



CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

Building Trust Through Accountability

Special October 2026 Report: Right To Know

Table of Contents

- 1 – [Introduction](#)
- 6 – [Unreleased Data](#)
- 7 – [Revisiting Previous Findings](#)
- 9 – [New Findings](#)
- 11 – [Recommendations](#)
- 13 – [Works Cited and Other Readings](#)
- 14 – [Graphs](#)

Introduction

In October 2020, Syracuse Common Council passed [General Ordinance 34 of 2020](#), colloquially known as the “The Right to Know” law. This legislation was passed to fulfill part of [Mayor Walsh’s Executive Order No. 1](#), which followed calls for police reform in the summer of 2020. In the following months, Syracuse Police Department (SPD) formulated [a policy](#) to comply with the new local legislation and began releasing [public data](#) in August 2021. This policy change and public data reporting represented a massive shift toward transparency in Syracuse policing. Syracuse’s Right to Know law has three main components controlling how police officers interact with the public during certain law enforcement interactions. The types of interactions controlled by the Right to Know law includes: frisks, traffic stops; roadblock or checkpoint stops; home searches; investigatory questioning of victims or witnesses to crimes; searches of persons or property, including vehicles; noncustodial questioning of individuals, questioning where the individual is free to leave; or stops where an officers has an individualized, reasonable suspicion that the person stopped has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime and where a reasonable person would not feel free to end the encounter at will.

The first component of the Syracuse Right to Know law controls how police officers initiate one of the interactions in the policy. The officer generally must state their name, rank, current assignment, and explain the reason for the law enforcement activity. The exceptions to this rule come from the following situations: if they are engaged in a law enforcement activity that is part of an approved undercover activity or operation; where an emergency exists requiring immediate action to respond to an imminent and substantial risk of injury to themselves or any other person, or imminent and substantial damage to property, or where immediate action is

necessary to forestall the imminent escape of a suspect or imminent destruction of evidence; during searches predicated upon entrance to a public building or facility, location, event or gathering, and where such a person's entrance into any such location constitutes implied consent to be searched under an exception to the warrant requirement. At the end of the activity, the officer will then offer a right to know business card except when an arrest is made, summons is issued, or in situations where the officer does not need to proactively identify themselves or explain the reason for an encounter.

The second component of the Right to Know law directs the Chief of Police to develop a policy around how officers are to go about securing consent to search a person or property in cases where a warrant has not been secured or any exception to the warrant requirement is not in play. The law outlines that the policy must specify conduct for: articulating, in plain and simple language delivered in a non-threatening manner, that the person who is subject of the search is being asked to voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently consent to a search, and explain that such a search will not be conducted if such person refuses to provide consent to such search; securing such consent without threats or promises of any kind being made to such person; affirming that such person understand the information about the search being communicated; refraining from conducting such a search where consent has not been obtained; and utilizing interpretation services when seeking consent to conduct a search of a person with limited English proficiency or such person's vehicle, home, or property, including but not limited to the use of bilingual officers and telephonic interpretation, prior to conducting such search. In addition to this requirement to write a new policy, the Right to Know legislation requires a record of the consent being sought. This can take the form of audio, video, or in written form and the person who is

subject to the search must obtain written instructions on how to obtain a copy of the record created. The record must also document the time, location and date of such a search.

The third component of the Right to Know law mandates that Syracuse Police Department releases quarterly information to the Common Council, the Mayor's Office, and to the department's website. The information should include: the demographic information of person involved in the recorded encounter, the number of persons from whom an officer requested consent to search, the number of times consent was granted or refused, the number of persons arrested or issued a summons, the factors leading to the investigative encounter, if use of force occurred in connection with the encounter, the number of encounters conducted based on founded suspicion (level two encounters), the number of encounters conducted based on reasonable suspicion (level three encounters), and the number of encounters conducted based on an objective credible reason (level one encounters) that escalated to level two or three encounters.¹ Historically, this data has been [reported in a spreadsheet format](#) with each row representing one encounter. This data can then be easily worked with by an interested party to find the counts required by law. An advantage of this format is increased transparency that would not be available from just a raw count. Independent researchers can get more detailed information from a raw spreadsheet that a report of totals would not provide, such as cross tabs or more detailed studies. Additionally, this information can be paired with other data, such as those from civilian complaints, and create a more robust analysis. A data release that would include merely the counts of requested information and not the raw spreadsheets would

¹ See an overview of DeBour Levels of Street Encounters [here](#).

significantly hinder independent analysis and undermine the original purpose of the data releases, which is increased transparency.

Creating change through legislation is difficult and requires follow-up through the legislative body or oversight agencies like the CRB. In June 2026, the CRB reviewed the Right to Know legislation and data releases from the Syracuse Police Department. A report released in July detailed the findings of the CRB. The findings of the original report are as follows: the Syracuse Police Department had not released Right to Know data since the end of 2024, the data might not be fully capturing what lawmakers had in mind when crafting the legislation, and there were minor issues stemming from the form used to generate the data. Following the release of the July report, the Syracuse Police Department released all the missing data. This report aims to continue that follow-up. Specifically, this report will analyze the public data releases to see what, if any, issues exist with the execution of the data release portion of Syracuse's Right to Know legislation and how Syracuse Police Department has already begun to improve their practices.

The key findings in this report are as follows. Syracuse Police have not publicly released Quarter 2 of 2026 Right to Know data as outlined by [Chapter 19 Section 10 of the Revised General City Ordinances](#). There were significant rates of missing data or NA values across variable types in Q3 2022 and Q4 2022 that dramatically fell in Q1 2023 after a change to the form that officers fill out by SPD. The requirements for what types of interactions are to be reported are likely to be causing most of the use of force incidents to not be included in Right to Know Data releases. This report aims to: highlight where data reporting has been insufficient, point to past administrative changes that have improved data reporting practices in SPD, report descriptive statistics found in the available Right to Know data, and propose recommendations.

A digital zip folder containing cleaned Right to Know data can be found here on the CRB website. The folder includes combined and cleaned Right to Know data from Q3 2021 to Q4 2024 and counts of various pieces of information found in the data such as demographics or stop outcomes reported in the data releases.

Unreleased Data

As mentioned in the introduction, the CRB uncovered that Syracuse Police Department had not released Right to Know data since the end of 2024. The day after the release of the CRB Right to Know report, Syracuse Police Department released the data for all quarters of 2025 and Quarters 1 and 2 of 2026. This list includes all the missing data releases. However, the CRB uncovered that these new data releases had identifying information of adults and children involved in police interactions attached to the normal Right to Know data. The identifying information released across all new releases included: First Name of Individual Interacted with, Last Name of Individual Interacted with, and Date of Birth for the Individual Interacted with. Some releases included a more specific location of the incident and which officers were involved with the interaction.

After uncovering this, the CRB manually reviewed all past data releases and found that identifying information had also been released with the 2024 data releases. The CRB made the Syracuse Police Department aware of the leaked information. The data releases from 2025 and 2026 were taken down immediately. The CRB continued to make SPD aware of the 2024 data releases remaining on [the website](#) and they were taken down on 8/12 or 8/13.² After being taken down, the 2024 releases were replaced with versions without identifying information and the missing data releases up to Quarter 1 of 2026 were published. **At this time, Syracuse Police Department needs to release Quarter 2 of 2026 data and then the data backlog will be solved.** Once solved, the objective will be to ensure that the quarterly releases become an institutional habit.

² See Web Archive for timeline

Revisiting Previous Findings

The new data releases have not fundamentally changed the findings from the original report. The new releases confirm the continued success of completely tracking non-demographic information, in addition to confirming the inability to fully track Use of Force incidents. NA percentages for demographic information continue to hover between 1 and 5 percent of entries.³ The available data does not contain the information required to determine if the NA rates in the most recent data or during the spike were being driven by a small number of officers not filling in many of their forms, all officers making a small mistakes in filling out the forms, or a mix of the two. **Syracuse Police Department should strive to lower rates of missing information in Right to Know data releases by making all fields mandatory.** The apparent demographic information of subjects can be a useful tool when studying areas of policing such as discrimination, especially when the apparent demographic information contradicts reality.

Use of Force entries remain low and have fallen alongside the number of Use of Force incidents in New York State Data. The parallel trends suggest that Use of Force incidents are truly down from the highs in early 2022. This is good news for Syracuse and use of force incidents are now so infrequent that some RTK data releases have no use of force incidents in them.⁴ Interestingly, level 4 encounters do not seem to have a disproportionate number of use of force incidents.⁵ This is likely the case because the population of RTK incidents is not a representative sample of all police incidents. However, this won't have a definitive answer

³ See [Figure 27](#)

⁴ Use of force incidents did occur in those quarters according to NY State data, however their complete absence from RTK data highlights the issue with pool of incidents that RTK data is drawing from.

⁵ See [Figure 32](#)

without analyzing larger SPD datasets. **Currently, it is the position of the CRB that the low number of use of force incidents are likely being driven by level 4 encounters not legally required to be included into the Right to Know data and not intentional misreporting on the SPD's end.**

New Findings

Following more discussions with the Syracuse Police Department, the CRB took a closer look at the consent search totals across different levels of encounters and the number of forms submitted for consent searches. Blank versions of the two forms used to generate RTK data provided to the CRB can be found on page 30 of this report as figures 33 and 34. [Figure 33](#) shows the Common Law Right of Inquiry Consent Search Report form used for level 2 encounters while [Figure 34](#) is the SPD Stop Report is used to track searches for level 3 stops, in addition to other uses. According to SPD, there have been 26 Common Law Right of Inquiry Consent Search Reports forms have been completed since tracking began in Quarter 3 of 2021.⁶ Out of the 627 instances of consent being sought for a search, the CRB estimates based on SPD's right to know policy that: 75 search entries should have an accompanying Right of Inquiry Consent Search Reports, 501 search entries should have an accompanying SPD Stop Report, 167 search entries should have an accompanying relevant arrest paperwork that tracks consent searches, and 64 search entries do not have a clear form of origin.⁷ To the right is a table outlining the breakdown in more detail.

<u>Form Type</u>	<u>Count</u>
Form Unknown	64
Right of Inquiry Report Only	52
SPD Stop Report Only	322
Arrest Reports	9
SPD Stop and Right of Inquiry Reports	22
Arrest and Right of Inquiry Reports	1
Arrest and SPD Stop Reports	157

⁶ See [Figure 31](#) for distribution of Right of Inquiry forms by quarter. At this time, the CRB does not have numbers on the number of Stop Reports and Arrest Reports done for this subset of the RTK data.

⁷ Total is greater than 627 due to some entries requiring multiple forms due to stop escalating to higher levels of encounters.

The discrepancy between the amount of paperwork that SPD has record of and what the data states should be available is striking and cause for SPD to review how RTK data is generated and what forms are being completed. The form unknown entries result from the policy on consent search documentation being unclear on what is to be done for encounters that begin at levels 2 and 3 but de-escalate to level 1. The current policy handles escalation but does not state what to do in the case of de-escalation to level 1.⁸ Additionally, the policy is silent on how level 1 encounters that stay at level 1 are to be tracked. **The CRB recommends that SPD undertakes such a review and amends its policy on the process of documenting consent searches so that there aren't any holes when documenting consent searches in particular situations.** Additionally, the CRB believes that the policy around consent search documentation can be streamlined into one process, rather than split between encounter levels. One process for all types could be a simple solution to the identified discrepancy.

⁸ In the case of a de-escalation from level 3 to two, the policy implies (but does not state outright) that Right of Inquiry form is the proper place to document this search.

Recommendations

For Syracuse Police Department:

1. **Continue to release Right to Know Data on schedule and release Q2 2026 data.**
2. **Maintain Current Format in How Right to Know Data Is Reported.** The available data is reported by incident and includes a wealth of information associated with each incident. Barring any changes to the right to know legislation, the recommendation of the CRB is to continue to report the data in this format.
3. **Expand or remove the character limit for the reason field in form used to generate a Right to Know entry.** Currently, the reason column can only contain a maximum of 50 characters. This leads to entries such as, “IDENTIFIED CRIME PATTERN,PROXIMITY TO THE SCENE OF”. The last reason is clearly meant to be proximity to the scene of the crime. However, the cut-off can be ambiguous for some values such as “FRISK ONLY,MATCHES A SPECIFIC SUSPECT DESCRIPTION,”. The comma at the end of the entry comes directly from the spreadsheet and shows another reason is supposed to follow but got cut off by an arbitrary character limit.
4. **Make demographic fields a required field when submitting relevant forms.**
5. **Conduct review of documents that build RTK data, ensure forms are being filled out to generate data properly.**
6. **Review policy on consent form documentation to ensure all situations are covered by policy and that process is as streamlined as possible.**

For Syracuse Common Council:

The CRB does not have any concrete recommendations for Common Council for specific amendments for Section 19-9 or 19-10 of the Revised General Ordinances currently. Each Councilperson must ask themselves if the Right to Know ordinance is fulfilling its intended purpose. If the legislation does not meet its goals, the CRB will be willing to assist in crafting legislation that will fulfill the goals of the Right to Know legislation. If no changes are needed, then the CRB will continue to monitor public data releases and report on findings in the data.

Works Cited and Further Readings

City of Syracuse, Revised General Ordinances § 19-9.

https://library.municode.com/ny/syracuse/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=REGEOR_CH19PODE_S19-9RIKN

City of Syracuse, Revised General Ordinances § 19-10.

https://library.municode.com/ny/syracuse/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=REGEOR_CH19PODE_S19-10REINEN

New York City Police Department. “Policing Legally: Investigative Encounters with the Public.”

City of New York, Sept 1, 2022. <https://www.nypdmonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/01-PolicingLegallySG-LatestRevision-4-5-16.pdf>

Syracuse Citizen Review Board. “Special 2026 Report: Right to Know.” City of Syracuse, July 8, 2026. <https://www.syr.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/1-boards-and-commissions/crb/documents/special-reports/new-folder/2026-special-right-to-know-report.pdf>

Syracuse Police Department. “Policy 434: Right to Know.” City of Syracuse, April 7, 2022.

https://www.syr.gov/files/sharedassets/public/departments/police/documents/policies/2021-q1/2021_right_to_know.pdf

Syracuse Police Department. “Right to Know Data.” Accessed October 6, 2026.

<https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Police/Public-Information/Right-to-Know-Data>

Walsh, Benjamin. Executive Order No. 1. City of Syracuse, 6/19/2020.

