

Vermont Department of Public Safety - Vermont State Police
Synopses of internal investigations for the period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020
Released November 4, 2021

Background: In an effort to further increase transparency in operations, beginning in January 2021 and continuing twice annually, the Department of Public Safety and Vermont State Police, with the support of the independent State Police Advisory Commission, will release synopses of all internal investigations. These synopses will be compiled in six month increments to balance timeliness with the need to have complete investigations and resolutions prior to release.

Notes:

- A. "Internally generated" indicates the complaint was made by a co-worker / employee of the Department.

"Externally generated" indicates the complaint was made by someone outside the department, most often a member of the public involved in an event or investigation.
- B. All investigations, details and outcomes are reviewed by the State Police Advisory Commission pursuant to its oversight role outlined in state statute.

1. Externally generated – July 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper was discourteous to a civilian on two consecutive days, one on and one off duty. Investigation revealed that the trooper acted in a manner unbecoming a Vermont State Trooper during one of these incidents.

Outcome: Finding of a "conduct" violation. Employee was disciplined for violating this policy – employment with VSP terminated.

2. Externally generated – July 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper used excessive force during an arrest. Investigation revealed that the trooper's use of force was within policy standards.

Outcome: Finding that no policies were violated.

3. Internally generated – August 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper drank excessive alcohol while off duty. Investigation revealed that the off-duty trooper consumed alcohol to an extent that it could have discredited him or the Vermont State Police.

Outcome: Finding of a policy violation for "use of alcohol – off duty." Employee was disciplined for violating this policy – 4 days suspension without pay.

4. Externally generated – August 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper inaccurately filled out a traffic ticket. Investigation revealed that the ticket's content, in sections not related to the nature of the traffic infraction/violation, contained an inaccuracy.

Outcome: Finding of a "conduct" violation. Employee was disciplined for violating this policy – 5 days suspension without pay.

5. Internally generated – September 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper harassed or discriminated against a fellow trooper.

Outcome: Trooper resigned prior to the investigation being completed and a finding being made.

6. Internally generated – September 2020

Synopsis: Investigation revealed that a trooper experienced a negligent accidental discharge of their firearm while attending firearms training.

Outcome: Finding of a “negligent/accidental discharge of firearm.” Employee disciplined for violating this policy – Letter of Reprimand.

7. Internally generated – November 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a group of troopers attended a meeting together and failed to adhere to all required COVID-19 precautions.

Outcome: Finding that the commanding officer violated the “responsibility” policy in addition to his “violation of rules.” Commanding officer disciplined for these policy violations – 1 day suspension without pay and a Letter of Reprimand. The other involved troopers were counseled.

8. Internally generated – December 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into allegation that a trooper used excessive force during an on-duty discharge of a firearm / use of force. Investigation revealed that the trooper’s use of force was within policy standards.

Outcome: Finding that no policies were violated.

9. Internally generated – December 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper physically assaulted a family or household member.

Outcome: Trooper arrested for domestic assault. Trooper resigned prior to an investigation being completed and a finding being made.

10. Internally generated – December 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper failed to adhere to COVID-19 precautions while on duty. Investigation revealed that the trooper failed to adhere to all required COVID-19 precautions during the interview of a civilian witness.

Outcome: Finding of “violation of rules.” Trooper was counseled.

11. Internally generated – December 2020

Synopsis: Inquiry into allegation that a trooper mishandled a piece of evidence. Investigation determined that the trooper did not mishandle evidence.

Outcome: Finding that no policies were violated.