, the State House, and the Powers (DOA) building. Capitol Police officers at these facilities are responsible for screening, and if necessary, searching employees and visitors entering these public buildings. They not only patrol these facilities to maintain a safe environment, but they also respond to calls for service to investigate criminal, domestic, traffic and parking related incidents that occur on and/or within the state properties and facilities they patrol.

Leadership

The Capitol Police is a satellite agency under the Department of Public Safety that was established in June of 2009. The Chief of the Capitol Police is Matthew Sutton., who was appointed to the agency in December of 2024 by Commissioner of Public Safety Colonel Darnell S. Weaver. Colonel Weaver was appointed by Governor Daniel J. McKee on April 29, 2022. The agency, while focusing on the specific mission, relies on the assistance and expertise of the Department of Public Safety - the Rhode Island State Police and the Division of Sheriffs - to provide all facilities with high-quality safety, security and law enforcement measures.

Chief Sutton is responsible to plan, develop, direct, supervise, and administer the operation of the Capitol Police force and to provide policing and protection for all buildings, grounds, and premises where staff maintain security responsibilities, against the ordinary hazards of trespass, theft, fire, and damage, and to perform related work as required.

Chief Sutton joined the Rhode Island Capitol Police after serving twenty-five years with the Narragansett Police Department. Chief Sutton holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Rhode Island. He is also a member of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Rhode Island Criminalistics Association.

Overview of 2024

This report will illustrate the agency's steady growth in most of the metrics. Screening numbers have again increased. While this growth is certainly good, it brings with it some significant challenges. As a credit to the men and women of this agency, throughout 2024, despite the growth; the agency successfully maintained state accreditation and increased training to meet these challenges. The agency is well-positioned to meet the challenges of 2025.

The training cadre is overseen by Lieutenant Joseph P. Habershaw who also maintains officers' certifications in weapon system and in screening protocols. He is also responsible for coordinating external training, maintaining state accreditation standards, and overseeing three sergeants. The agency has achieved and been awarded state accreditation in 2016 which we have successfully maintained since that time. The Rhode Island Capitol Police are on schedule for reaccreditation once again in 2025.



*Initial State Accreditation Award 2016. At the Rhode Island State House Bell Area
L-R Chief Little, Lt. Habershaw, Colonel McCartney, Director Christine Crocker*

Recruit Class of 2024

As a sign of the times and despite best efforts to retain officers, the agency continues to experience an unfortunate turnover of officers who typically move onto other work positions. This creates a challenge with more frequent recruitment which is both time and labor intensive. Despite these challenges, the agency has been able to hire and maintain an excellent core group of men and women who serve each day in various capacities and at various buildings. The class of 2024 consists of four recruits who successfully completed the training program and are expected to be fully assimilated into the department's operations by Spring of 2025.

I have a great appreciation for all the members of this agency. The officers and support staff form a tremendous team who for the past fourteen years that I have led the agency, have continued to provide all the facilities safe space for people to visit and conduct their business in these buildings. This is the core of our mission which has not only been achieved, but it has been exceeded. Thank you for taking the time to read through this report.



Capitol Police by the Numbers 2024



Calls for Service.

This year the Capitol Police logged 54,498 calls for service.

	Capitol Police Calls for Service	
2022	2023	2024
48002	56221	52498

These calls for service represent officer-initiated calls as well as calls from members of the public. Our agency serves as the primary responders to all calls for emergencies at our locations. Any serious calls which require lengthy investigations or arrests are handled by the Rhode Island State Police.

Traffic Enforcement/Citations

Our agency issued eighty-two (82) traffic citations in 2024. Most of those tickets were issued by officers assigned to the Pastore Complex. These citations are primarily for various parking enforcement issues including handicap parking, fire lane violations and unregistered vehicles.

Screening

One of our agencies greatest strengths is the screening that we provide for people entering our five judicial buildings as well as the State House and at the Powers Building. The State does not allow weapons or firearms into any state facility. All Capitol Police Officers and Capitol Police Screeners have received specialized training and undergo biannual testing for the operation of the scanners and magnetometers. This is done to ensure that everyone who works and visits our facilities can do so in an unfettered and safe environment. Our agency also screens all mail and packages that come into the State House and at the courts.