<https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Police/Initiatives-Programs/Reporting-Progress-on-Police-Reform/SYR-EO-01>

Graphs

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Citizens Being Engaged in Law Enforcement Activity

$n = 22947$, NA values in SPD Right to Know data are represented in this chart as age = 125 (Approx. 3.8% of interactions)

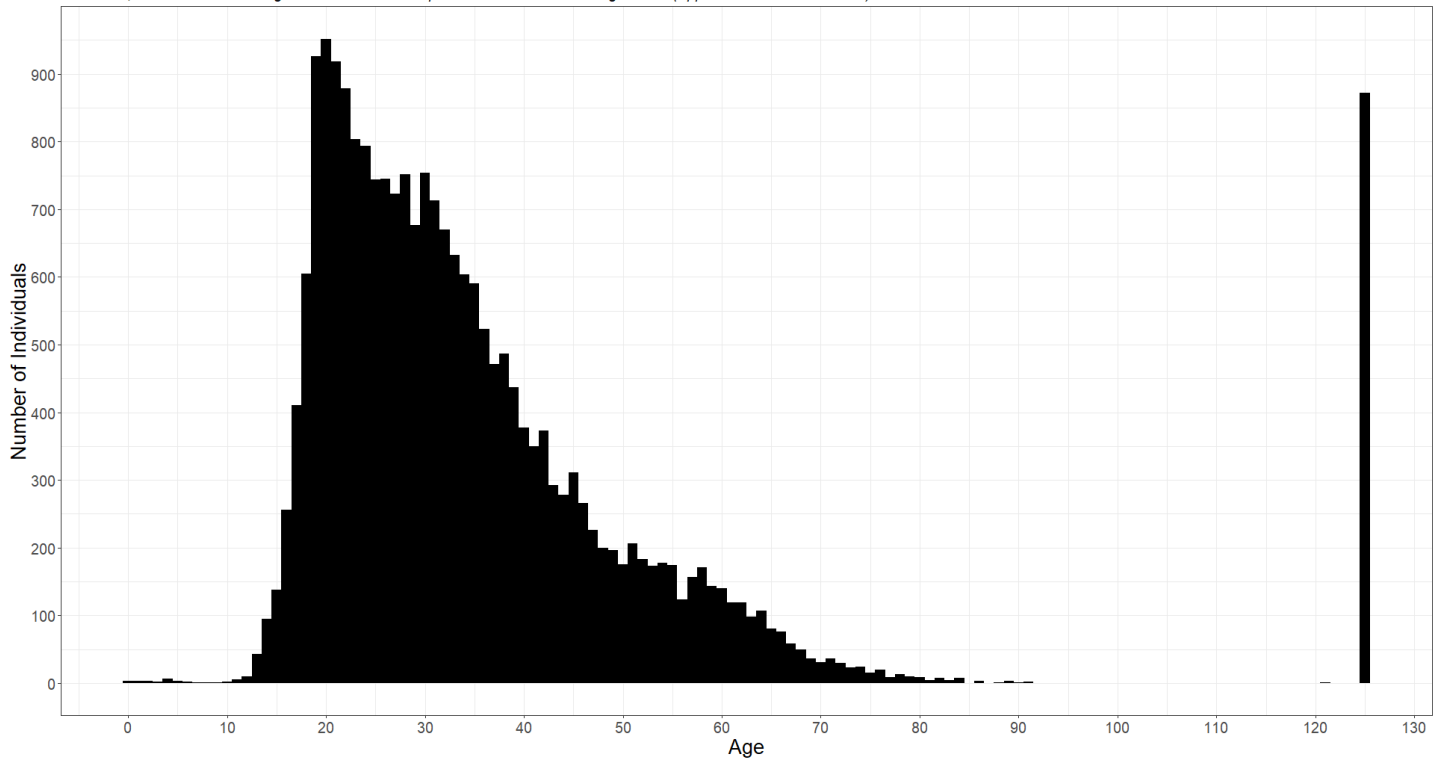


Figure 2: Percentage of NA Age Entries by Quarter

$n = 872$

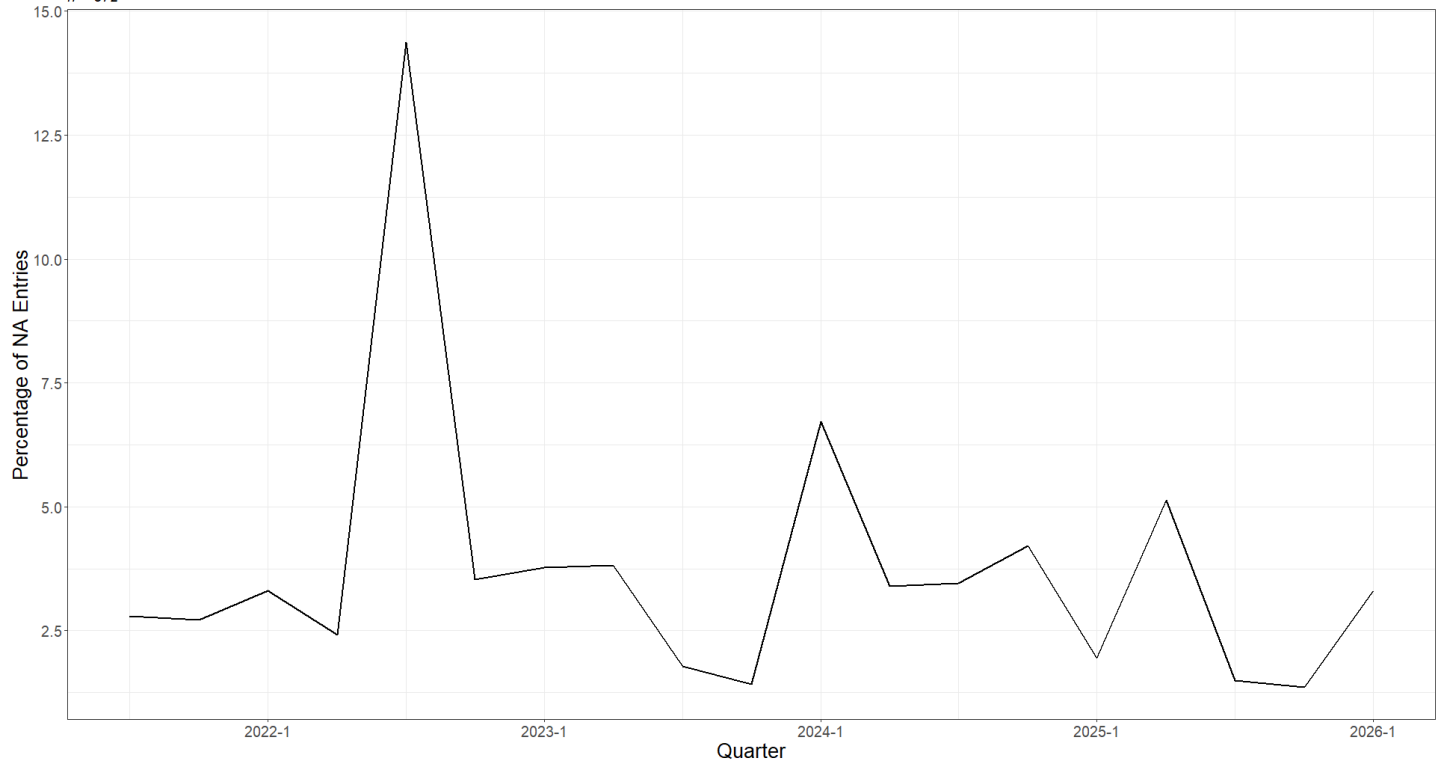


Figure 3: Sex Distribution of Citizens Being Engaged in Law Enforcement Activity
n = 22947

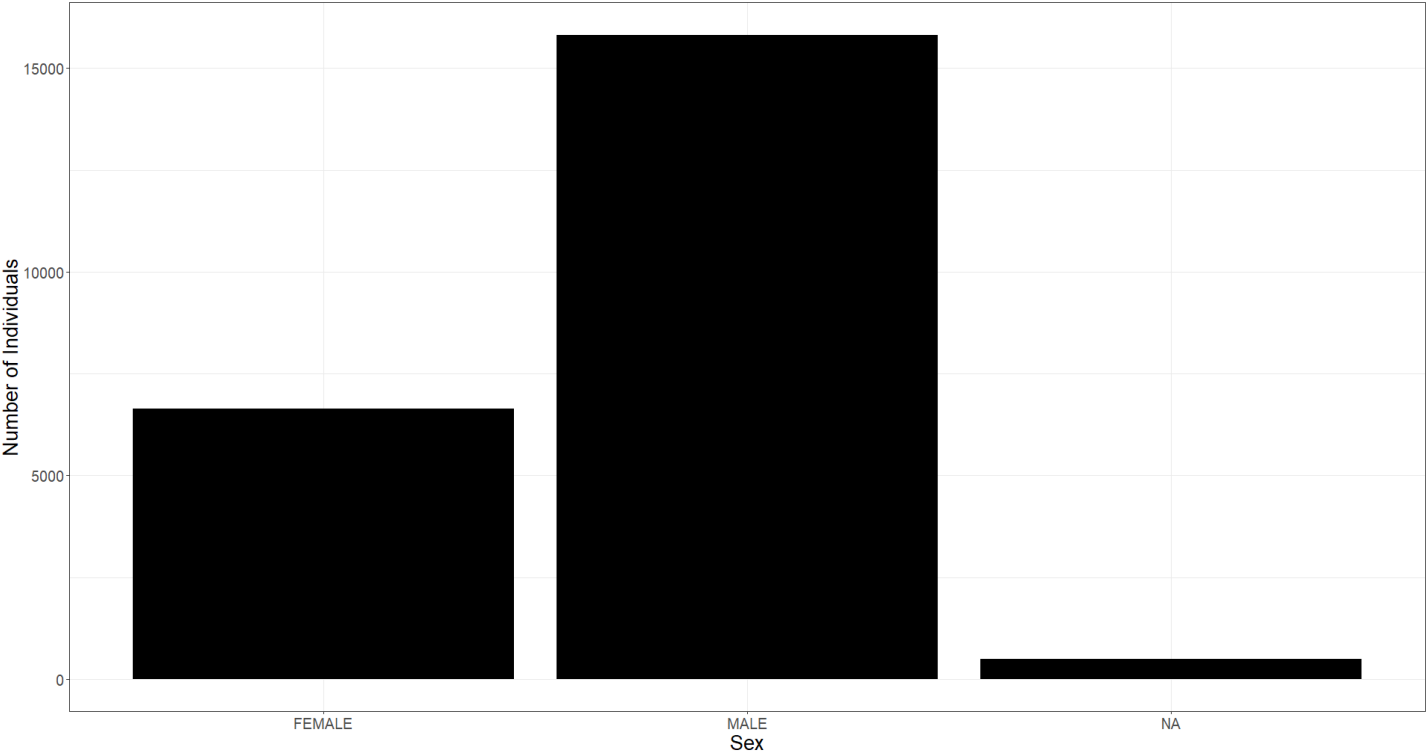


Figure 4: Percentage of NA Sex Entries by Quarter
n = 484

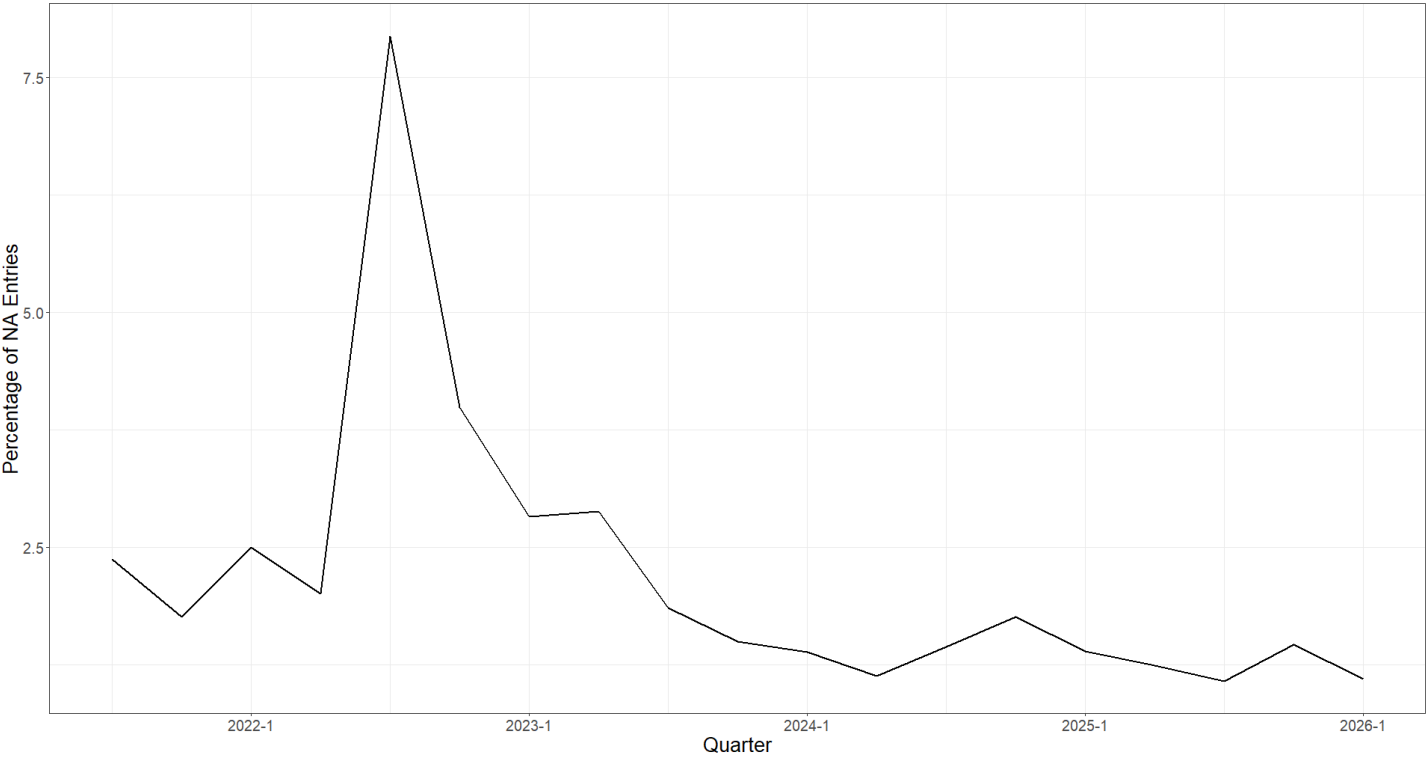


Figure 5: Race Distribution of Citizens Being Engaged in Law Enforcement Activity
 $n = 22933$

