



## TIPSHEET: Understanding and Analyzing Chicago Police TRRs

Created based on a Feb 12, 2025 virtual workshop with Josh McGhee (MindSite News, [josh.mcghee@mindsitenews.org](mailto:josh.mcghee@mindsitenews.org)) and Farrah Anderson (Invisible Institute, [farrah@invisibleinstitute.com](mailto:farrah@invisibleinstitute.com)), hosted by the Investigative Project on Race and Equity

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### What Are TRRs?

- **Tactical Response Reports (TRRs)** are use of force documentation forms filled out by Chicago Police Department officers
- Officers complete TRRs whenever they use any type of force, from showing a taser to using lethal force
- Each officer involved in a use of force incident fills out their own separate TRR form
- TRRs document the officer's perspective of incidents, subject information, force used, and supervisory reviews

### How to Access TRRs

#### Through FOIA Requests

- Request individual TRR forms using specific case information, to build a narrative of a single event, poking holes in an individual story, using one anecdote as part of a larger trend/story

Dear Farrah:

Thank you for your interest in information from the **Chicago** Police Department. Your FOIA request has been received and is being processed. Your FOIA Center reference number for tracking purposes is: **P967712-073124**

You have requested the following records: **Police incident reports, use of force reports, reviews of incident and/or use of force and any investigatory documents, including the Civilian Office of Police Accountability, into the shooting and death of Reginald Clay Jr. on April 15, in the 3800 block of West Flournoy Street in the North Lawndale neighborhood. The Event Number is 2310505763 and the RD number is JG224244.**

**Chicago** Police Department (CPD) responds to all public records requests in accordance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 ILCS 140/1 et seq. If further time is needed to assemble and copy all documents responsive to your FOIA request, we will contact you with a time estimate and a request to extend.

You can monitor the progress of your request at the link below and you'll receive an email when your request has been completed. Thank you for using the **Chicago** FOIA Center.

- Request bulk TRR data for establishing trends, looking at systematic compliance, large-scale investigations
- If you know what incident you're looking for, Include as much specific information as possible when requesting (date, location, names, event numbers, RD numbers)
  - "A lot of times I try to put as much detail as possible, just so they don't have as much to mess with me about." — Farrah Anderson, Invisible Institute
- Specify the format you want (e.g., Excel or CSV for data requests)

### *Alternative Sources*

- COPA (Civilian Office of Police Accountability) portals often have TRRs for high-profile cases
- Check COPA's website for case logs with published TRR forms and body camera footage
- For university police departments: Public universities are subject to FOIA, private universities generally are not

### **Key Information in TRRs**

- **Officer information:** Name, unit, badge number, appointment date, demographics
- **Subject information:** Demographics, actions prior to force
- **Force details:** Type of force used, weapons involved, reasons for force
- **Location data:** Address (block level), community area, district, beat
- **Situational factors:** Lighting conditions, indoor/outdoor
- **Case identifiers:** Event number, RD number, CB number (important for connecting related records)

### **Data Analysis Strategies**

#### *Individual Incidents*

- Request complete documentation (TRRs, incident reports, COPA reviews)
- Connect with body camera footage for fuller context
  - "I would request body worn camera for any incidents. COPA is a good place, especially if there's a COPA complaint where they'll have all of the footage... But why you don't want all 17 angles is because they're going to say, 'Oh, we have to redact this or that out of the video, and this is going to take 18 years, so you're not getting this,' or they're going to put it to the back until you're not reporting on this ever again." — Josh McGhee, MindSite News
  - "Sometimes they'll work with you. Every department is different. But you can also request, I want from five minutes before handcuffing to five minutes after or something like that... so you can also tailor it, and sometimes they'll be a little bit more willing to work with you if you can kind of narrow it down a little bit." — Farrah Anderson, Invisible Institute

- Look for inconsistencies between reports and video evidence
- Examine supervisory reviews and follow-up on recommendations

### *Pattern Analysis*

- Analyze force by geography (zip codes, community areas, beats)
- Examine racial disparities in use of force
- Track frequency of different force types
- Monitor specific officers with multiple use of force incidents
- Analyze mental health-related calls that result in force

### **Connected Records and Related Data**

"Your unique identifier across most of these departments is the event number. I know University of Chicago, yes, their health lab did a look at evaluation of the care team, and basically they were using so many departments that that was one of the problems that they had, was they weren't able to keep everything study across one way. But I do know that the RD numbers work for OEMC, CFD and the police department." — Josh McGhee, MindSite News

- 911 Call data (from OEMC - Office of Emergency Management and Communications)
- Body camera footage (through FOIA or COPA)
- Incident reports (includes more narrative via Event No)
  - RD Number
  - Event Number
- Arrest records and subsequent charges
- COPA investigations
- Officer misconduct data (through CPDP.co)
- Foot pursuit data
- Traffic stop data

### Links to existing databases

- <https://cpdp.co/>: Chicago Police Data Project from Invisible Institute
- [COPA case portals](#): Access to TRRs and body camera footage
- [Chicago Consent Decree](#): Details requirements for use of force documentation
- [CPD Use of Force Dashboard](#): Provides some aggregated statistics

### **Analyzing Data Before and After Policy Changes**

- Be aware of changes to TRR forms after the [2017 consent decree](#) and Laquan McDonald case
- Sort data by pre- and post-reform periods to analyze differences
  - "One of the things that we noticed when I was going through here is that there isn't a mental health column, which is something they are required in the consent

decree to keep. So that's one of the reasons why the mental health column isn't here is because they're combining these two data... if you want to look at the factors, you're going to have to look at these data sets separately and not have them just kind of produce this, because they've probably made this 1000 times to just reproduce, and you will be missing a big chunk of data." — Josh McGhee, MindSite News

- Cross-reference against the applicable use of force policy in effect during relevant periods
- Note that newer TRRs may include mental health and other factors not present in older records

### Investigative Tips

- Request data from multiple agencies (CPD, COPA, OEMC, Fire Department, Chicago Department of Public Health)
- Use event numbers and RD numbers to link data across departments
- Don't assume TRRs tell the complete story—they present only the officer's perspective
- Look for violations of department policy documented within the reports themselves
- When requesting body camera footage, specify time frames to avoid excessive processing times
- Consider investigating follow-through on training and policy recommendations after use of force incidents

### Real World Applications

Josh's investigations into mental health and CPD response

- <https://mindsitenews.org/2025/01/31/police-use-of-force-mental-health/>
- <https://mindsitenews.org/2022/10/03/illinois-is-getting-better-at-answering-calls-to-the-suicide-crisis-line-will-chicagos-south-side-be-left-behind/>

Farrah and Invisible Institute's shorter investigations into protests, accountability, downstate

- <https://chicagoreader.com/news/cops-appear-to-violate-use-of-force-rules-dozens-of-times-at-protests/>
- <https://ipmnewsroom.org/rantoul-police-shootings-trainings/>

### Final Food For Thought!

"The data doesn't just tell you the whole story. When we look at things like, oh, there's a zip code on the west side where all of this force is used over time, it's getting... exponentially worse. What we do want is to connect with those incident reports, some kind of investigative file, some kind of review of what happened before force was used. You know that story doesn't tell you anything if we just do the data analysis, we do want to know, hey, what? How do police respond? What do they say about the incidents, especially, hey, what makes them take out a baton versus a taser?" — Josh McGhee, MindSite News