The numbers for entrants for 2024 as compared to 2023 are as follows:

	Screening 2024	Screening 2023	X-Ray (State House) 2024	X-Ray (Powers) 2024
State House	86559	81692	70624	36175
Courts	668761	606,097		
Powers Building	46554	47,734		
TOTALS	801874	735523		

The screening numbers here represent a steady growth of people who have come into our buildings. The X-Ray count are the numbers of bags/packages/backpacks that had been screened separately in both the State House and at the Powers Building.

Professional Standards

The cornerstone of any professional police agency is a vibrant and robust method of internal review, oversight, and accountability. The professional standards duties are overseen by Captain Donald J. Sousa, Jr. Captain Sousa has been with this agency for 18 years. Prior to that, he retired as a Captain with the North Providence Police Department. Captain Sousa holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Roger Williams University. In addition to his other duties, he investigates complaints that have been lodged by citizens against Capitol Police Officers and he investigates any deviance by members of the agency that do not follow policy standards. By policy, and after a thorough review, the incidents are concluded in the following manner:

- Sustained – Evidence sufficient to Prove the allegation.
- Not Sustained – Insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation(s)
- Exonerated – Incident occurred but was lawful or proper.
- Unfounded – Allegation is false or not-factual.
- Policy Failure – Flaw in policy caused the problem.

As part of our internal controls, we also compile a quarterly sick time review where we monitor and track officer's use of sick time for any type of patterned abuse or early warning signs. The early warning signs are crucial in maintaining the wellness of each of our officers and supervisors. This is extremely important because our personnel are the cornerstone of our agency.

TRAINING

All sworn members of the department are firearms qualified pursuant to statute (11-47-15.3 RIGL) and POST approval. These firearms trainings are biannual, typically in the spring and fall. The courses include reduced light firing, moving targets, use of cover, hand drills and close quarter firing. In addition, all officers review and are tested on the agency's Use of Force policies, including testing in all the less lethal force options. All officers are also certified in CPR, First Aid and Narcan.

Utilizing PowerDMS software, every Capitol Police officer reviewed all the agency's policies including, workplace harassment, mental health, blood borne pathogens, criminal intelligence, impartial policing, records/ public information, officer wellness and social networking. Officers were also tested in many of these policies including legal updates, 4th Amendment issues and accreditation.

The agency also sent several officers to various specialty training programs either to outside locations or remotely by computer.



Rhode Island Capitol Police Vehicle at the Pastore Campus

PASTORE COMPLEX:

Since September 2019, the agency has assigned two (2) Capitol Police Officers to the Pastore Complex. The Pastore complex is in Cranston on approximately 325 acres of land that has 35 buildings that provide office space for a variety of state office facilities. These include the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Labor & Training, the Department of Business Regulation, the Executive Offices of Health & Human Services, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, the Department of Human Services, the Healthcare Exchange, Office of the Child Advocate, Governor's Commission on Disabilities, Fire Code Appeals Board, Labor Hearing Board, Traffic Tribunal, Parole Board, Department of Corrections, Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner, Department of Children Youth & Families, The Lottery Commission and the Eleanor Slater Hospital Network.

The Capitol Police substation is in the Department of Motor Vehicles and officers are primary responders to all calls for service on this campus. Officers assigned to the campus work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) personnel and staff at many of these facilities to ensure the safety and security of the building.

AGENCY STAFFING:

The Capitol Police currently has a legislatively authorized FTE size of 51 members. This includes the Chief of Police, one Captain, one Lieutenant, three Sergeants and an Administrative Assistant to the chief and two screeners. The Chief, the Captain and the Administrative Assistant are non-union positions. The supervisory staff of the Capitol Police is as follows:

Chief Matthew Sutton

Captain Donald J. Sousa, Jr.

Lieutenant Joseph P. Habershaw

Sergeant Robert D. Brown, Jr.

Sergeant Alison Thompson

Sergeant Chad San Bento

Mrs. Edina Zuena, Administrative Assistant to the Chief