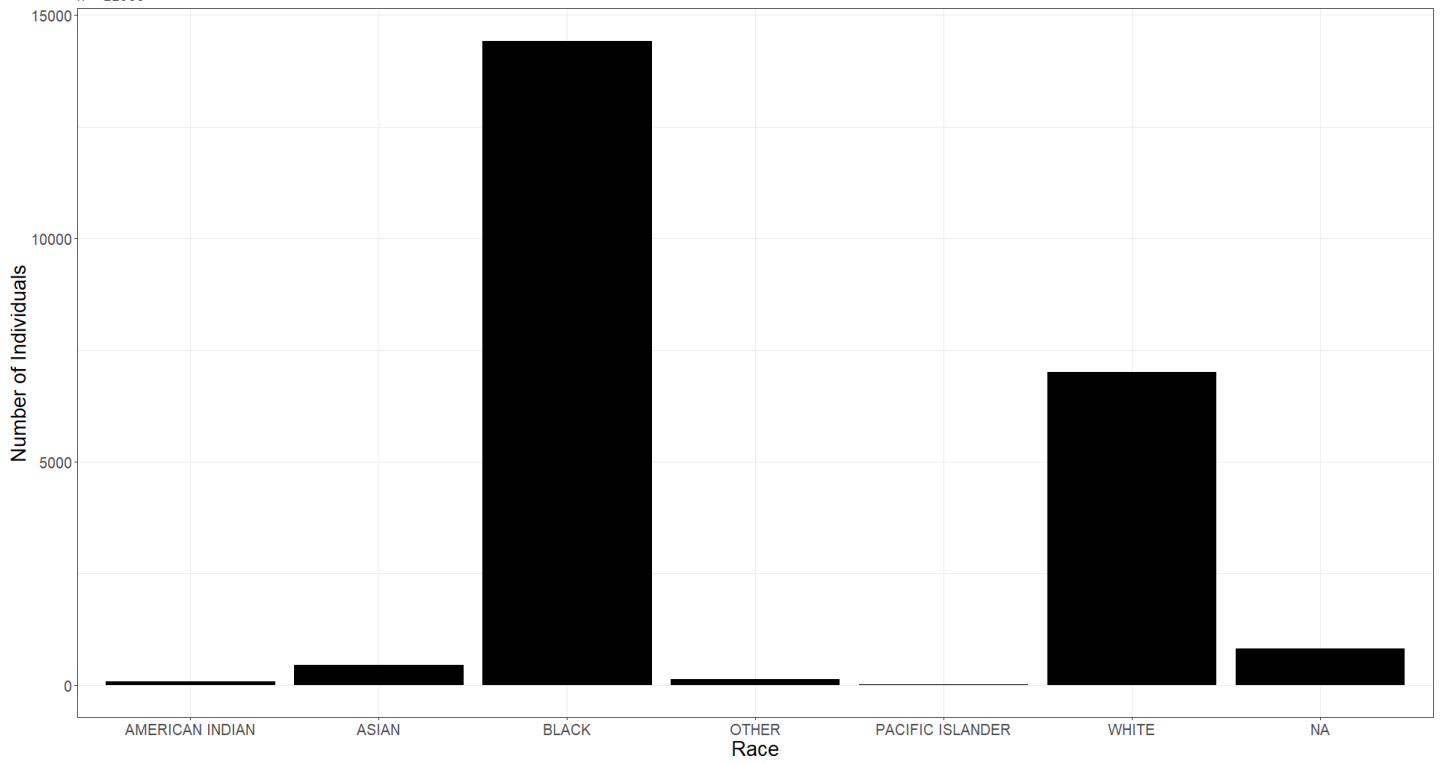


Figure 6: Percentage of NA Race Entries by Quarter
 $n = 814$

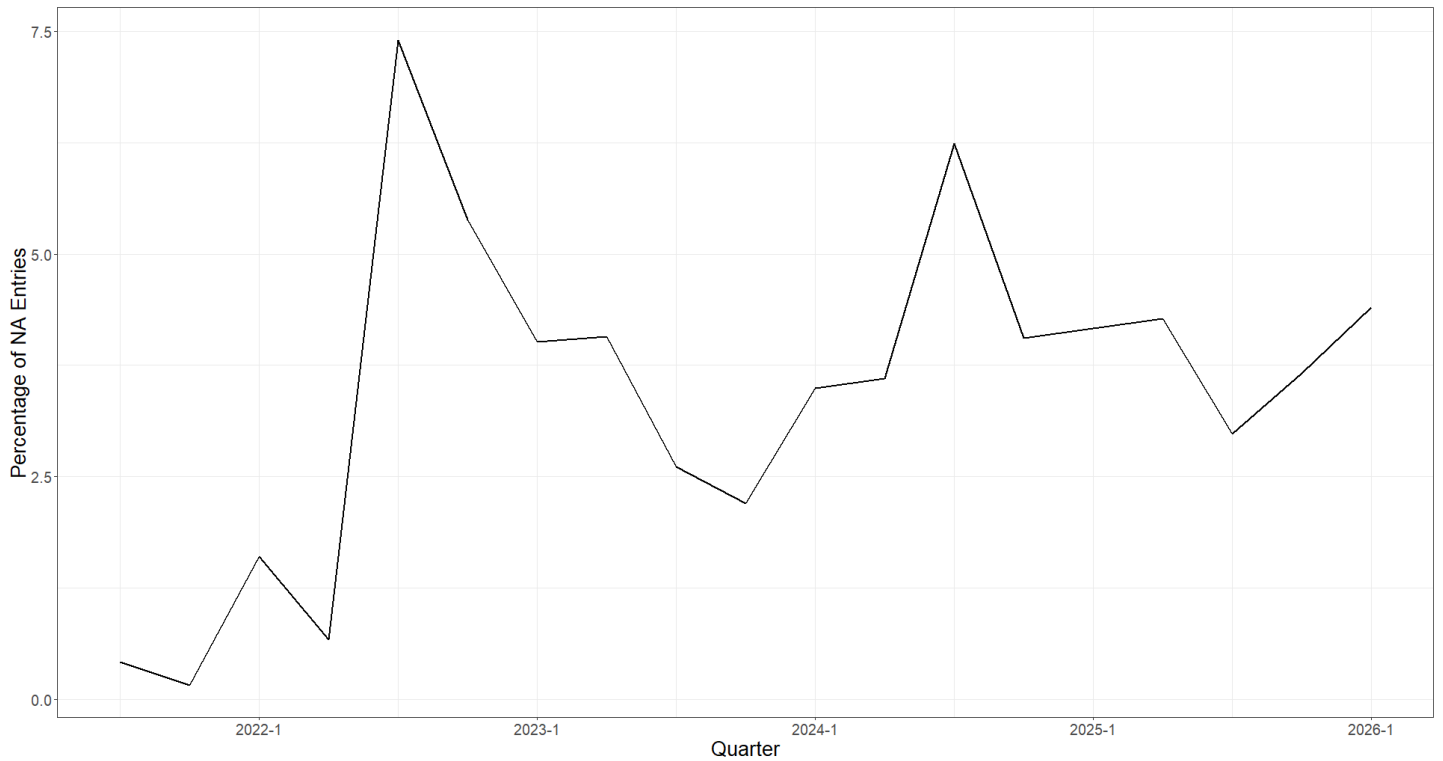


Figure 7: Distribution of Encounter Levels at the Start of Encounters
n = 22947

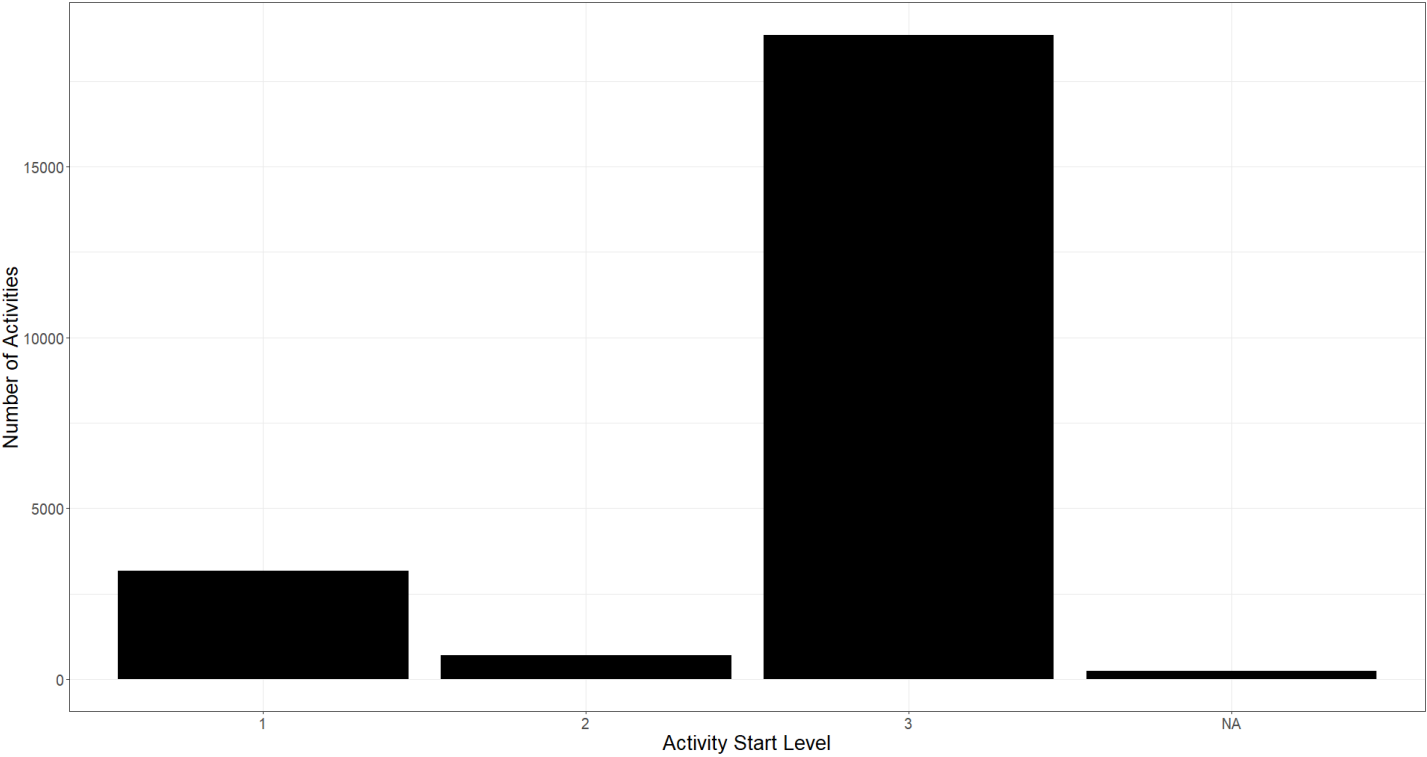


Figure 8: Distribution of Encounter Levels at the End of Encounters
n = 22947

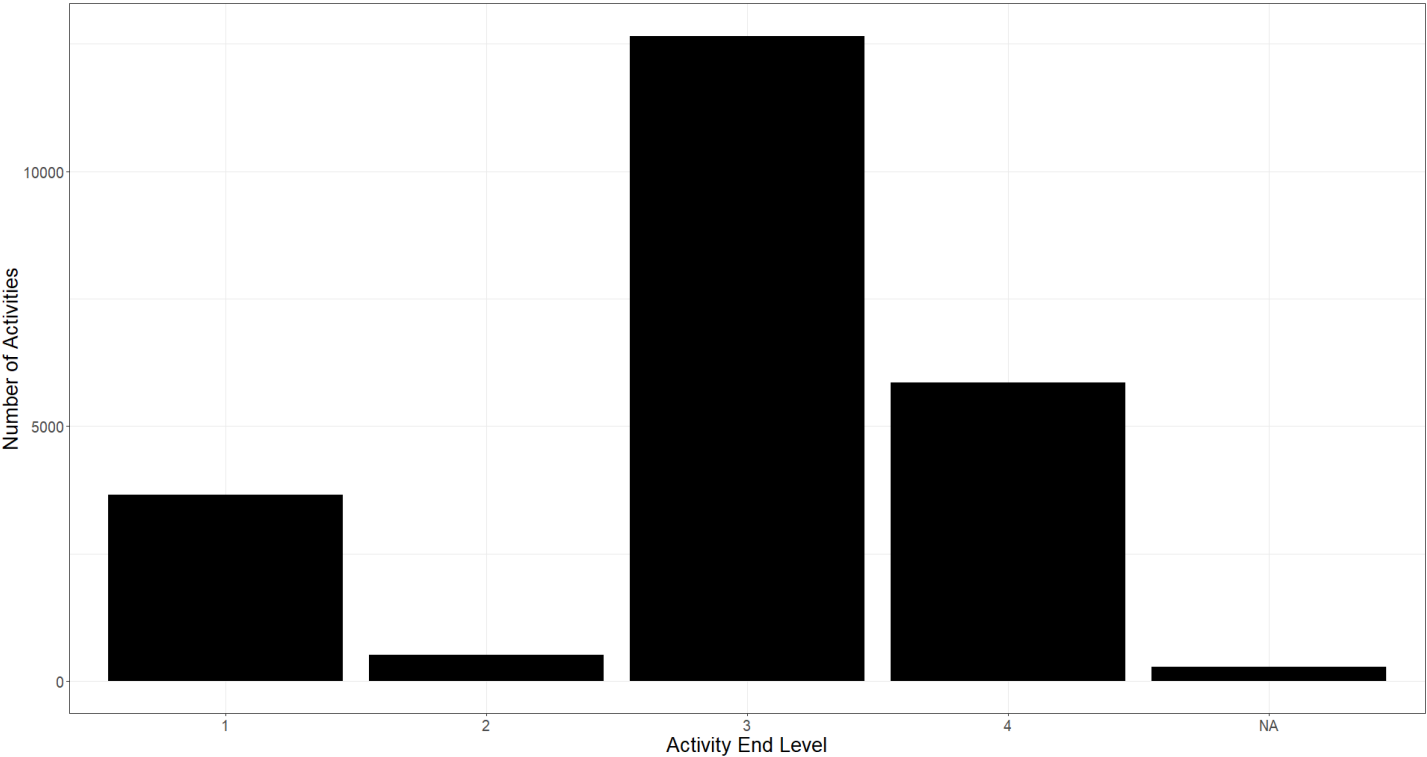


Figure 9: Level 1 Encounters with Ending Level different from Starting Level
n = 298

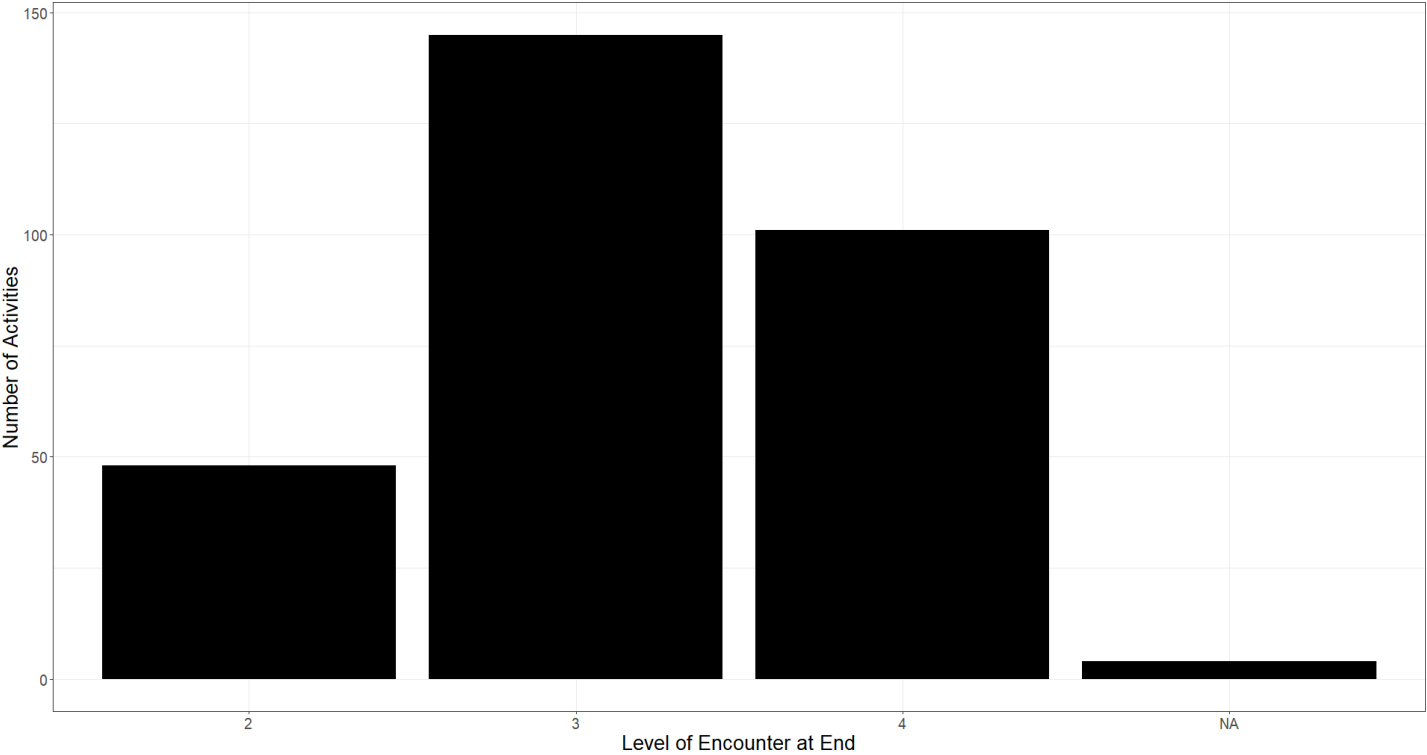


Figure 10: Level 2 Encounters with Ending Level different from Starting Level
n = 260

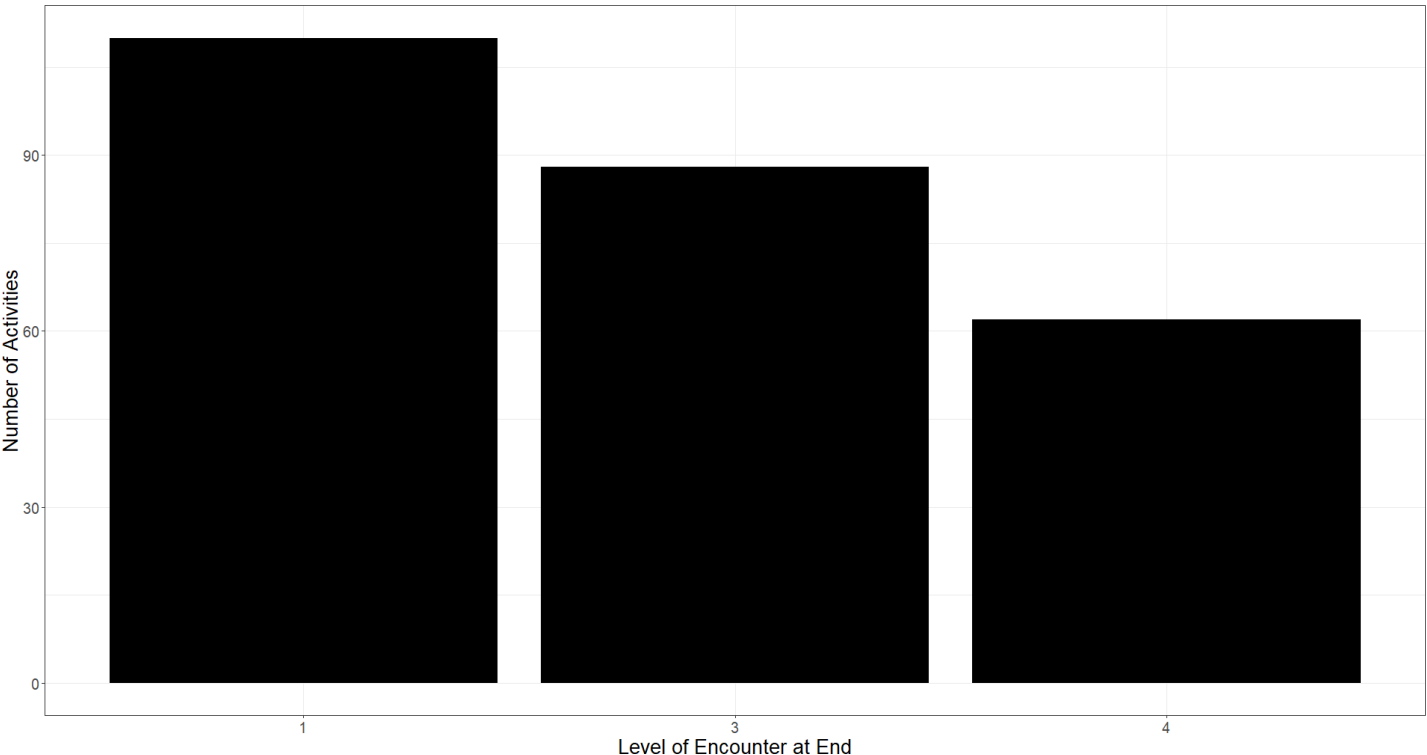


Figure 11: Level 3 Encounters with Ending Level different from Starting Level
n = 6453

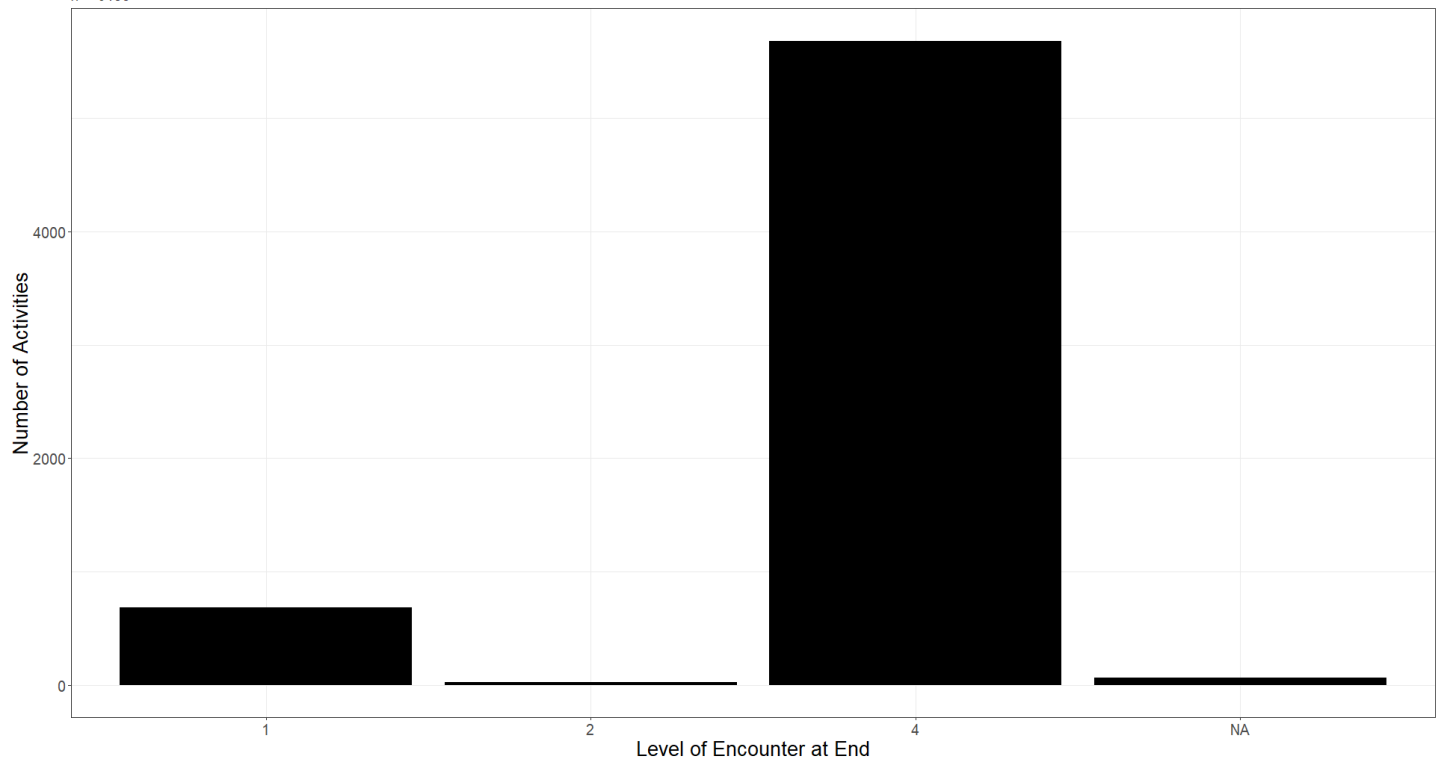


Figure 12: Percentage of Encounters with Start Level or End Level Missing from Right to Know Data
n = 509

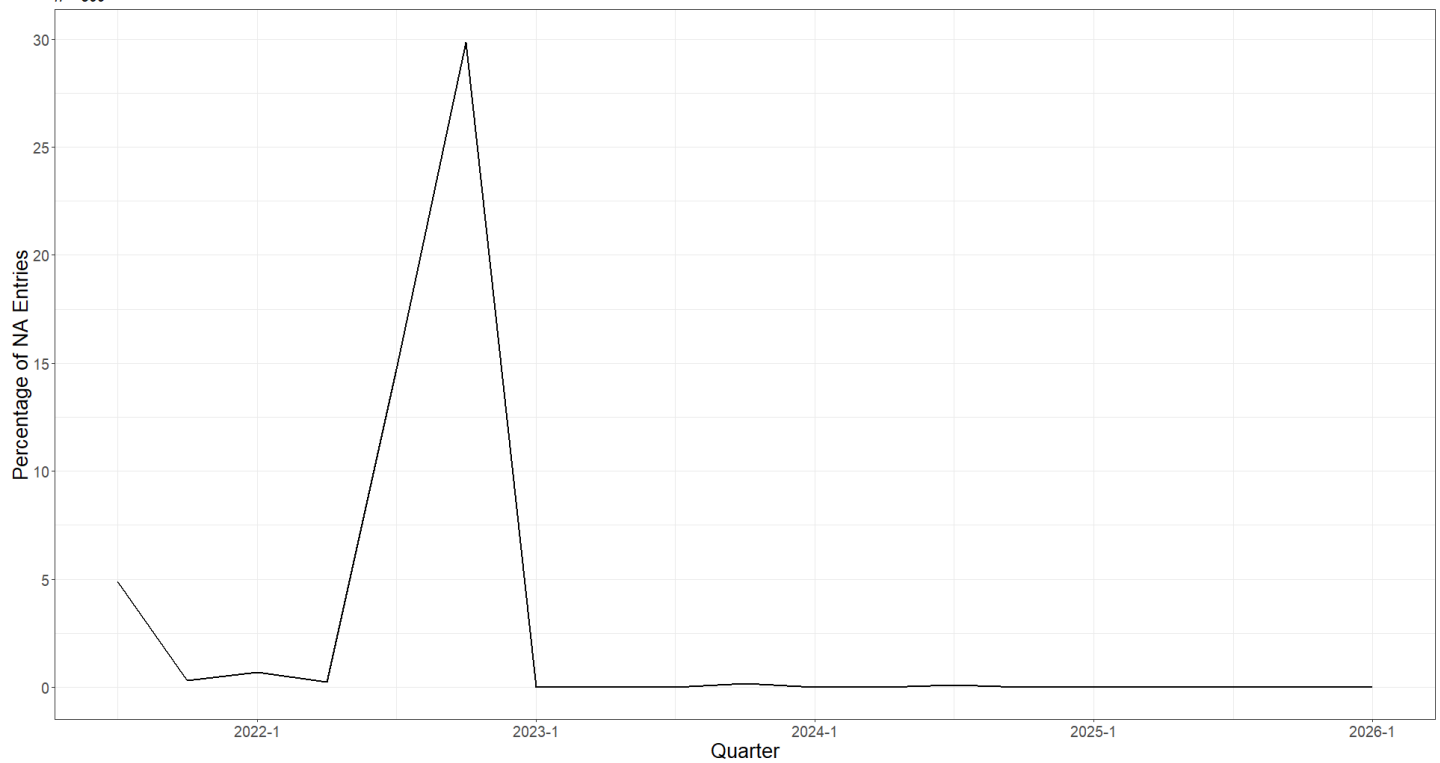


Figure 13: Encounters Ending in Arrest by Type
n = 5848

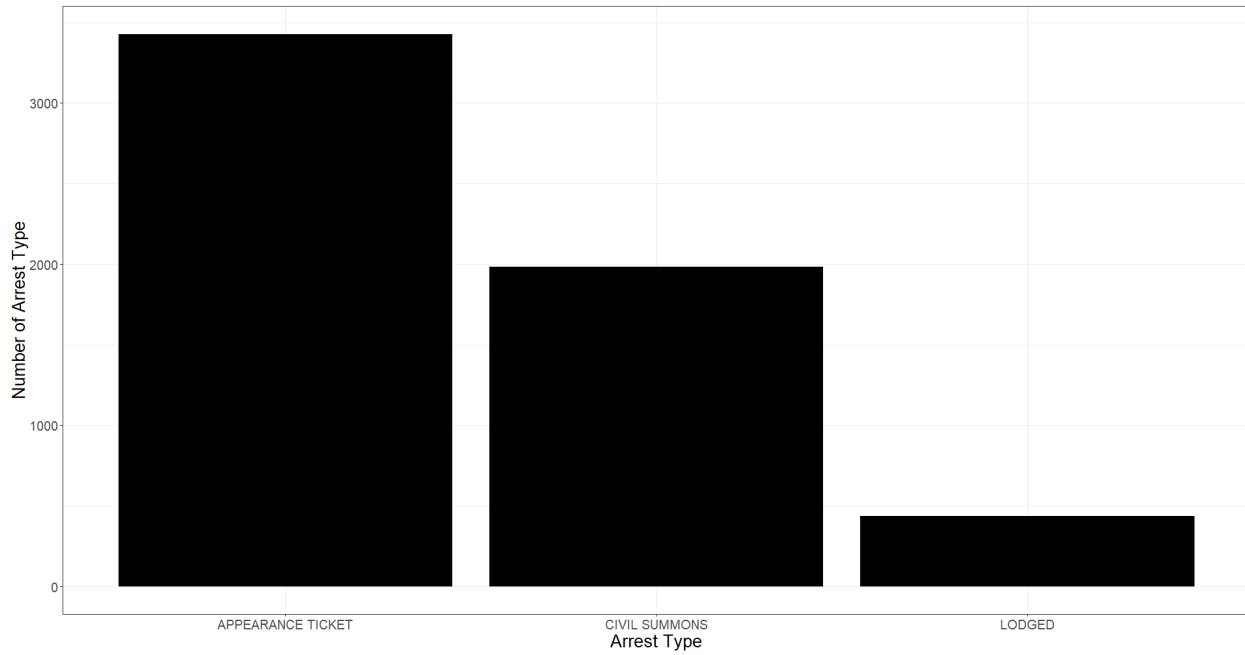


Figure 14: Encounters by Business Card Being Offered
n = 22947

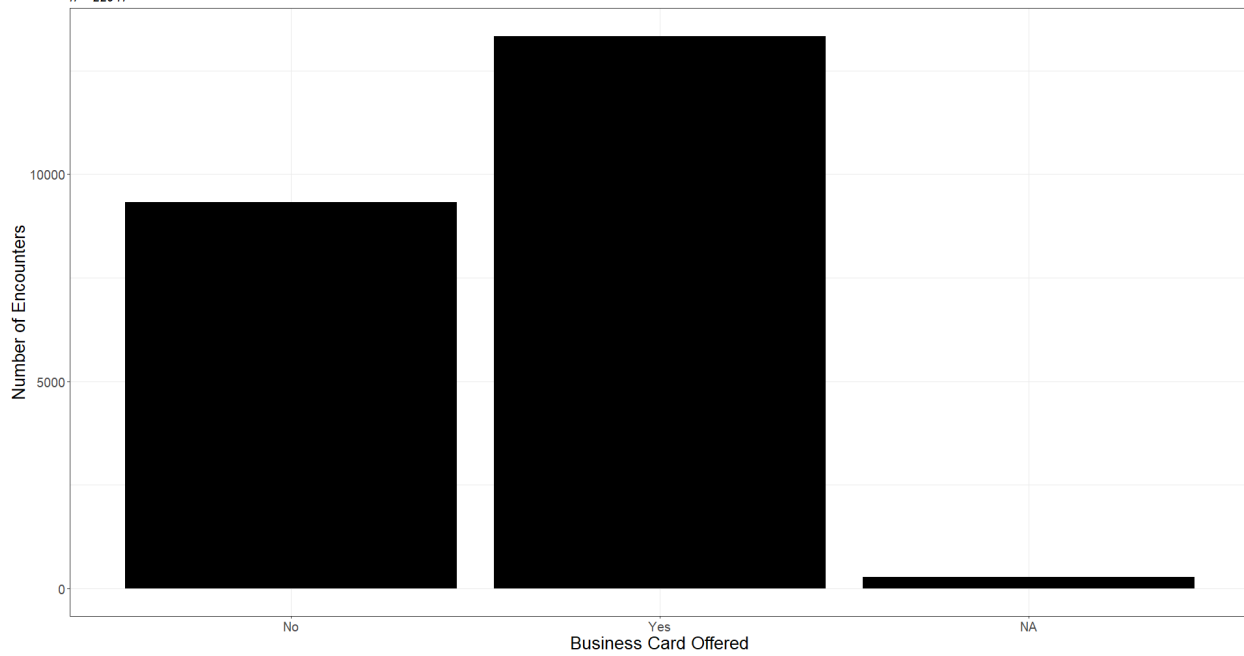


Figure 17: Distribution of Consent Requests in Law Enforcement Activities
n = 22947

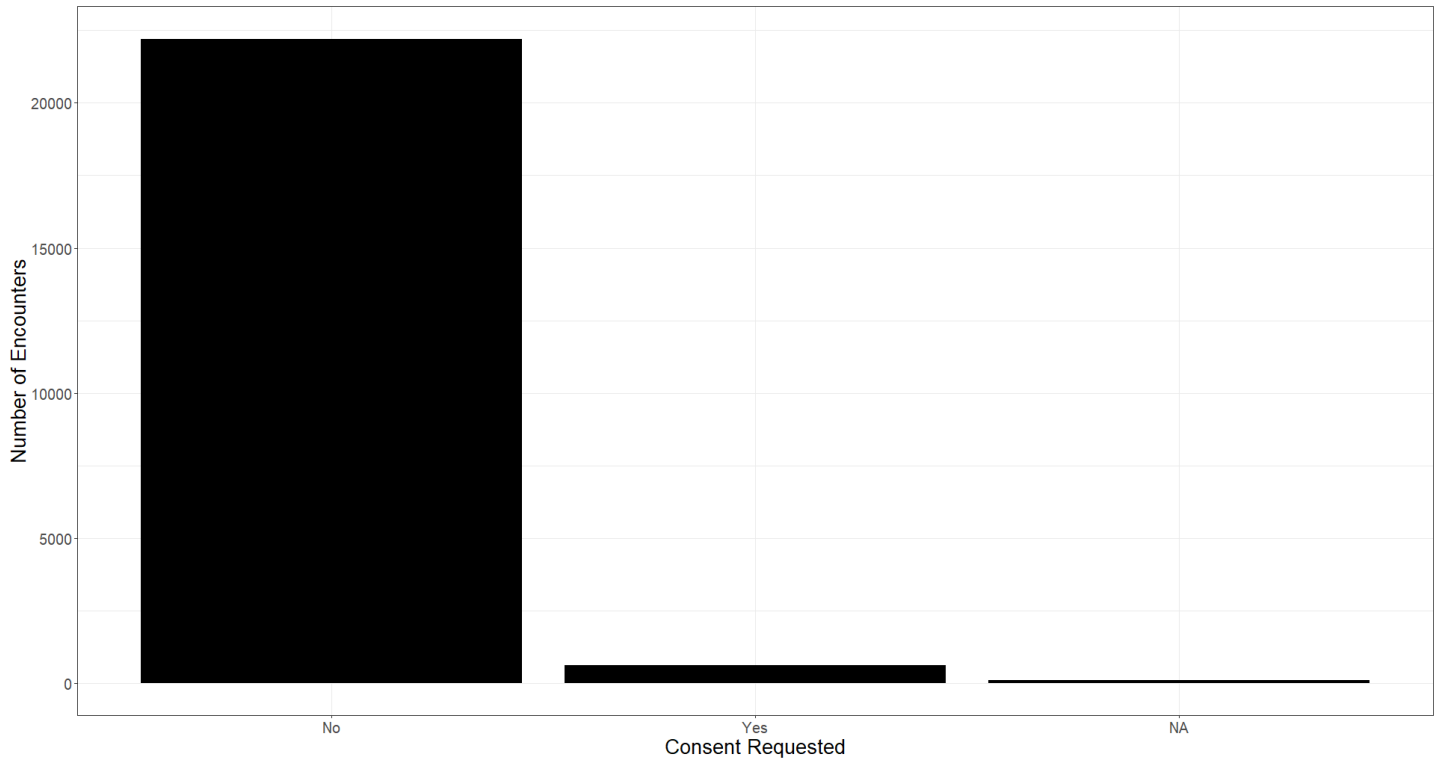


Figure 18: Distribution of Responses to Consent Requests in Law Enforcement Activities
n = 627

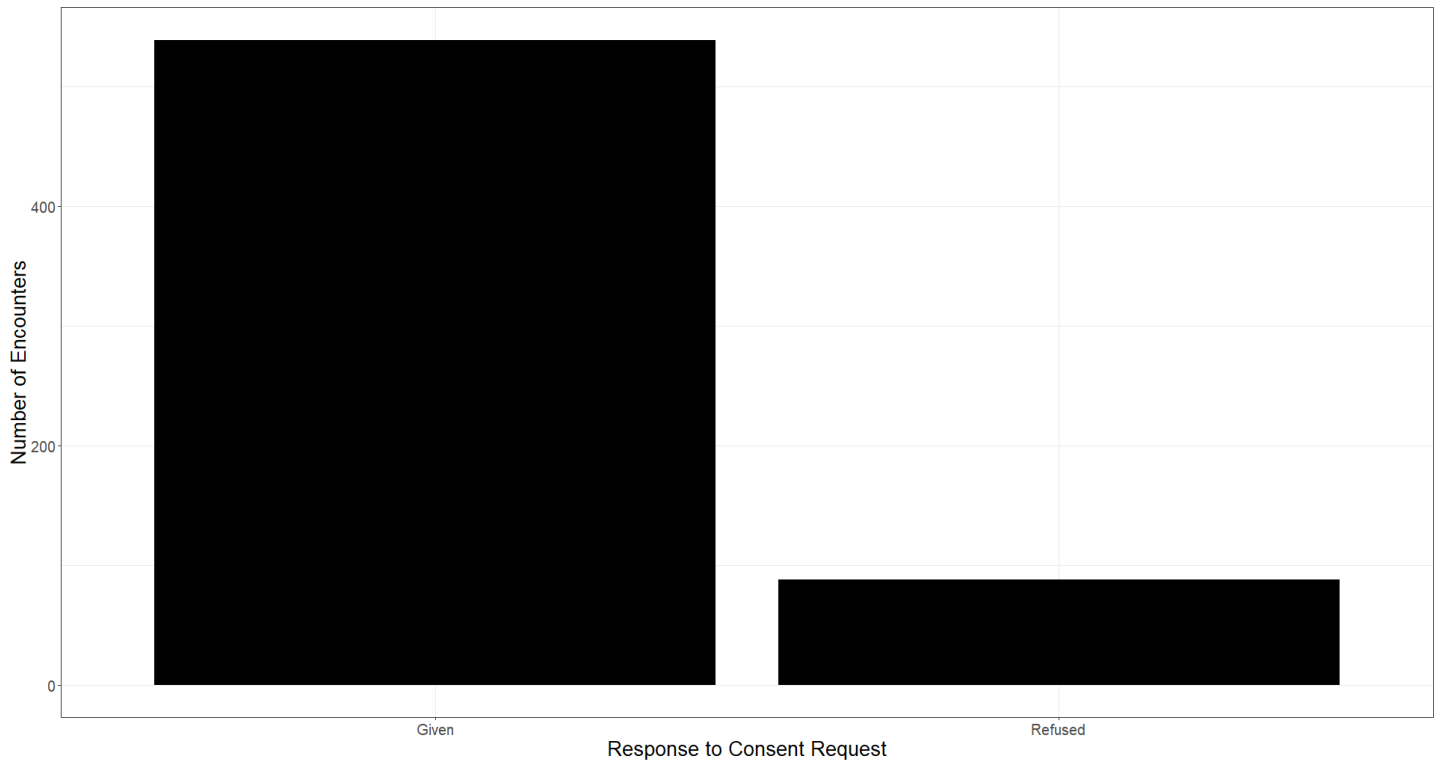


Figure 19: Percentage of Encounters where Consent Request was not Recorded

n = 108

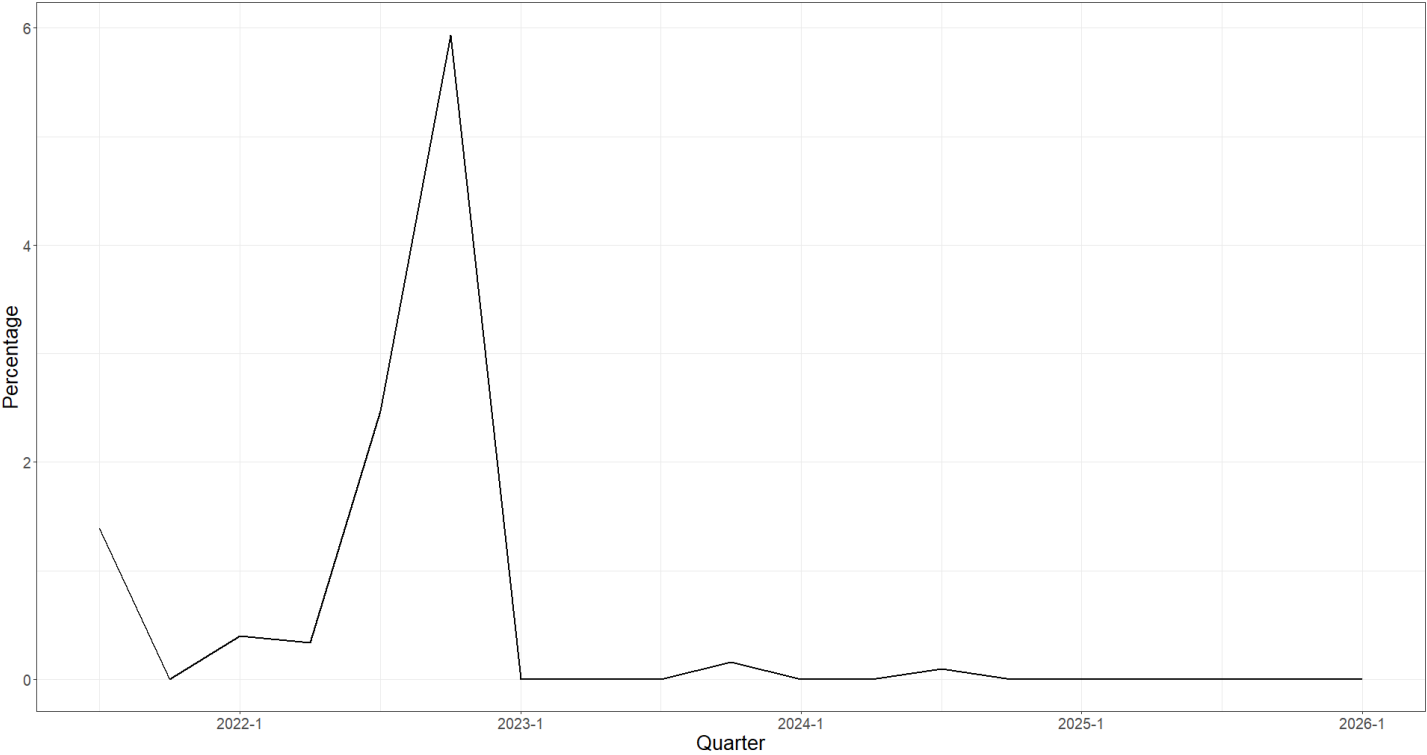


Figure 20: Distribution of Use of Force in Law Enforcement Activities

n = 22947

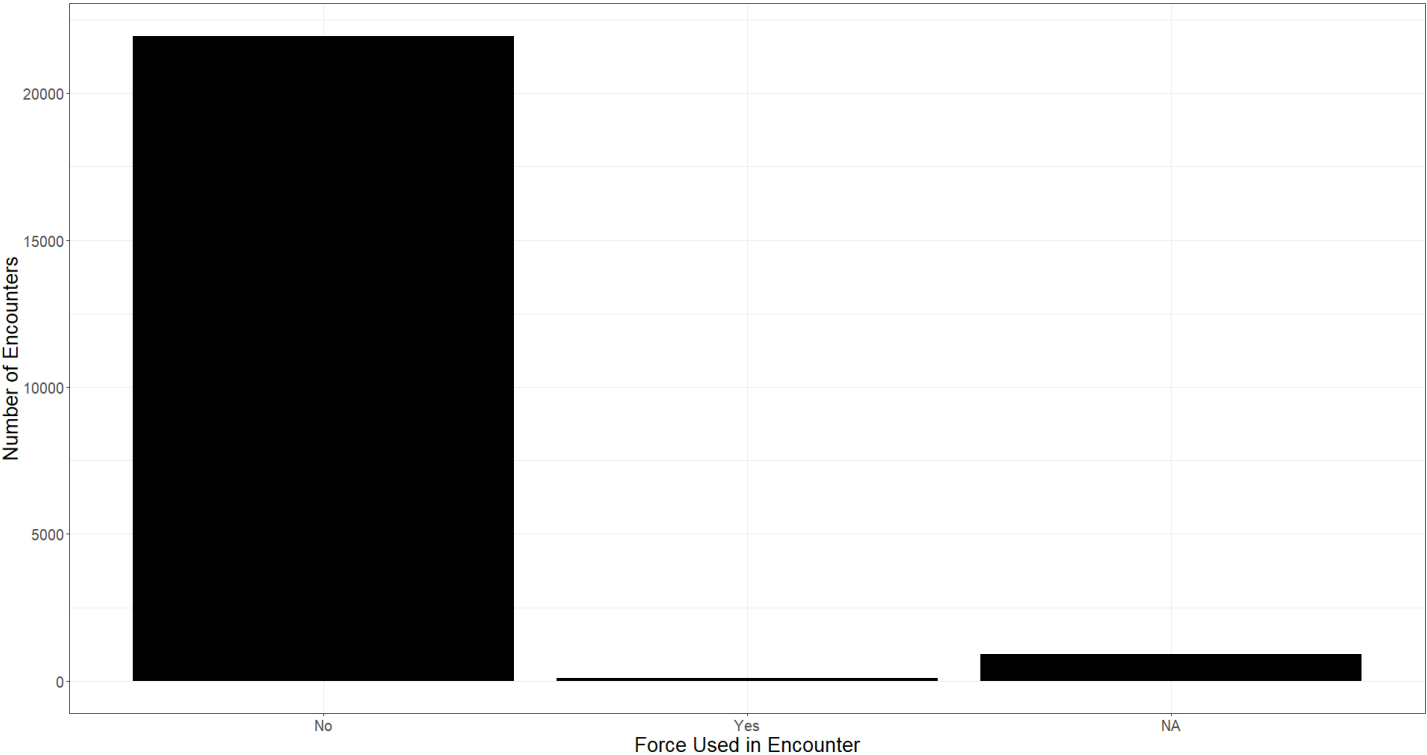


Figure 21: Percentage of Encounters where Use of Force Information is not Reported

n = 906

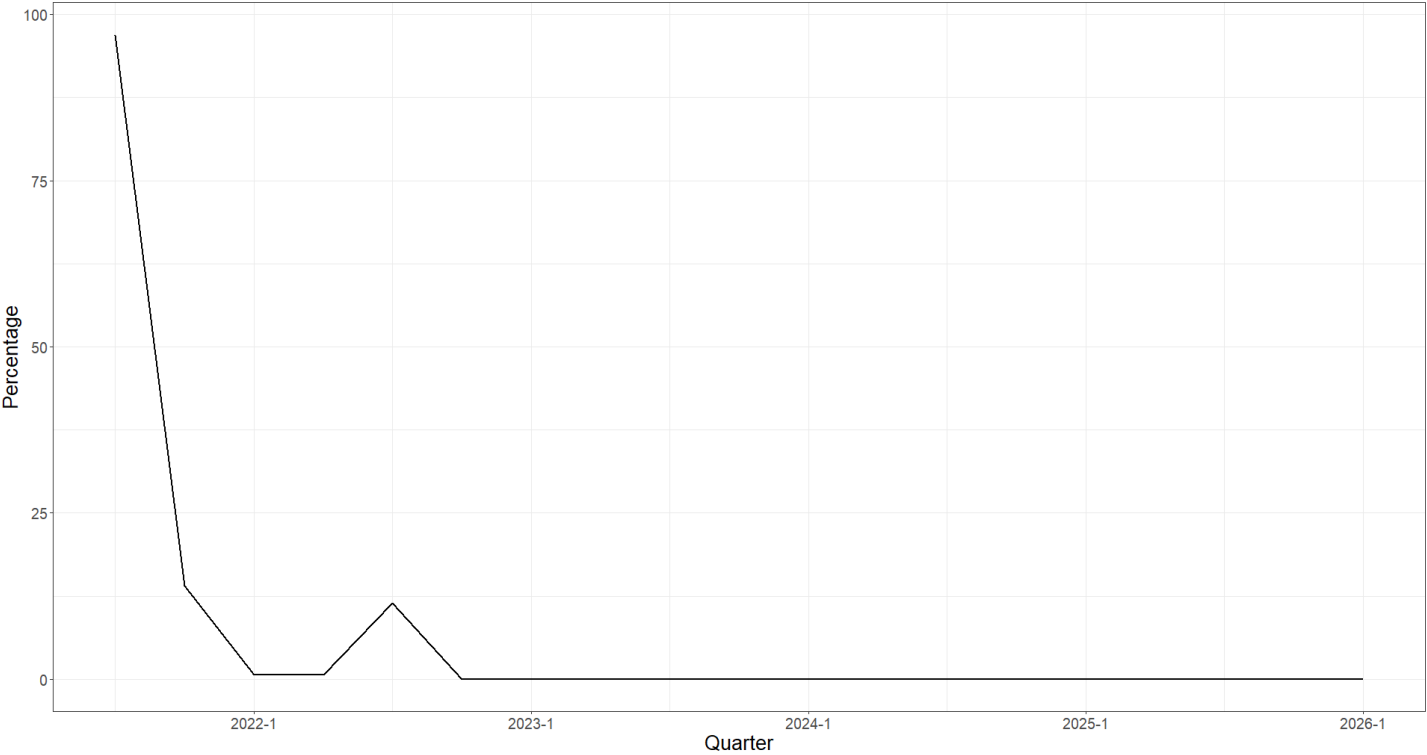


Figure 26: Percentage of Encounters where Reason is not Reported

n = 61

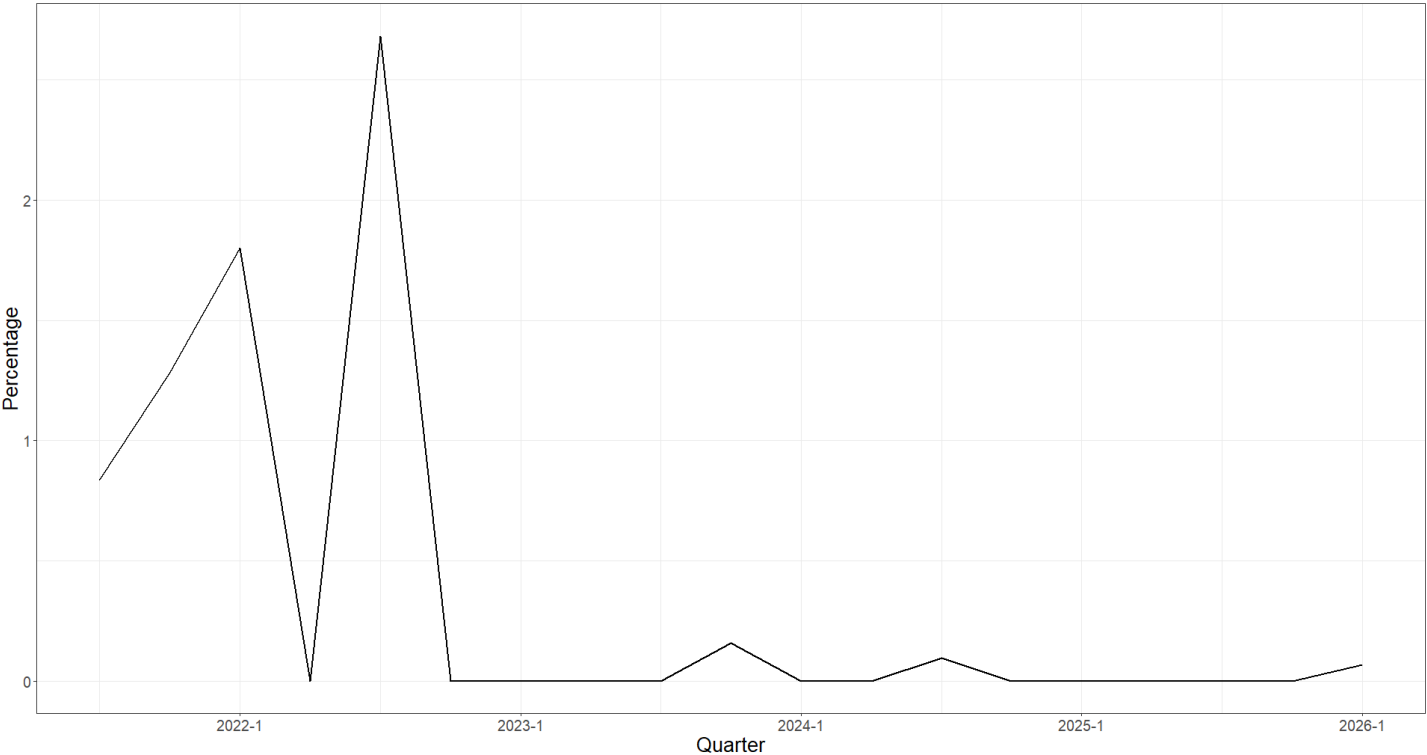


Figure 22: Number of Encounters where Use of Force was used (SPD Right to Know Data)
n = 90

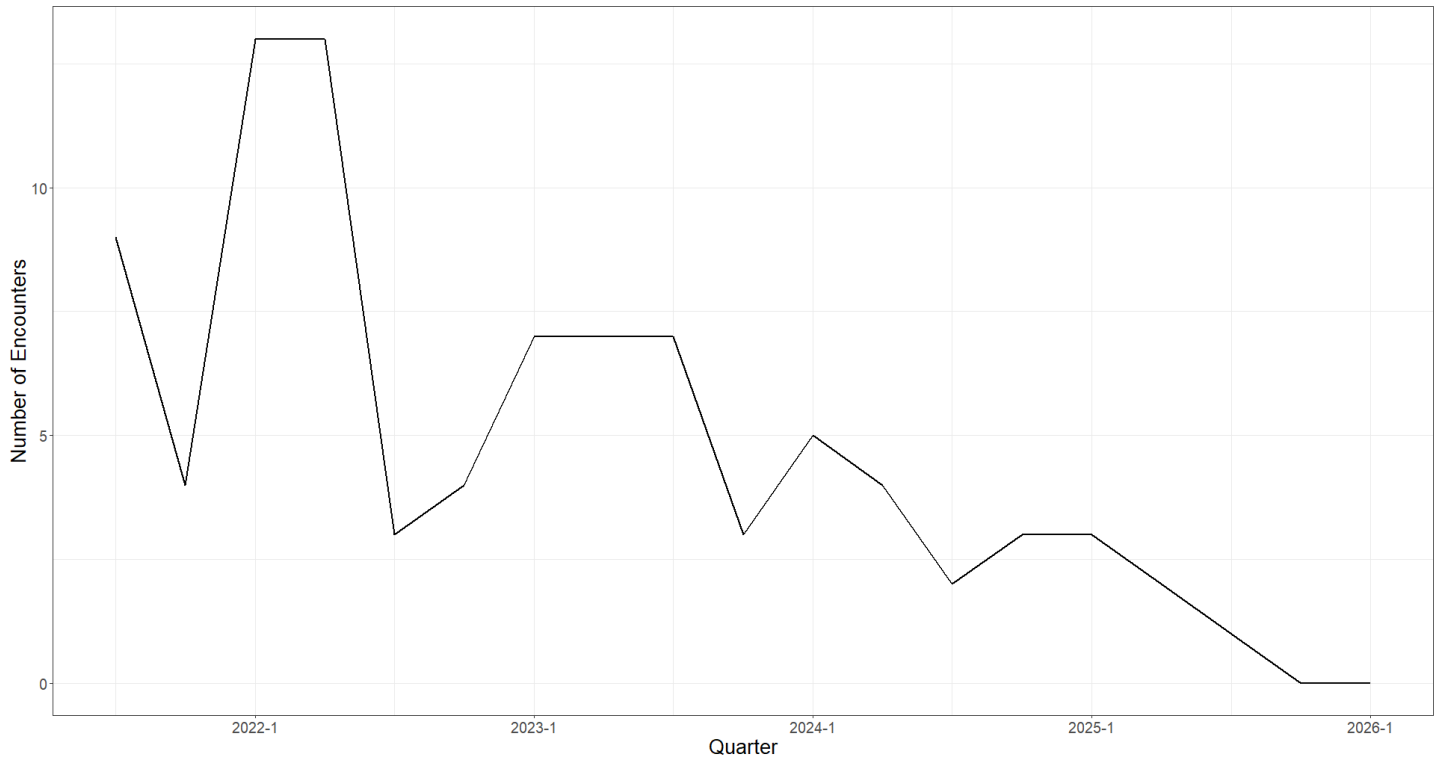
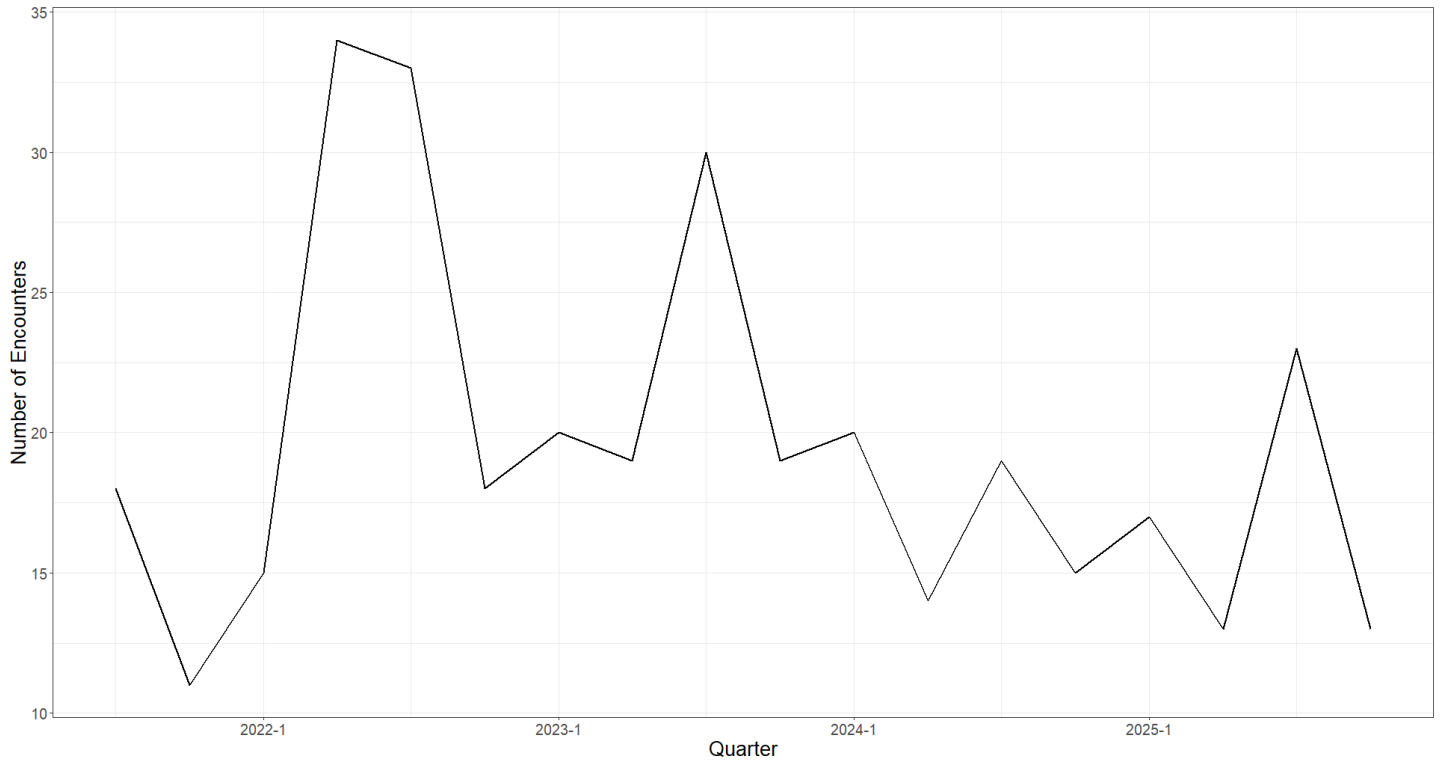
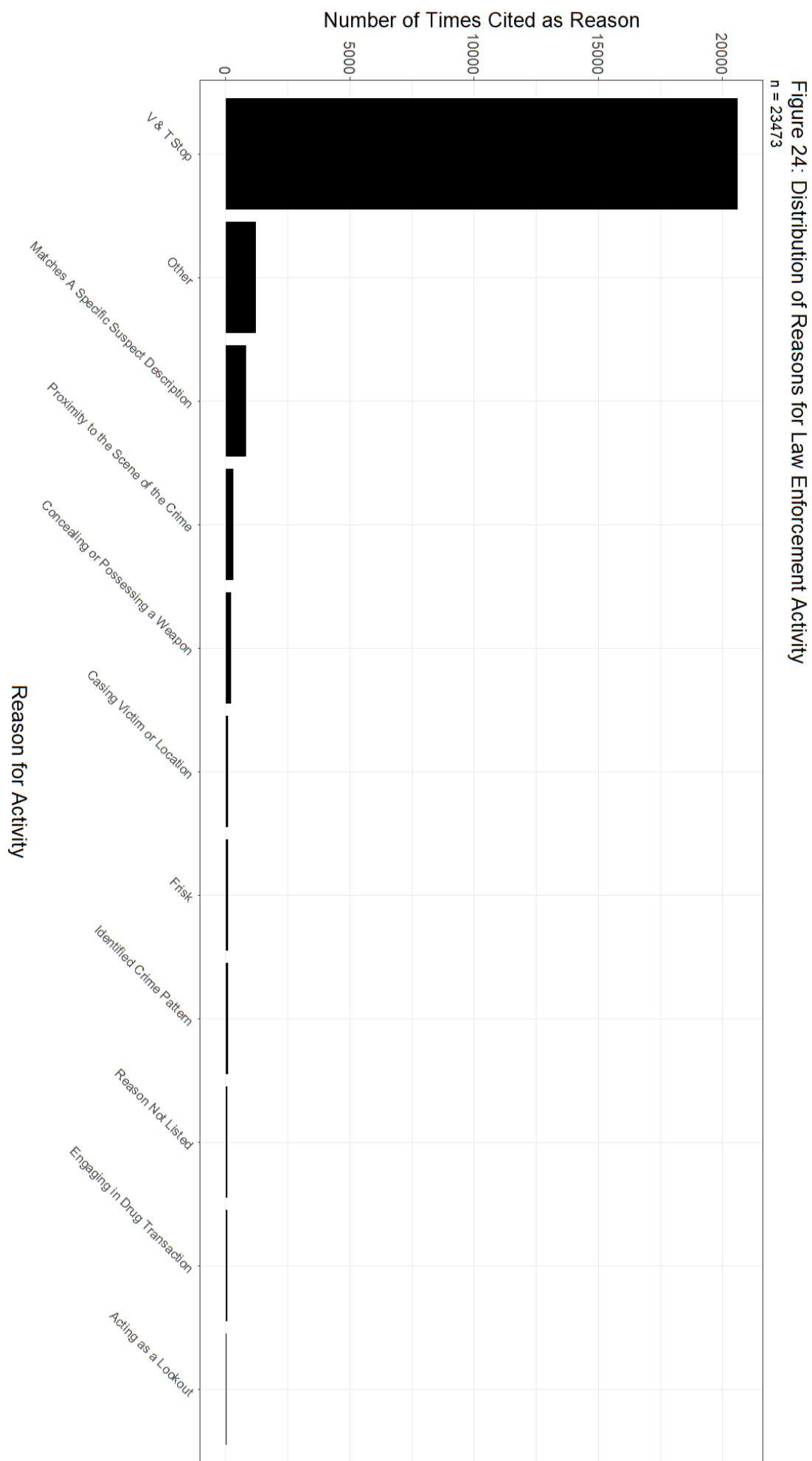
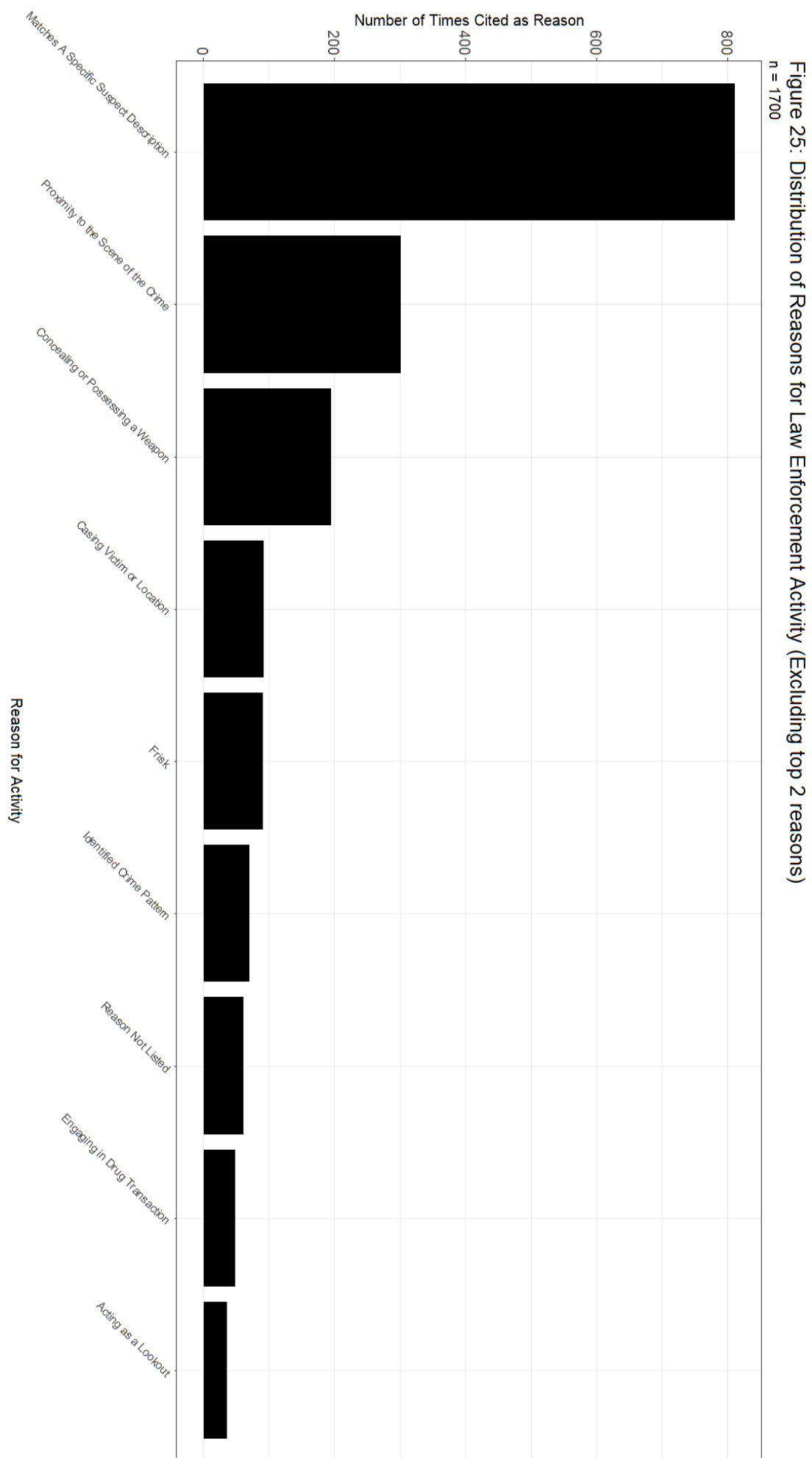


Figure 23: Number of Encounters where Use of Force was Used (NY State Data)
n = 351







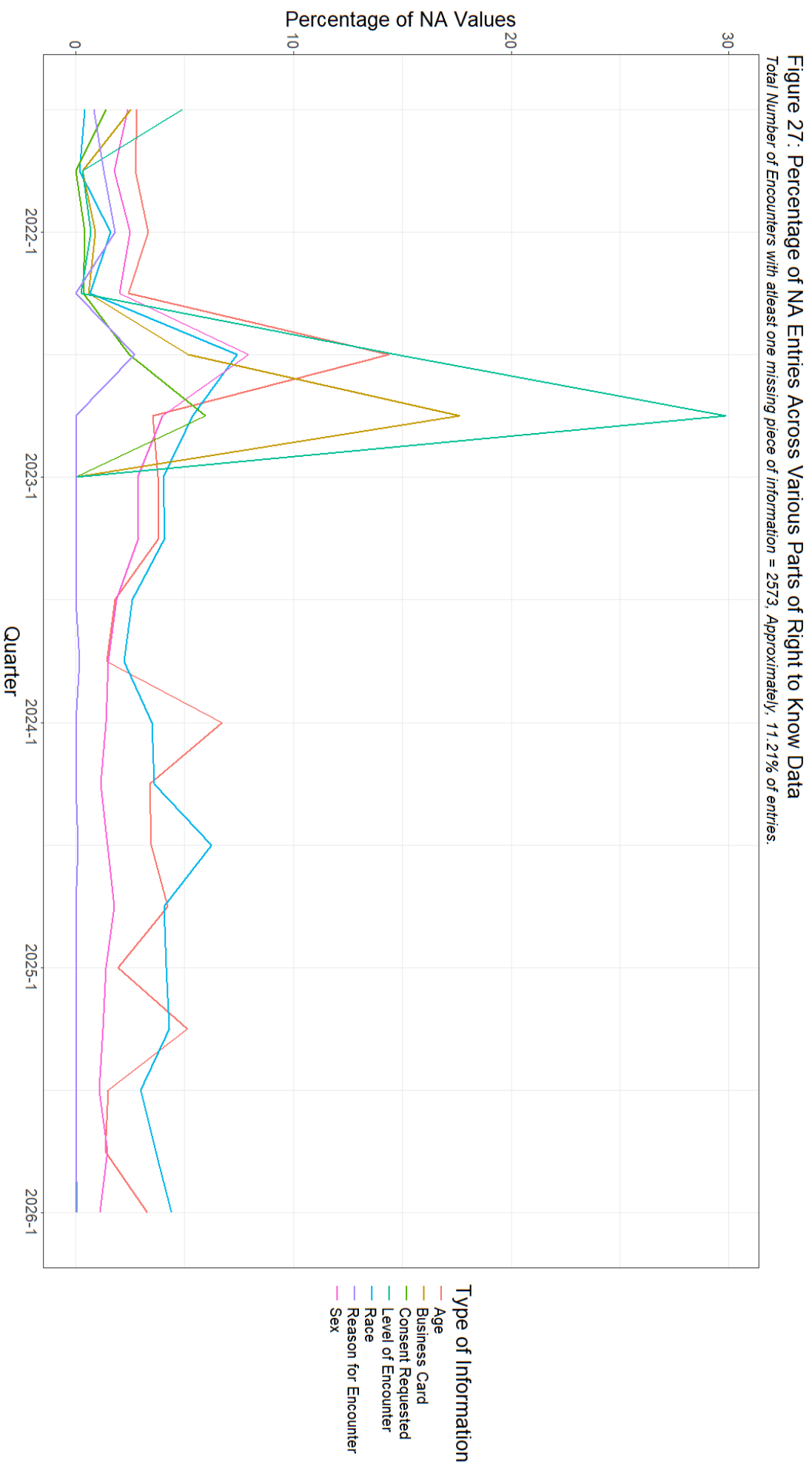


Figure 28: Number of Calls of Service by Year Since 2022
n = 219001

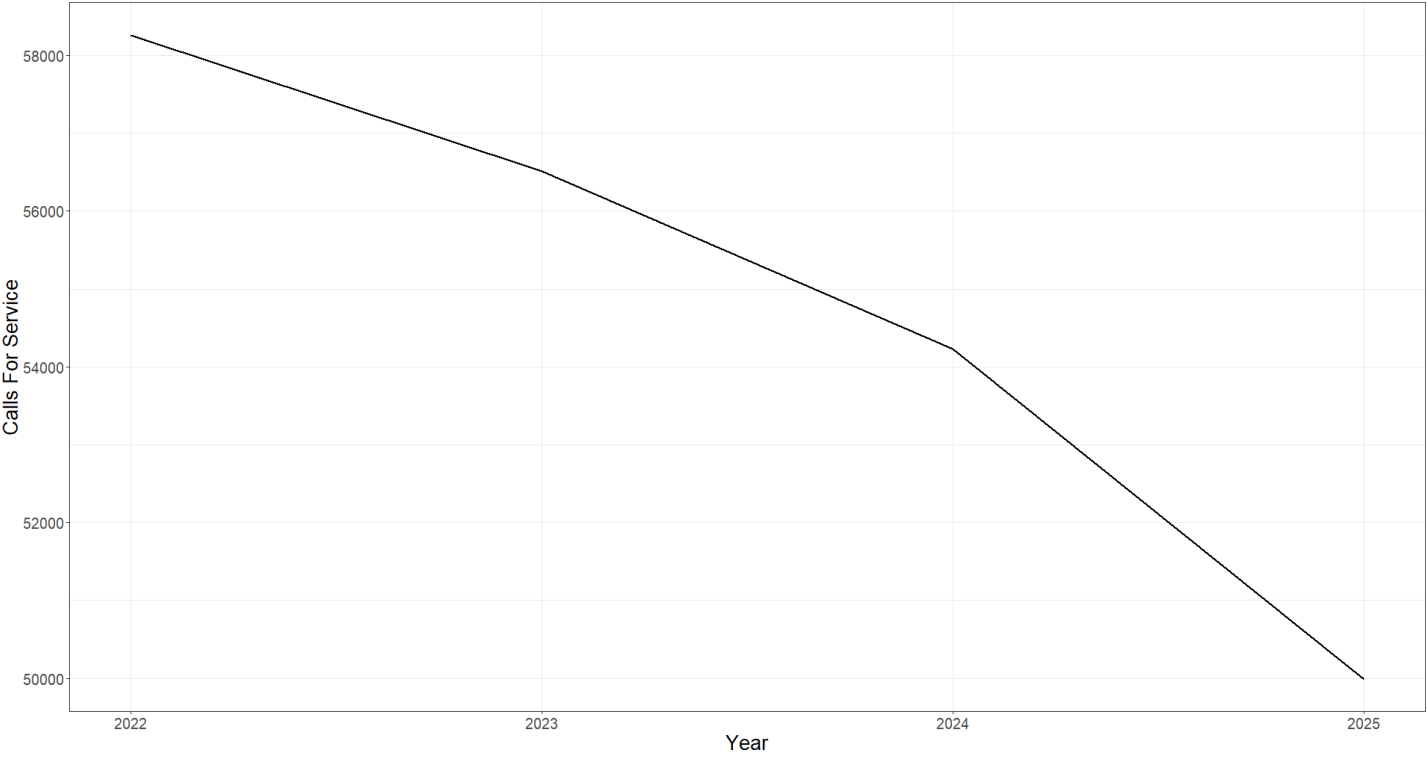
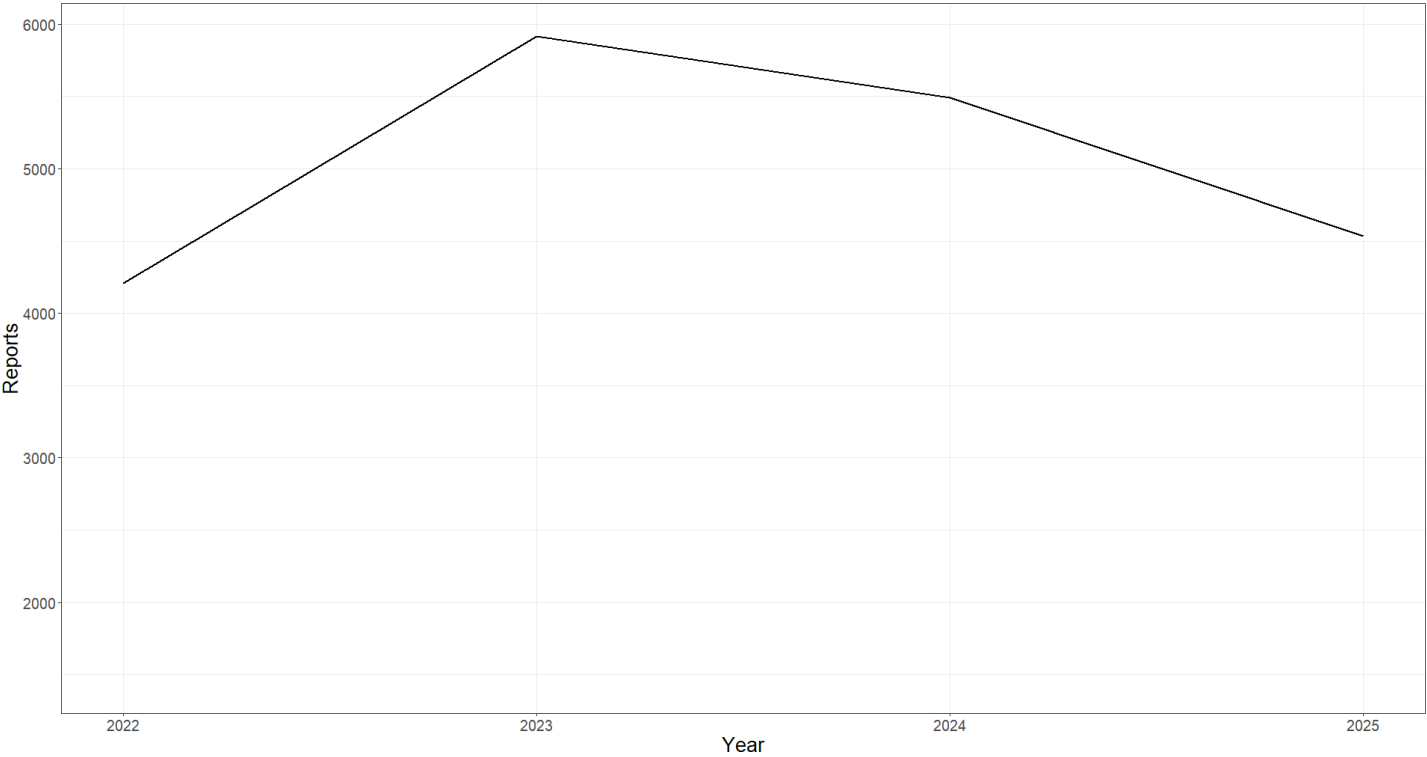


Figure 29: Number of Right to Know Reports by Year Since 2022
n = 21604



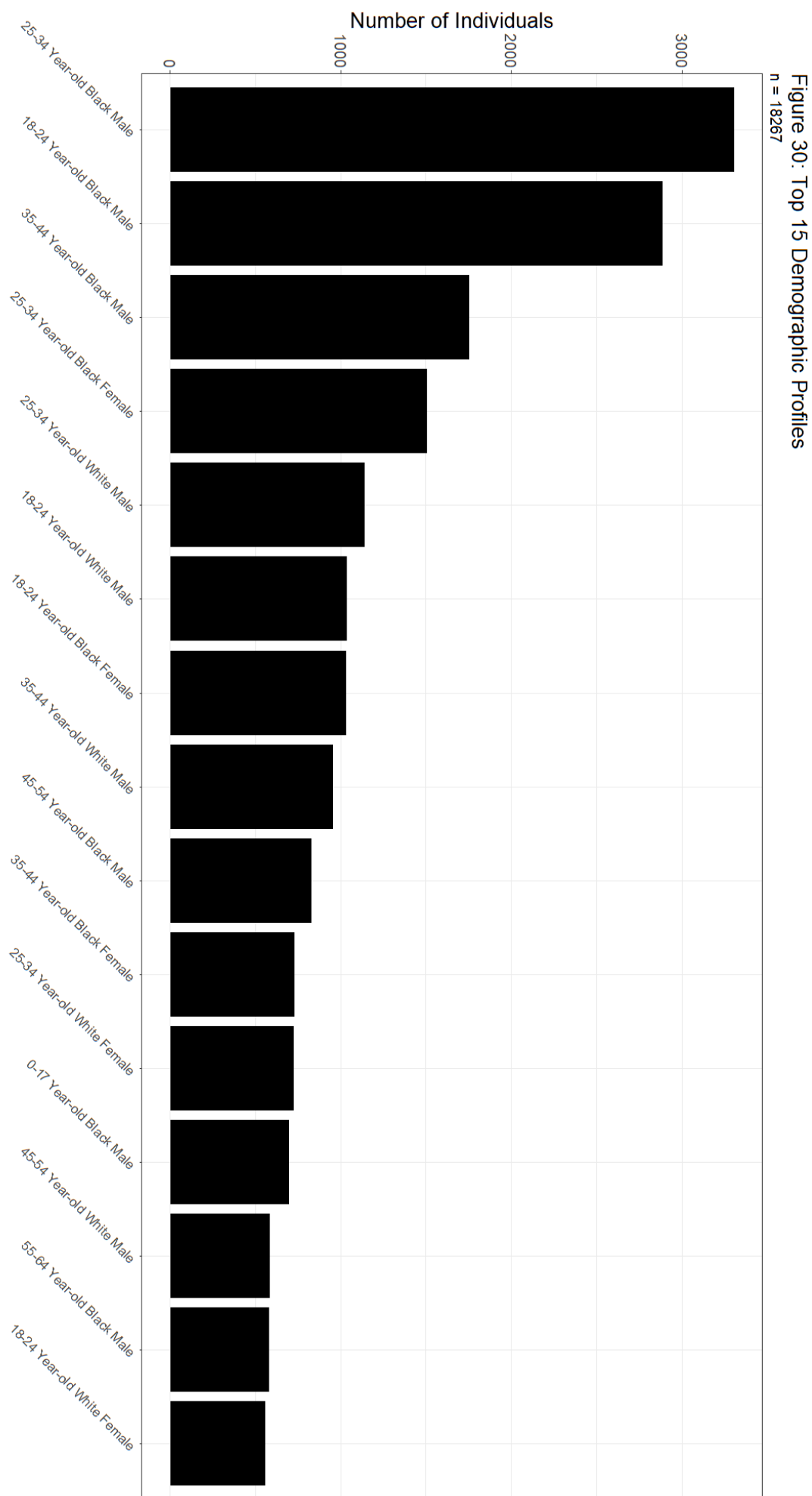


Figure 31: Number of Right of Inquiry Forms since 2021 by Year
Total Right of Inquiry forms: 26 or 34.67% of forms estimated to have been completed.

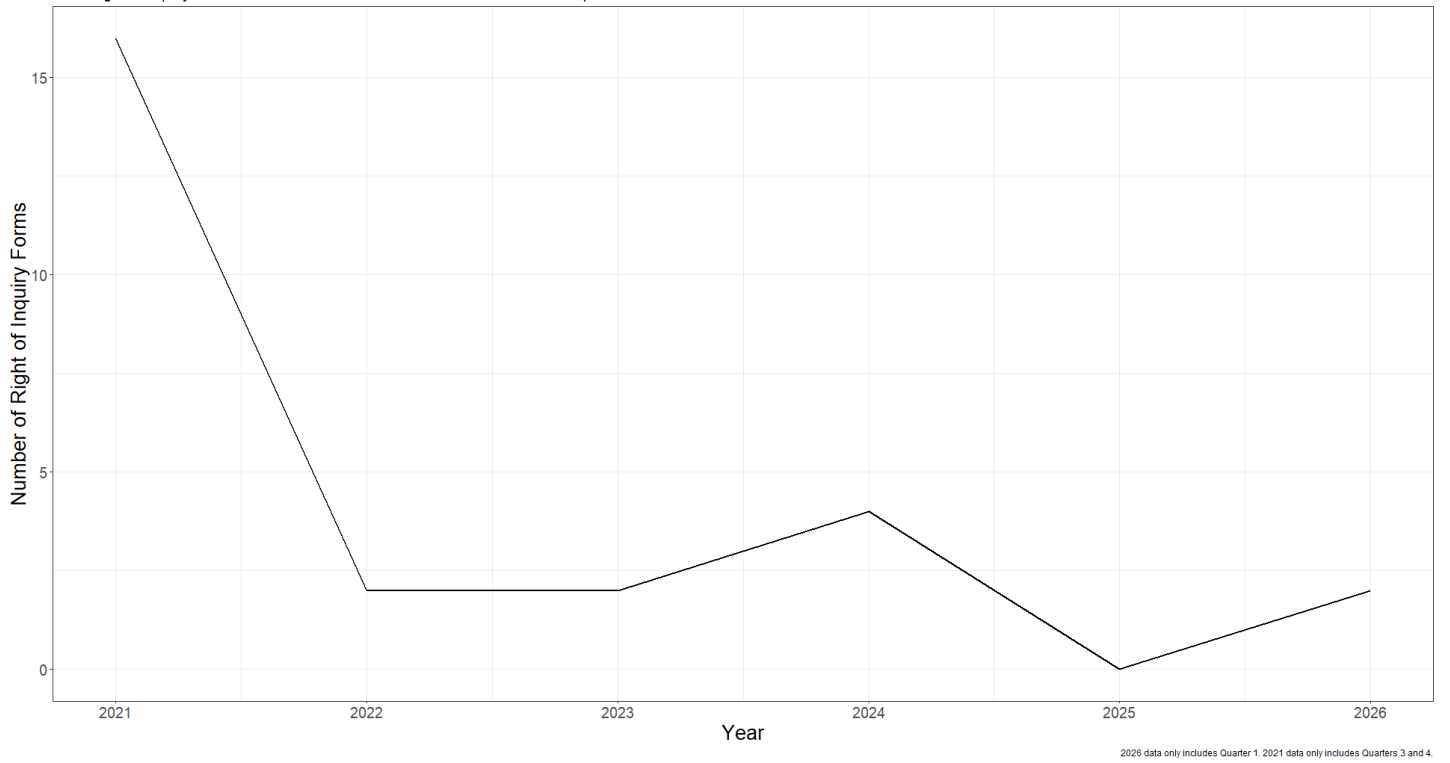


Figure 32: Distribution of End Levels in Use of Force Encounters from RTK Data
n = 90

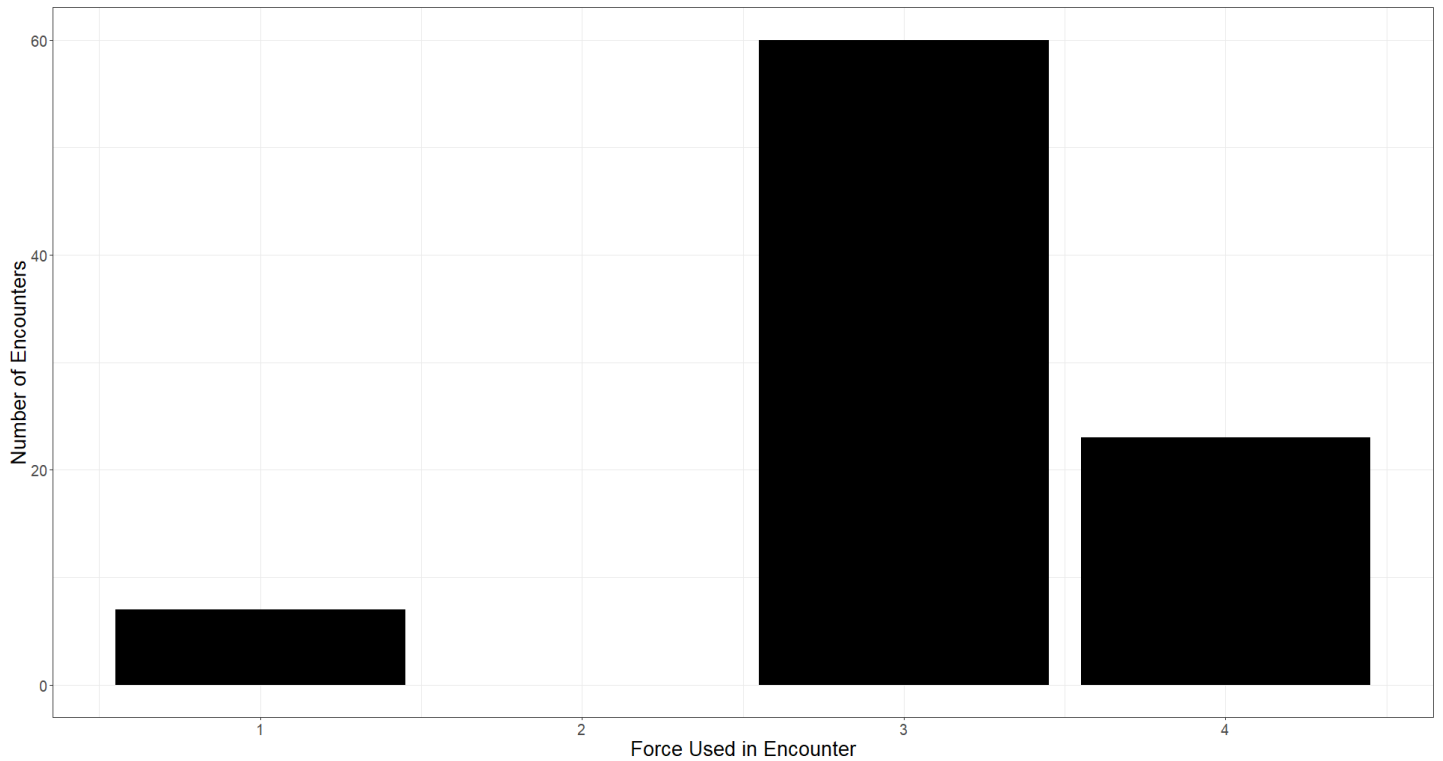


Figure 33: Common Law Right of Inquiry Form

Common Law Right of Inquiry - Consent Search Report



**COMMON LAW RIGHT OF INQUIRY -
CONSENT SEARCH REPORT**

REJECT
SUBMIT
PRINT

Record of DR #

District: Beat:

This is for Consent Search Requests during a Common Law Right of Inquiry (Level 2). Consent Searches during Terry Stops (Level 3) should be documented on a Level 3 Form 60 Report.

Body Worn Camera Footage Available?		Started at Level 1?		Consent Given?		Business Card Offered to Person?		Business Card Refused?	
☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

Location of Consent Search Request										
Incl. Address Num.		Prefix	Street Name		Street Type	Suffix	Bldg.	Suite / Apt.	City	
State	Zip	Premise Name				Incident Location Type		Occurred Date / Time / / : :		
To Date / Time / / : :		Person refused to give		Last Name	First Name			MI		
Race / Apparent Race				Ethnicity	Sex	Date of Birth / /		Age		

False Statements made herein are punishable as a Class A Misdemeanor pursuant to section 210.45 New York State Penal Law. AFFIRMED UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY

PRINT: Officer Rank, Last Name, First Name, MI						ISM	Unit	Date / /	
Officer Electronic Signature									
PRINT: Supervisor Rank, Last Name, First Name, MI						ISM	Unit	Date / /	
Supervisor Electronic Signature									

REJECT

SUBMIT

PRINT

Form # 71, Issued: 03/2021

Figure 34: SPD Stop Report



PERSON / VEHICLE STOP REPORT

REJECT
SUBMIT
PRINT

DISTRICT: BEAT: DR #

BODY-WORN CAMERA VIDEO AVAILABLE

NEXT PAGE

Incident / Vehicle / Person 1	TYPE OF STOP		REASON FOR STOP		SOURCE	
	STARTED AT		EXPLAINED REASON FOR THE STOP		DATE / TIME START	
					DATE / TIME END	

LOCATION STREET NUMBER		Prefix	STREET NAME		STREET TYPE	Suffix	CITY	
							Syracuse	

PLATE #	STATE	YEAR	EXPIRATION	MAKE	MODEL	STYLE	COLOR

PERSON TYPE	LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MI	DOB	AGE	SEX

RACE	ETHNICITY	HT	WT	HWR	EYE	STREET NUMBER	PREFIX

STREET NAME		STREET TYPE	Suffix	APT	CITY	STATE	Zip	TELEPHONE NUMBER
					Syracuse			() -

CONSENT SEARCH ASKED		FRISKED / EXPLANATION		SEARCHED / EXPLANATION	

WAS A WEAPON FOUND		BUSINESS CARD OFFERED		LEVEL OF ENCOUNTER		ARREST	

PERSON TYPE	LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MI	DOB	AGE	SEX

RACE	ETHNICITY	HT	WT	HWR	EYE	STREET NUMBER	PREFIX

STREET NAME		STREET TYPE	Suffix	APT	CITY	STATE	Zip	TELEPHONE NUMBER
					Syracuse			() -

CONSENT SEARCH ASKED		FRISKED / EXPLANATION		SEARCHED / EXPLANATION	

WAS A WEAPON FOUND		BUSINESS CARD OFFERED		LEVEL OF ENCOUNTER		ARREST	

PERSON TYPE	LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MI	DOB	AGE	SEX

RACE	ETHNICITY	HT	WT	HWR	EYE	STREET NUMBER	PREFIX

STREET NAME		STREET TYPE	Suffix	APT	CITY	STATE	Zip	TELEPHONE NUMBER
					Syracuse			() -

CONSENT SEARCH ASKED		FRISKED / EXPLANATION		SEARCHED / EXPLANATION	

WAS A WEAPON FOUND		BUSINESS CARD OFFERED		LEVEL OF ENCOUNTER		ARREST	

Page 1 of 2

REJECT

SUBMIT

PRINT

Form # 72, Issued: 03/2021